2012 SOUTH CAROLINA TURKEY HARVEST REPORT

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TURKEY RESEARCH & MANAGEMENT PROJECT

DNR

Submitted by

Charles Ruth; Deer & Wild Turkey Program Coordinator

INTRODUCTION

Ranking only behind the white-tailed deer in popularity among hunters, the Eastern wild turkey is an important natural resource in South Carolina. The 2012 Turkey Hunter Survey represents the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Wildlife Section's ongoing commitment to conduct pertinent research related to the state's wild turkey population. The primary objectives of this survey research were to obtain valid estimates of; (1) the statewide spring gobbler harvest in 2012, (2) the harvest of gobblers in the constituent counties of the state, and (3) hunting effort related to turkeys. Information on hunter's opinions of the turkey resource and other aspects of turkey hunting are also presented.

Due to the importance of turkeys as a state resource, DNR believes that accurately assessing the harvest of turkeys, as well as hunter participation in turkey hunting, is key to the management of this species. Proposed changes in turkey-related laws and regulations should have foundations in biology, therefore, the population dynamics associated with annual hunting mortality cannot be ignored. Similarly, when issues arise that do not involve biological parameters, it is important to have information related to turkey hunter activities afield because they too form an important basis for managing wild turkeys.

Since the inception of the Statewide Turkey Restoration and Research Project (Turkey Project) the methods used to document the turkey harvest have changed. Historically, turkey harvest figures were developed using a system of mandatory turkey check stations across the state. This system yielded an actual count of harvested turkey and was, therefore, an absolute minimum harvest figure. Shortcomings in this system included deterioration of check station compliance, complaints from hunters regarding the inconvenience of check stations, and costs associated with the check station system. The requirement to check harvested turkeys in South Carolina was eliminated following the 2005 season. Prior to eliminating the check-in requirement, DNR conducted surveys in order to document the rate of noncompliance, as well as, to determine the relationship between harvest figures obtained from check stations and those obtained from surveys. As would be expected, harvest figures obtained from surveys are higher than those from check stations due to lack of compliance with the check-in requirement.

Survey Methodology

The 2012 Turkey Hunter Survey represented a random mail survey that involved a single mail-out. The questionnaire for the 2012 Turkey Hunter Survey was developed by Wildlife Section personnel (Figure 1). The mailing list database was constructed by randomly selecting 25,000 individuals who received a set of 2012 Turkey Transportation Tags which are required in order to hunt turkeys in South Carolina. Data entry was completed by Priority Data, Inc., Omaha, Nebraska.

Following the mail survey, a nonresponse bias test was conducted by Responsive Management of Harrisonburg, Virginia using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interview program (CATI). Results from the mail survey were corrected for nonresponse bias using data collected from the telephone survey.

Statistical analysis was conducted using Statistix 7 (Analytical Software, Tallahassee, FL).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Turkey Harvest

During the 2012 spring season it is estimated that a total of 18,977 adult gobblers and 2,575 jakes were harvested for a statewide total of 21,552 turkeys (Table 1). This figure represents a 20 percent increase in harvest from 2011 (17,085). Although the harvest was up substantially in 2012, this harvest level still represents a 15 percent decrease from the record harvest established in 2002 (16,348 check station, 25,487 estimated by survey). The overall reduction in harvest seen since 2002 can likely be attributable to one primary factor, poor reproduction.

Although reproduction in wild turkeys was generally poor between 2003 and 2009 it was much better in both 2010 and 2011 (Figure 2). This undoubtedly led to a significant increase in turkeys available during the spring of 2012 and resulted in a significant increase in harvest during the season (Figure 3). In fact, harvest figures from 2012 are the highest since 2005. This association between changes in reproduction and its effects on harvest are rather remarkable in South Carolina's turkey harvest and reproductive data sets.

Unlike deer, wild turkeys are much more susceptible to significant fluctuations in reproduction and recruitment and with the exception of the last two years, these measures of production have generally not been good in the last decade. Lack of reproductive success is typically associated with bad weather (cold and wet) during nesting and brood rearing season. On the other hand, habitats are continually changing in South Carolina. Although timber management activities stimulated the growth in South Carolina's turkey population in the 1980s, considerable acreage is currently in even-aged pine stands that are greater than 10 years old, a situation that does not support turkeys as well.

Harvest Per Unit Area County Rankings

Comparisons can be made between turkey harvests from the various counties in South Carolina if a harvest per unit area is established. Harvest per unit area standardizes the harvest among counties regardless of the size of individual counties. One measure of harvest rate is the

number of turkeys taken per square mile (640ac. = 1 mile^2). When considering the estimated turkey habitat that is available in South Carolina, the turkey harvest rate in 2012 was 1.0 gobblers per square mile statewide (Table 2). Although this harvest rate is not as high as it once was, it should be considered good and is similar to other Southeastern states. The top 5 counties for harvest per unit area were Union (2.3 turkeys/mile^2), Cherokee (2.1 turkeys/mile^2), Fairfield (2.0 turkeys/mile^2), Bamberg (1.9 turkeys/mile^2), and Anderson (1.7 turkeys/mile^2) (Table 2).

