

Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project No: W-15-R**Job:** E2**Title of Job:** Spring 2017 Turkey Hunter Survey

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The spring turkey hunter survey is conducted each year at the end of the spring season. In 2017, the spring season closed on 31 May. The objective of the survey is to obtain information on the spring turkey harvest and success, to determine age and sex of the harvest, and to assess characteristics of the hunt and hunters (e.g., satisfaction). This year's survey was available to hunters from 23 June to 10 July 2017, inclusive. A summary of estimated harvest and success is available in a separate report, *2017 Spring Wild Turkey Harvest*.

Caveats. The spring Wild Turkey Hunter Survey samples spring turkey hunters who provided valid email addresses at the time they purchased their permit(s). As such, the sample frame may be biased and not strictly generalizable to the population of all spring turkey hunters. For the spring 2017 season, however, 66.4% of all permits sold were associated with an email address. After accounting for individuals who purchased multiple permits, 65.8% of unique, individual permit buyers provided an email address. A reminder email was sent to all non-respondents one week after the initial invitation was sent, but no further attempts were made to contact hunters who failed to respond to the survey. Therefore, results might be biased toward successful hunters, if successful hunters respond more readily to harvest surveys. However, it is likely that such biases are small given the proportion of permit buyers sampled and the response rate (see 2017 Spring Wild Turkey Harvest report).

Interpretations. Non-resident hunters during the spring 2017 season came largely from Colorado and Minnesota, and residents from Lancaster, Douglas, and Sarpy Counties. Most resident hunters did not hunt in other states (94%), but the majority of non-residents (72%) had hunted in other states, including Kansas and Minnesota. Spring 2017 turkey hunters spent an average of 5.8 days afield hunting turkeys. Total number of days spent afield by respondents was 17,664. Knox, Dawes, Lincoln, and Custer Counties were reported as being hunted in most frequently. Whereas residents were not pursuing a specific subspecies (74%), non-residents reported pursuing Merriam's more than other subspecies (49%). Importance of feather coloration and genetic purity of a particular subspecies was generally low for residents and non-residents, but was higher among non-residents pursuing Merriam's turkeys. Almost all resident (98%) and non-resident (96%) hunters would hunt Nebraska again based on their experiences in the spring of 2017. Most hunters were satisfied with the number of turkeys seen afield and were overall satisfied with their spring 2017 hunting experiences. Among resident hunters, availability of permits, turkey abundance, and having family in the state were most important in their decision to hunt in Nebraska. Among non-residents, subspecies available, the number of permits allowed per hunter, and success rates were also important.

Take-home Message: Spring turkey hunting continues to be a popular and satisfying experience for turkey hunters.

Methods. This year's survey was composed and administered in-house using Snap Survey development software (Snap v11) and Snap Webhosting service. An initial invitation to participate in the survey for the spring 2017 season was sent to 17,086 (65.8% of unique permit buyers) spring turkey hunters, but 654 were bounced back as undeliverable, giving an effective sample size of 16,432 permitted hunters. Initial invitations were emailed on 23 June 2017, and a reminder email was sent to all non-responding hunters on 30 June 2017. The survey was closed on 10 July 2017. The survey was also available on the NGPC website for hunters who did not have valid emails associated with their permits. The website survey was open over the same period as the invitation-only version. At the end of the survey period, responses had been received from 3,100 spring turkey hunters, representing 4,588 individual permits for the spring 2017 season. The raw response rate was, therefore, 18.9% and the permit response rate was 27.9%. Each survey respondent represented 7.2 spring 2017 permit buyers.

Results. Below are figures and tables that summarize hunter responses to survey questions. In most cases, the results are presented for residents, non-residents, and all hunters combined.

Table 1. Statistics on how long survey respondents spent (in minutes) taking the survey.

Counts	Total	Descriptive Statistics				
		Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
Respondents						
Duration of interview	3100	0.4	1323.2	7.8	9.8	25.2

Table 2. Top ten states in which spring 2017 non-resident turkey hunters resided and raw number of respondents from each.

State of residence	
Colorado	372
Minnesota	170
Missouri	98
Arkansas	85
Iowa	84
Mississippi	70
Indiana	63
Illinois	60
Wisconsin	57
Georgia	38

Table 3. Among Nebraska residents, top 10 counties of residence and raw number of respondents from each for the spring 2017 turkey season.

County	
Lancaster	231
Douglas	189
Sarpy	114
Buffalo	68
Hall	45
Adams	40
Seward	38
Madison	35
Lincoln	29
Cass	27

Table 4. Number of permits purchased by resident, non-resident, and all hunters for the 2017 spring turkey season.

Number of Permits	Resident				Non-resident				Total			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
\$5.00 Statewide Youth Permit	1431 47%	1201 40%	255 8%	135 4%	1596 50%	898 28%	478 15%	206 6%	3027 49%	2099 34%	733 12%	341 6%
Statewide Regular or Landowner Permit	1278 85%	170 11%	42 3%	21 1%	1450 91%	72 5%	40 3%	27 2%	2728 88%	242 8%	82 3%	48 2%

Table 5. Resident, non-resident, and total number of hunters reporting hunting wild turkey in states other than Nebraska during the spring 2017 season.

