



2020 WISCONSIN WILD TURKEY UPDATE

UPCOMING: SPRING 2020 TURKEY SEASON



The spring turkey season consists of six 7-day time periods (A-F) that run from Wednesday to the following Tuesday with a 2-day youth hunt the weekend before the start of the season. There are 7 turkey management zones (1-7) throughout the state. Harvest authorizations are specific to a time period and zone and are issued through a preference-based drawing (see page 2 for more information). Only male or bearded turkeys can be harvested in spring.

2020 Spring Turkey Season

Youth: April 11-12

Period A: April 15-21

Period D: May 6-12

Period B: April 22-28

Period E: May 13-19

Period C: April 29-May 5

Period F: May 20-26

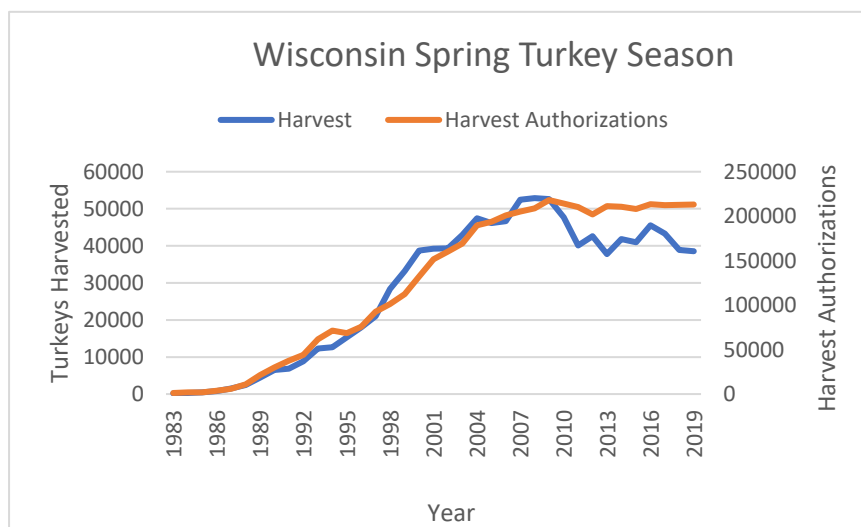
In 2020, 245,443 harvest authorizations are available, 131,559 of which were awarded to hunters in the drawing. The remaining bonus harvest authorizations will be sold over the counter starting in March. For more information, visit dnr.wi.gov and search, "[spring turkey harvest authorizations](#)."

REVIEW: SPRING 2019 TURKEY SEASON

Statewide totals show that 38,576 turkeys were harvested at an 18.1% success rate.

Harvest was down 0.8% in 2019 compared to 2018. With harsh winter weather in early April, we saw a decline in harvest during the youth hunt and the first time period. The remaining time periods had similar harvest to last year, with a slight decline in Period F when record high temperatures were recorded throughout the state.

A total of 245,443 harvest authorizations were available; 135,421 were issued in the drawing and 77,657 bonus harvest authorizations were sold over the counter.



2019 Spring Turkey Season Harvest - Final

Zone	A		B		C		D		E		F		Special Harvest		Total	
	Harvest	Success	Harvest	Success	Harvest	Success	Harvest	Success	Harvest	Success	Harvest	Success	LTH	Youth	Harvest	Success
01	2942	24%	2064	17%	1922	15%	1469	12%	900	14%	493	15%	84	461	10335	17%
02	2005	24%	1695	20%	1350	16%	1220	14%	1289	15%	1061	12%	133	580	9333	18%
03	2682	26%	1941	18%	1799	17%	1461	14%	672	17%	408	17%	66	471	9500	20%
04	1415	24%	1094	19%	838	14%	944	16%	776	13%	582	18%	19	310	5978	19%
05	440	22%	359	18%	311	16%	212	11%	281	14%	211	11%	14	73	1901	16%
06	243	27%	190	21%	140	16%	137	15%	98	11%	105	12%	4	49	966	18%
07	130	20%	104	16%	71	11%	58	9%	45	7%	47	7%	3	9	467	12%
FM	21	30%	29	42%	17	29%	14	15%	7	19%	8	27%	0	0	96	27%
Total	9878	24%	7476	18%	6448	16%	5515	13%	4068	14%	2915	14%	329	950	38576	18.1%

ADDITIONAL SPRING TURKEY HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES

MENTORED HUNTING PROGRAM – The Mentored Hunting Program allows hunters of all ages, born on or after January 1, 1973, to obtain a hunting license and harvest authorization without first completing hunter education. For additional information and rules and regulations for the Mentored Hunting Program, visit dnr.wi.gov and search, "[Mentored Hunting](#)."

