

Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project: W-15-R  
Title of Job: 2024 Fall Wild Turkey Harvest

Job: E2



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The fall turkey hunter survey is conducted each year at the end of the fall season. The season closed on 30 November 2024. The objective of the survey is to obtain information on the fall turkey harvest and success. Information on age and sex composition of the harvest is also obtained and is reported elsewhere. This year's survey was available to hunters between 18 and December 2024 and 1 January 2025, inclusive.

**Caveats.** The fall Wild Turkey Hunter Survey samples mostly fall turkey hunters who provided valid email addresses at the time of purchase of their permit(s). As such, the sample frame may be biased and not strictly generalizable to the population of all fall turkey hunters. For the fall 2024 season, 88.2% of unique permit buyers had provided usable email addresses. **NOTE:** Regulation changes instituted for the fall 2023 season removed the bonus tag, limited the number of permits a hunter could have per season to 1, and reduced the number of days in the season to 61. Each of these changes likely contributed to the changes in harvest and success noted below and in this report.

**Interpretations.** Permit sales decreased for the fall 2023 season compared to 2022 (-29.9%; 3,127 permits sold vs. 4,462). No permit buyers for the fall 2023 season purchased a second permit, because hunters were limited to one permit. Estimated total turkey harvest for the 2023 fall season was 821 turkeys, down 55.4% compared to fall 2022, when 1,839 turkeys were harvested. Resident harvest was higher than non-resident (697 turkeys vs. 124, respectively), but non-residents were more successful (36% vs. 24%, respectively). Interest in youth permits continues to be strong, comprising 17.0% of total permit sales for the fall 2023 season.

**Take-home Message.** Fall harvest and participation were much reduced for the fall 2023 season, partially due to changes in season regulations meant to arrest declines in turkey populations observed over the past several years. These regulation changes seem to have had the desired effect.

**Methods.** The fall turkey hunter survey was composed and administered in-house using Snap survey software and Snap Online service. An initial invitation to participate was sent to 2,906 (88.2%) of unique permit buyers on 18 December 2024, of which 2,833 were deliverable. A follow-up reminder was sent on 25 December 2024 to hunters who received the first invitation but failed to respond. The survey was closed to all participants on 1 January 2025, at which time 539 responses had been received, for a raw response rate of 19.0%. Each survey respondent represented 5.26 fall 2024 permit buyers.

**Results.** Permit sales ( $n = 3,294$ ) for fall 2024 were 5.2% higher than for the fall 2023 turkey season ( $n = 3,127$ , Figure 1). Of permits sold for the fall 2024 season, 19.9% were youth permits ( $n = 654$ ) and 80.1% were regular or landowner permits ( $n = 2,640$ ). Comparison of demographic information (residency, sex, age) between permit buyers, survey sample, and survey respondents indicated that the permits sampled were representative of all permit buyers. However,

respondent demographics differed from all permit buyers and the permits sampled (Table 1). Respondents tended to be older than the sample and the population of all permit buyers (Table 1). Estimated total fall 2024 harvest was 1,010 turkeys (Table 2, Figure 2), with youth harvesting 143 turkeys and regular/landowner permit holders harvesting 867 turkeys. Overall, harvest was 23.0% higher for the fall 2024 compared to fall 2023. Overall success rate was 30.7% for permit holders (Table 2, Figure 3). Reported success rates for residents was 29.6% and for non-residents was 43.4% (Table 3). Table 3 summarizes the 2024 season harvest results.

**TABLE 1.** Comparison of demographic factors among all permit buyers, permit holders sampled, and survey respondents for the fall 2024 turkey hunter survey.