Did you hunt turkeys during the spring 2017 season in any state other than Nebraska?	Resident	Non-resident	Total
Yes	86 6%	1142 72%	1228 40%
No	1423 94%	445 28%	1868 60%

Table 6. State most frequently hunted by resident, non-resident, and all hunters who indicated that they hunted in states other than Nebraska during the spring 2017 turkey season.

Resident		Non-resident		Total	
Kansas	17	Kansas	157	Kansas	174
Missouri	7	Minnesota	103	Minnesota	105
Iowa	5	Missouri	94	Missouri	101
Florida	3	Colorado	83	Colorado	83
South Dakota	3	Iowa	60	Iowa	65
Minnesota	2	Mississippi	54	Mississippi	54
New Mexico	2	Wisconsin	51	Wisconsin	51
Oklahoma	2	Indiana	45	Illinois	45
Illinois	1	Illinois	44	Indiana	45
Maryland	1	Arkansas	40	Arkansas	40

Table 7. Number of resident, non-resident, and total respondents who indicated whether they hunted turkeys in Nebraska during the spring 2017 spring turkey season.

Did you hunt turkeys in Nebraska during the spring 2017 season?	Resident	Non-resident	Total
Yes	1452 96%	1572 99%	3024 98%
No	59 4%	17 1%	76 2%

Table 8. Total and average number of days afield during the 2017 spring turkey season reported by resident, non-resident, and total hunter respondents who hunted.

How many days did you hunt turkeys during the 2017 spring season?	Resident	Non-resident	Total
Total	8,357	9,307	17,664
Days per hunter	5.8	5.9	5.8

Table 9. Top 10 counties resident, non-resident, and all hunters reported hunting in most frequently during the 2017 spring turkey hunting season.

Resident		Non-Resident		Total	
Lancaster	87	Dawes	133	Knox	160
Knox	74	Lincoln	95	Dawes	157
Lincoln	49	Knox	86	Lincoln	144
Custer	44	Custer	70	Custer	114
Cass	42	Unknown	62	Holt	92
Holt	41	Red Willow	59	Lancaster	92
Johnson	39	Cherry	53	Red Willow	80
Buffalo	38	Frontier	51	Cherry	72
Saunders	38	Holt	51	Frontier	71
Otoe	37	Sheridan	50	Boyd	69

Table 10. Turkey sub-species resident, non-resident and total hunters reported pursuing during the 2017 spring turkey season.

Subspecies	Resident	Non-resident	Total
Respondents	1439	1568	3007
Eastern	151 10%	118 8%	269 9%
Merriam's	261 18%	761 49%	1022 34%
Rio Grande	31 2%	207 13%	238 8%
No particular subspecies	1067 74%	685 44%	1752 58%

Table 11. Top 10 counties of harvest for the first turkey harvested for resident, non-resident, and total hunters during the 2017 spring turkey season.

Resident		Non-resident		Total	
Lancaster	40	Lincoln	70	Knox	105
Knox	39	Dawes	69	Lincoln	104
Lincoln	34	Knox	66	Custer	89
Custer	32	Custer	57	Dawes	85
Cass	23	Unknown	46	Holt	68
Holt	23	Cherry	45	Cherry	58
Buffalo	22	Holt	45	Red Willow	57
Sarpy	20	Red Willow	44	Frontier	49
Saunders	20	Sheridan	42	Unknown	48
Otoe	19	Frontier	34	Sheridan	46

Table 12. Top 10 counties of harvest for the second turkey harvested for resident, non-resident, and total hunters during the 2017 spring turkey season.

Resident		Non-resident		Total	
Custer	13	Lincoln	28	Lincoln	40
Lincoln	12	Custer	26	Custer	39
Holt	7	Unknown	26	Knox	32
Knox	7	Knox	25	Dawes	27
Buffalo	6	Dawes	22	Unknown	27
Dawson	6	Sheridan	20	Holt	24
Lancaster	6	Keya Paha	18	Frontier	21
Saunders	6	Holt	17	Sheridan	20
Dawes	5	Frontier	16	Keya Paha	19
Frontier	5	Cherry	15	Boyd	17

Table 13. Top 10 counties of harvest for the third turkey harvested for resident, non-resident, and total hunters during the 2017 spring turkey season.

Resident		Non-resident		Total	
Custer	6	Lincoln	11	Custer	14
Frontier	4	Knox	9	Knox	12
Johnson	3	Custer	8	Lincoln	12
Knox	3	Dawes	8	Frontier	10
Lancaster	3	Unknown	7	Dawes	8
Cedar	2	Boyd	6	Unknown	8
Franklin	2	Frontier	6	Boyd	7
Hall	2	Harlan	6	Harlan	7
Saline	2	Hayes	5	Hall	5
Boone	1	Dawson	4	Hayes	5

Table 14. Hunting activity and timing of harvest by week of season for resident, non-resident, and total hunters during the 2017 spring turkey season.

