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2012 VERMONT WILDLIFE HARVEST REPORT - WILD TURKEY



FISH & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT
(802) 241-3700 / www.vtfishandwildlife.com



2012 VERMONT WILD TURKEY HARVEST REPORT

Most of the programs described in this report are funded through the *Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program*. This program was initiated in 1937 as the Federal Aid in Wildlife Act and created a system whereby taxes are paid on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment by the public who hunts. Today this excise tax generates more than one hundred million dollars each year that are dedicated to state wildlife restoration and management projects across the United States. The State of Vermont uses these monies for acquiring land, and for restoring and managing wildlife. These excise tax dollars, coupled with state hunting license fees, have been the predominant source of money funding the successful restoration and management of Vermont’s wildlife resources.

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The MISSION of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the people of Vermont.

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

Agency of Natural Resources

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2012 Wild Turkey Report

Wild Turkey Population Status

Vermont's current wild turkey population was estimated at 45,000 to 50,000 birds in the fall of 2012. Wild turkeys occur throughout the state and are hunted in all 24 Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) during the spring season and all but three northern WMUs during the fall season. Examination of long-term trends of harvest and hunter effort suggest that after a fairly dramatic population increase through the period of mid- to late-1990s and into early 2000s, Vermont's turkey population may have stabilized, with the exception of a sharp decline resulting from the severe winter of 2010.



Fish & Wildlife Department staff conduct an annual brood survey in August and September. The results of the survey are important in tracking annual poult production in the population because winter severity and spring weather conditions influence chick survival and overall population size. The wild turkey brood Production Index (PI) is the total poults divided by the total adult hens (poults:hen ratio). The counts from the August and September survey are combined into one index. In 2012, the statewide mean was 3.3 PI. Results of the brood surveys indicate that overall production is the highest observed in recent years. The high numbers of overall turkey observations as well as total birds observed per mile driven indicates that the population remains at a relatively high level (Figure 1).

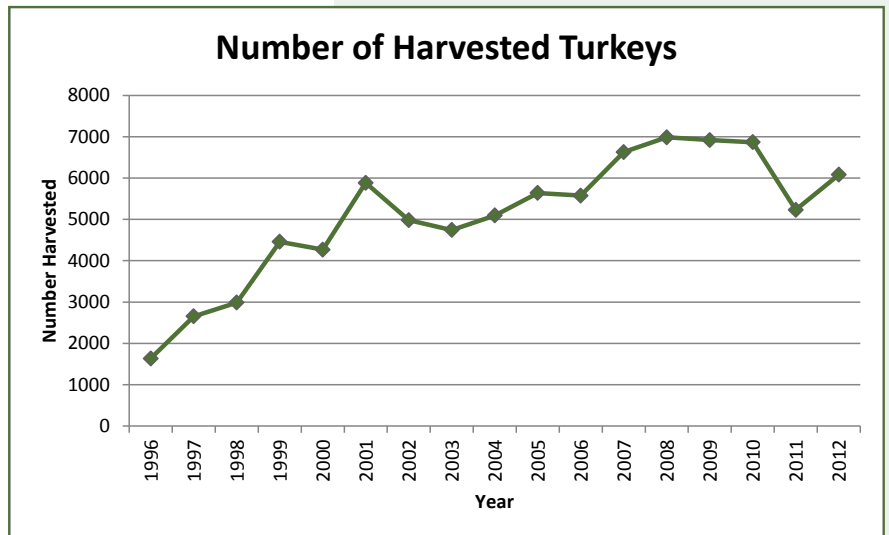


FIGURE 1. ANNUAL TOTAL WILD TURKEY HARVEST TRENDS IN VERMONT FOR 1996-2012. NUMBERS ARE FOR SPRING AND FALL SEASON HARVESTS COMBINED.

2012 Harvest

A total of 18,401 licensed hunters participated the 2012 spring and fall turkey hunt, which resulted in the harvest of 6,079 wild turkeys. Of those, 5,265 were bearded turkeys. Turkeys were harvested statewide in all 24 Wildlife Management Units (Figure 2). The majority of turkeys were harvested during the spring season (78 percent). The 2012 fall season harvest marked a substantial increase from the low 2011 harvest.

