

**PA Chapter NWTF Wild Turkey Management Committee Report
July 30, 2011 PANWTF July Board Meeting
Submitted by Don Heckman, WTM Committee**

Wild Turkey Management changes requiring PGC Staff and Commissioner overview.

- 1) Support PGC Management Plan For Wild Turkeys In Pennsylvania, 2006-2015, goal, 8 objectives 47 strategies, with measurement timeline outlined, plans needs to be fully funded over the 10 years; several management plan strategies are not being fully funded or followed.
- 2) Northeast Wild Turkey Population Model – implement in wild turkey management plan – PA NWTF has \$15,000 invested in development; model data and modeling results are requirements for future wild turkey management decisions; Mary Jo updating model for implementation.
- 3) Recommendation for Mentored Youth Hunting to including fall turkey hunting season in regulation starting in 2011. PANWTF needs to continue to support “tag sharing” with Mentored Youth Hunters and then work with PGC to get their support for fall turkey hunting with fall antlerless hunting when the legislation is signed into law. **SB 274 legislation passed by House and Senate, signed by the Governor, regulated for 2011 antlered doe hunting season by PGC Commissioners.** Legislation gives PGC regulator authority for adding antlerless deer to Mentored Youth fall hunting seasons and bag limits. Fall wild turkey not included in legislation or regulation change.
- 4) Recommendation for Mentored Youth be included in fall turkey hunting season regulations starting when the WTMP criteria supports the regulation change. PANWTF supports “tag transferring” for Mentored Youth and Adult fall turkey hunter and will work with PGC to get their support for initiating this for fall turkey hunting. PANWTF needs to continue supporting “tag transferring” with Mentored Youth Hunter for Fall Turkey Hunting Season when talking to and communicating to PGC Executive Director and Commissioners. PANWTF will work with PGC to get their support to expand upon the tag transfer by including fall turkey hunting in the Mentored Youth program at a later date when and where WTMP criteria will allow additional fall harvest.
- 5) Recommendation to expand youth spring gobbler season and regular spring gobbler season to all day hunting after 4 year gobbler leg band research project is completed in 2009, project evaluation will be completed in 2010, and recommendations will be documented. **At April 20, 2010 PGC Commissioner meeting they voted 8-0 to expand spring gobbler season for last two weeks of spring season up to May 31 to all day hunting starting Spring 2011. All day youth spring gobbler season will be reviewed for additional hunting opportunity.**
- 6) Recommendation to expand youth spring gobbler to more than one day.
- 7) Continue recommendations to reduce or increase WMU fall season lengths as management plan setting fall season guidelines are determined; using management data based on current field data and indices, harvest densities, population densities, and hunter densities, as charted measurements outlined in the wild turkey management plan; when management data supports regulation change. Fall turkey hunting regulations for season start and end date changes were adopted by PGC BOC at April 20, 2010 Meeting. PANWTF and member articles have been distributed documenting our disapproval of these approved fall turkey hunting season regulations fro 2010. **Feb. 1, 2011 under Proposed Rule making, Commissioner’s move tentative fall turkey hunting season start date back to last Saturday of October. Saturday, October 29, 2011 will be first day of fall turkey hunting season, while WMU’s will be back tp 1, 2, 3 weeks, plus 3 days for WMU 5A, or closed fall turkey hunting season in WMU 5B, 5C, 5D. Thanksgiving Day, Friday, and Saturday fall turkey hunting for 2011 is still in seasons and bag limits criteria as adopted by Commissioners. 2011, 4th Saturday, October 22 continues to be closed for fall turkey hunting and continues to be opening day Bear Season Start date. April 19th PGC Board of Commissioners adopted these season and bag limit dates under Final Rule Making for 2011.**
- 8) PGC Gobbler Leg Band Research Study (2006-2009) has been completed. Study results have been documented by Dr. Duane Diefenbach and Mary Jo Casalena, and handed out to PA Chapter NWTF Board. What will be the PGC recommendations coming out of this research study and how will they be presented to PGC Executive Staff, Commissioner’s, PA Chapter NWTF?
- 9) PGC submitted Fall Hen Harvest Rates Study to NWTF Technical Committee requesting funding for state-wide hen research/telemetry study for 4 years – 2010-2013. Bob Boyd resubmitted and presented

NWTF Grant-In-Aid proposal for 2011-2013. NWTF approved funding for 2011 trapping sessions. Mary Jo, Ian, or John Dunn and Bob Eriksen can update Board on final decision and payment schedule.