Week of season	Resident		Non-resident		Total	
	Hunted	Harvested	Hunted	Harvested	Hunted	Harvested
Early & Youth Archery (25 March-7 April)	250 7%	88 10%	176 9%	74 7%	426 8%	162 8%
Youth Shotgun/Archery (8 April-31 May)	283 8%	76 8%	127 7%	58 5%	410 8%	134 7%
Week 1, any weapon (15-21 April)	694 20%	194 21%	414 22%	256 23%	1108 20%	450 22%
Week 2, any weapon (22-28 April)	640 18%	161 18%	330 17%	193 18%	970 18%	354 18%
Week 3, any weapon (29 April-5 May)	539 15%	130 14%	301 16%	172 16%	840 15%	302 15%
Week 4, any weapon (6-12 May)	425 12%	107 12%	240 13%	151 14%	665 13%	258 13%
Week 5, any weapon (13-19 May)	356 10%	64 7%	175 9%	102 9%	531 10%	166 8%
Late Season, any weapon (20-31 May)	331 9%	88 10%	137 7%	91 8%	468 9%	179 9%

Table 15. Subspecies of wild turkey resident, non-resident, and total hunters purported as the last turkey they harvested during the 2017 spring turkey season.

Respondents	Resident	Non-resident	Total
		814	1157
Eastern Wild Turkey	229 28%	110 10%	339 17%
Rio Grande Wild Turkey	142 17%	246 21%	388 20%
Merriam's Wild Turkey	170 21%	468 40%	638 32%
A mixture of one or more of these (hybrid)	188 23%	306 26%	494 25%
Do not remember	85 10%	27 2%	112 6%

Table 16. Number of turkeys harvested by age and sex by resident, non-resident, and total hunters during the 2017 spring turkey season. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding errors.

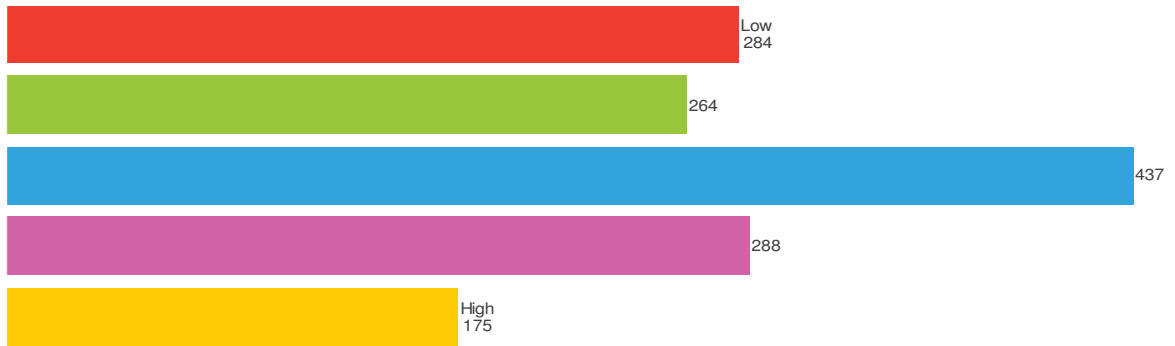
Number harvested	Resident				Non-resident				Total			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
Respondents	1508	713	131	48	1951	815	298	119	3459	1528	429	167
Adult males (toms)	91 12%	541 69%	105 13%	45 6%	70 6%	655 59%	274 25%	118 11%	161 8%	1196 63%	379 20%	163 9%
Juvenile males (jakes)	401 68%	160 27%	25 4%	3 1%	568 77%	149 20%	23 3%	1 0%	969 73%	309 23%	48 4%	4 0%
Bearded hens	508 98%	11 2%	- -	- -	659 99%	10 1%	- -	- -	1167 98%	21 2%	- -	- -
Unknown age/sex	508 100%	1 0%	1 0%	- -	654 100%	1 0%	1 0%	- -	1162 100%	2 0%	2 0%	- -

Table 17. Allocation of harvest by residents, non-residents, and total hunters between private land where permission was required to hunt and public lands during the 2017 spring season. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding errors.

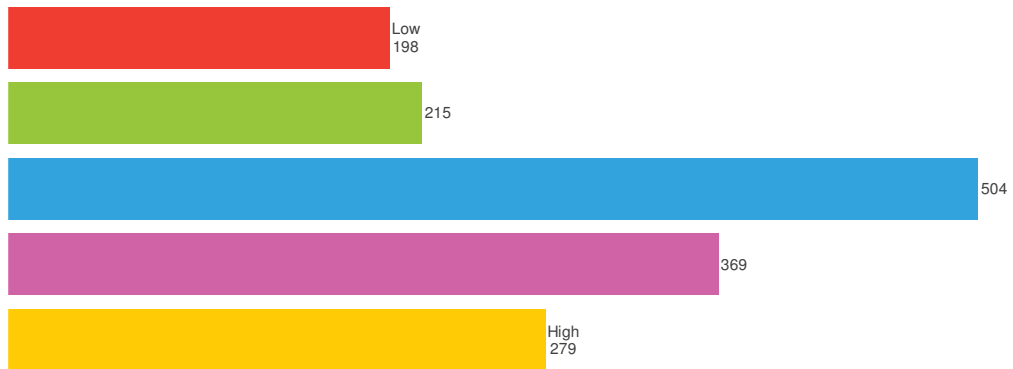
Turkeys harvested	Resident				Non-resident				Total			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
Respondents	630	620	143	67	763	733	313	135	1393	1353	456	202
Private land where permission was required?	64 10%	553 89%	128 90%	62 93%	135 18%	574 78%	284 91%	115 85%	199 14%	1127 83%	412 90%	177 88%
Land open to public hunting?	566 90%	67 11%	15 10%	5 7%	628 82%	159 22%	29 9%	20 15%	1194 86%	226 17%	44 10%	25 12%

Figure 1. Resident, non-resident, and total hunters' rating of the number of turkeys observed during the spring 2017 turkey season.