During the 2-day youth season, young hunters accompanied by older mentors harvested 614 bearded turkeys and enjoyed a success rate of 25 percent (Table 1).

Vermont allows only half-day hunting during the regular spring season and the youth season. The spring season occurs from May 1 to 31. The youth season is the last weekend in April. Fall turkey season occurs as either a 9-day or a 16-day season in October, with the length varying by WMU. The bag limit is two bearded birds in the spring and one bird of any sex in the fall. Harvest registration is mandatory.

TABLE 1. SPRING 2012 TURKEY HARVEST BY SEASON

Season	Non-Resident	Resident	Unknown	Total
Youth Turkey	10	604	0	614
Regular May	354	3,746	0	4,100
Total	364	4,350	0	4,714

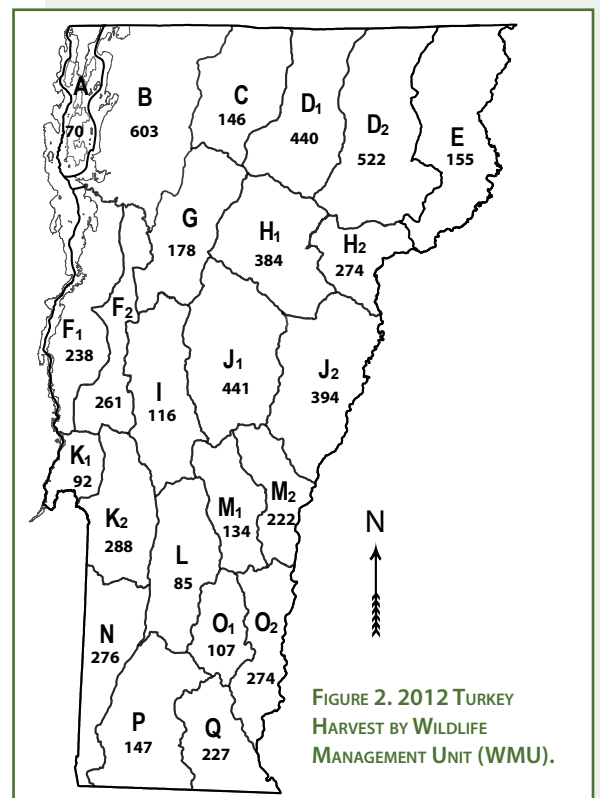
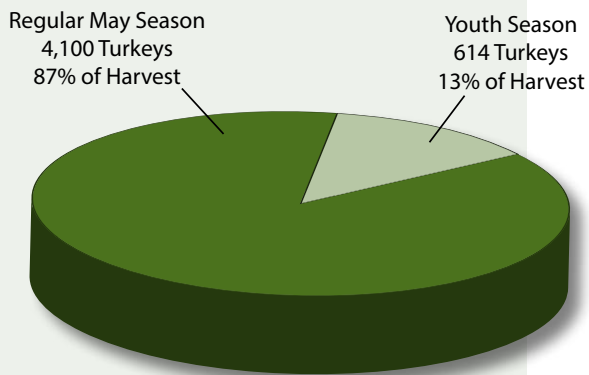
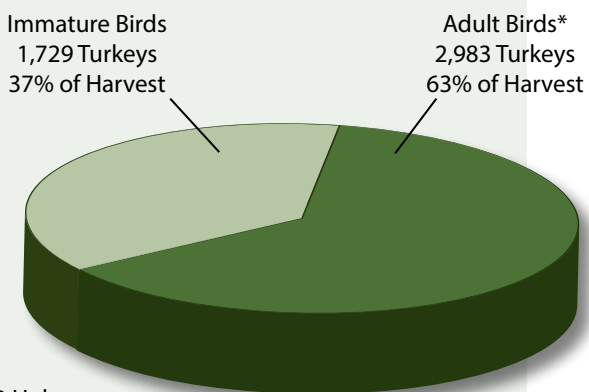


FIGURE 2. 2012 TURKEY HARVEST BY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UNIT (WMU).

