



2014 VERMONT WILDLIFE HARVEST REPORT – WILD TURKEY



VERMONT

FISH & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

(802) 828-1000 / www.vtfishandwildlife.com



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 over a 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.

2014 Vermont Wild Turkey Harvest Report

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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

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2014 Wild Turkey Report

Wild Turkey



Wild Turkey Population Status

Vermont's wild turkey population was estimated at 45,000 to 60,000 birds in the fall of 2014. Wild turkeys occur throughout the state and are hunted in all 21 Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) during the spring and fall seasons. Examination of long-term trends of harvest and hunter effort suggests that Vermont's turkey population may have recently stabilized following a fairly dramatic population increase from the mid-1990s through 2008. The population also appears to have bounced back following a slight decline as a result of the severe winter of 2010.

Department staff conduct a brood survey during August and September. The results of the survey are important in tracking annual poult production in the population, as winter severity and spring weather conditions influence chick survival and overall population size. The wild turkey brood Production Index (PI) is the total poults/total adult hens (poults:hen ratio) compiled from the August data. In 2013 the statewide ratio was 2.2 poults:hen (PI). In 2014, the statewide ratio was 2.8 poults:hen (PI). Results of the August brood surveys indicate that overall production was on par with the rolling 3-year average of 2.9 (2011-2013).

2014 Harvest

A total of 18,286 turkey licenses were purchased for the spring and fall turkey seasons, leading to an annual harvest of 6,392 wild turkeys. Of those, 5,584 were bearded turkeys, including bearded females. Turkeys were harvested statewide in all 21 WMUs (Figure 1). The majority of turkeys were harvested during the regular spring season (72 percent). The 2014 fall season harvest was above the rolling 3-year average of 816.

FIGURE 1. TOTAL WILD TURKEY HARVEST TRENDS BY SEASON IN VERMONT. SPRING NUMBERS INCLUDE YOUTH WEEKEND HARVEST

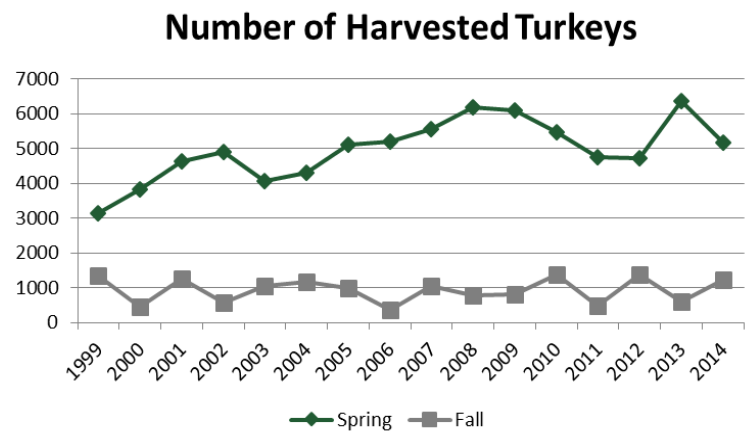
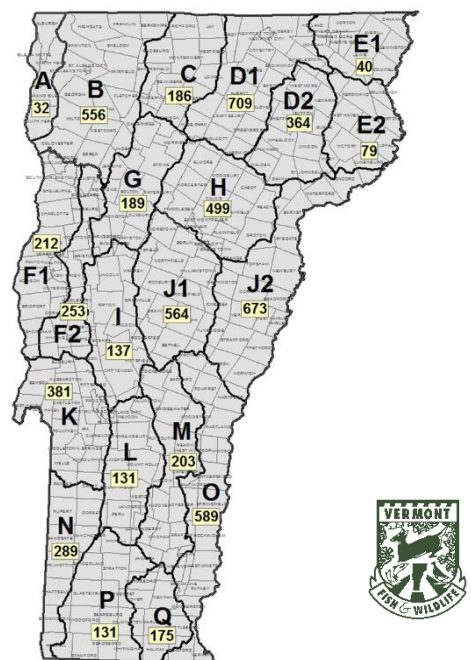


FIGURE 2. 2014 TURKEY HARVEST BY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UNIT (WMU)



During the 2-day youth season, young hunters accompanied by older mentors harvested 547 bearded turkeys (Table 1) and enjoyed a success rate of 23 percent.

