



STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE WILD TURKEY IN 2004

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Abstract: Wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) populations in North America have increased steadily in the past 50 years since restoration began in earnest. This increase is the result of intensified restoration efforts, improved habitat conditions and increased protection. A North American survey of wild turkey populations was first published in the 1959 *Proceedings of the First Wild Turkey Symposium*. Similar surveys have been made every 5 years since 1970 and the results published in all but one of the subsequent wild turkey symposia. In 2004, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agency biologists responsible for wild turkey programs to determine the status of the bird in their jurisdiction. Based on the survey, we describe the current distribution of wild turkeys in North America. We report population estimates by subspecies, compare current occupied range to that of 5 years ago, compare hunter numbers and harvest numbers with figures from 1999, and report on the status of each state's or province's restoration program. Wild turkey populations have increased between 1.2–1.4 million birds in the past 5 years, and in 2004 were estimated to be between 6.6–6.9 million birds. The total annual harvest increased by 24% to 920,012, which included 730,541 birds taken during the 2004 spring hunting season. The number of turkey hunters increased 6% in the past 5 years to more than 2.8 million.

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Key words: distribution, harvest, hunters, *Meleagris gallopavo*, populations, range, restoration, wild turkey.

In 1941, there was serious doubt that the wild turkey would remain a game species in the United States because populations were on the decline throughout most of their range (Blakey 1941). Regional extirpation and severe population declines through habitat destruction and subsistence hunting caused some people to wonder if the species could survive at all (Davis 1949). As tenant farms and harvested forests of the

Table 1. Estimates of wild turkey populations by subspecies, 1999 and 2004.

Subspecies	1999 ^a	2004
Eastern	4,213,862–4,231,862	5,131,384–5,389,384
Florida	80,000	80,000–100,000
Rio Grande	742,800	1,022,700–1,025,700
Merriam's	242,300–246,300	334,460–344,460
Gould's	350–500	650–800
Hybrid	181,100	116,600–117,800
Total	5,460,412–5,482,562	6,685,794–6,978,144

^a Tapley et al. (2001a).

Table 2. States with largest wild turkey populations, 2004.

State	Population
Missouri	600,000–800,000
Texas	600,500
Alabama	450,000
Mississippi	395,784
Wisconsin	350,000+
Georgia	350,000
Pennsylvania	342,000
Tennessee	270,000–300,000
New York	250,000
California	244,000–246,000
Iowa	200,000
Kentucky	200,000
Michigan	180,000
Arkansas	175,000
Ohio	170,000
Virginia	145,000
Oklahoma	140,000
North Carolina	130,000
South Carolina	120,000
Illinois	120,000 ^a

^a Tapley et al. (2001a).

Table 3. Estimates of wild turkey populations by state and province, 1999 and 2004.