Turkey Harvest Rankings by County

Total turkey harvest is not comparable among counties because there is no standard unit of comparison, i.e. counties vary in size and are, therefore, not directly comparable. However, some readers may be interested in this type of ranking. The top 5 counties during 2012 were Fairfield, Williamsburg, Union, Berkeley, and Orangeburg (Table 3).

Turkey Harvest by Week of Season

Gobbling by male wild turkeys occurs primarily in the spring and is for the purpose of attracting hens for mating purposes. Therefore, spring turkey hunting is characterized by hunters attempting to locate and call gobbling male turkeys using emulated hens calls. With respect to both biology and effective hunting, the timing of the spring gobbler season should take into account three primary factors; peak breeding, peak gobbling, and peak incubation. Considering these factors, seasons can be set to afford hunters the best opportunity to hunt during the best time (i.e. peak gobbling) without inhibiting reproductive success.

South Carolina currently has two spring turkey season frameworks. Throughout most of the state (Game Zones 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) the season is April 1-May1. This season is based on a recommendation from DNR following gobbling and nesting studies that were conducted in the 1970's. The other season framework is March 15-May 1 and is only in effect in Game Zone 6 (lower coastal plain). This season is socio-politically based. For additional information on setting spring turkey season refer to: http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/turkey/springseason09.html.

If seasons are set appropriately, the greatest proportion of turkeys should be harvested during the first week of the season because hens should be nesting resulting in gobblers that are

naïve and most responsive to hunter's calls. Harvest by week of season demonstrates that the timing of the April 1-May 1 season affords higher turkey harvests as most turkeys are harvested following the April 1 opening date (Figure 4). When broken-out by specific season framework the results are similar. In areas were the season begins March 15, only 27 percent of the total harvest was accounted for during the first week of the season (Figure 5). This is likely due to the fact that late March is the time of peak breeding and males gobble less because "they are all henned up". On the other hand, 49 percent of the harvest occurred during the first week of the season in areas where the season begins April 1 (Figure 6). This is due to the fact that by the first week in April, a significant number of hens have left the gobblers and begun continuous incubation.

Comparing the first two weeks of each season format, we find that where the season opens March 15, 48 percent of gobblers were harvested while this figure is 70 percent where the season opens on April 1. Finally, the percentage of turkeys harvested in the first week of the season in areas where the season opens April 1 is as high as the percentage of turkey harvested during the first two weeks of the season in areas where the season opens March 15. Again, this is a reflection of fewer available hens due to nesting and this lack of hens stimulates peak gobbling resulting in hunters being more successful in locating and calling responsive birds. These results have been consistent since this type of data has been available.

Number of Turkey Hunters

Even though all individuals receiving a set of Turkey Transportation Tags were licensed to hunt turkeys, only 48 percent actually hunted turkeys. Based on this figure, approximately 41,420 hunters participated in the 2012 spring turkey season, a 2.5 percent increase from 2011 (40,454). Counties with the highest estimates for individual hunters include Fairfield, Newberry, Orangeburg, Laurens, and Union (Table 4).

Hunter Effort

For the purposes of this survey hunter effort was measured in days with one day being defined as any portion of the day spent afield. Turkey hunters averaged approximately 5.0 days

afield during the 2012 season (Table 4). Successful hunters averaged significantly more days afield (6.7 days) than unsuccessful hunters (4.3 days). Extrapolating to the entire population of turkey hunters yields a figure of 206,096 total days of spring gobbler hunting, up 7.9 percent from 2011 (189,893 days).

The number of days devoted to turkey hunting in South Carolina is significant and points not only to the availability and popularity of turkeys as a game species, but to the obvious economic benefits related to this important natural resource. Figures generated by a 2003 Survey by the National Wild Turkey Federation estimate that approximately 35 million dollars are added to South Carolina's economy annually from turkey hunting. The top 5 South Carolina counties for overall days of turkey hunting during 2012 were Fairfield, Berkeley, Newberry, Orangeburg, and Union counties (Table 4).

Hunting Success

For determination of hunting success only those individuals that actually hunted turkeys were included in the analysis and similarly, success was defined as harvesting at least one turkey. Overall hunting success in 2012 was 25 percent, the same figure as in 2011 (Table 7). Unlike deer hunting which typically has high success, turkey hunting can be an inherently unsuccessful endeavor, relatively speaking. As would be expected, the majority of successful hunters take one gobbler (Figure 7). However, the percentage of successful hunters who take two birds is quite high as well. This indicates that successful hunters had nearly the same chance of taking two birds as they did one bird.