LEARN TO HUNT – The Learn to Hunt Program is an opportunity designed for inexperienced youth and adult hunters to have a high-quality, safe, and rewarding experience their first-time hunting. The programs consist of both classroom and field instruction along with a hunt under the guidance of qualified Hunter Education instructors and hunting mentors. All participants are paired up one-on-one with a mentor to provide the highest level of instruction and safety. Many of the Learn to Hunt events are sponsored by local conservation clubs and organizations under the supervision of the DNR. For more info, visit dnr.wi.gov and search, "[Learn to Hunt](#)."

YOUTH HUNT – The Spring Turkey Youth Hunt is an opportunity for hunters under the age of 16 to hunt wild turkey and gain valuable experience. Youth hunters must have a spring turkey license, stamp, and harvest authorization for the spring season. Youth under the age of 12 and those who have not completed hunter education must participate through the Mentored Hunting Program. For more information, visit dnr.wi.gov and search, "[youth hunt](#)."

DISABLED HUNTER OPPORTUNITIES – Wisconsin law provides for a variety of hunting, fishing, and recreational use permits designed to help people with disabilities enjoy the state's natural resources. For disabled hunters with a Class A, B or C permit wishing to participate in the spring turkey hunting season on private lands, one option is to apply for a "Wild Turkey Hunt for People with Disabilities" using Forms 2300-271 and 2300-271A. For more information, visit dnr.wi.gov and search, "[disabled turkey hunt](#)."

SPRING TURKEY DRAWING

Spring harvest authorizations are awarded through a preference-based drawing. Preference is based on Wisconsin residency, landownership and preference points. The drawing is designed to award one harvest authorization to as many applicants as possible. The drawing preference categories are as follows:

1. Resident landowners
2. Residents with preference points
3. All other residents
4. Non-resident landowners
5. All other non-residents

Applications cost \$3 and the deadline is December 10. The application consists of 3 choices. For Choice 1 and Choice 2, applicants pick a Zone and Time Period in which they want to hunt. For Choice 3, applicants pick a Zone in which they would accept any time period if the first two choices are unavailable. The applicant may pick the same Zone for all 3 choices. The 2nd and 3rd choices are optional, but for the highest rate of success, hunters should diversify their application by listing all Time Periods and Zones they would be willing to accept.

To start the spring turkey drawing, each applicant is assigned a random number, then the drawing is conducted in rounds based of the preference categories above. For the first round, applicants claiming landowner preference are lined up by their assigned random number and their first choice option is evaluated. Landowner preference is only valid for the applicant's first choice. If their first choice is available, they are awarded a harvest authorization. If the first choice is not available, they are bumped into the next round where all their choices will be evaluated. Up to 30% of harvest authorizations in each zone can be allotted in this first round.

In the second round, resident applicants (including those unsuccessful in the first round) are lined up based on the random number they were originally assigned. Applicants are then sorted into categories based on the number of preference points they have. The drawing is done in order, starting with people with the most preference points. All choices are evaluated, and if available, applicants are awarded a harvest authorization. This process continues until all resident applicants with preference points are evaluated. The drawing continues with like this with the remaining preference categories. All unsuccessful applicants are awarded a preference point. Preference points increase the applicant's chance of success in the next drawing.

For more information on the spring turkey drawing, visit dnr.wi.gov and search, "[Turkey Questions](#)."

UPCOMING: 2020 FALL TURKEY SEASON



Wisconsin's fall turkey season is conducted differently than spring. In the fall, there is one continuous season where both male and female turkeys can be harvested. Hunters are allowed to use dogs for fall turkey hunting statewide, which is not allowed in the spring.

