

**NWTF Technical Committee Representatives' Report - PA Chapter NWTF
Board of Directors Meeting, July 30, 2011**

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Harvest Management

Preliminary 2011 spring turkey harvests were approximately 35,942 (33,897 initial harvests + 2,045 from the special turkey license; Table 1). The preliminary initial harvest is 22% below the 2010 preliminary initial harvest of 43,201, but only 3% below the previous 3-year average. This decrease most likely is due to the rainy weather throughout much of the season and below average summer reproduction two and three years ago in many WMUs, both of which decreased gobbling activity. The estimate also most likely is affected by recent changes in reporting rate due to on-line and phone reporting, but we will begin getting more consistent and reliable estimates when we initiate the annual spring hunter survey after the 2012 spring season. This preliminary initial harvest ranks as the second lowest during the past 10 years (2005 was the lowest at 32,594). 2011 ranked highest in sales of the special turkey licenses at 15,159, representing a 66% increase from the previous average sales (2006-2010). All-day spring hunting was initiated this year during the second half of the month-long season, and included two full weeks. Afternoon harvests comprised 5% of the total reported harvests, and 22% of harvests during the all-day portion of the season.

Wild Turkey Hen Harvest Rates and Annual Survival Rates Study

As part of the hen turkey harvest and survival rate study, we ordered equipment for the late summer turkey trapping season, coordinated with Regions and the PFWRC regarding transmitter recoveries and locations of transmittered hens and continued working with the transmitter manufacturer to redesign the transmitter harness attachments. During this reporting cycle we recovered 4 transmitters; 2 from each Study Area. The Study Area 2 (SA2) recoveries were from Tioga (mammalian predation) and Warren counties (transmitter fell off the hen due to equipment failure so the hen may still be alive). The recoveries from Study Area 1 (SA 1) were from Clearfield (equipment failure) and Indiana counties (coyote predation). This last recovery was of the hen that had made the longest movement, over 20 miles. She was one year old and had successfully nested as evidenced by poult feathers close to the recovered transmitter. Of the 119 total hens transmittered since January 2010, we have lost contact with 6 (battery failure, etc.), 10 transmitters fell off the hens due to equipment failure and one was censored (died within one week of capture). Of the remaining 102, 75 hens have died due to predation, harvest, illegal harvest or natural infection. Twenty-eight transmitters are active as of 22 July (14 of 61 in SA1; 14 of 58 in SA2).

Total reported leg-banded hen turkeys during the spring season are: 3 bearded hens harvest (2 in SA1, 1 in SA2), 2 road killed and 1 found killed by a predator while incubating a nest. Legband reports of male turkeys harvested are 51 (non-reward bands); 30 leg-banded between 2006–2009 during the gobbler harvest rate study and 21 leg-banded between 2010-2011 during the hen harvest rate study. Ages of males banded during the gobbler study were: one 6-year old (banded as a juvenile in 2006 and harvested in Centre Co); 3 5-year olds; 2 4-year olds; 10 at least 4 years old (banded as adult in 2009), 14 3-years old. During the all-day portion of the spring season we asked hunters if their harvest was before or after noon; only 2 of 19 were harvested after noon.

A turkey trapping/update workshop was held for all trappers to practice transmitter attachment, review aging/sexing methods for juveniles during late summer and winter trapping, provide group discussion to share tips for trapping/sexing birds, and discuss transmitter harness re-design.

We are preparing for the upcoming late summer trapping season (mid-August to early October) when we will leg band an additional 150 hens (75 per Study Area), focusing on brood flocks to obtain a sample of leg banded juvenile hens to estimate fall harvest rates by age. Transmitters recovered from mortalities will be re-deployed.

Annual Cooperative PGC/NWTF/PANWTF Meeting

This 37th annual meeting, held June 8 at the PGC headquarters, emphasizes the partnership between the PGC and NWTF/PANWTF and demonstrates the health and importance of this partnership. The PGC Executive Office and all pertinent PGC Bureaus participate. Twelve topics were discussed and 10 action items were identified for completion during the year.

Information and Education

MJ Casalena met with the Bureau of I&E to update the PGC wild turkey web page. MJ Casalena assisted with an annual NRA sponsored Turkey Hunting Clinic in Johnstown. Attendance was similar to last year at 25.

Table 1. PRELIMINARY Pennsylvania spring 2011 wild turkey harvests, determined from harvest report cards and corrected for reporting rate. First Harvests are from general license sales and do not include harvests from the Special Spring Turkey License, which are shown in the column Second Harvest.

WMU	Spring			Harvest per Square Mile	% Total State Harvest
	First Harvest	Second Harvest	Total Harvest		
1A	2,116	116	2,232	1.21	6.2
1B	2,124	163	2,287	1.08	6.4
2A	1,871	111	1,982	1.09	5.5
2B	1,495	53	1,548	1.14	4.3
2C	2,006	148	2,154	0.69	6.0
2D	2,534	163	2,697	1.08	7.5
2E	1,216	87	1,303	1.03	3.6
2F	1,157	66	1,223	0.51	3.4
2G	1,939	132	2,070	0.50	5.8
3A	1,107	60	1,166	0.77	3.2
3B	1,689	98	1,787	0.79	5.0
3C	2,175	146	2,321	1.08	6.5
3D	1,592	82	1,674	0.77	4.7
4A	1,187	79	1,266	0.73	3.5
4B	1,187	85	1,272	0.80	3.5
4C	1,922	105	2,026	1.12	5.6
4D	1,993	145	2,138	0.78	5.9
4E	1,951	116	2,067	1.19	5.8
5A	524	27	551	0.42	1.5
5B	971	29	1,000	0.36	2.8
5C	1,077	34	1,111	0.51	3.1
5D	63	2	65	0.08	0.2
TOTAL	33,897	2,045	35,942	0.79	100