State/province	Subspecies	Population estimate		Percent change
		1999 ^a	2004	
United States:				
Alabama	Eastern	350,000	450,000	+29
Arizona	Merriam's	20,000	20,000	0
	Gould's	150–300	500	N/A ^b
Arkansas	Eastern	153,000	175,000	+14
	Hybrid	2,000	N/A	N/A
California	Eastern	100	N/A	N/A
	Rio Grande	600	242,000 ^c	+40,233
	Merriam's	400	2,000–4,000	N/A
Colorado	Hybrid	100,200	N/A	N/A
	Rio Grande	4,000	2,000–3,000	N/A
	Merriam's	18,000	20,000–22,000	N/A
Connecticut	Eastern	25,000–35,000	40,000	N/A
Delaware	Eastern	3,000	3,500	+17
Florida	Florida	80,000	80,000–100,000	N/A
	Eastern	20,000	20,000–25,000	N/A
Georgia	Eastern	400,000	350,000	-13
Hawaii	Rio Grande	33,000	33,000 ^a	0
Idaho	Eastern	500	Unknown	N/A
	Rio Grande	3,000	500	-83
	Merriam's	21,000	30,000	+43
	Hybrid	5,500	Unknown	N/A
Illinois	Eastern	120,000	120,000 ^a	0
Indiana	Eastern	70,000	90,000–100,000	N/A
Iowa	Eastern	130,000	200,000	+54
Kansas	Eastern	20,000	N/A	N/A
	Rio Grande	5,000	N/A	N/A
	Hybrid	40,000	N/A	N/A
Kentucky	Eastern	150,000	200,000	+33
Louisiana	Eastern	65,000	75,000	+15
Maine	Eastern	10,000	25,000 ⁺	+150
Maryland	Eastern	28,000–32,000	30,000–35,000	N/A
Massachusetts	Eastern	>15,000	25,000–28,000	N/A
Michigan	Eastern	135,000	180,000	+33
Minnesota	Eastern	35,000	60,000	+71
Mississippi	Eastern	300,000	395,784	+32
Missouri	Eastern	450,000	600,000–800,000	N/A
Montana	Eastern	<5,000	<5,000	0
	Merriam's	80,000	80,000	0
Nebraska	Eastern	50	N/A	N/A
	Rio Grande	<100	N/A	N/A
	Merriam's	10,000	20,000	+100
	Hybrid	25,000	60,000	+140
Nevada	Rio Grande	3,500	1,200	-66
	Merriam's	100	60	-40
New Hampshire	Eastern	15,000	28,000	+87
New Jersey	Eastern	18,000–22,000	23,000	N/A
New Mexico	Rio Grande	5,000	N/A	N/A
	Merriam's	25,000	25,000–30,000	N/A
	Gould's	200	150–300	N/A
	Hybrids	0	300–500	N/A
New York	Eastern	250,000	250,000	0
North Carolina	Eastern	100,000	130,000	+30
North Dakota	Eastern	10,000	10,000 ^a	0
	Merriam's	1,200	1,200 ^a	0
	Hybrid	800	800 ^a	0
Ohio	Eastern	146,000	170,000	+16
Oklahoma	Eastern	15,000	30,000	+100
	Rio Grande	70,000	110,000	+57
Oregon	Rio Grande	25,000	25,000–27,000	N/A
	Merriam's	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Hybrid	2,000	2,000–3,000	N/A
Pennsylvania	Eastern	>300,000	342,000	+14
Rhode Island	Eastern	4,000	6,000	+50
South Carolina	Eastern	100,000	120,000	+20
South Dakota	Eastern	2,000	2,000	0
	Rio Grande	2,000	2,000 ^a	0
	Merriam's	36,000	20,000	-44
	Hybrid	1,000	30,000	+2,900
Tennessee	Eastern	160,000	270,000–300,000	N/A

Table 3. Continued.

State/province	Subspecies	Population estimate		Percent change
		1999 ^a	2004	
Texas	Eastern	5,012	15,000	+199
	Rio Grande	573,500	585,000	+2
	Merriam's	500	500	0
Utah	Rio Grande	5,500	15,000	+173
	Merriam's	2,500	3,500	+40
Vermont	Eastern	30,000	35,000–40,000	N/A
Virginia	Eastern	127,000	145,000	+14
Washington	Eastern	3,000	1,000	-67
	Rio Grande	12,000	5,000	-58
	Merriam's	15,000	40,000	+167
West Virginia	Eastern	120,000	105,000	-13
Wisconsin	Eastern	300,000 ⁺	350,000 ⁺	+17
Wyoming	Rio Grande	600	2,000	+233
	Merriam's	10,000–12,000	67,000	N/A
	Hybrid	1,000	16,500	+1,550
Canada:				
Alberta	Merriam's	600	1,200	+100
Brit. Columbia	Merriam's	2,000–4,000	4,000–5,000	N/A
Manitoba	Hybrid	3,500	7,000	+100
Nova Scotia	Eastern	<100 ^d	0	0
Ontario	Eastern	24,000	55,000	+129
Quebec	Eastern	<100	100	0
Saskatchewan	Hybrid	<100	Unknown	N/A
Total		5,460,412–5,482,562	6,685,794–6,978,144	

^a Tapley et al. (2001a).