The statewide bag limit in South Carolina is five gobblers. Obviously, most successful hunters harvest only one or two birds. However, it is interesting to note the relative contribution to the total harvest of turkeys by the few hunters that harvest many birds. Ironically, the percentage of hunters taking more than 3 birds was only 3.7 percent, however, this small percentage of hunters harvested 33 percent of the total birds taken in the state (Figure 8). These results have been consistent since this type of data has been available.

Hunter Opinion Regarding Turkey Numbers

The 2012 Turkey Hunter Survey asked participants to compare the number of turkeys in the area they hunt most often with the number of turkeys in past years. Participants were given 3 choices; increasing, about the same, or decreasing. About half (50%) of hunters indicated that the number of turkeys in the area they hunted most often was about the same as in past years. More hunters (29%) believed that the turkey population was increasing than decreasing (21%). On a scale of 1 to 3 with 1 being increasing, 2 being the same, and 3 being decreasing, the overall mean rating of 1.8 suggests that hunters viewed the turkey population as slightly increasing. This is only the second time in 6 years that the opinion among hunters is that the turkey population is increasing. As previously discussed, this is likely attributable to substantially better reproduction by turkeys in 2010 and 2011.

Turkeys Shot but not Recovered

Harvesting game signals the end of a successful hunt and although most hunters do a good job of preparing their equipment and mental state, it goes without saying that a certain percentage of game is shot or shot at and not killed or recovered. This point is no different when turkey hunting.

In order to estimate the prevalence of errant shots at turkeys, the 2012 Turkey Hunter Survey asked hunters to indicate the number of turkeys that they "shot but did not kill or recover during the 2012 season in South Carolina". Approximately 10.9 percent of hunters indicated that they shot but did not kill or recover at least one turkey in 2011 (10.8% in 2011). There were approximately 41,420 turkey hunters in 2012 meaning that approximately 4,530 turkeys were shot or shot at and not killed or recovered. Therefore, approximately 18 percent of the total number of turkeys shot were not killed or recovered. These results have been consistent since this type of data has been available.

This data is certainly not indicative of "dead and unrecovered turkeys", however, it is clear that some percentage of the 4,530 turkeys that were shot did eventually die. Although shot shells for turkeys have become increasingly sophisticated, accurate, and lethal it is a fact that the

pattern of a shotgun is relatively broad and contains between 200 and 400 pellets. Therefore, a "clean miss" is not as clear-cut for turkeys compared to other big game like deer where there is typically a single projectile. Additional research is needed on this topic.

Turkey Harvest in the Morning VS. Afternoon

The typical spring turkey hunt is characterized by attempting to locate a gobbling bird prior to or just after sunrise. Once a gobbler is located most hunters position themselves as close as they can to the gobbler without scaring it away. Various types of callers that mimic the sounds of wild turkeys are then used to attempt to call the gobbler into gun range. This technique of locating a gobbling bird, setting-up, and calling is repeated as necessary.

Traditionally, spring turkey hunting was primarily carried out during the first few hours of the day. As the popularity of turkey hunting has increased, many hunters now hunt in the afternoon as well. Gobblers are generally not as vocal in the afternoon but they can be stimulated to gobble using the various turkey calls, particularly late in the afternoon near areas where turkeys frequently roost.

In order to gain a better understanding of the distribution of harvest with respect to time of day, the 2012 Turkey Hunter Survey asked hunters to identify the number of birds harvested in the morning compared to the afternoon. Results indicate that approximately 75 percent of gobblers are harvested in the morning compared to 25 percent in the afternoon. This data may be useful if discussions arise concerning the relative importance of morning compared to afternoon harvest of gobblers in the spring. These results have been consistent since this type of data has been available.