Resident



Non-resident



Total

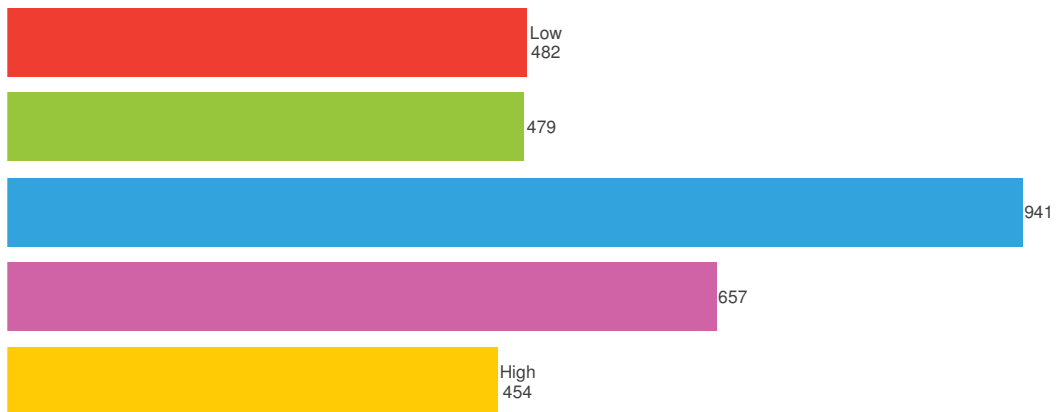
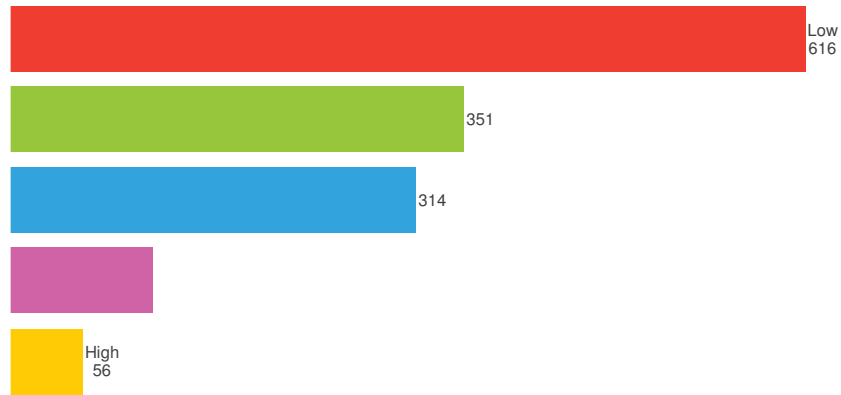
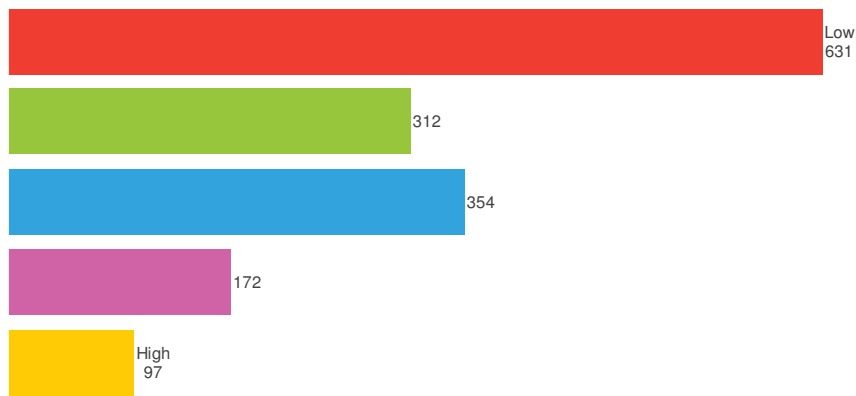


Figure 2. Resident, non-resident, and total hunter rating of the number of turkey hunters encountered during the spring 2017 turkey season.

