

Spring Turkey Harvest Report 2012

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Abstract

A total of 42,612 turkeys were harvested during the 2012 spring turkey hunt. The spring season was comprised of 6 hunting periods in 7 turkey management zones, 15 state parks, and Fort McCoy. The uncorrected success rate for permit holders was 21%, based on a total of 201,691 permits issued. Hunter success rates of 20% or above occurred in 3 of the 7 major hunting zones. Highest success rates per hunting period occurred in the first two periods of the season. Eighty-two percent of the harvested males were adults, up from 77% in the 2011 harvest. Three hunting accidents occurred during the spring season; two accidents involved hunters mistaking another individual for game.

Methods

Harvest information was obtained through mandatory registration of harvested turkeys. Turkey registration stations were paid \$0.35 per turkey registered, or \$35 total, depending on which calculation was greater. Registration records were then entered into the DNR computer network by district personnel and summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

Results

Hunting Zones

Wisconsin is divided into 7 Turkey Management Zones (TMZ) with similar timber, agriculture, ownership, and hunter and turkey densities (Figure 1). Twelve state parks and Fort McCoy allow limited access for turkey hunting as well. Most parts of the state have some amount of turkey activity during the year.

Permit Levels

Permit levels in each zone are decided upon by the DNR Turkey Committee. Consideration is given to the following when permits levels are set: previous hunter success rates, turkey population and distribution within a zone, square miles of turkey range (i.e., square miles of timber), recruitment, winter severity, and hunter interference rates (Table 1).

A total of 201,691 permits were issued in 2012 compared to 210,083 in 2011 and 214,066 in 2010. A total of 140,606 applications were received for the spring hunt. There were 136,870 permits issued via a drawing/preference process to these applicants by mail. A total of 3,736 applicants did not get a permit through the drawing process. These applicants either applied for oversubscribed zones or restricted their choices to the first 3 hunt periods where there were more applicants than permits. One zone was oversubscribed in 2012.

This was the seventh year that leftover permits were sold (\$10 for resident, \$15 for non-residents) over the counter (OTC) at DNR license sales locations on a first-come, first-served basis at a rate of one permit per day. This continued until all permits available for a zone were issued or the season closed. A total of 65,114 permits were issued this way.

Permit Selection

All applicants were required to pay a \$3 application fee for a spring turkey permit application to

enter the preference drawing. Preference for permits was given first to landowners (up to 30% of permits available per zone/time period combination), followed by residents who applied for but did not receive a permit in the spring of 2011, other residents, and finally non-residents. Applications were randomly selected, but first choice zone and time period of all applicants within each preference category were issued available permits before second, third, fourth, etc. choices were filled.

Age Ratio

Adult gobblers comprised 82% of the 2012 spring turkey harvest (Table 2). This proportion is higher than the 2011 level of 77% and above a typical of year of "normal" recruitment during which harvests comprised of 70% adults are more typical. The change in the percent adults in the 2012 harvest did match with a decrease in recruitment in 2011. Hunters being more selective in harvesting turkeys in the spring and selecting adult Toms may have affected this ratio as well.

Harvest and Success Rates

The 2012 spring turkey harvest was 42,612 birds taken (Figure 1, Table 3). This was 6% more than the 40,133 killed in 2011 but short of the record harvest total for the state of 52,880 take in 2008. The hunter success rate of 21% was higher than last year's 19% and more in-line with the long-term average.

Good hunter success rates (defined as above 20%) occurred in 3 of the 7 main turkey zones open to spring hunting (Table 4). TMZ 2 had the highest hunter success rate at 26%, while all other TMZ's were between 17-21%. The highest success rates per period occurred in the first 2 periods of the season, at 30% and 23%, respectively. Most of the turkey season had average temperatures and rain fall. A very warm March led to early spring phenology throughout most of the state, this may have led to increased breeding behavior during some of the early periods. Recruitment was below normal in 2011 and turkey numbers were down from past springs in parts of the state.