^b N/A = not available.

^c California Department of Fish and Game stated as Rio Grande turkeys that may contain some hybrids.

^d Pen-raised birds, from personal communication with Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources 2003.

1930s began to revert back to suitable habitat, the stage was set for the comeback of the wild turkey (Kennamer et al. 1992). Mosby (1959) reported the first indication of positive change since the early 1940s at the First National Wild Turkey Symposium.

Wild turkey trap and transfer programs initiated by state wildlife agencies in the 1950s have increased populations and occupied range substantially in areas where wild turkeys had been extirpated, and they established huntable populations in several states and Canadian provinces (Mosby 1959, 1973, 1975; Bailey 1980; Kennamer 1986). During the past 50 years, state and provincial restoration programs have been largely responsible for the reestablishment and expansion of the species in North America. Wild turkeys now occur in all states, except Alaska. Six of 13 Canadian provinces also have wild turkey populations.

Here we describe the current distribution of birds in the United States and Canada. We report estimates of wild turkey populations of each subspecies and their current range, and compare these to that of 5 years ago. We also report hunter numbers and harvest numbers for the fall of 2003 and the spring of 2004, and document the status of each state or province's restoration program.

METHODS

Questionnaires were sent out during the fall of 2004 to members of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTFF) Technical Committee, which is composed of state and provincial wildlife biologists re-

sponsible for the wild turkey programs in their respective states and provinces. A state map delineated with county lines was provided to Technical Committee members to outline wild turkey range and densities to the county level. Surveys also were sent to the wildlife agencies of the Canadian provinces and Central American countries not represented on the Technical Committee including Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Belize, Guatemala, and Mexico. Some data were obtained from Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Saskatchewan, and Mexico (range map). However, data from New Brunswick was unavailable. We were unable to obtain consistent and accurate data on the Rio Grande (*M. g. intermedia*) and Gould's (*M. g. mexicana*) populations of wild turkeys in Mexico and the Ocellated turkey (*M. ocellata*) in Belize and Guatemala, so information from Central America is not included in the text or tables. However, an approximate range map for Central America is included.

Population and range estimates provided here were based on the most accurate information available at the time of the survey. Variation existed among states and provinces in the methods used to collect population data and identify range. Some of this variation was evident in inconsistencies in range estimates across state boundaries. However, we believe the population and range estimates are the best available given the technical limitations of estimating wild turkey densities and range.