TURKEY HARVEST BY SEASON 4,714 TOTAL SPRING HARVEST



TURKEY HARVEST BY AGE 4,714 TOTAL SPRING HARVEST



*2 Unknown

Wild turkeys were harvested in all of Vermont's 24 Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) during the spring season. WMU B had the highest harvest with 523 birds, followed by D2 in north central Vermont (348 birds) and J1 (317 birds) in east central Vermont (Table 3). Wildlife Management Unit A (Champlain Islands) recorded the highest density of turkeys taken with 3.33 bearded turkeys harvested per square mile of forested habitat.

2012 Spring Turkey Season Summary

Hunter success rates remained high with 28 turkeys harvested for every 100 licensed hunters. In most years, 25 percent of these successful hunters also harvest a second bearded bird to fill the two-bird spring bag limit. Hunting pressure in 2012, measured in terms of turkey licenses sold by June 1, was nearly identical to the 2011 season, with 16,989 licenses sold in 2012 compared to 17,003 in 2011.

Adult turkeys comprised 63 percent of the spring harvest, which is comparable to the 2011 spring harvest (64 percent). The 2012 season also included 20 bearded hens in the tally (Table 2). Birds were harvested in 241 of Vermont's 253 towns, which is three more towns than in 2011 (Table 7).

TABLE 2. SEX AND AGE OF SPRING 2012 TURKEY HARVEST

Sex	Adult	Immature	Unknown	Total
Bearded Female	20	0	0	20
Male	2,963	1,729	2	4,964
Total	2,983	1,729	2	4,714

TABLE 3. SPRING 2012 WILD TURKEY HARVEST BY WMU

WMU	Number Harvested	Turkeys Harvested Per Mi ² of Habitat
A	70	3.33
B	523	1.32
C	137	0.39
D1	290	0.84
D2	348	0.63
E	152	0.28
F1	202	2.00
F2	186	1.35
G	106	0.29
H1	266	0.67
H2	180	0.96
I	85	0.21
J1	317	0.67
J2	315	0.66
K1	78	0.99
K2	229	0.88
L	77	0.22
M1	122	0.49
M2	190	0.94
N	230	0.65
O1	89	0.46
O2	213	0.83
P	109	0.24
Q	195	0.72
Unknown	5	—
TOTAL	4,714	—