Demographic Factor	Sample Size	Permit Buyers	Permits Sampled	Respondents
		3,294	2,906	539
Residency	Resident	88.1%	87.9%	82.2%
	Non-resident	11.9%	12.1%	17.8%
Sex	Male	91.8%	92.6%	94.1%
	Female	8.2%	7.4%	5.9%
Age	Median	38	40	49
	Mean	39	41	48
	% Youth Permits	19.9%	13.7%	14.5%

**TABLE 2.** Fall turkey season harvest and success, 2017-2024.

Type	Year	Year							
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Shotgun	Permits	6,863	5,977	5,445	6,570	5,512	4,462	3,127	3,294
	Harvest	3,520	3,255	2,853	3,302	2,529	1,839	821	1,010
	% Success	51.3	54.5	52.4	50.3	45.9	41.2	26.3	30.7

**TABLE 3.** Summary of fall 2024 turkey hunter survey responses and estimated harvest.

Residency	Permit Type	Permits Sold	Surveyed Permits	Reported Harvest	Reported Success Rate	Estimated Harvest
Resident	Youth	559	65	11	16.9%	95
	Regular	2344	377	120	31.8%	745
	Sub-total	2,903	442	131	29.6%	840
Non-Resident	Youth	95	12	6	50.0%	48
	Regular	296	80	33	41.3%	122
	Sub-total	391	92	39	43.4%	170
Total		3,294	534	170	31.8%	1,010

FIGURE 1. Fall turkey permit sales, 1962-2024.