10) Wild Turkey Biologists Spring Options white paper has been finalized March 2010 for PGC Executive Staff and Commissioner's review. Number of Spring Options changes have been adopted under final rule making by Commissioner's like expanding spring gobbler season to all day hunting for last 2 weeks up to May 31 for spring season starting in 2011. No further reports back from Commissioner's or Executive Staff on other white paper suggestions or changes.

11) June 8, 2011, PGC Staff meeting with PA Chapter NWTF representatives in Harrisburg Headquarters building was held. Need to review action items and meeting minutes from June 2010 meeting for updates and changes.

Legislation changes that require Governor signature.

1) Spring Turkey Hunting License proposed by PA Chapter NWTF Board of Directors. Support statement and benefits talking points will need to be distributed to several key Legislator's, PGC Executive Staff, PGC Commissioner's, Local Chapter Presidents, NWTF Members, and turkey hunters if this moves forward.

2) PGC hunting license increase legislation – Legislation has been submitted, SB 1046, in this legislative session, 2011-2012. Little opportunity for legislative approval at this time.

3) Support Sunday hunting as regulated by PGC, required legislation to change Title 34 Game Code. No Legislative vote was taken on lbill in 2009-2010 legislative session. Legislative bill will be introduced in 2011-2012 legislative session.

4) Do not support legislation [Title 34 Game Code] through legislative wording that changes PGC hunting seasons, bag limits, and shooting hours. PGC hunting seasons, bag limits, and shooting hours are changed by Board of Commissioners through PGC Regulation [Title 58 Code].

Other Committee actions requiring PA Chapter NWTF Board participation and overview.

PANWTF Spring Turkey Hunter Cooperative Program for Spring 2011 will be scheduled.

Other Committee actions requiring PGC Staff and Commissioner participation and overview.

1) Turkey hunting safety and ethics – New PGC Turkey Hunting Curriculum Course on schedule for Spring 2011 kick-off. Other PANWTF / PGC wild turkey hunter safety material - NWTF Turkey Hunter Safety DVD provided to PGC HTE classes; helping PGC reach out to 300,000+- turkey hunters with additional turkey hunter safety and ethics information and material; PA Edition NWTF Turkey Hunting Success and Safety brochure; NWTF Turkey Hunter Safety Task Force material; New updated PANWTF Turkey Hunting Safety posters.

2) Annually review of meeting minutes from PGC Executive Staff and PA NWTF June meeting as provided by PGC Wild Turkey Biologist Mary Jo Casalena. Final June 2011 minutes will be forwarded to PGC Staff and PANWTF Board. Important wild turkey management criteria and decision making changes have been accomplished since these joint partnership yearly meetings started back in the mid 1980's.

3) NWTF wild turkey management outreach programs - Wild Turkey Woodlands, Habitat Management, Turkey Hunting Safety Education, Land Acquisition, Conservation Seed programs, Project HELP, Operation Appleseed, Operation Oak, NWTF Grant opportunities for habitat improvement on Marcellus Shale well pads, other budgeted NWTF outreach programs and HHSF Super Fund expenditures, support funding for NWTF's Pennsylvania Comprehensive Wild Turkey Management Plan, continued distribution of PANWTF news releases, and articles in Turkey Talk, Tell The Story – Pass It On.

NWTF North American Wild Turkey Management Plan.

1) Pennsylvania Comprehensive Wild Turkey Management Plan - support management plan objectives and recommendations, provide for fully funded management plan criteria as directed by NWTF Wild Turkey Biologist and NWTF Conservation Programs.