A statewide youth turkey hunt was held for the sixth time in the spring of 2012. This was the third spring of the mentored hunting law, which allows youth ages 10 and older to hunt without a Hunter's Education card as long as they were accompanied by an 18 year or older adult. All youth ages 10-15 that had obtained a Hunter's Ed card or were a mentored hunter, and held a valid turkey permit and license were eligible to hunt. Youth were restricted to the zone of their valid turkey permit but the permit could be from any time period. The hunt occurred on the 7-8th of April, with 2,929 turkeys being harvested (Table 3). All unused permits were still valid for the zone and time period of issuance.

Accidents

There were three hunting accident during the 2012 spring turkey hunt; 3 in 2011. Two of the three accidents involved one hunter mistakenly shooting someone when they thought they were shooting at a turkey, the third was self-inflicted. Turkey hunting continues to be a very safe sport with less than 3 accidents per 100,000 permits.

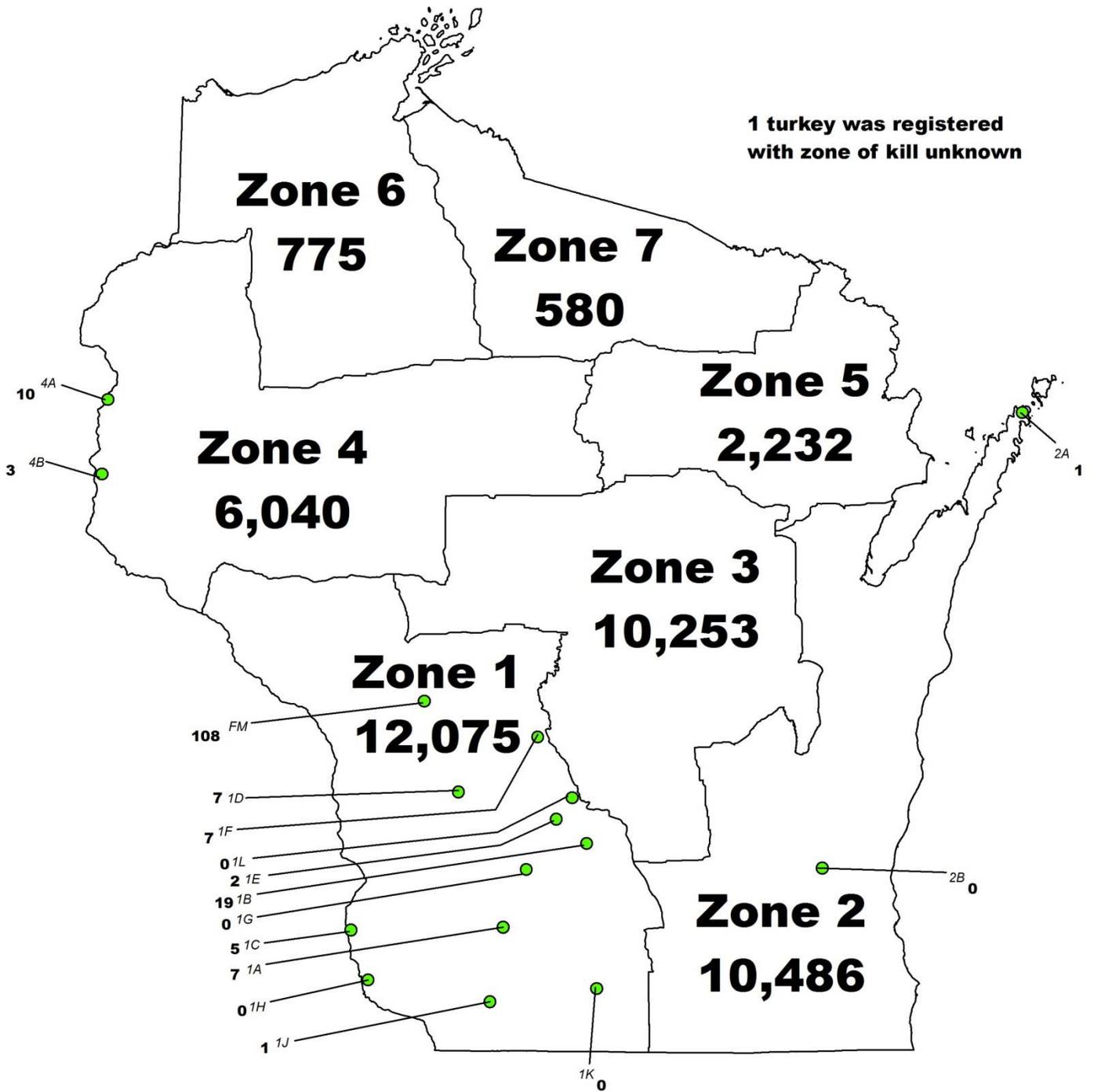


Figure 1. Spring Turkey harvest by zone, 2012.

Table 1. Total number of spring turkey permits issued, 1994-2012.

Zone	1994 ^a	1995 ^a	1996 ^a	1997 ^a	1998 ^a	1999 ^a	2000 ^a	2001 ^a	2002 ^a	2003 ^a	2004 ^a	2005 ^a	2006 ^a	2007 ^a	2008 ^a	2009	2010	2011	2012
1	50,299	44,661	48,117	54,265	56,983	59,534	67,476	68,990	68,434	68,820	71,764	72,303	71,806	70,893	70,167	70,068	68,806	67,152	59,875
2	5,252	5,497	7,005	8,562	10,057	11,017	13,496	15,496	16,656	18,600	22,616	23,850	27,022	28,857	29,729	34,196	34,344	34,198	40,797
