



# 2018 WISCONSIN WILD TURKEY UPDATE

## UPCOMING: SPRING 2018 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 they are issued through a preference-based drawing (see page 2 for more information). Only male or bearded turkeys can be harvested in spring.

The 2018 season is April 19 - May 29, with the youth hunt on April 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

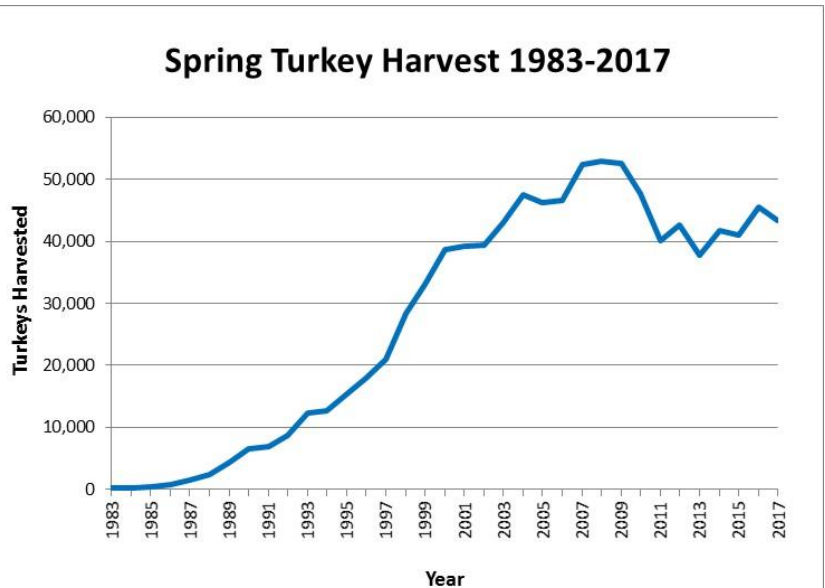
In 2018, there are 244,218 harvest authorizations available, 138,144 of which were awarded to hunters in the drawing. The remaining bonus harvest authorizations will be sold by zone on a first-come, first-served basis until they are sold out or the season has ended. For more information, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "[spring turkey harvest authorizations](#)."

## REVIEW: SPRING 2017 TURKEY SEASON

We had another great spring turkey season in 2017. Statewide, 43,305 turkeys were harvested at a 20.4% success rate. See the table below for zone and time period harvests. 240,768 permits were available and 212,546 were issued.

### Youth Hunt

Wisconsin offers an opportunity for youth hunters to go turkey hunting the weekend before the regular season. Youth hunters can use a harvest authorization for any time-period during the youth hunt weekend, but are limited to the turkey management zone on their authorization. In 2017, hunters age 10-15 harvested a record 3,039 birds, an 8% increase from 2016.



Success rates are not corrected for nonparticipation. FM=Fort McCoy

Zone	A %		B %		C %		D %		E %		F %		Special Hunts		Total %	
	Harvest	Success	Harvest	Success	Harvest	Success	Harvest	Success	Harvest	Success	Harvest	Success	Learn to Hunt	Youth Hunt	Harvest	Success
01	3,406	27%	2,308	19%	2,330	19%	1,998	16%	1,096	13%	430	12%	87	909	12,564	20%
02	2,340	29%	1,786	22%	1,698	21%	1,354	17%	1,508	19%	1,186	15%	65	727	10,664	22%
03	2,813	27%	1,928	18%	1,875	18%	1,366	13%	802	15%	371	15%	75	689	9,919	20%
04	1,633	28%	1,151	20%	1,028	18%	1,107	19%	735	13%	572	18%	47	501	6,774	21%
05	479	24%	358	18%	310	15%	210	10%	268	13%	178	9%	37	126	1,966	16%
06	216	29%	148	20%	124	17%	106	14%	78	10%	75	10%	14	56	817	18%
07	139	23%	104	17%	83	14%	61	10%	40	7%	55	9%	1	31	514	14%
FM	29	31%	22	31%	1	4%	11	22%	16	25%	8	13%	0	0	87	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,055</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>7,805</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>7,449</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>6,213</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>4,543</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>2,875</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>3,039</b>	<b>43,305</b>	<b>20.4%</b>

## 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](http://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 information, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://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](http://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](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search “[disabled turkey hunt](#).”

## SPRING TURKEY DRAWING

Spring turkey harvest authorizations are awarded through a preference-based drawing where Wisconsin residents have preference over non-residents and landowners have preference over non-landowners.

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: 2 zone and time period combinations and 1 zone for which you would accept any time period. Up to 10 people who wish to hunt together can apply as a group. To be in a group, all members must designate a group leader on their application. Landowner preference does not apply in group applications.