Resident



Non-resident



Total

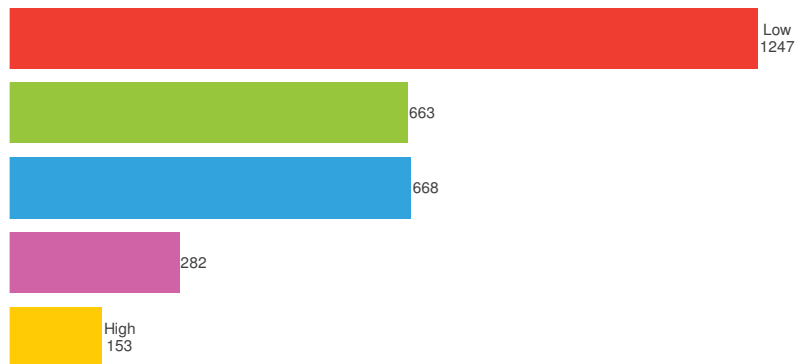


Table 18. Importance to resident, non-resident, and all hunters that the turkey they harvested has the correct feather coloration for the subspecies they were pursuing.

Respondents	Resident	Non-resident	Total
Base	1449	1569	3018
Very Important	61 4%	359 23%	420 14%
	94 6%	245 16%	339 11%
Neutral	238 16%	296 19%	534 18%
	176 12%	148 9%	324 11%
Not Important at all	880 61%	521 33%	1401 46%

Table 19. Importance of correct sub-species coloration of turkey to the sub-species being pursued for resident, non-resident, and all hunters by the species hunters reported pursuing.

Species			Importance Ranking									
			Very Important		Important		Neutral		Unimportant		Not Important at all	
Sub-species Being Pursued	Resident	Eastern	12	8%	19	13%	35	23%	24	16%	61	40%
		Merriam's	29	11%	38	15%	59	23%	43	17%	91	35%
		Rio Grande	8	26%	6	19%	6	19%	2	6%	9	29%
		No particular subspecies	18	2%	47	4%	156	15%	110	10%	735	69%
	Non-resident	Eastern	23	20%	21	18%	24	21%	11	9%	38	32%
		Merriam's	305	40%	180	24%	142	19%	50	7%	82	11%
		Rio Grande	52	25%	53	26%	55	27%	13	6%	34	16%
		No particular subspecies	30	4%	42	6%	130	19%	88	13%	394	58%
	Total	Eastern	35	13%	40	15%	59	22%	35	13%	99	37%
		Merriam's	334	33%	218	21%	201	20%	93	9%	173	17%
		Rio Grande	60	25%	59	25%	61	26%	15	6%	43	18%
		No particular subspecies	48	3%	89	5%	286	16%	198	11%	1129	65%

Table 20. Importance of exact genetic match (genetic purity) between the turkey harvested and the subspecies resident, non-resident, and all hunters reported pursuing.

Respondents	Resident	Non-resident	Total
Base	1449	1570	3019
Very Important	72 5%	288 18%	360 12%
	84 6%	265 17%	349 12%
Neutral	238 16%	303 19%	541 18%
	174 12%	164 10%	338 11%
Not Important at all	881 61%	550 35%	1431 47%

Table 21. The importance of the genetic purity of the harvested turkey matching the sub-species being pursued by resident, non-resident, and all hunters by sub-species hunters reported pursuing.

		Importance Ranking										
		Very Important		Important		Neutral		Unimportant		Not Important at all		
Sub-species Being Pursued	Resident	Eastern	12	8%	20	13%	40	27%	18	12%	60	40%
		Merriam's	34	13%	28	11%	68	26%	47	18%	83	32%
		Rio Grande	7	23%	2	6%	8	26%	4	13%	10	32%
		No particular subspecies	24	2%	43	4%	142	13%	111	10%	747	70%
	Non-resident	Eastern	16	14%	21	18%	25	21%	12	10%	43	37%
		Merriam's	241	32%	187	25%	162	21%	72	9%	98	13%
		Rio Grande	36	17%	61	30%	53	26%	14	7%	42	20%
		No particular subspecies	26	4%	50	7%	118	17%	84	12%	407	59%
	Total	Eastern	28	10%	41	15%	65	24%	30	11%	103	39%
		Merriam's	275	27%	215	21%	230	23%	119	12%	181	18%
		Rio Grande	43	18%	63	27%	61	26%	18	8%	52	22%
		No particular subspecies	50	3%	93	5%	260	15%	195	11%	1154	66%

Table 22. Resident, non-resident, and total number of hunters who would hunt turkeys in Nebraska again in the future given their experiences during the 2017 spring season.

Respondents	Resident	Non-resident	Total
	1449	1569	3018
Yes	1420 98%	1502 96%	2922 97%
No	29 2%	67 4%	96 3%

Figure 3. Hunter agreement with the statement, "I saw too many hunters," regarding their experiences during the spring 2017 turkey season.

"I saw too many hunters."