3	9,852	10,630	12,558	19,460	22,193	27,007	32,859	44,858	50,102	52,800	56,896	59,100	59,215	59,876	60,390	59,694	56,273	54,611	48,898
4	2,978	4,603	5,309	7,106	8,384	10,901	14,031	16,558	18,701	21,890	26,143	28,524	30,076	31,632	33,032	34,909	35,295	34,908	31,974
5	2,652	2,803	2,504	2,806	2,845	3,094	3,564	4,688	5,408	6,300	8,510	9,303	9,463	10,055	10,722	11,989	12,087	11,994	11,654
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,350	2,011	2,763	4,200	4,510	4,495	4,499
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,203	1,200	1,500	2,400	2,400	2,400	3,602
FM	222	235	0	449	463	463	610	555	555	0	482	510	510	510	384	398	351	325	392
Total	71,255	68,429	75,493	92,648	100,925	112,016	132,036	151,145	159,856	168,410	186,411	193,590	200,645	205,034	208,687	217,854	214,066	210,083	201,691

^a Data was compiled from "old" turkey zone information**Table 2. Percent of the harvest composed of adult gobblers, 1994-2012.**

Zone	1994 ^a	1995 ^a	1996 ^a	1997 ^a	1998 ^a	1999 ^a	2000 ^a	2001 ^a	2002 ^a	2003 ^a	2004 ^a	2005 ^a	2006 ^a	2007 ^a	2008 ^a	2009	2010	2011	2012
1	73	59	72	72	67	63	75	79	72	75	78	86	71	73	78	84	80	77	82
2	75	62	64	72	66	63	68	77	69	73	79	86	75	78	80	87	81	78	84
3	70	55	70	71	70	68	76	80	73	76	76	87	68	75	81	84	77	76	81
4	71	61	67	63	61	55	71	75	72	77	76	86	71	73	81	88	83	79	81
5	63	48	45	61	53	56	66	70	68	83	75	82	71	76	83	86	81	75	82
6													75	69	79	87	80	75	78
7													76	75	77	83	83	77	81
FM															89	90	85	88	79
Statewide	74	59	70	71	68	65	74	79	72	76	78	87	72	75	81	86	80	77	82

^a Data was compiled from "old" turkey zone information

Table 3. The 2012 spring turkey harvest by zone and time period.

Success rates are uncorrected for nonparticipation.