2020 Fall Turkey Season:

Zones 1-5: September 12 – January 3, 2021

Zones 6-7: September 12 – November 20

Turkey hunting is open the Friday immediately preceding the Thanksgiving holiday statewide, as well as during the 9-day gun season for Zones 1-5. Hunters must follow blaze orange/pink regulations when pursuing turkeys during any firearm deer season.

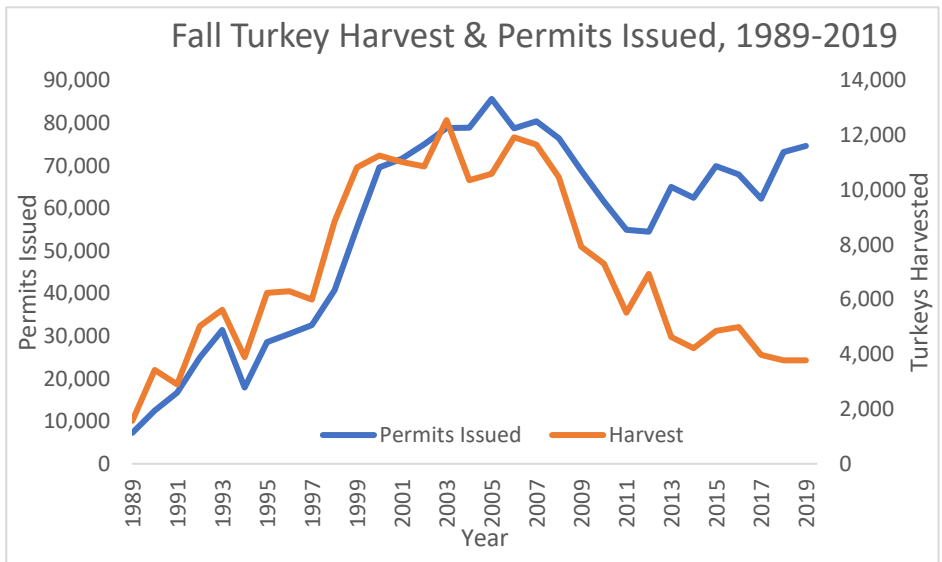
There is no longer a need to apply for a fall turkey harvest authorization through the drawing. Anyone who purchases a fall turkey license and stamp will receive one harvest authorization for the zone of their choosing. Bonus harvest authorizations will be available starting in August. Visit dnr.wi.gov and search, "[fall turkey harvest authorizations](#)" for availability.

REVIEW: 2019 FALL TURKEY SEASON

2019 marked the second year where there was no drawing for the fall turkey harvest. Instead of a drawing, each person that received a fall turkey license was awarded one harvest authorization. Bonus harvest authorizations were available in Zones 1-4.

Overall, this fall there were 729 more harvest authorizations issued compared to 2018. Despite the increase in harvest authorizations, there were 8 fewer birds harvested in 2019 versus 2018.

Over the past decade, fall turkey harvest has steadily declined. Turkey and hunter survey data show that the decline is mainly due to lower hunter effort, rather than a reduction in turkey numbers. Hunters are simply pursuing turkeys secondary to other species in the fall.