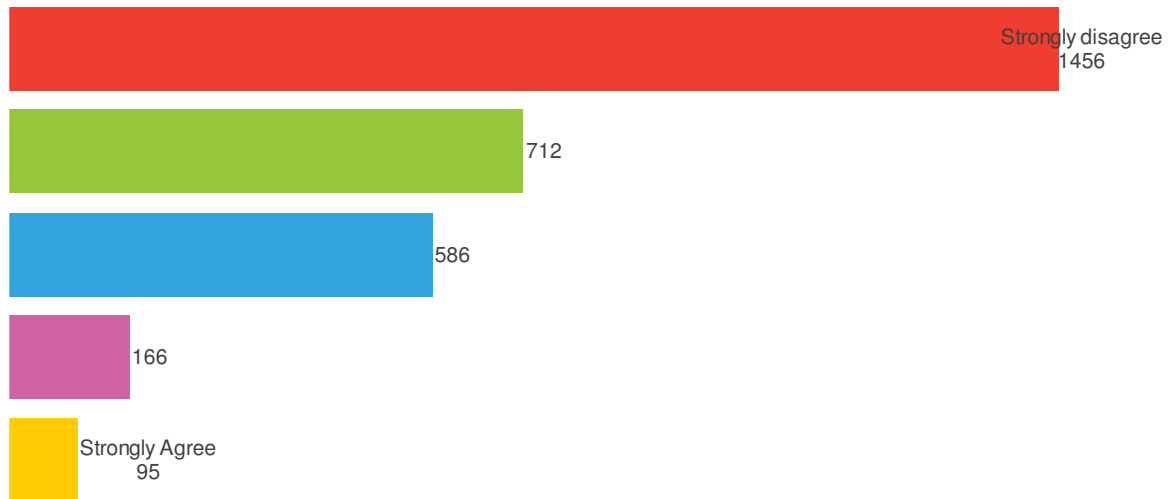


Figure 4. Hunter agreement with the statement, “I was satisfied with the number of turkeys I saw,” regarding their experiences during the spring 201 turkey season.

“I was satisfied with the number of turkeys I saw.”

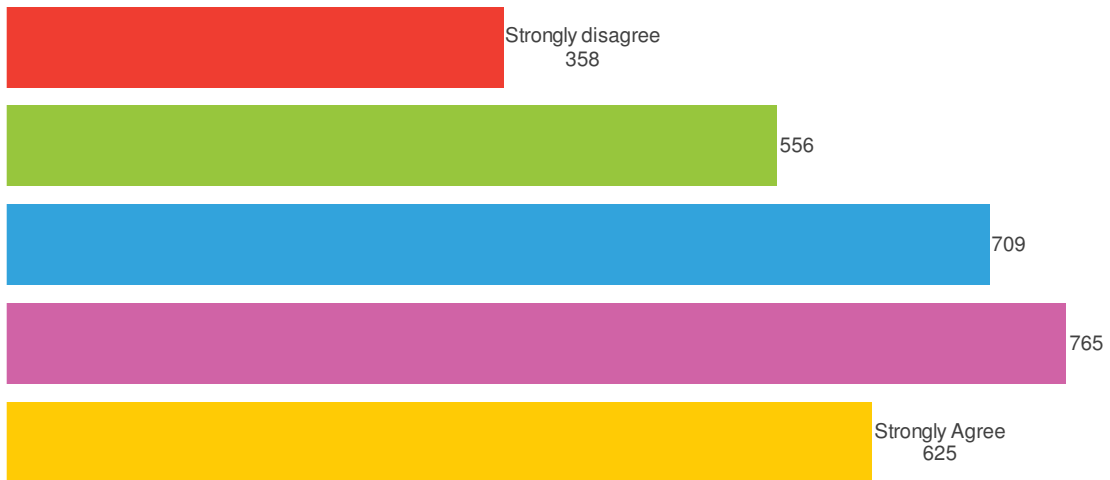


Figure 5. Hunter agreement with the statement, “I was satisfied with the amount of land open to public hunting,” regarding their experiences during the 2017 spring turkey season.

“I was satisfied with the amount of land open to public hunting.”

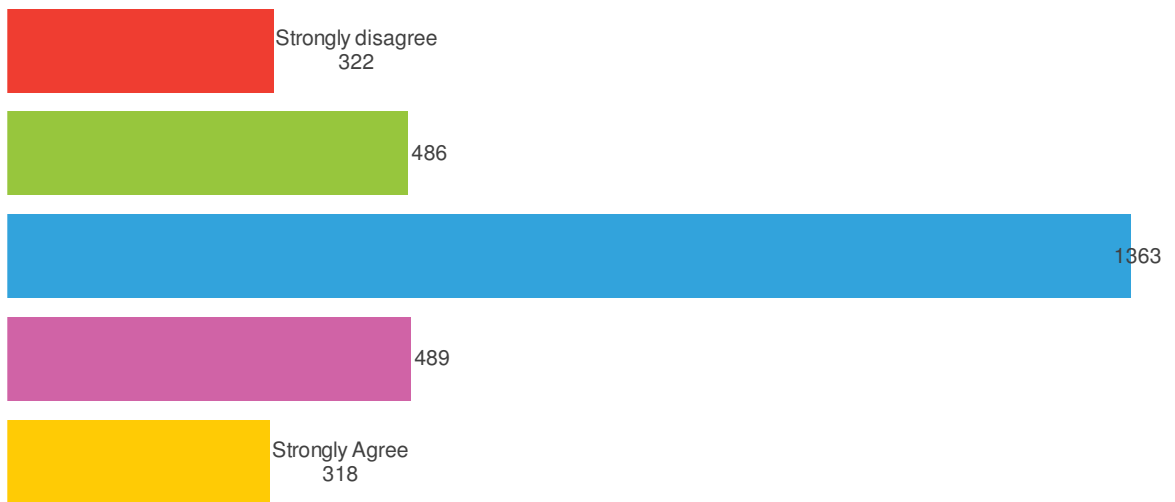


Figure 6. Hunter agreement with the statement, “Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of my hunting experience,” regarding their experiences during the 2017 spring turkey season.

“Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of my hunting experience.”

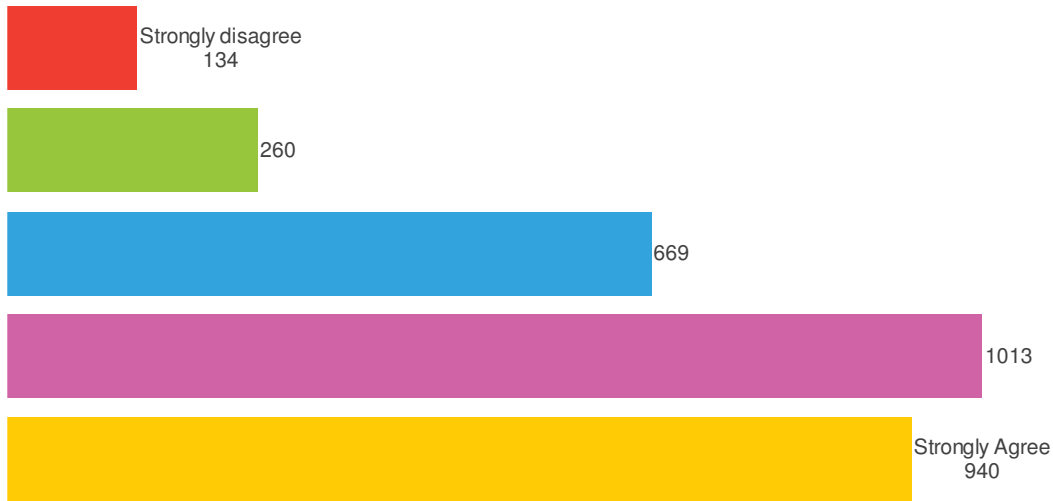
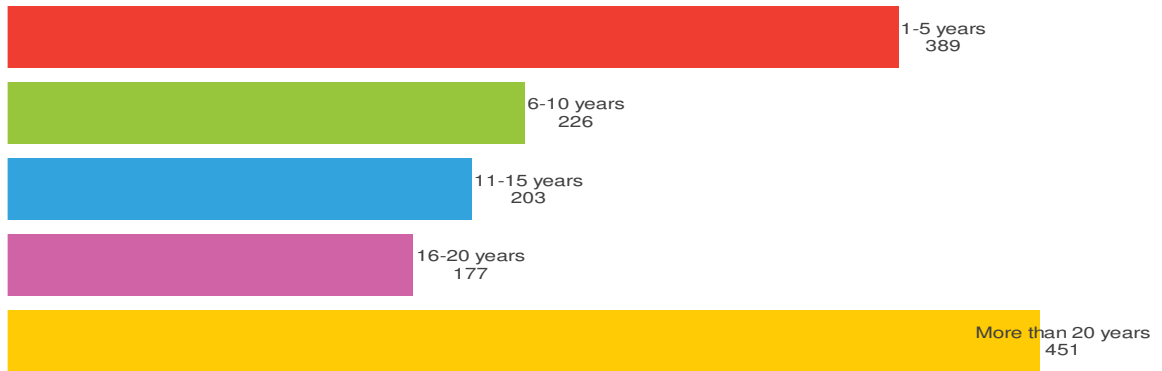


Table 23. Number of hunters accompanying youth, novice, women, and apprentice hunters afield, and the number they reported accompanying during the spring 2017 turkey season.

Respondents	Hunters Accompanying	Number Accompanied
	1110	
Youth hunters less than 16 years old	516 46%	512
New adult hunters at least 16 years old	417 38%	407
Women	333 30%	302
Apprentice license holders	92 8%	78

Figure 7. Resident, non-resident, and total number of years of experience hunting turkeys reported by hunters who hunted during the 2017 spring turkey season.

