

SPRING TURKEY HUNTING

All Tennessee counties are open to wild turkey hunting including WMAs and refuges unless specifically listed.

Statewide Spring Turkey Season - March 29 - May 11, 2008

BAG LIMITS

One (1) bearded turkey per day, not to exceed four (4) per season. Turkeys taken on all quota hunts and specially designated WMAs are bonus turkeys.

STATEWIDE YOUNG SPORTSMAN HUNT

March 22-23, 2008 (ages 6 through 16). One (1) bearded turkey which counts toward statewide bag unless taken on a WMA where turkeys are designated as bonus birds. Each youth must be accompanied by a nonhunting adult, 21 years of age or older, who must remain in a position to take immediate control of the hunting device, who is not required to have a license.

MAST CRASH?

The big news around the state is that temperatures plummeted into the low twenties on successive nights in Tennessee. Normally these temperatures do not have any negative impact on plant species during the winter months since most plants lie dormant and are well prepared for freezing temperatures. Unfortunately, these freezing marks occurred during the second week of April, well after the spring green-up. To make matters worse, most Tennessee tree species were in their "flowering" mode which is a necessary component for fruit production. The fruit of many hardwood trees, also called mast, may have been killed off. In other words, come fall there may not be much acorn or nut production throughout most of the state.

Since many animal species rely heavily on mast, especially acorns, there may be widespread effects of the mast failure. If a failure does occur, game species such as squirrel, deer, turkey, and bear will be more active during the day, seeking out alternative food sources. This may lead to increased harvest since the animals will be more exposed during the hunting season, so don't be surprised if previous harvest records are exceeded in 2007. Regardless of the outcome, it's Mother Nature's way of controlling the population.

What will the 2007 mast year look like? Only time will tell.



WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Most WMAs are open with statewide seasons and bag limits but some have restricted dates or quota hunts. See WMA section for specific dates and regulations.

HUNTING HOURS

Thirty minutes before legal sunrise to legal sunset (unless otherwise listed).

LEGAL HUNTING EQUIPMENT

1. Shotguns (28 gauge or larger) using ammunition loaded with number 4 shot or smaller. No restriction on number of rounds in magazine.
2. Longbows, compound bows, crossbows and other bows drawn or held by a mechanical device.
3. Weapons may be equipped with sighting devices except those devices utilizing an artificial light capable of locating wildlife. Night vision scopes are illegal.

PROHIBITED ACTS

- It is illegal to bait for turkeys. Possession of agricultural grain while turkey hunting is prohibited.
- Rifles and handguns are prohibited.
- Turkeys may not be shot or stalked from a boat in Dyer, Haywood, Lauderdale, Obion, Shelby or Tipton counties.
- Use or possession of electronic calls while turkey hunting is prohibited.
- Use of live decoys is prohibited. However, artificial and mounted decoys are permissible.
- Possession of ammunition loaded with shot larger than No. 4 while turkey hunting is prohibited.
- The use of any type of food to feed or attract wild turkeys on WMAs is

prohibited.

- Calling or attempting to call wild turkeys using any means to mimic the sounds made by turkeys is prohibited on all WMAs from March 1 until the opening day of the spring turkey hunts on the WMA.
- A licensed turkey hunter, who has filled his bag limit or does not possess a valid permit for a quota hunt, may accompany another turkey hunter who has a valid permit (except on WMAs where prohibited) and assist him in calling, but may not have a gun or bow in his possession.

WMA SPRING TURKEY QUOTA HUNTS

- Deadline for applications is Feb. 13, 2008. See page 27 for more information.

WHITE TURKEYS

Albino, grey/silver phase, bronze or other non-typical plumages regularly appear in the Tennessee flock but at extremely low frequencies. These aberrantly colored birds are often considered a prized natural trophy or a perceived domestic problem. Very little is known about these color phases but most biologists believe the influence of domestic genes in the wild flock has little impact on population health or the expression of these rare plumages. Regardless of color, all wild turkey in Tennessee are legal for harvest during the open turkey season and must be checked in according to big game check-in procedures.

MEASURING A TURKEY SPUR