Zone	A		B		C		D		E		F		Special Hunts		Total	
	Kill	% Success	Kill	% Success	Kill	% Success	Kill	% Success	Kill	% Success	Kill	% Success	Learn to Hunt	Youth Hunt	Kill	% Success
01	3,554	29%	2,583	21%	2,040	16%	1,635	13%	1,026	14%	470	16%	20	747	12,075	20%
02	2,348	35%	1,976	29%	1,605	24%	1,444	21%	1,208	18%	1,067	16%	55	783	10,486	26%
03	3,131	30%	2,371	23%	1,630	16%	1,427	14%	660	14%	309	15%	21	704	10,253	21%
04	1,577	27%	1,194	21%	920	16%	837	14%	676	12%	371	13%	18	447	6,040	19%
05	574	29%	443	22%	342	17%	250	13%	288	14%	189	11%	16	130	2,232	19%
06	223	30%	150	20%	102	14%	95	13%	62	8%	66	9%	3	74	775	17%
07	171	29%	110	18%	88	15%	73	12%	52	9%	48	8%	0	38	580	16%
01A	2	17%	0	0%	5	42%	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	7	19%
01B	7	47%	8	53%	3	20%	0	#DIV/0!	1	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	19	42%
01C	3	33%	1	13%	1	14%	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	5	21%
01D	4	33%	2	15%	1	9%	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	7	19%
01E	1	20%	1	20%	0	0%	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	2	13%
01F	2	9%	2	10%	1	5%	0	#DIV/0!	1	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	1	7	11%
02A	0	0%	0	0%	1	17%	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	1	6%
04A	4	200%	2	100%	1	50%	1	#DIV/0!	1	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	1	10	167%
04B	3	38%	0	0%	0	0%	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	3	13%
01G	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	0	0%
01H	0	#DIV/0!	0	0%	0	0%	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	0	0%
01J	1	50%	0	0%	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	1	33%
01K	0	0%	0	0%	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	0	0%
01L	0	#DIV/0!	0	0%	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	0	0%
02B	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	0	0%
FM	44	110%	24	21%	15	15%	11	12%	5	15%	2	15%	3	4	108	28%
Unks	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	1	0%
Total	11,649	30%	8,868	23%	6,755	17%	5,773	15%	3,980	14%	2,522	14%	136	2,929	42,612	21%

Table 4. Hunter success rates (percent successful) for 1994-2012.

Zone	1994 ^a	1995 ^a	1996 ^a	1997 ^a	1998 ^a	1999 ^a	2000 ^a	2001 ^a	2002 ^a	2003 ^a	2004 ^a	2005 ^a	2006 ^a	2007 ^a	2008 ^a	2009	2010	2011	2012
1	18%	23%	24%	22%	27%	29%	28%	25%	24%	24%	24%	22%	21%	22%	23%	22%	22%	18%	20%
2	18%	21%	22%	22%	25%	29%	29%	28%	27%	32%	32%	31%	29%	28%	30%	30%	28%	25%	26%
3	17%	23%	27%	26%	31%	32%	31%	26%	24%	24%	24%	22%	22%	25%	24%	22%	19%	18%	21%
4	17%	20%	21%	22%	31%	31%	29%	28%	27%	26%	27%	26%	27%	30%	28%	28%	23%	18%	19%
5	10%	14%	14%	16%	18%	23%	26%	24%	24%	20%	22%	21%	21%	24%	25%	22%	20%	18%	19%
6													28%	25%	26%	21%	19%	18%	17%
7													19%	20%	22%	15%	17%	16%	16%
FM Total	30%	41%		25%	32%	32%	29%	28%	25%	0%	25%	28%	22%	24%	33%	27%	26%	20%	28%
Statewide	18%	22%	24%	23%	28%	30%	29%	26%	25%	25%	25%	24%	23%	25%	25%	24%	22%	19%	21%