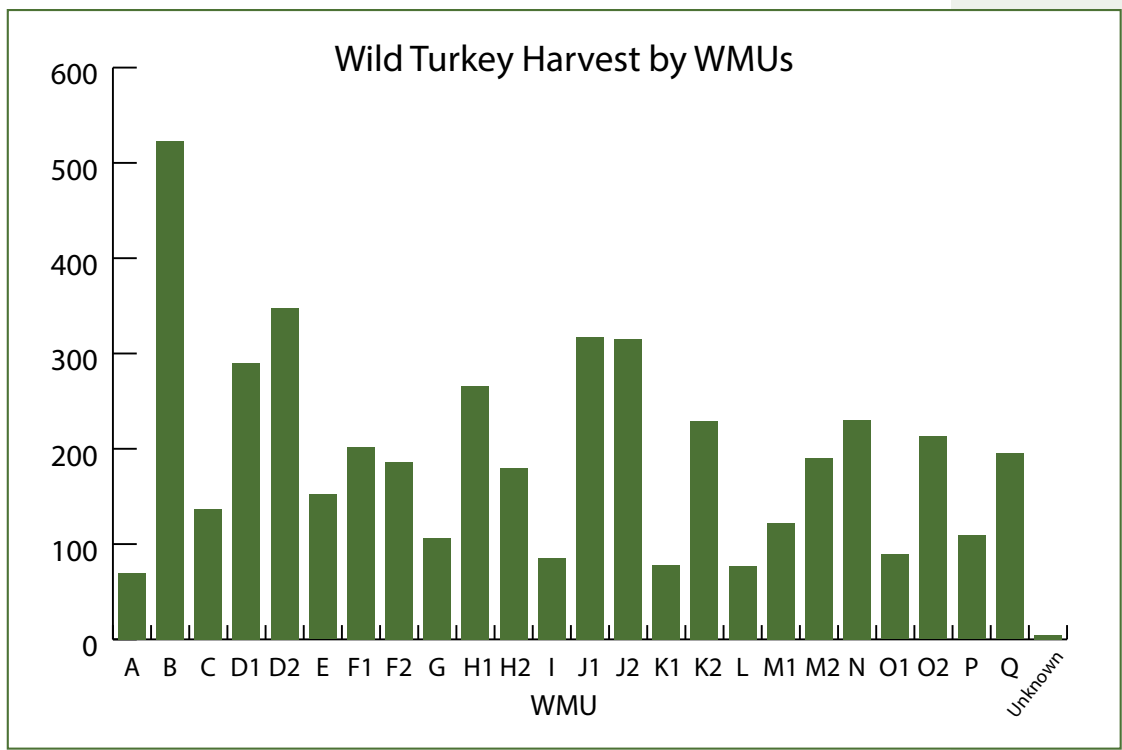


TABLE 4. SPRING 2012 WILD TURKEY HARVEST BY COUNTY

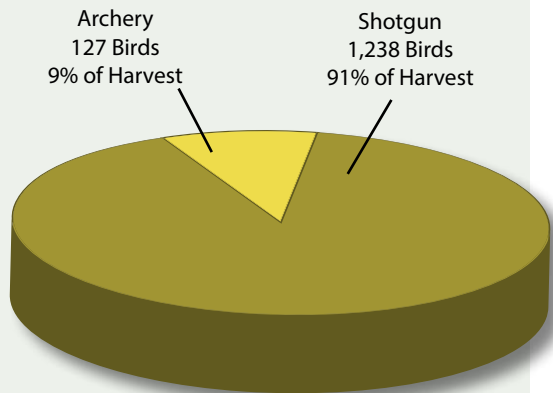
County	Adult	Immature	Unknown	Total
Addison	265	91	0	356
Bennington	174	80	0	254
Caledonia	215	238	1	454
Chittenden	116	82	0	198
Essex	86	75	0	161
Franklin	240	220	1	461
Grand Isle	48	22	0	70
Lamoille	120	104	0	224
Orange	265	156	0	421
Orleans	168	181	0	349
Rutland	325	114	0	439
Washington	194	130	0	324
Windham	326	60	0	386
Windsor	435	176	0	611
Unknown	6	0	0	6
TOTAL	2,983	1,729	2	4,714

Windsor County led among Vermont counties again this year, with the highest harvest numbers reported (611 birds) followed by Franklin County (461 birds), Caledonia County (454 birds), and Rutland County (439 birds) (Table 4).

Management strategies for wild turkeys in Vermont continue to emphasize high-quality spring hunting. The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department believes this management strategy helped stimulate a three-fold population increase over subsequent years, resulting in an impressive string of record harvests.



FALL TURKEY HARVEST METHOD OF HARVEST 1,365 TURKEYS HARVESTED



2012 Fall Turkey Season Summary

The 2012 fall season resulted in a harvest of 1,365 male and female turkeys, up 186 percent from the fall 2011 harvest of 476. The fall harvest accounted for 22 percent of the overall harvest for 2012, which is up markedly from 2011. The increase in fall harvest is likely due to good poult productivity and the observed lack of fall mast crops. This was in stark contrast to 2011 when mast crops, especially the beechnut crop, were much higher than normal, resulting in a lower fall harvest of turkeys for that year.

The 2012 fall archery-only season accounted for 127 (9 percent) of the fall harvested birds, with the balance of the birds (1,238) taken in the shotgun season. Fall birds were taken in 197 Vermont towns. Wildlife Management Unit D2 reported the highest number of fall birds with 174 taken, followed by WMU D1 with 150 birds, J1 with 124 and H1 reporting 118 (Table 5). The recently opened WMUs, accounted for 38 percent of the fall harvest while that region of the state open for a 16-day season (F1, F2, K1, K2 and N) reported 17 percent of the total fall harvest in Vermont (Table 6).

