

**NWTF Technical Committee Representative's Report - PA Chapter NWTF  
Board of Directors Meeting, March 4, 2012**

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**Harvest Management**

A new data analysis program was created for one portion of the turkey summer sighting data. The preliminary fall 2011 harvest was approximately 17,000 turkeys; a 5% decrease from 2010 and a 24% decrease from the previous 5-year average (Table 1). We received no additional reports to the toll-free phone line at Penn State of leg banded female wild turkeys harvested during the fall 2011 season.

**January Board of Commissioners Meeting Highlights**

- Proposed to maintain the same fall turkey hunting season structure as 2011. This structure will facilitate the objectives of the female wild turkey harvest and survival rate study in the two Study Areas (SA1; WMUs 2C, 2E, 4A, 4B & 4D, SA2; 2F & 2G).
- Proposed to maintain the same spring season regulations for 2013.
- Proposed to permit the transfer of a fall turkey tag from one mentor to one mentored youth.
- During my report to the Board of Commissioners I emphasized the hen study's cross-over design calls for fall turkey seasons in 2013. Specifically, decreasing the season length in SA2 (from 3 to 2 weeks) and increasing the season length in SA1 (from 2 to 3 weeks).

**Hen Turkey Survival and Harvest Rate Study**

A 2-page color hand-out summarizing the hen harvest and survival rate study was provided to the Board of Commissioners, trapping crews and cooperators as educational information. The hand-out also is provided with this report.

Most of my activities this quarter centered on the hen survival and harvest rate study. We coordinated with Regions and the PFWRC regarding locations of transmittered hens, creating and checking turkey trapping sites, and making trapping attempts.

No transmittered hen turkeys died during this reporting cycle, which is similar to previous years when turkeys maintain winter flocks. We deployed 19 transmitters thus far during winter trapping efforts (17 in Study Area 1 and 2 in Study Area 2). Of the 159 total hens with satellite transmitters since January 2010, 39 transmitters are active as of 29 February (20 of 85 in SA1; 19 of 74 in SA2).

Winter turkey trapping continues with the goal of deploying 16 additional transmitters and leg banding 160 hen turkeys in each Study Area. We have reached 51% of our goal. The lack of snow and warm winter weather continue to make winter trapping difficult for the 20 trapping crews across both study areas. To date we have leg banded 158 hens (123 in SA1; 79% of SA1 goal, and 33 in SA2; 23% of SA2 goal). Trapping teams are putting forth extra effort during this last month of the trapping season to meet the banding goal.

We received a report from the public of a newly transmittered hen having difficulty walking and flying, possibly due to the transmitter harness. We attempted to catch her before dawn, but she was too mobile, constantly remaining out of view even after daylight. Our close monitoring of her transmitter activity shows typical behavior. She may have had something temporarily caught in her harness.

**PANWTF Habitat Committee**

I received, reviewed and entered into a spreadsheet 83 turkey habitat project proposals (PGC, other state agencies & private) for the PANWTF habitat committee. The committee funded 77 proposals covering 1,287 acres of private and state lands in Pennsylvania, totaling \$144,913 PANWTF habitat superfund dollars – much of which is matched with cooperator monies/labor, so the total dollars for habitat improvement could be twice that amount. This, along with the PANWTF's seed subsidy and conservation seed programs shows the PANWTF's great partnership for improving wildlife habitat

throughout Pennsylvania. Fifty-four of the 77 proposals (70%) are funded in cooperation with the PA Game Commission for a total of \$104,211 funded to the Game Commission by the PANWTF for 2012.

**Fall 2011 Turkey Hunter Survey**

10,000 fall turkey hunter surveys were mailed January 9. A reminder postcard to non-respondents was mailed on January 25. We received approximately 5,000 completed surveys, a 50% reporting rate, compared to 46% last year. The final report on survey results will be available in June.

**National wild Turkey Federation Convention**

Bureau of Wildlife Management Director, Cal DuBrock, attended the convention and National Wild Turkey Technical Committee meetings. I created a PowerPoint presentation regarding a summary and results to date on the hen turkey study which Cal presented at the technical committee meeting, which was very well received. Other state representatives commented that this research is needed and they are encouraged to see Pennsylvania is taking the lead.

**Additional**

In association with Penn State’s Wildlife Extension program I presented a PowerPoint presentation as a PSU webinar to 273 forest landowners across the country and Canada regarding wild turkey life history, habitat needs, and habitat management for wild turkeys. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources requested a copy to be incorporated into their outreach program.

Table 1. PRELIMINARY Pennsylvania spring and fall 2011 wild turkey harvests, determined from harvest report cards and corrected for reporting rate.

Preliminary 2011		
WMU	Spring	Fall
1A	2,670	974
1B	2,726	890
2A	2,369	733
2B	1,858	773
2C	2,569	1,479
2D	3,221	1,451
2E	1,555	802
2F	1,463	713
2G	2,472	1,671
3A	1,395	653
3B	2,137	729
3C	2,772	513
3D	2,004	477
4A	1,511	870
4B	1,518	810
4C	2,424	910
4D	2,551	1,499
4E	2,471	970
5A	659	100
5B	1,201	Closed
5C	1,334	Closed
5D	78	Closed
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42,957</b>	<b>17,017</b>