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Table 1. Estimated statewide turkey harvest in South Carolina in 2012.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Gobbler Harvest	Jake Harvest	Total Harvest	Percent Jakes	Harvest Rates	
							Ac/Turkey	Turkey/Mi.^{2}
Abbeville	223,113	349	293	105	398	26.4	560.6	1.1
Aiken	500,546	782	272	16	288	5.6	1738.0	0.4
Allendale	216,455	338	220	24	244	9.8	887.1	0.7
Anderson	219,068	342	482	110	592	18.6	370.0	1.7
Bamberg	196,573	307	534	40	574	7.0	342.5	1.9
Barnwell	281,764	440	131	4	135	3.0	2087.1	0.3
Beaufort	147,441	230	110	12	122	9.8	1208.5	0.5
Berkeley	567,530	887	843	52	895	5.8	634.1	1.0
Calhoun	190,584	298	120	12	132	9.1	1443.8	0.4
Charleston	288,732	451	361	28	389	7.2	742.2	0.9
Cherokee	156,664	245	408	101	509	19.8	307.8	2.1
Chester	300,589	470	681	110	791	13.9	380.0	1.7
Chesterfield	372,478	582	288	48	336	14.3	1108.6	0.6
Clarendon	298,087	466	403	36	439	8.2	679.0	0.9
Colleton	502,666	785	728	16	744	2.2	675.6	0.9
Darlington	286,228	447	141	8	149	5.4	1921.0	0.3
Dillon	214,069	334	131	14	145	9.7	1476.3	0.4
Dorchester	302,717	473	314	24	338	7.1	895.6	0.7
Edgefield	246,543	385	503	89	592	15.0	416.5	1.5
Fairfield	384,607	601	1079	138	1217	11.3	316.0	2.0
Florence	397,888	622	424	36	460	7.8	865.0	0.7
Georgetown	399,638	624	372	28	400	7.0	999.1	0.6
Greenville	294,257	460	445	118	563	21.0	522.7	1.2
Greenwood	204,400	319	246	52	298	17.4	685.9	0.9
Hampton	324,840	508	387	5	392	1.3	828.7	0.8
Horry	533,336	833	340	57	397	14.4	1343.4	0.5
Jasper	309,889	484	408	28	436	6.4	710.8	0.9
Kershaw	360,485	563	337	57	394	14.5	914.9	0.7
Lancaster	266,382	416	372	93	465	20.0	572.9	1.1
Laurens	317,916	497	644	122	766	15.9	415.0	1.5
Lee	220,106	344	230	16	246	6.5	894.7	0.7
Lexington	280,742	439	94	20	114	17.5	2462.6	0.3
McCormick	212,021	331	309	81	390	20.8	543.6	1.2
Marion	216,907	339	256	40	296	13.5	732.8	0.9
Marlboro	281,271	439	183	8	191	4.2	1472.6	0.4
Newberry	317,761	497	720	130	850	15.3	373.8	1.7
Oconee	284,348	444	267	12	279	4.3	1019.2	0.6
Orangeburg	504,516	788	796	85	881	9.6	572.7	1.1
Pickens	219,926	344	518	61	579	10.5	379.8	1.7
Richland	340,121	531	309	24	333	7.2	1021.4	0.6
Saluda	192,173	300	377	57	434	13.1	442.8	1.4
Spartanburg	265,939	416	445	97	542	17.9	490.7	1.3
Sumter	338,968	530	246	28	274	10.2	1237.1	0.5
Union	258,111	403	770	175	945	18.5	273.1	2.3
Williamsburg	513,851	803	953	48	1001	4.8	513.3	1.2
York	276,650	432	487	110	597	18.4	463.4	1.4
Total	**14,028,896**	**21,920**	**18,977**	**2,575**	**21,552**	**11.9**	**650.9**	**1.0**
95% Conf. Interval for harvest			**(+-) 1,449**	**(+-) 517**	**(+-) 1,565**			

* Acreage shown represents the acreage of forested land and acreage of row crops considered to be significant turkey habitat within each county.

Table 2. County rankings based on turkeys harvest per unit area in South Carolina in 2012.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Gobbler Harvest	Jake Harvest	Total Harvest	Percent Jakes	Harvest Rates	
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Union	258,111	403	770	175	945	18.5	273.1	2.3
Cherokee	156,664	245	408	101	509	19.8	307.8	2.1
Fairfield	384,607	601	1079	138	1217	11.3	316.0	2.0
Bamberg	196,573	307	534	40	574	7.0	342.5	1.9
Anderson	219,068	342	482	110	592	18.6	370.0	1.7
Newberry	317,761	497	720	130	850	15.3	373.8	1.7
Pickens	219,926	344	518	61	579	10.5	379.8	1.7
Chester	300,589	470	681	110	791	13.9	380.0	1.7
Laurens	317,916	497	644	122	766	15.9	415.0	1.5
Edgefield	246,543	385	503	89	592	15.0	416.5	1.5
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Kershaw	360,485	563	337	57	394	14.5	914.9	0.7
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Oconee	284,348	444	267	12	279	4.3	1019.2	0.6
Richland	340,121	531	309	24	333	7.2	1021.4	0.6
Chesterfield	372,478	582	288	48	336	14.3	1108.6	0.6
Beaufort	147,441	230	110	12	122	9.8	1208.5	0.5
Sumter	338,968	530	246	28	274	10.2	1237.1	0.5
Horry	533,336	833	340	57	397	14.4	1343.4	0.5
Calhoun	190,584	298	120	12	132	9.1	1443.8	0.4
Marlboro	281,271	439	183	8	191	4.2	1472.6	0.4
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Aiken	500,546	782	272	16	288	5.6	1738.0	0.4
Darlington	286,228	447	141	8	149	5.4	1921.0	0.3
Barnwell	281,764	440	131	4	135	3.0	2087.1	0.3
Lexington	280,742	439	94	20	114	17.5	2462.6	0.3
Total	**14,028,896**	**21,920**	**18,977**	**2,575**	**21,552**	**11.9**	**650.9**	**1.0**