TABLE 5. 2012 FALL WILD TURKEY HARVEST BY WMU

WMU	Harvest	% of Fall Harvest
B	80	5.86%
D1	150	10.99%
D2	174	12.75%
F1	36	2.64%
F2	75	5.49%
G	72	5.27%
H1	118	8.64%
H2	94	6.89%
I	31	2.27%
J1	124	9.08%
J2	79	5.79%
K1	14	1.03%
K2	59	4.32%
L	8	0.59%
M1	12	0.88%
M2	32	2.34%
N	46	3.37%
O1	18	1.32%
O2	61	4.47%
P	38	2.78%
Q	32	2.34%
Unknown	12	0.88%
TOTAL	1,365	100%

TABLE 6. FALL HARVEST BY REGION AND SEASON LENGTH

Region (WMUs)	Season Length	Birds Harvested
F1, F2, K1, K2, N	16-day season	230 (17%)
B, D1, D2, G, H1, H2, I, J1, J2, L, M1, M2, O1, O2, P and Q	9-day season	601 (44%)
New WMUs only (B, D1, D2 and H1)	9-day season	522 (38%)
Unknown		12 (1%)

Final tallies indicate immature birds comprised 25 percent of the fall hunting season harvest, while the female cohort (adult and immature birds) accounted for 60 percent of the fall harvest. The adult female to immature ratio was 1: 0.66. A total of 324 adult males were taken in the fall season, and 2,963 adult males taken in the spring season, for a total of 3,287 adult male birds in all of 2012.

SEX AND AGE DISTRIBUTION OF FALL HARVEST 1,365 TURKEYS HARVESTED

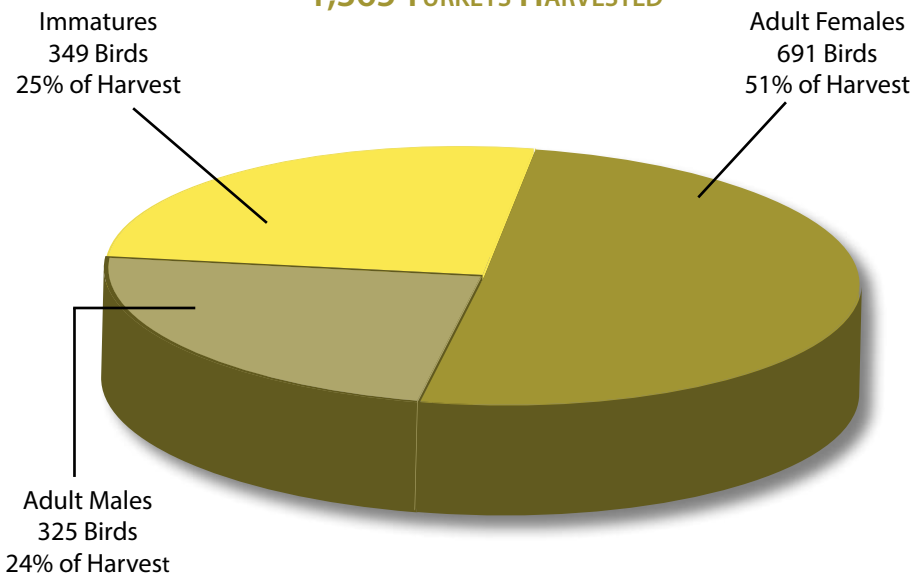


TABLE 7. 2012 LEGAL TURKEY HARVEST BY TOWN

COUNTY	Town	Spring 2012 Harvest	Fall 2012 Harvest	Town Total	
ADDISON	Addison	34	6	40	
	Bridport	31	1	32	
	Bristol	11	6	17	
	Cornwall	17	1	18	
	Ferrisburg	22	5	27	
	Goshen	1	1	2	
	Granville	4	0	4	
	Hancock	4	6	10	
	Leicester	13	13	26	
	Lincoln	9	1	10	
	Middlebury	25	10	35	
	Monkton	15	4	19	
	New Haven	35	6	41	
	Orwell	28	5	33	
	Panton	10	1	11	
	Ripton	9	0	9	
	Salisbury	15	8	23	
	Shoreham	39	12	51	
	Starksboro	11	10	21	
	Vergennes	2	0	2	
	Waltham	3	2	5	
	Weybridge	11	4	15	
	Whiting	7	0	7	
	TOTAL	356	102	458	
BENNINGTON	Arlington	24	0	24	
	Bennington	26	11	37	
	Dorset	25	2	27	
	Landgrove	4	0	4	
	Manchester	8	3	11	
	Peru	4	1	5	
	Pownal	34	7	41	
	Readsboro	6	6	12	
	Rupert	36	6	42	
	Sandgate	20	2	22	
	Searsburg	2	1	3	
	Shaftsbury	38	12	50	
	Stamford	4	2	6	
	Sunderland	5	0	5	
	Winhall	10	3	13	
	Woodford	8	1	9	
		TOTAL	254	57	311
	CALEDONIA	Barnet	36	17	53
Burke		28	9	37	
Danville		46	23	69	