^a Data was compiled from "old" turkey zone information

Spring Permits Issued and Harvest 1983-2012

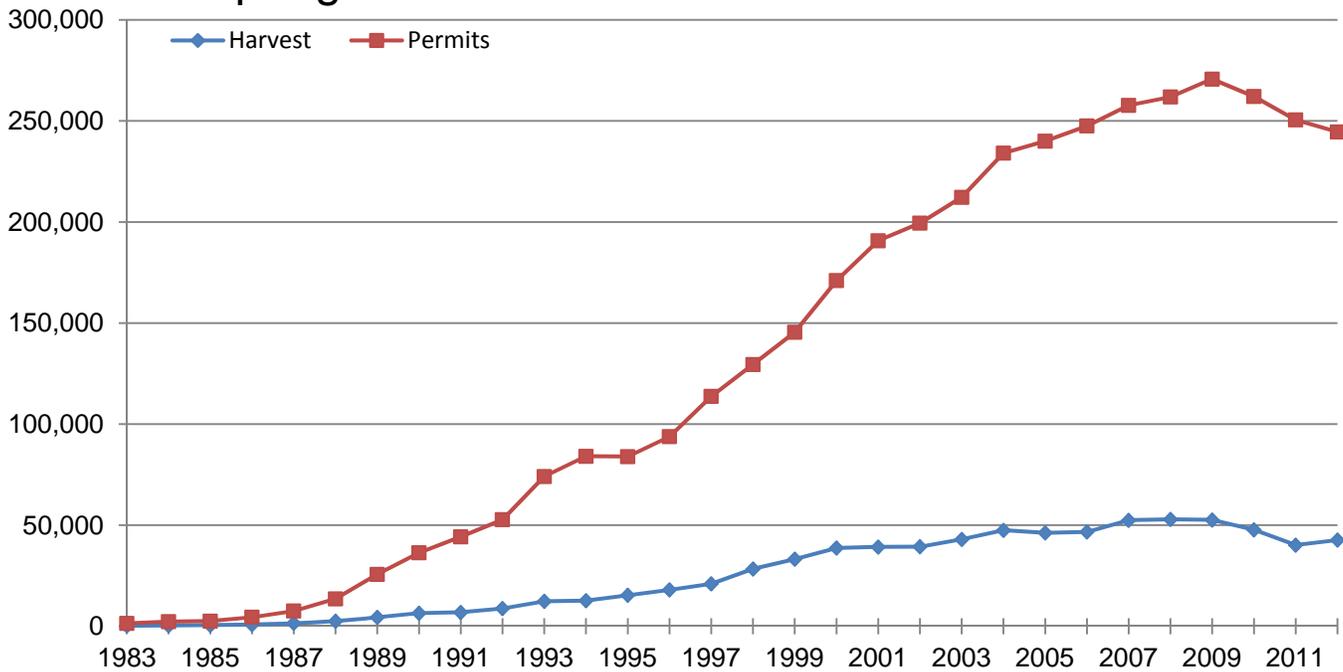


Figure 2. Spring turkey permits issued and harvest, 1983-2012.

Table 5. Historical number of permits issued, harvest, and permit success for spring turkey hunting, 1983-2012.

Year	Permits	Harvest	Permit Success
1983	1,200	182	15.2%
1984	1,950	303	15.5%
1985	2,025	496	24.5%
1986	3,675	793	21.6%
1987	6,040	1,478	24.5%
1988	11,070	2,486	22.5%
1989	21,280	4,400	20.7%
1990	29,877	6,465	21.6%
1991	37,414	6,846	18.3%
1992	43,925	8,798	20.0%
1993	61,767	12,316	19.9%
1994	71,420	12,637	17.7%
1995	68,588	15,323	22.3%
1996	75,812	18,000	23.7%
1997	92,734	20,992	22.6%
1998	101,141	28,338	28.0%
1999	112,256	33,168	29.5%
2000	132,318	38,686	29.2%
2001	151,522	39,211	25.9%
2002	160,101	39,336	24.6%
2003	169,277	42,970	25.4%
2004	186,608	47,477	25.4%
2005	193,826	46,183	23.8%
2006	200,869	46,662	23.2%
2007	205,306	52,428	25.5%
2008	208,972	52,880	25.3%
2009	218,133	52,581	24.1%
2010	214,356	47,722	22.3%
2011	210,384	40,133	19.1%
2012	201,984	42,612	21.1%