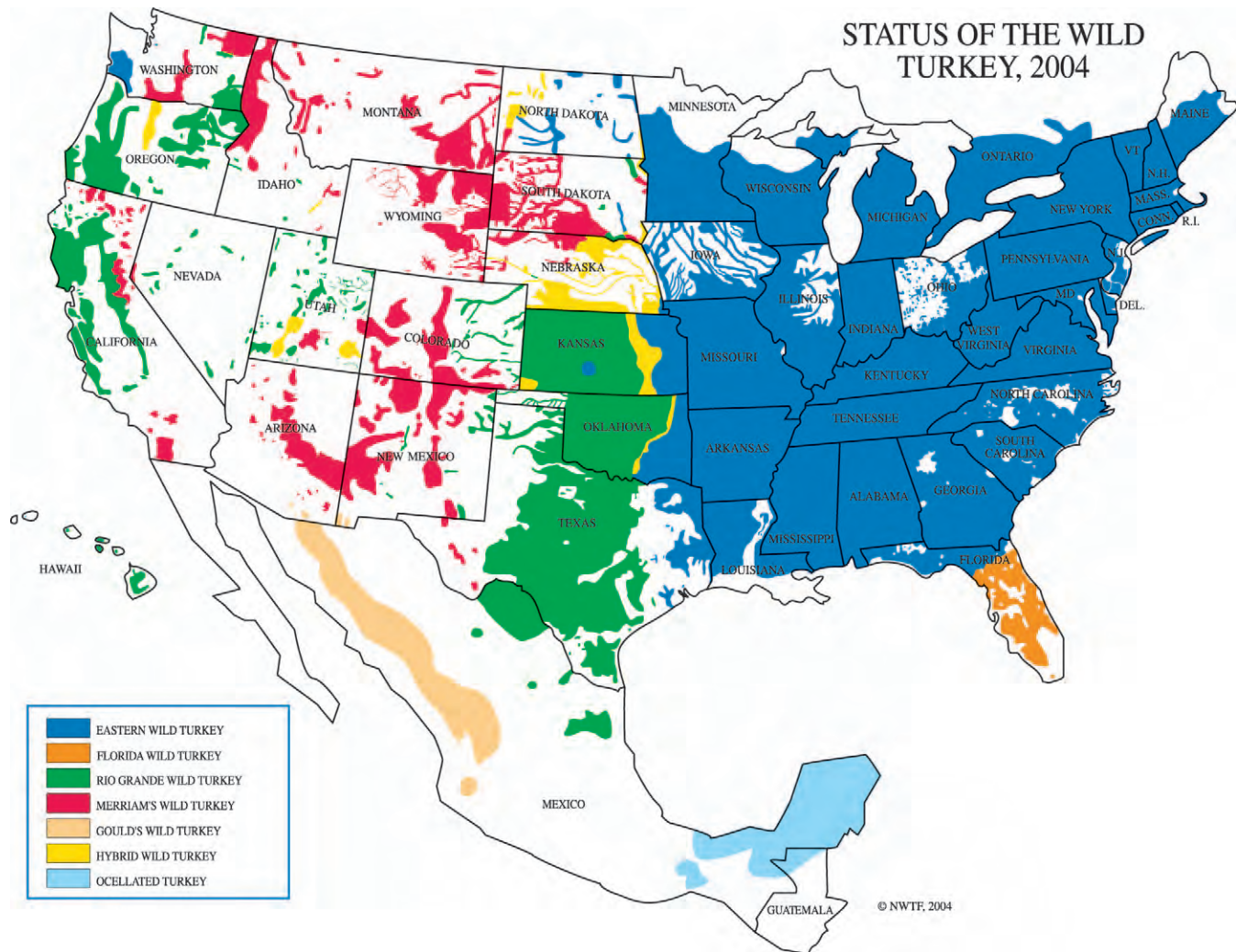


Fig. 1. Distribution range of the wild turkey by subspecies.

RESULTS

Population Estimates by Subspecies

The eastern wild turkey subspecies (*M. g. silvestris*) is the most common and is estimated between 5.1–5.3 million, an increase of approximately 1 million birds from 1999 to 2004 (Table 1). The Rio Grande subspecies is estimated to number over 1 million birds, and the Merriam’s (*M. g. merriami*) more than 334,000. The Florida subspecies (*M. g. osceola*) is estimated to number more than 80,000 birds, and the Gould’s over 650. Some states delineated hybrid populations, and these are estimated at more than 116,000 birds.

Missouri had the largest wild turkey population with approximately 600,000 to 800,000 birds. Texas followed with a population of 600,500 birds, followed in descending order by Alabama, 450,000; Mississippi, 395,784; Wisconsin, 350,000+; Georgia, 350,000; and Pennsylvania, 342,000 (Table 2). Nevada (1,260) and Delaware (3,500) had the lowest population estimates in the United States (Table 3).

Distribution

Wild turkeys now range throughout much of North America (Figure 1). More than 3,041,009 km² of habitat was inhabited by wild turkeys (Table 4) in 2004 as compared to 2,349,764 km² in 1999 (Tapley et al. 2001a). About 20,195 km² of suitable habitat is currently being stocked. Ohio (7,770 km²) contained the largest yet unoccupied habitat followed by Arizona, South Dakota, and Ontario all with (2,590 km²).