Refinement of license sales reported for more accurate youth weekend license totals has resulted in a lower calculated success rate than that of previous years.

Vermont allows half-day hunting during both the youth season and the regular spring season. The youth season is the last weekend in April. The regular spring season is throughout the month of May, while the fall season occurs as either a 9-day or a 16-day season in October with the length varying by WMU. The bag limit is 1 bearded bird on youth weekend, 2 bearded birds in May, and 1 bird of any sex in the fall. Harvest registration is mandatory for all successful turkey hunters.

2014 Spring Turkey Season Summary

Vermont's 2014 spring seasons resulted in a harvest of 5,160 bearded birds, which is just short of the rolling 3-year average of 5,277. The 2014 spring figure includes the 547 turkeys taken during the April youth turkey hunting weekend (Tables 1 and 3). The youth season contribution to the total spring turkey harvest was 11 percent, a similar harvest proportion to that seen in 2013. Resident hunters took 93 percent of the total spring harvest.

Hunter success rates remained high in 2014 at 31 percent (or 31 turkeys harvested for every 100 licensed hunters). As in most years, an impressive 27 percent of successful hunters also harvested a second bearded bird to fill the 2-bird regular spring season bag limit. Hunting pressure in 2014, measured in terms of spring

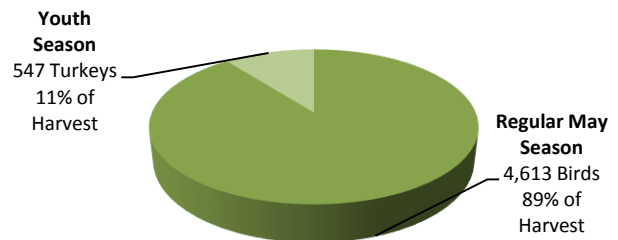
TABLE 1. 2014 SPRING TURKEY HARVEST BY SEASON

Season	Non-Resident	Resident	Unknown	Total
Youth Turkey Season	14	533	0	547
Regular May Season	324	4,289	0	4,613
TOTAL	338	4,822	0	5,160

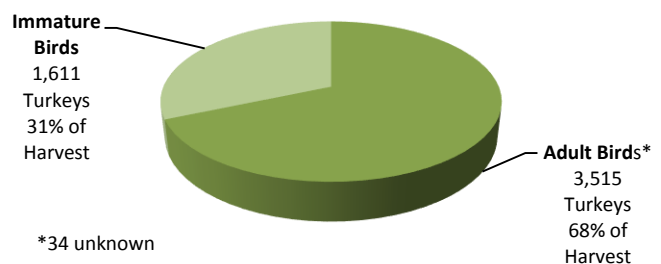
turkey license sales sold by June 1, 2014 (16,505), matched the 3-year average of 16,153 licenses.

Adult turkeys comprised 68 percent of the total spring harvest, which is slightly higher than the rolling 3-year average of 63 percent. The 2014 spring seasons also included 39 bearded hens in the tally (Table 2). Birds were harvested in 242 of Vermont's 253 towns, 2 fewer towns than in 2013 (Table 6).

**FIGURE 3. TURKEY HARVEST BY SEASON
5,160 TOTAL SPRING HARVEST**



**FIGURE 4. TURKEY HARVEST BY AGE
5,160 TOTAL SPRING HARVEST**



In 2014, some WMU boundaries were adjusted to make select units more uniform in their habitat characteristics. Wild turkeys were harvested in all of Vermont's 21 WMUs, including those with adjusted boundaries, during the spring seasons (Table 3 and Figure 2). With its boundary adjustment, WMU J2 along the Connecticut River had the highest harvest with 536 birds reported. The second highest came from WMU O in the southern Connecticut River valley (former WMUs O2 and M2) with 506 birds reported. Lastly, WMU D1 in north-central Vermont had the third highest harvest with 495 birds reported.