TABLE 7. 2012 LEGAL TURKEY HARVEST BY TOWN

COUNTY	Town	Spring 2012 Harvest	Fall 2012 Harvest	Town Total
CALEDONIA (cont.)	Groton	31	12	43
	Hardwick	58	25	83
	Kirby	27	22	49
	Lyndon	35	28	63
	Newark	8	3	11
	Peacham	21	12	33
	Ryegate	49	19	68
	Saint Johnsbury	21	14	35
	Sheffield	13	4	17
	Stannard	2	1	3
	Sutton	25	12	37
	Walden	24	9	33
	Waterford	24	12	36
	Wheelock	6	1	7
	TOTAL	454	223	677
CHITTENDEN	Bolton	2	0	2
	Charlotte	24	5	29
	Colchester	25	2	27
	Essex	13	5	18
	Hinesburg	8	2	10
	Huntington	9	7	16
	Jericho	6	0	6
	Milton	37	5	42
	Richmond	17	5	22
	Saint George	2	1	3
	Shelburne	10	2	12
	Underhill	10	2	12
	Westford	23	4	27
	Williston	8	5	13
	TOTAL	194	45	239
ESSEX	Averill	1	0	1
	Bloomfield	19	0	19
	Brighton	17	5	22
	Brunswick	8	0	8
	Canaan	7	2	9
	Concord	22	3	25
	East Haven	7	0	7
	Ferdinand	3	0	3
	Granby	5	1	6
	Guildhall	14	0	14
	Lemington	4	0	4
	Lunenburg	21	0	21
	Maidstone	13	0	13
	Norton	13	0	13

TABLE 7. 2012 LEGAL TURKEY HARVEST BY TOWN

COUNTY	Town	Spring 2012 Harvest	Fall 2012 Harvest	Town Total
ESSEX (cont.)	Unknown	1	0	1
	Victory	6	0	6
	TOTAL	161	11	172
FRANKLIN	Bakersfield	15	3	18
	Berkshire	35	10	45
	Enosburg	40	5	45
	Fairfax	41	10	51
	Fairfield	57	4	61
	Fletcher	21	8	29
	Franklin	43	2	45
	Georgia	17	4	21
	Highgate	76	2	78
	Montgomery	17	3	20
	Richford	18	1	19
	Saint Albans	19	2	21
	Sheldon	28	5	33
	Swanton	34	0	34
	TOTAL	461	59	520
GRAND ISLE	Alburgh	15	0	15
	Grand Isle	21	0	21
	Isle La Motte	1	0	1
	North Hero	9	0	9
	South Hero	24	0	24
	TOTAL	70	0	70
LAMOILLE	Belvidere	4	0	4
	Cambridge	39	13	52
	Eden	13	5	18
	Elmore	15	6	21
	Hyde Park	32	21	53
	Johnson	21	14	35
	Morristown	36	26	62
	Stowe	29	23	52
	Waterville	5	0	5
	Wolcott	30	13	43
	TOTAL	224	121	345
Orange	Bradford	23	9	32
	Braintree	16	3	19
	Brookfield	39	12	51
	Chelsea	26	9	35
	Corinth	27	6	33
	Fairlee	8	1	9
	Newbury	46	20	66