The spring turkey drawing is conducted in 5 rounds, starting with resident landowners. In the first round, residents claiming landowner preference are chosen at random and their first choice 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 second 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, residents with preference points and resident landowners who were not successful in the first round are chosen at random. All choices are evaluated, and if available, applicants are awarded a harvest authorization. This process continues until all round 2 applicants are evaluated. Round 3, 4, and 5 are conducted the same way. All unsuccessful applicants are awarded a preference point. Preference points bump applicants to the top of the list in their respective preference category for the next drawing. The drawing is designed to award as many harvest authorizations to as many people as possible. For the highest rate of success, hunters should diversify their application choices.

For more information on the drawing, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search “[turkey questions](#).”

## UPCOMING: 2018 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.

Starting in 2018, the fall harvest authorization drawing has been waived. 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 in some zones starting in August. Visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "[fall turkey harvest authorizations](#)" for availability.

The 2018 fall season is September 15, 2018 – January 6, 2019 for Zones 1-5 and September 15 – November 16, 2018 for Zones 6 and 7. Turkey hunting is open the Friday immediately preceding the Thanksgiving holiday and during the 9-day gun season. Hunters must follow blaze orange/pink regulations when pursuing turkeys during the gun deer season.

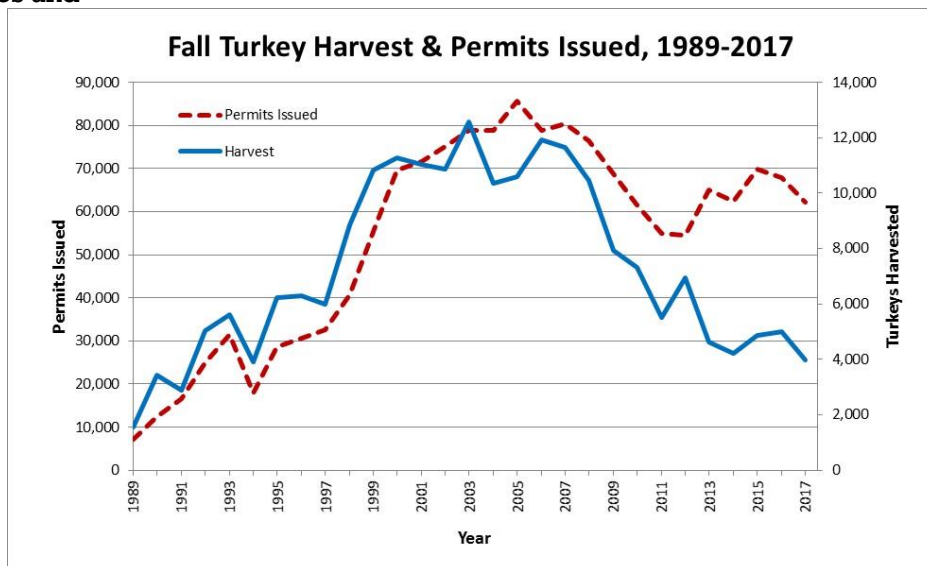
## REVIEW: 2017 FALL TURKEY SEASON

The 2017 fall season saw a decline in harvest, following a decade long trend. Turkey and hunter survey data show that the decline in harvest is mainly due to a decline in hunter effort, not a reduction in turkey numbers. Hunters are simply pursuing turkeys secondary to other species in the fall.

There were 102,100 harvest authorizations available and 62,239 were issued, leaving 39,861 unissued. The harvest consisted of 51.3% males and 48.7% females.

Success rates are not corrected for nonparticipation. FM=Fort McCoy

Zone	Harvest					Permits Issued	% Success
	Hens	Juv. Hens	Toms	Jakes	Total		
1	189	94	240	61	584	14574	4.0%
2	540	210	593	162	1505	21882	6.9%
3	323	130	296	93	842	14048	6.0%
4	151	82	237	54	524	8712	6.0%
5	69	22	116	27	234	4199	5.6%
6	41	19	72	20	152	1900	8.0%
7	44	19	48	13	124	1500	8.3%
FM	1	1	0	4	6	NA	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>1358</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>1602</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>3971</b>	<b>66815</b>	<b>5.9%</b>





## 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, 101 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. 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.

## 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, gobbler surveys), hunter effort, interference rates, gobbler 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

### Your Turkey Stamp Dollars at Work.



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](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search keyword “[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.

Art for the 2019 wildlife stamps is being accepted now through July 16, 2018.

To the left is the winning artwork for the 2018 Wild Turkey Stamp, submitted by Robert Leum of Holmen, WI. Robert is an accomplished artist, having won the Wisconsin wildlife stamp contest 4 other times including the 2018 Pheasant Stamp, 2009 Waterfowl, 2002 Pheasant, and 2001 Wild Turkey.

Second place in the 2018 Wild Turkey Stamp design contest goes to Sara Stack of Mellen and third place goes to Virgil A. Beck of Stevens Point.

Collector stamps can be purchased at any [DNR Service Center](#) or [online](#). For information on the stamp design contest, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search keyword “[stamp](#).”

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



PUB WM-268-2018



Compiled by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707.

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