2019 Fall Season Harvest - Preliminary

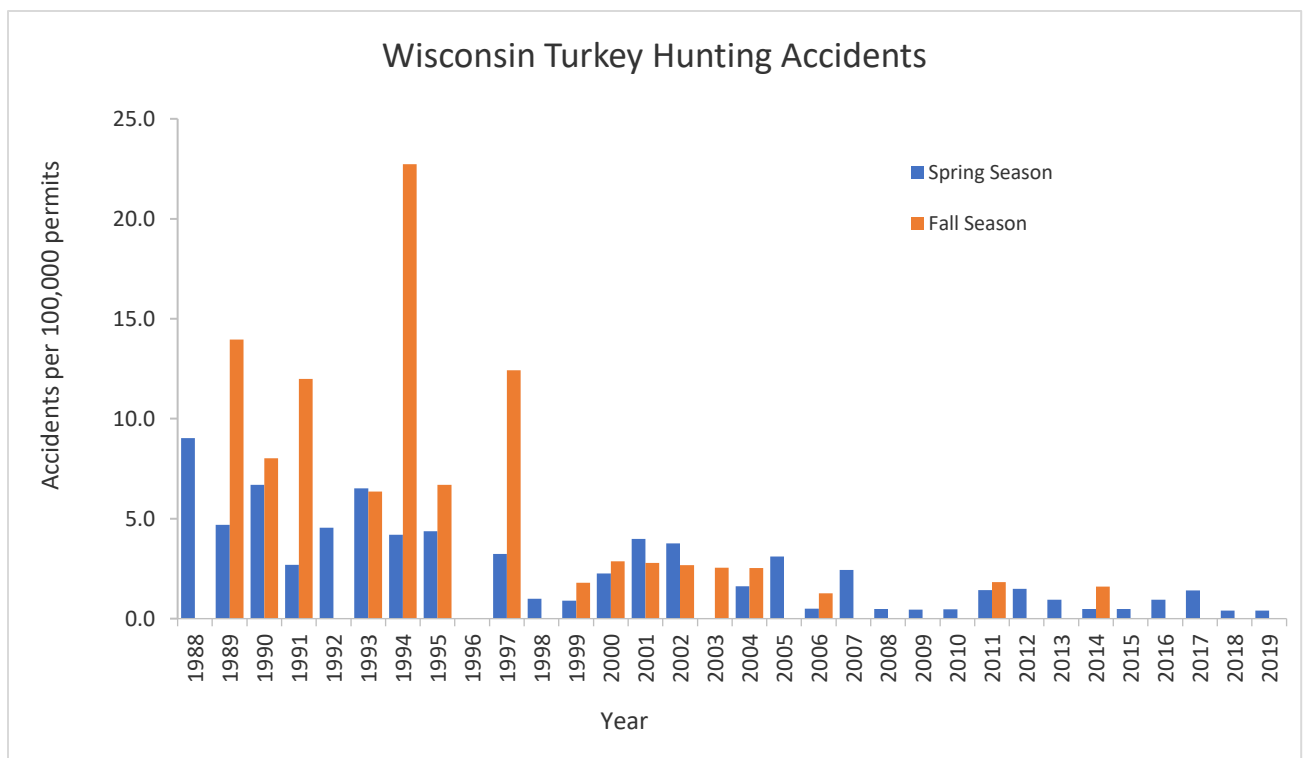
Zone	Turkeys Harvested					Harvest Authorizations Issued			Success Rate
	Hens	Juv. Hens	Toms	Jakes	Total	With License Purchase	Bonus Sales	Total	
1	159	84	186	43	472	14952	809	15761	3.0%
2	421	156	486	128	1191	20674	2000	22674	5.3%
3	332	120	363	101	916	14322	1096	15418	5.9%
4	197	64	225	57	543	9172	786	9958	5.5%
5	70	31	113	26	240	4581	0	4581	5.2%
6	89	29	104	19	241	3533	0	3533	6.8%
7	51	30	72	18	171	2719	0	2719	6.3%
FM	9	0	3	4	16	132	0	132	12.1%
Total	1329	514	1553	396	3792	70084	4691	74775	5.1%

SAFETY FIRST!

Through season structure, regulations and mandatory hunter safety, the DNR works to provide a fun safe hunt for everyone. Since turkey hunting began in 1983, 102 accidents have occurred. Most turkey hunting accidents occur when the shooter fails to identify their target and mistakes another person for a turkey. Turkey hunting can be dangerous because hunters are fully camouflaged and making calls to attract turkeys.

In 2018, there was 1 hunting accidents during the spring season and 0 accidents during the fall. If hunters follow some basic safety rules, everyone can have a safe hunting experience.

- ↓ Assume every movement and sound is hunter until you can identify the source.
- ↓ If another hunter is approaching you, call out to them. DO NOT wave to get their attention. Some hunters have mistaken a waving hand for a turkey fan.
- ↓ Do not hunt in heavy brush. Brush blocks your view and prevents other hunters from seeing you.
- ↓ Turkey hunting is an exciting sport, but hunters must control emotions when hunting.
- ↓ Lastly, do not feel pressured to harvest a turkey. No bird is worth injuring or killing a person.