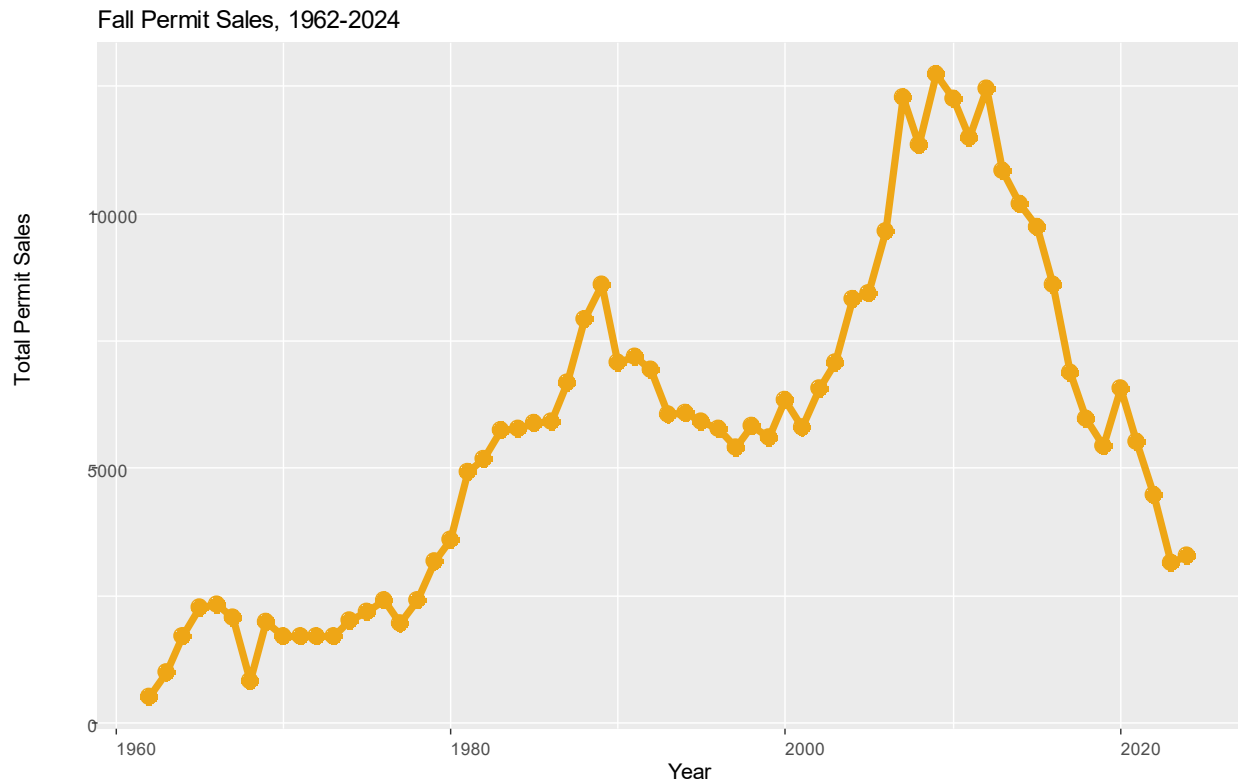
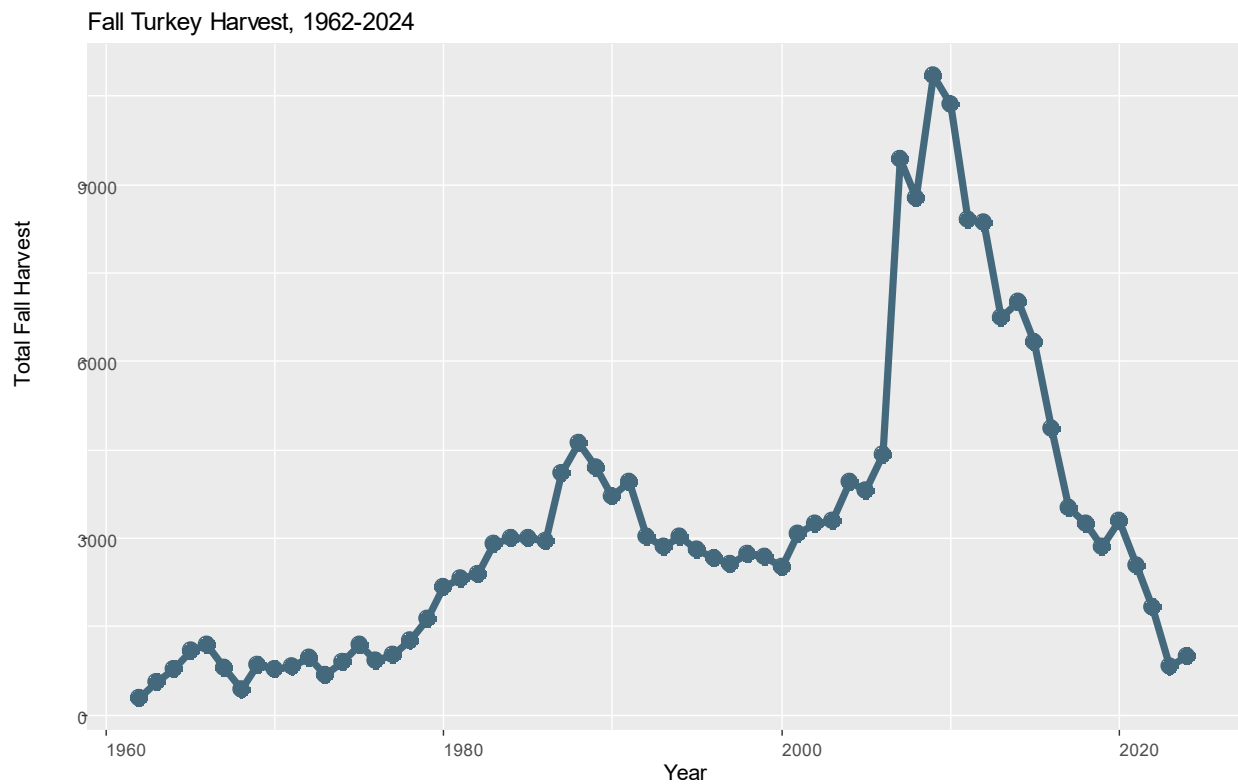


FIGURE 2. Fall turkey season harvest estimates, 1962-2024.



**FIGURE 3.** Fall turkey hunter success rate, 1962-2024. Horizontal line represents the success rate goal established in the 2011-2016 Focus on the Future strategic plan.