Table 3. County rankings based on total turkeys harvest in South Carolina in 2012.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Gobbler Harvest	Jake Harvest	Total Harvest	Percent Jakes	Harvest Rates	
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Orangeburg	504,516	788	796	85	881	9.6	572.7	1.1
Newberry	317,761	497	720	130	850	15.3	373.8	1.7
Chester	300,589	470	681	110	791	13.9	380.0	1.7
Laurens	317,916	497	644	122	766	15.9	415.0	1.5
Colleton	502,666	785	728	16	744	2.2	675.6	0.9
York	276,650	432	487	110	597	18.4	463.4	1.4
Anderson	219,068	342	482	110	592	18.6	370.0	1.7
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Total	**14,028,896**	**21,920**	**18,977**	**2,575**	**21,552**	**11.9**	**650.9**	**1.0**

Table 4. Estimated number of turkey hunters, average days hunted, and total hunting effort in South Carolina in 2012.

County	Total Harvest	Number Hunters	Avg. Days Hunted	Total Man/Days
Abbeville	398	931	4.2	3,873
Aiken	288	886	4.2	3,692
Allendale	244	597	4.9	2,948
Anderson	592	1,220	4.4	5,384
Bamberg	574	815	5.8	4,733
Barnwell	135	449	4.8	2,157
Beaufort	122	282	4.2	1,198
Berkeley	895	1,451	6.5	9,367
Calhoun	132	559	4.7	2,617
Charleston	389	1,079	4.2	4,524
Cherokee	509	693	5.2	3,628
Chester	791	1,342	5.1	6,867
Chesterfield	336	777	5.1	3,948
Clarendon	439	597	3.9	2,343
Colleton	744	1,175	6.2	7,297
Darlington	149	456	4.8	2,181
Dillon	145	231	4.4	1,018
Dorchester	338	745	5.1	3,768
Edgefield	592	976	5.0	4,849
Fairfield	1217	2,144	4.9	10,525
Florence	460	841	4.2	3,564
Georgetown	400	700	3.9	2,750
Greenville	563	995	5.5	5,495
Greenwood	298	674	4.1	2,785
Hampton	392	905	5.5	4,977
Horry	397	841	5.0	4,169
Jasper	436	661	6.5	4,315
Kershaw	394	1,162	4.1	4,797
Lancaster	465	745	5.7	4,251
Laurens	766	1,489	4.7	7,030
Lee	246	488	4.6	2,239
Lexington	114	456	3.3	1,506
McCormick	390	719	4.9	3,489
Marion	296	591	4.2	2,483
Marlboro	191	488	5.4	2,657
Newberry	850	1,643	5.1	8,443
Oconee	279	642	6.4	4,099
Orangeburg	881	1,496	5.4	8,065
Pickens	579	963	5.6	5,350
Richland	333	905	4.1	3,727
Saluda	434	815	5.0	4,070
Spartanburg	542	1,104	5.2	5,762
Sumter	274	802	4.9	3,913
Union	945	1,483	5.0	7,373
Williamsburg	1001	1,316	4.5	5,873
York	597	1,091	5.5	5,995
Total	**21,552**	**41,420**	**5.0**	**206,096**

Figure 1. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources 2012 Turkey Hunter Survey.

May, 2012

Dear Sportsman:

Eastern wild turkeys are one of the most important game species in South Carolina. Therefore, it is important that this species be monitored for population status and harvesting activities. Wildlife resource managers require current and accurate information about wild turkey harvests to aid in successfully managing this important natural resource and to optimize future hunting potential. To obtain this needed data, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) is conducting a survey of hunters who received a set of turkey tags during spring 2012.

You are one of a group of randomly selected hunters asked to participate in this survey. To draw accurate conclusions it is very important that you complete the survey and return it. Please take time to read each question. Even if you did not hunt wild turkeys this spring please indicate this by answering the appropriate questions and moving on to the next set of questions.

Please note that complete confidentiality will be given to you. Each survey form is numbered, but only so we can avoid costly repeat mailings to those survey participants who have not returned their survey.

Keep in mind that the purpose of the survey is to determine the wild turkey harvest in South Carolina and not to determine whether game laws are observed. By accurately answering the survey questions you will enable SCDNR biologists to better manage the Eastern wild turkey resource for you and other citizens of the state. Therefore, it is very important that you take a few minutes to complete this survey and mail it. Return postage is prepaid.

Results of this survey will be posted on the SCDNR web site once completed. The results from the 2011 survey can be found at:
www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/turkey/2011TurkeyHarvest.html

Thank you for your assistance.