In conjunction with WMU boundary adjustments, updated analysis of land cover was conducted to model available turkey habitat based on the new WMU boundaries. Based on these updates, WMU F1 recorded the highest density of turkeys taken with 1.84 bearded turkeys harvested per square mile of forested habitat (Table 3).

Windsor County led among Vermont counties in 2014 with the highest harvest number reported (645 birds) followed by Orange County (540 birds), Caledonia County (485 birds), and Rutland County (460 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 has helped stimulate a three-fold population increase over the history of the turkey project, resulting in an impressive string of record harvests.

2014 Fall Turkey Season Summary

The 2014 fall season resulted in a harvest of 1,232 either-sex turkeys, well above the rolling 3-year average of 816 (Table 3). The fall harvest accounted for 19 percent of the overall harvest for 2014. The higher than average fall harvest is likely a reflection of a low beechnut production year as well as the within-average poult production. Although 2014 saw a good acorn mast, turkey habitat now extends beyond the range of oaks and the role of beechnuts is more important. This high fall harvest is in contrast to 2013 when mast crops were much higher than normal, resulting in a lower fall harvest of turkeys for that year.

The 2014 fall archery-only season accounted for 152 (12 percent) of the fall harvested birds, with the balance of the birds (1,081) taken in the shotgun season. Fall birds were taken in 197 Vermont towns. With the boundary changes as noted in the spring season section of this report, WMU D1 reported the highest number of fall birds with 214 taken, followed by WMU J2 with 137 birds, J1 with 133, and H reporting 121 (Table 3). The region of the state with a 9-day season harvested 0.20 birds per square mile of habitat, while the region of the state open for a 16-day season reported a harvest of 0.17 birds per square mile of habitat (Table 5). The archery-only portion of the state (open for a 21-day season) harvested fewer birds per square mile of habitat (0.01).

Immature birds comprised 43 percent of the fall hunting season harvest, while the female cohort accounted for 36 percent of the fall harvest (Figure 5). The adult female to immature ratio for the fall harvest was 1:1.19.

A total of 122 adult males were taken in the fall season and 3,494 adult males taken in the spring season, for a total of 3,616 adult male birds in all of 2014.

TABLE 2. SEX AND AGE OF TOTAL SPRING 2014 HARVEST

Sex	Adult	Immature	Unknown	Total
Bearded Female	21	1	17	39
Male	3,494	1,610	17	5,121
TOTAL	3,515 (68%)	1,611 (31%)	34	5,160

TABLE 3. 2014 SEASON HARVEST BY WMU

WMU	Mi ² of Habitat	Spring Youth	Regular Spring	Fall Archery	Fall Shotgun	Total Harvest	Spring Harvest Per Mi ² of Harvest
A	32	6	24	2	—	32	0.94
B	407	70	401	21	64	556	1.16
C	349	21	158	6	1	186	0.51
D1*	446	56	439	13	201	709	1.11
D2*	345	42	212	10	100	364	0.74
E1*	305	2	37	—	1	40	0.13
E2*	325	8	70	—	1	79	0.24
F1	103	15	175	3	19	212	1.84
F2	154	26	192	2	33	253	1.41
G	360	7	127	6	49	189	0.37
H*	464	50	329	13	107	499	0.81
I	405	3	95	5	34	137	0.24
J1	462	29	402	14	119	564	0.93
J2*	630	57	479	17	120	673	0.85
K*	354	33	284	9	55	381	0.89
L	343	12	88	8	23	131	0.29
M*	423	9	175	4	15	203	0.43
N	173	29	231	6	23	289	0.95
O*	475	44	462	13	70	589	1.06
P	444	12	93	3	23	131	0.24
Q*	218	16	140	3	16	175	0.71
Unknown	—	0	0	0	0	0	—
TOTAL	7,320	547	4,613	158	1,074	6,392	—