Resident



Non-resident



Total

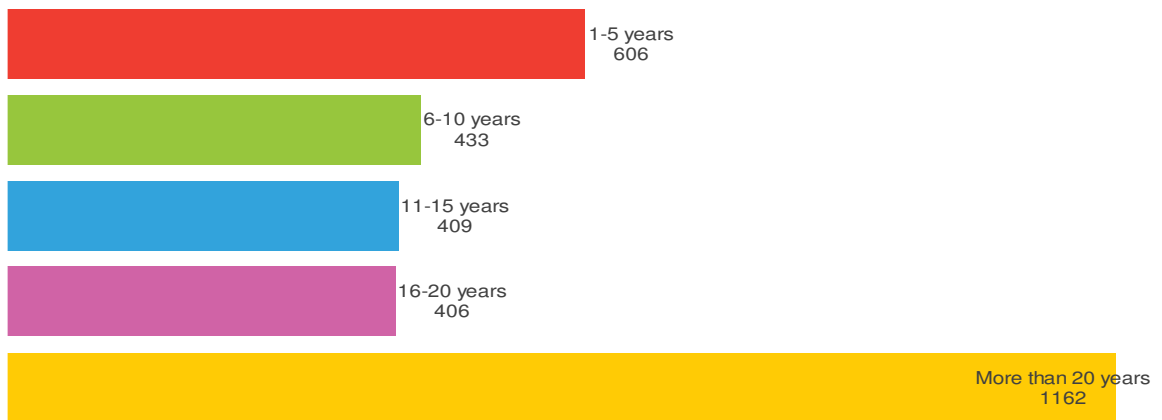


Table 24. Factors influencing resident, non-resident, and total hunters’ decisions to hunt turkeys in Nebraska during the 2017 spring season. (Choices with ≥40% selection are in bold.)

Respondents	Resident	Non-resident	Total
Availability of public land to hunt	286 20%	429 27%	715 24%
Family and/or friends who live in state	657 46%	609 39%	1266 42%
Ability to hunt a different or particular subspecies of turkey	161 11%	763 49%	924 31%
Availability of permits	800 56%	971 62%	1771 59%
Permit costs	446 31%	385 25%	831 28%
Number of permits allowed per hunter	354 25%	643 41%	997 33%
Hunter success rate	465 32%	620 40%	1085 36%
Turkey population abundance	731 51%	954 61%	1685 56%
Other	247 17%	145 9%	392 13%

Figure 8. Word cloud of hunters’ “Other” responses regarding the factors influencing their decision to hunt wild turkeys in Nebraska during the spring 2017 season.

If other, please provide further details.

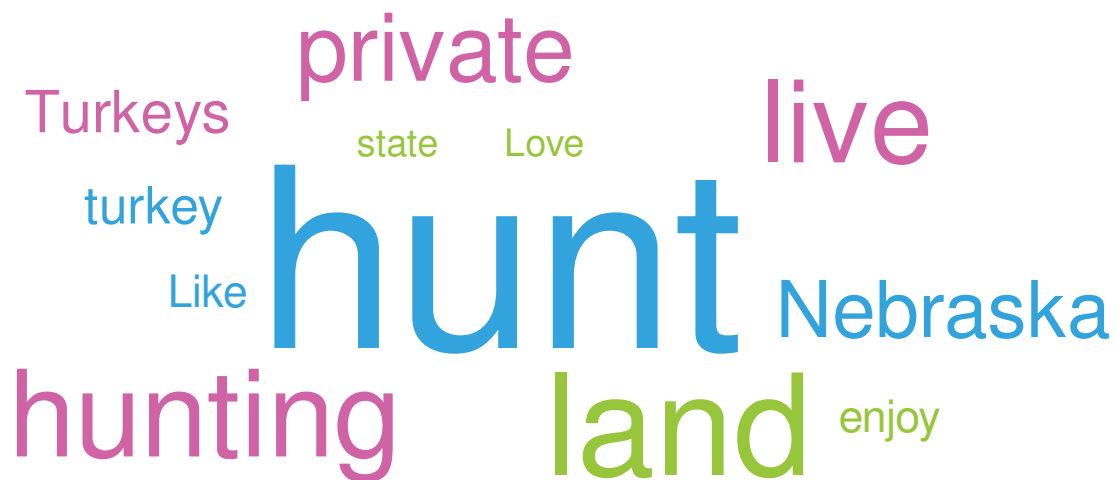
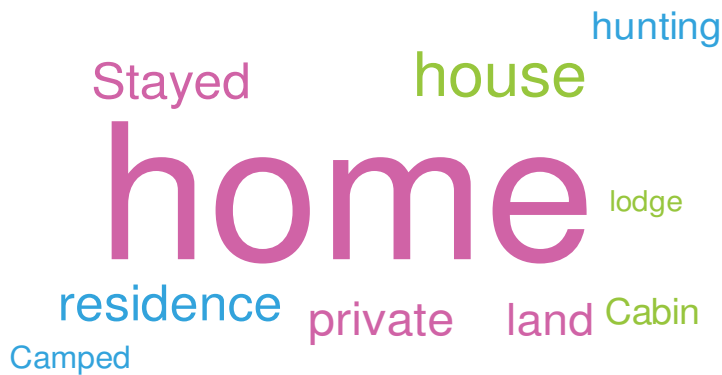


Table 21. Type of lodging resident, non-resident, and total hunters used when hunting turkeys in Nebraska during the 2017 spring season.

	Resident	Non-resident	Total
Respondents	1427	1566	2993
Hotel/motel	59 4%	502 32%	561 19%
Commercial campground (e.g., KOA)	1 0%	19 1%	20 1%
Public camping site (e.g., state parks)	62 4%	179 11%	241 8%
Private residence of family or friends	919 64%	596 38%	1515 51%
Other	386 27%	270 17%	656 22%

Figure 9. Word cloud of hunters' "Other" responses regarding the type of lodging resident and non-resident hunters used while hunting wild turkeys in Nebraska during the spring 2017 season.

Other locations where resident hunters stayed while hunting



Other locations where non-resident hunters stayed while hunting