Charles Ruth
Wildlife Biologist
Deer/Turkey Project Supervisor

PLEASE MAIL YOUR SURVEY AFTER SEPARATING THIS HALF FROM THE SIDE ON WHICH YOUR ANSWERS HAVE BEEN ENTERED. NO POSTAGE IS NECESSARY.

If you have questions regarding this survey, please call 803-734-3886 or write 2012 Turkey Hunter Survey, SCDNR, P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202.

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, disability, religion or age. Direct all inquiries to the Office of Human Resources, P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202

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TURKEY HUNTER SURVEY
SC DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
PO BOX 167
COLUMBIA SC 29202-9976

NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES

2012 South Carolina Turkey Hunter Survey

1. Did you turkey hunt in SC this past season (2012)? **1. Yes 2. No**
   If you answered **No** to this question please **go to question # 8**.

2. Did you harvest any turkeys in SC this past season? **1. Yes 2. No**

3. Even if you did not harvest a turkey, please record the SC counties you turkey hunted and the number of days hunted in each county this past season (2012). If you harvested turkeys please record the number of adult gobblers and jakes taken in each county. A day of hunting is defined as any portion of the day spent afield. Please do not give ranges (i.e. 5-10), rather provide absolute numbers (i.e. 5). Provide information only for yourself - not friends, relatives, or other people you may have called or guided for. See the diagram below if you are unsure how to determine an adult gobbler or "longbeard" from a juvenile gobbler or "jake".

SC Counties You Turkey Hunted	# Days Hunted	Number Turkeys Harvested
1		Adult gobblers_____ Jakes_____
2		Adult gobblers_____ Jakes_____
3		Adult gobblers_____ Jakes_____
4		Adult gobblers_____ Jakes_____
5		Adult gobblers_____ Jakes_____

If you did not harvest any turkeys this past season please go to question 6.

4. If you harvested turkeys in SC this past season, please indicate as best you can the number of turkeys killed by week of season.

Week of Season	# Turkeys Harvested	Week of Season	# Turkeys Harvested
1 March 15-22		4 April 8-14	
2 March 23-31		5 April 15-21	
3 April 1-7		6 April 22-May 1	

5. How many turkeys did you kill in the morning_____ after 12:00 noon _____?

6. How many turkeys did you shoot but not kill or recover in SC this past season?_____

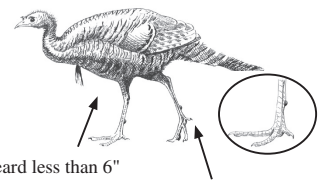
7. Compared to past years, how would you describe the number of turkeys in the area that you hunted most often this spring? **Circle one**
   1. Increasing 2. About the same 3. Decreasing

8. Are you a resident of SC? **1. Yes 2. No**

9. If yes, which county _____

Separate and return this portion of the survey. Postage is prepaid. Please do not staple this form.

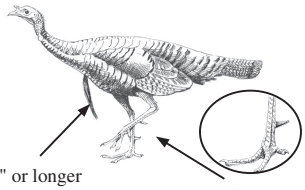
Juvenile "Jake"



beard less than 6"

spur less than ½"

Adult "Gobbler"



beard 6" or longer

spur ½" or longer

HELP MANAGE TURKEYS IN S.C. COMPLETE YOUR HUNTER SURVEY

DNR

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SCDNR
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Figure 2. Summer wild turkey recruitment ratio in South Carolina 1982-2011. Note improved harvest (Fig. 3 below) related to improved recruitment in 2010 and 2011. Recruitment ratio is a measure of young entering the population based on the number of hens in the population.

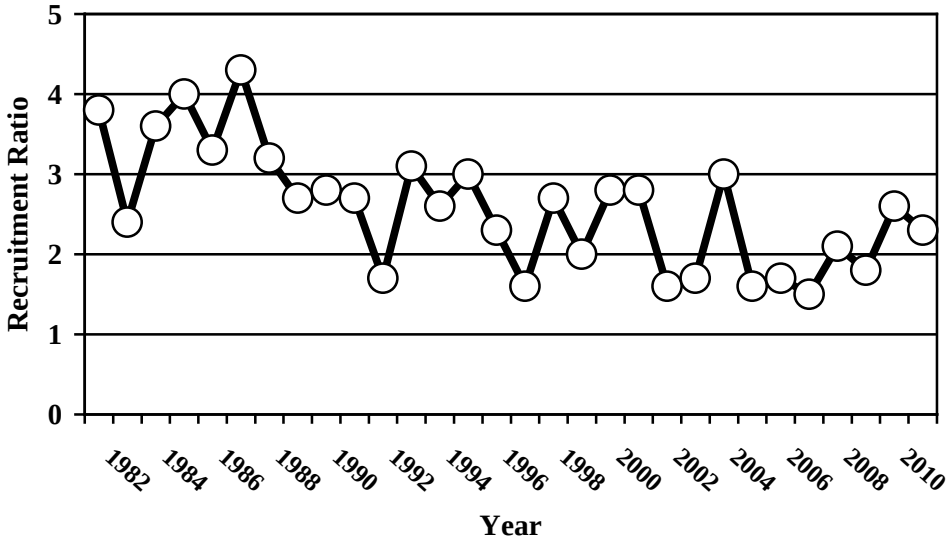

Figure 3. Spring wild turkey harvest in South Carolina 1982-2012. Note declines in harvest associated with years of poor recruitment 2003-2009 and increased harvest in 2012 resulting from improved recruitment in 2010 and 2011.