*indicate WMU boundary changed in 2014



Photo courtesy Joel Flewelling

TABLE 4. 2014 REGULAR SPRING AND YOUTH SEASON HARVEST BY COUNTY

County	Adult	Immature	Unknown	Total
Addison	236	112	1	349
Bennington	214	70	0	284
Caledonia	323	161	1	485
Chittenden	147	60	1	208
Essex	82	33	2	117
Franklin	250	163	0	413
Grand Isle	23	7	0	30
Lamoille	159	74	1	234
Orange	363	176	1	540
Orleans	261	181	1	443
Rutland	360	99	1	460
Washington	270	153	0	423
Windham	291	108	3	402
Windsor	478	164	3	645
Unknown	74	52	1	127
TOTAL	3,531	1,613	16	5,160

FIGURE 5. TURKEY HARVEST BY AGE
1,232 TOTAL FALL HARVEST

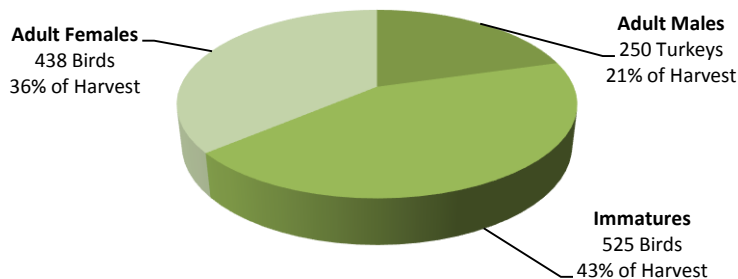


TABLE 5. 2014 FALL HARVEST BY SQUARE MILE AND SEASON LENGTH

Region (WMUs)	Season Length	Birds Harvested Per Mi ² Habitat
F ₁ , F ₂ , K, and N	16-day season	0.17
B, D ₁ , D ₂ , G, H, I, J ₁ , J ₂ , L, M, O, P, and Q	9-day season	0.20
Archery-only A, C, E ₁ , and E ₂	21-day season	0.01

TABLE 6. HARVEST BY TOWN (SPRING 2014 AND FALL 2014)

County	Town	Spring 2014 Harvest	Fall 2014 Harvest	Town Total
ADDISON	Addison	17	2	19
	Bridport	21	1	22
	Bristol	19	9	28
	Cornwall	16	4	20
	Ferrisburgh	31	1	32
	Goshen	6	0	6
	Granville	5	0	5
	Hancock	9	9	18
	Leicester	8	3	11
	Lincoln	18	9	27
	Middlebury	25	3	28
	Monkton	23	2	25
	New Haven	40	5	45
	Orwell	31	3	34
	Panton	8	1	9
	Ripton	5	0	5
	Salisbury	20	4	24
	Shoreham	40	5	45
	Starksboro	15	3	18
	Vergennes	2	0	2
	Waltham	6	1	7
	Weybridge	10	0	10
Whiting	5	1	6	
	TOTAL	380	66	446
BENNINGTON	Arlington	25	1	26
	Bennington	31	2	33
	Dorset	30	8	38
	Landgrove	1	0	1
	Manchester	17	0	17
	Peru	5	0	5
	Pownal	36	5	41
	Readsboro	7	4	11
	Rupert	35	3	38
	Sandgate	25	1	26
	Searsburg	6	1	7
	Shaftsbury	39	4	43
	Stamford	10	0	10
	Sunderland	8	0	8
Winhall	5	3	8	

TABLE 6. HARVEST BY TOWN (SPRING 2014 AND FALL 2014)