*There were no turkey hunting accidents from 1983-1987. The first accidents were in the 1988 spring season.

TURKEY MANAGEMENT

The goal of the Wisconsin wild turkey management program is to maintain a secure population capable of supporting a safe, high-quality hunting experience with a reasonable chance of success. The season framework is set to minimize interference among hunters and reflect wild turkey population densities and distribution.

Harvest authorization levels for turkey management zones are determined based on biological information, law enforcement concerns and hunter concerns. The [Wild Turkey Advisory Committee](#) looks at turkey habitat, population levels (recruitment, sex ratio, hen-poult ratio, grouse surveys), hunter effort, interference rates, grouse harvest rates and overall success rates of hunters to advise on harvest authorization levels. Local wildlife biologist and hunter input are considered when making determinations regarding quotas.

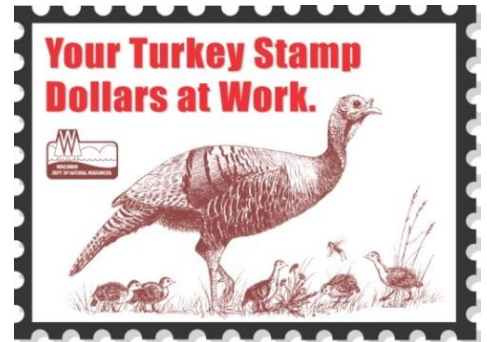
Hunters regularly provide advice to wildlife managers through their responses to questionnaires, active involvement with their local National Wild Turkey Federation chapter and other conservation organizations, the [Conservation Congress Turkey Committee](#), and public hearings.

The newest update of the Wisconsin turkey management plan, "[Ecology of Wild Turkeys in Wisconsin: A Plan for Their Management, 2015-2025](#)," is complete. Hard copies can be available at any [DNR Service Center](#).

TURKEY STAMP

Everyone who wants to hunt turkey in Wisconsin must purchase a Wisconsin Wild Turkey Stamp. Stamps cost \$5.25. Sales of the Wild Turkey Stamp currently bring in more than \$750,000 annually.

All the money generated by stamp sales goes directly to turkey management in the state. Since the start of the Wild Turkey Stamp in 1984, millions of dollars have funded thousands of habitat projects. Wild Turkey Stamp funds are available to DNR personnel, conservation groups, and other organizations. Project proposals are submitted, reviewed, and approved by the DNR Wild Turkey Management Advisory Committee and the Wildlife Policy Team.



Since wild turkeys were first successfully reintroduced into Wisconsin in 1976, population levels have increased and expanded statewide. Successful restoration of the wild turkey resulted from tremendous hunter and landowner support, good survival, and high-quality habitat. A key role in the success of the wild turkey management program can be attributed to hunters through their purchase of the Wild Turkey Stamp. The vital financial support from hunters provides future wild turkey management and hunting opportunities in Wisconsin. For more information on stamp funds, visit dnr.wi.gov and search, "[stamp](#)."

TURKEY STAMP DESIGN



Each year the Wisconsin DNR hosts the wildlife stamp design contest where local artists compete for the opportunity to have their art featured on the Wisconsin Wild Turkey, Pheasant and Waterfowl Stamp for the upcoming year.

To the left is the winning artwork for the 2020 Wild Turkey Stamp, submitted by Brian Kuether of Greenfield, WI. Brian has been painting since the fourth grade and stated the most time-consuming parts include researching and observing wildlife in their natural state.

Betty Casper of Almond, WI took second place.

Art for the 2021 wildlife stamps is being accepted now through July 15, 2020.

Collector stamps can be purchased at any [DNR Service Center](#) or [online](#). For information on the stamp design

contest, visit dnr.wi.gov and search, "[stamp](#)."

Visit the WDNR's website at dnr.wi.gov and search, "[Turkey](#)" for more information regarding wild turkeys, hunting season information, and educational materials



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