

Wild Turkey Management January 2013 Hen Study

2 Study Areas: consist of groups of similar Wildlife Management Units (WMUs)

Study Area 1 - WMUs 2C, 2E, 4A, 4B & 4D; Units that have shown to be sensitive to long fall seasons.

Study Area 2 - WMUs 2F & 2G; Units that traditionally have had long seasons, but have lower population densities (turkeys per mi.²) than the state average.

Study Length:

4 fall hunting seasons (2011, 2012, 2013 & 2014).

Fieldwork began January 2010 (trapping birds Jan-Mar and Aug-Oct) and monitoring of birds will continue through the November 2014 hunting season.

Objective 1: Estimate female wild turkey harvest rates.

Leg Bands - In each Study Area 230 wild hen turkeys each year are trapped using rocket nets and fitted with leg bands that specify a \$100 reward if reported. Leg bands also are stamped with a toll-free number to report the band number. A toll-free number results in greater reporting rates by hunters (compared to a mailing address) and is an effective means of collecting harvest information and paying rewards.

Objective 2: Fall Hunter Surveys

After each fall turkey season a survey is mailed to 10,000 Pennsylvania hunters with a postage-paid return envelope. Only a few questions are asked to ensure at least a 70% return rate. Questions include hunting participation, success and satisfaction for the early and late segments of the fall hunting season as well as reasons why they did or didn't hunt to determine hunter recruitment and youth participation.

Objective 3: Determine How Season Length Affects Harvest Rates

We'll change season lengths in each Study Area after 2 years (2013) to determine how this affects female harvest rates. With actual data regarding hen harvest rates, hunter participation and satisfaction we can more effectively set future fall turkey hunting seasons.

Procedures:

Turkey License

The number of fall turkey hunters was estimated to be 144,734 in 2011, according to the Game Take Survey.

The 88,667 number was an unofficial approximation of number of hunters pursuing turkeys in fall AND spring. (~88,667 hunt both seasons, ~56,000 hunt fall only and ~133,000 hunt spring only = ~277,000 overall turkey hunters)

PGC Mary Jo

A 10 year WTM plan needs to be drafted by 2014

Turkey Season

No changes to the (2013) proposed season

Propose to expand youth to a (2) All day season ((need sunday hunting))

WTM Accomplishment

Fall Tag sharing for Mentored Youth