County	Town	Spring 2014 Harvest	Fall 2014 Harvest	Town Total
BENNINGTON (cont.)	Woodford	4	1	5
	TOTAL	284	33	317
CALEDONIA	Barnet	38	7	45
	Burke	20	16	36
	Danville	51	10	61
	Groton	38	9	47
	Hardwick	43	17	60
	Kirby	28	4	32
	Lyndon	47	22	69
	Newark	13	0	13
	Peacham	33	12	45
	Ryegate	56	28	84
	St. Johnsbury	25	9	34
	Sheffield	19	7	26
	Stannard	5	1	6
	Sutton	18	11	29
	Walden	34	12	46
	Waterford	35	13	48
	Wheelock	7	11	18
	TOTAL	510	189	699
CHITTENDEN	Bolton	5	2	7
	Charlotte	28	3	31
	Colchester	13	2	15
	Essex	15	1	16
	Hinesburg	23	7	30
	Huntington	14	4	18
	Jericho	9	3	12
	Milton	32	7	39
	Richmond	14	3	17
	St. George	7	1	8
	Shelburne	9	1	10
	Underhill	15	3	18
	Westford	16	0	16
	Williston	15	0	15
	TOTAL	215	37	252
ESSEX	Averill	1	0	1
	Bloomfield	5	0	5

TABLE 6. HARVEST BY TOWN (SPRING 2014 AND FALL 2014)

County	Town	Spring 2014 Harvest	Fall 2014 Harvest	Town Total
ESSEX (cont.)	Brighton	10	1	11
	Brunswick	3	0	3
	Canaan	10	0	10
	Concord	21	1	22
	East Haven	5	1	6
	Ferdinand	3	0	3
	Granby	3	0	3
	Guildhall	8	0	8
	Lemington	5	0	5
	Lewis	1	0	1
	Lunenburg	15	2	17
	Maidstone	14	0	14
	Norton	8	0	8
	Victory	3	0	3
	TOTAL	115	5	120
FRANKLIN	Bakersfield	36	1	37
	Berkshire	40	16	56
	Enosburg	46	3	49
	Fairfax	32	2	34
	Fairfield	51	10	61
	Fletcher	18	2	20
	Franklin	24	8	32
	Georgia	24	2	26
	Highgate	65	11	76
	Montgomery	32	1	33
	Richford	31	3	34
	St. Albans	17	3	20
	Sheldon	39	6	45
	Swanton	23	4	27
TOTAL	478	72	550	
GRAND ISLE	Alburgh	4	1	5
	Grand Isle	7	0	7
	Isle La Motte	2	0	2
	North Hero	11	0	11
	South Hero	6	1	7
TOTAL	30	2	32	
LAMOILLE	Cambridge	34	3	37

TABLE 6. HARVEST BY TOWN (SPRING 2014 AND FALL 2014)

County	Town	Spring 2014 Harvest	Fall 2014 Harvest	Town Total
LAMOILLE (cont.)	Eden	19	4	23
	Elmore	10	3	13
	Hyde Park	43	16	59
	Johnson	22	9	31
	Morristown	43	23	66
	Stowe	29	19	48
	Waterville	11	0	11
	Wolcott	23	12	35
	TOTAL	234	89	323
ORANGE	Bradford	33	1	34
	Braintree	20	20	40
	Brookfield	41	14	55
	Chelsea	37	9	46
	Corinth	39	6	45
	Fairlee	11	3	14
	Newbury	55	7	62
	Orange	26	8	34
	Randolph	38	13	51
	Strafford	21	5	26
	Thetford	30	12	42
	Topsham	36	8	44
	Tunbridge	53	13	66
	Vershire	19	4	23
	Washington	27	3	30
	West Fairlee	5	2	7
	Williamstown	49	15	64
TOTAL	540	143	683	
ORLEANS	Albany	14	10	24
	Barton	25	22	47
	Brownington	33	9	42
	Charleston	22	15	37
	Coventry	25	6	31
	Craftsbury	50	21	71
	Derby	36	10	46
	Glover	33	18	51
	Greensboro	28	16	44
	Holland	20	8	28
	Irasburg	27	9	36

TABLE 6. HARVEST BY TOWN (SPRING 2014 AND FALL 2014)