TABLE 7. 2012 LEGAL TURKEY HARVEST BY TOWN

COUNTY	Town	Spring 2012 Harvest	Fall 2012 Harvest	Town Total
ORANGE (cont.)	Orange	17	6	23
	Randolph	21	17	38
	Strafford	19	2	21
	Thetford	16	3	19
	Topsham	25	11	36
	Tunbridge	44	11	55
	Vershire	18	0	18
	Washington	10	3	13
	West Fairlee	17	0	17
	Williamstown	49	26	75
	TOTAL		421	139
ORLEANS	Albany	19	7	26
	Barton	22	10	32
	Brownington	23	5	28
	Charleston	27	16	43
	Coventry	17	9	26
	Craftsbury	24	16	40
	Derby	22	8	30
	Glover	27	12	39
	Greensboro	19	10	29
	Holland	21	9	30
	Irasburg	19	17	36
	Lowell	16	2	18
	Morgan	20	14	34
	Newport	41	12	53
	Troy	23	11	34
	Westfield	5	1	6
	Westmore	4	2	6
	TOTAL		349	161
RUTLAND	Benson	34	7	41
	Brandon	16	5	21
	Castleton	24	6	30
	Chittenden	19	4	23
	Clarendon	18	2	20
	Danby	22	4	26
	Fair Haven	12	0	12
	Hubbardton	16	1	17
	Ira	10	0	10
	Killington	4	0	4
	Mendon	4	0	4
	Middletown Springs	14	6	20
	Mount Holly	9	2	11
	Mount Tabor	6	0	6

TABLE 7. 2012 LEGAL TURKEY HARVEST BY TOWN

COUNTY	Town	Spring 2012 Harvest	Fall 2012 Harvest	Town Total
RUTLAND (cont.)	Pawlet	40	15	55
	Pittsfield	4	2	6
	Pittsford	31	14	45
	Poultney	30	9	39
	Proctor	5	0	5
	Rutland	12	5	17
	Shrewsbury	14	0	14
	Sudbury	19	1	20
	Tinmouth	13	0	13
	Wallingford	17	2	19
	Wells	16	3	19
	West Haven	19	4	23
	West Rutland	15	10	25
	TOTAL	443	102	545
WASHINGTON	Barre	41	12	53
	Berlin	23	4	27
	Cabot	34	17	51
	Calais	18	6	24
	Duxbury	10	0	10
	East Montpelier	33	15	48
	Fayston	3	4	7
	Marshfield	29	8	37
	Middlesex	11	7	18
	Montpelier	0	3	3
	Moretown	18	7	25
	Northfield	26	9	35
	Plainfield	19	13	32
	Roxbury	5	2	7
	Waitsfield	12	11	23
	Warren	7	4	11
	Waterbury	17	11	28
	Woodbury	12	1	13
	Worcester	6	5	11
	TOTAL	324	139	463
WINDHAM	Athens	4	0	4
	Brattleboro	21	2	23
	Brookline	5	8	13
	Dover	9	4	13
	Dummerston	14	5	19
	Grafton	10	4	14
	Guilford	36	3	39
	Halifax	23	1	24
	Jamaica	14	2	16
	Londonderry	14	4	18

TABLE 7. 2012 LEGAL TURKEY HARVEST BY TOWN

COUNTY	Town	Spring 2012 Harvest	Fall 2012 Harvest	Town Total
WINDHAM (cont.)	Marlboro	16	1	17
	Newfane	22	3	25
	Putney	10	3	13
	Rockingham	36	17	53
	Somerset	1	0	1
	Stratton	9	0	9
	Townshend	22	4	26
	Vernon	25	3	28
	Wardsboro	11	0	11
	Westminster	19	5	24
	Whitingham	21	10	31
	Wilmington	37	18	55
	Windham	7	1	8
	TOTAL	386	98	484
	WINDSOR	Andover	19	2
Baltimore		6	2	8
Barnard		15	0	15
Bethel		22	6	28
Bridgewater		18	3	21
Cavendish		16	2	18
Chester		46	10	56
Hartford		29	12	41
Hartland		49	7	56
Ludlow		21	2	23
Norwich		26	5	31
Plymouth		11	4	15
Pomfret		28	4	32
Reading		22	1	23
Rochester		20	11	31
Royalton		15	5	20
Sharon		19	2	21
Springfield		66	13	79
Stockbridge		8	3	11
Weathersfield		59	6	65
West Windsor		20	3	23
Weston		10	1	11
Windsor		29	2	31
Woodstock	37	2	39	
TOTAL	611	108	719	
UNKNOWN	TOTAL	6	0	6
STATE TOTAL		4,714	1,365	6,079