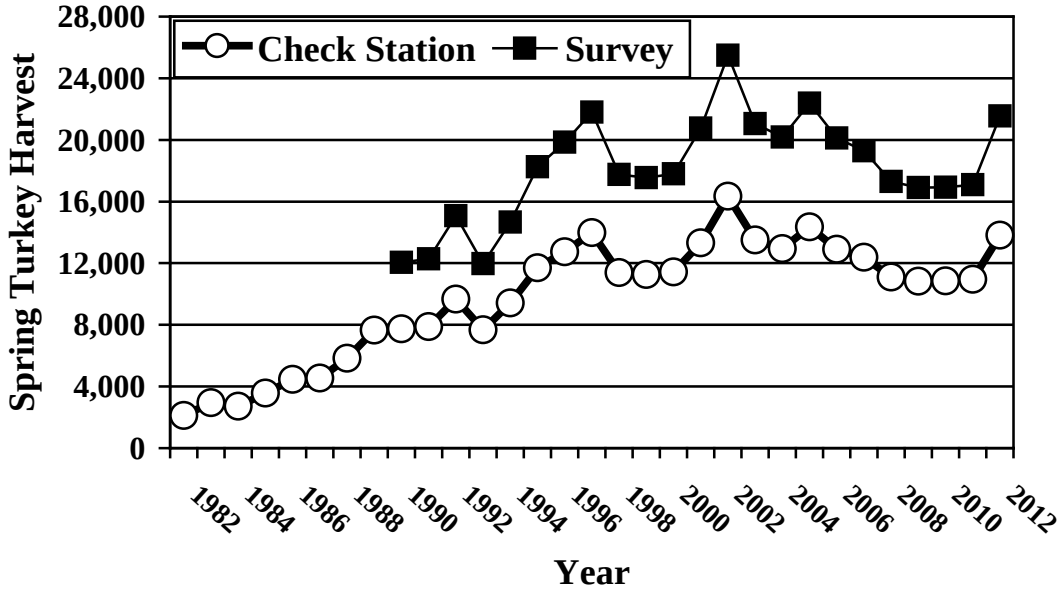

Figure 4. Percentage of gobblers harvested by week of season in South Carolina in 2012.

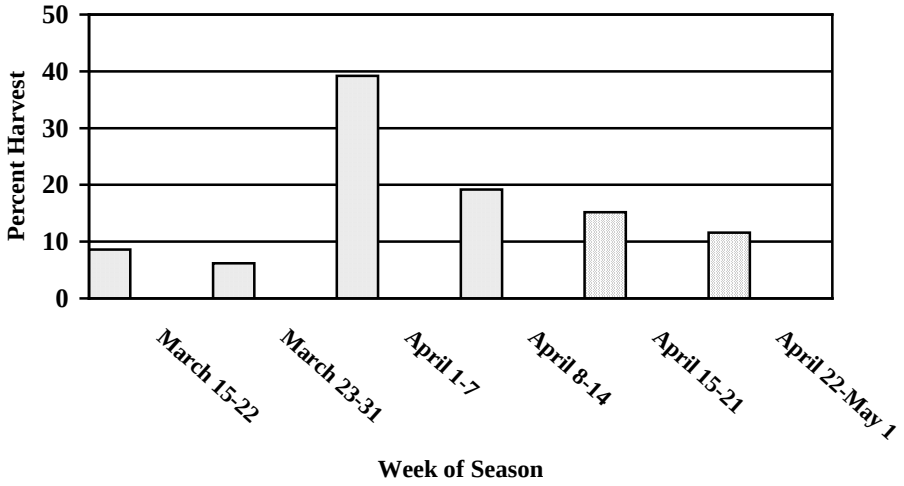

Figure 5. Percentage of gobblers harvested by week in areas with March 15-May 1 season.