County	Town	Spring 2014 Harvest	Fall 2014 Harvest	Town Total
ORLEANS (cont.)	Jay	7	0	7
	Lowell	22	4	26
	Morgan	10	5	15
	Newport	46	11	57
	Troy	27	14	41
	Westfield	12	3	15
	Westmore	6	2	8
	TOTAL	443	183	626
RUTLAND	Benson	35	10	45
	Brandon	18	6	24
	Castleton	19	3	22
	Chittenden	13	4	17
	Clarendon	25	2	27
	Danby	21	7	28
	Fair Haven	6	0	6
	Hubbardton	21	2	23
	Ira	11	3	14
	Killington	5	0	5
	Mendon	4	0	4
	Middletown Springs	14	1	15
	Mount Holly	9	5	14
	Mount Tabor	1	3	4
	Pawlet	38	9	47
	Pittsfield	5	2	7
	Pittsford	39	10	49
	Poultney	38	2	40
	Proctor	6	2	8
	Rutland	8	6	14
	Shrewsbury	23	3	26
	Sudbury	8	2	10
	Tinmouth	12	4	16
	Wallingford	25	5	30
	Wells	19	6	25
	West Haven	24	0	24
West Rutland	13	5	18	
TOTAL	460	102	562	
WASHINGTON	Barre	59	15	74
	Berlin	38	5	43

TABLE 6. HARVEST BY TOWN (SPRING 2014 AND FALL 2014)

County	Town	Spring 2014 Harvest	Fall 2014 Harvest	Town Total
WASHINGTON (cont.)	Cabot	35	21	56
	Calais	12	9	21
	Duxbury	5	5	10
	East Montpelier	44	9	53
	Fayston	6	4	10
	Marshfield	27	14	41
	Middlesex	6	3	9
	Montpelier	2	2	4
	Moretown	16	3	19
	Northfield	43	7	50
	Plainfield	38	12	50
	Roxbury	12	3	15
	Waitsfield	16	11	27
	Warren	12	3	15
	Waterbury	32	4	36
	Woodbury	7	3	10
	Worcester	13	1	14
		TOTAL	423	134
WINDHAM	Athens	8	1	9
	Brattleboro	17	1	18
	Brookline	15	0	15
	Dover	24	8	32
	Dummerston	16	3	19
	Grafton	10	5	15
	Guilford	33	1	34
	Halifax	25	7	32
	Jamaica	16	6	22
	Londonderry	17	7	24
	Marlboro	15	1	16
	Newfane	11	0	11
	Putney	1	2	3
	Rockingham	45	12	57
	Somerset	1	0	1
	Stratton	6	0	6
	Townshend	33	5	38
	Vernon	16	4	20
Wardsboro	11	0	11	
Westminster	27	0	27	
Whitingham	13	7	20	

TABLE 6. HARVEST BY TOWN (SPRING 2014 AND FALL 2014)

County	Town	Spring 2014 Harvest	Fall 2014 Harvest	Town Total
WINDHAM (cont.)	Wilmington	30	9	39
	Windham	12	0	12
	TOTAL	402	79	481
WINDSOR	Andover	18	1	19
	Baltimore	4	0	4
	Barnard	16	1	17
	Bethel	25	3	28
	Bridgewater	22	0	22
	Cavendish	28	5	33
	Chester	50	5	55
	Hartford	31	3	34
	Hartland	43	9	52
	Ludlow	15	1	16
	Norwich	28	6	34
	Plymouth	16	4	20
	Pomfret	24	3	27
	Reading	11	0	11
	Rochester	27	11	38
	Royalton	27	6	33
	Sharon	23	0	23
	Springfield	81	14	95
	Stockbridge	14	2	16
	Weathersfield	61	11	72
	West Windsor	14	4	18
Weston	8	3	11	
Windsor	26	5	31	
Woodstock	33	2	35	
	TOTAL	645	99	744
UNKNOWN	TOTAL	0	0	0
STATE TOTAL		5,160	1,233	6,393