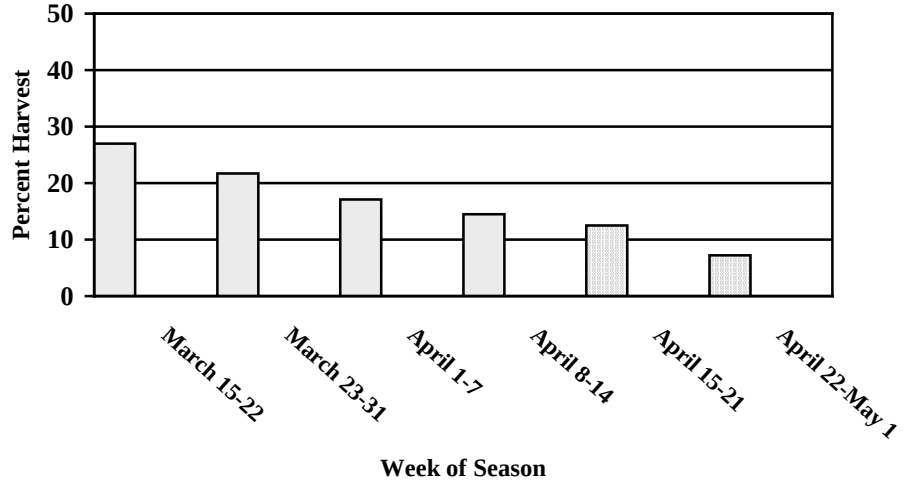

Figure 6. Percentage of gobblers harvested by week in areas with April 1-May 1 season.

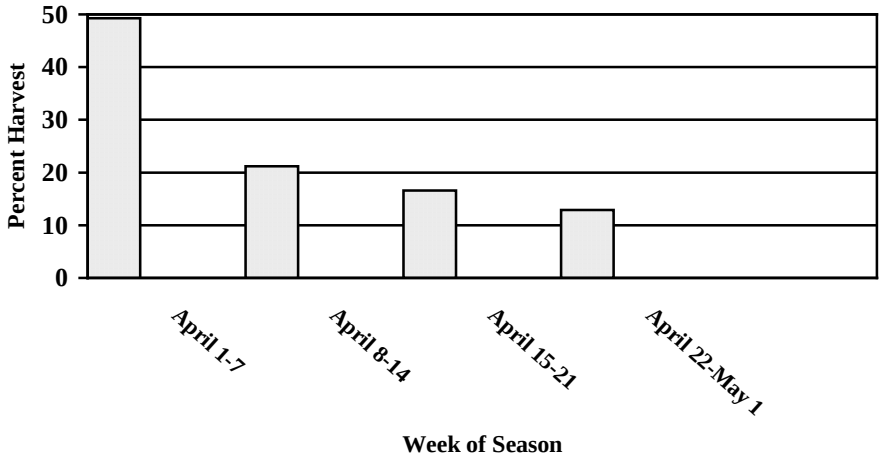

Figure 7. Hunter success during the spring turkey season in South Carolina in 2012. Overall success was 25 percent at harvesting at least one gobbler.

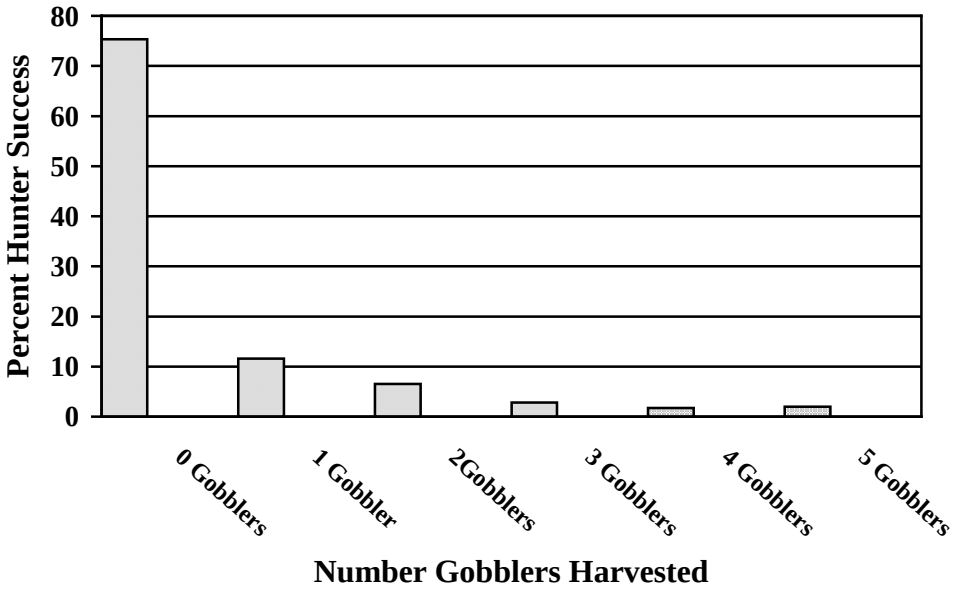

Figure 8. Relative contribution to the total turkey harvest by hunters taking between 1 and 5 gobbler in South Carolina in 2012. Hunters taking more than 3 birds accounted for 33% of total harvest.