Restoration

The status of 2004 restoration programs indicated that 5 states (Maine, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, and Wyoming) and Ontario finished in 2005, and 1 state (Minnesota) will finish within the next 5 years (Table 5). Alabama plans to do follow up stocking until 2010, and Arizona’s Gould’s restoration should be completed in 2010. Four states (Colorado, Hawaii, South Carolina, and Utah) listed completion dates as unknown.

Table 4. Estimated occupied range by wild turkeys, 1999 and 2004, and range remaining to be stocked.

State/province	1999 ^a		2004		Area to be stocked	
	km ²	mi ²	km ²	mi ²	km ²	mi ²
United States:						
Alabama	98,420	38,000	101,010	39,000	259	100
Arizona	21,238	11,624 ^b	30,754	11,874 ^b	2,590	1,000
Arkansas	113,313	43,750	89,031	34,375	0	0
California	19,425	7,500	75,545	29,168	N/A ^c	N/A
Colorado	45,714	17,650	49,210	19,000	N/A	N/A
Connecticut	9,466	3,655	9,420	3,637	0	0
Delaware	2,072	800	3,885	1,500	0	0
Florida	64,750	25,000	101,010	39,000	0	0
Georgia	93,240	36,000	102,587	39,609	0	0
Hawaii	4,271	1,649	4,271 ^a	1,649 ^a	0	0
Idaho	33,670	13,000	38,721	14,950	0	0
Illinois	20,202	7,800	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indiana	75,520	28,000	93,240	36,000	0	0
Iowa	8,904	3,438	9,992	3,858	0	0
Kansas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kentucky	101,010	39,000	78,032	30,128	0	0
Louisiana	55,685	21,500	45,765	17,670	N/A	N/A
Maine	13,675	5,280	18,907	7,300	Unknown	Unknown
Maryland	9,065	3,500	14,245	5,500	0	0
Massachusetts	12,497	4,825	12,497	4,825	0	0
Michigan	110,171	42,537	115,359	44,540	0	0
Minnesota	113,960	44,000	113,960	44,000	N/A	N/A
Mississippi	75,110	29,000	112,898	43,590	0	0
Missouri	N/A	N/A	55,716	21,512	N/A	N/A
Montana	64,750	25,000	56,980	22,000	No estimate	No estimate
Nebraska	26	10	197,410	76,220	0	0
Nevada	427	165	2,598	1,003	648	250
New Hampshire	20,720	8,000	22,015	8,500	0	0
New Jersey	5,957	2,300	5,957	2,300	N/A	N/A
New Mexico	78,658	30,370	93,240	36,000	Unknown	Unknown
New York	N/A	N/A	124,320	48,000	N/A	N/A
North Carolina	93,240	36,000	80,290	31,000	130	<50
North Dakota	19,684	7,600	10,231	3,950	0	0
Ohio	50,647	19,555	58,275	22,500	7,770	3,000
Oklahoma	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	N/A	0	0
Oregon	61,124	23,600	89,233	34,453	N/A	N/A
Pennsylvania	67,962	26,240	117,332	45,302	0	0
Rhode Island	1,295	500	1,295	500	N/A	N/A
South Carolina	47,915	18,500	48,174	18,600	1,036	<400
South Dakota	27,713	10,700	54,779	21,150	2,590	1,000
Tennessee	98,420	38,000	103,600	40,000	0	0
Texas	337,995	130,500	385,825	148,967	0	0
Utah	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vermont	18,130	7,000	22,015	8,500	0	0
Virginia	62,160	24,000	64,623	24,951	0	0
Washington	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
West Virginia	59,283	22,889	62,937	24,300	0	0
Wisconsin	90,650	35,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wyoming	10,360	4,000	42,872	16,553	2,582	997
Canada:						
Alberta	1,900	734	1,813	700	N/A	N/A
Brit. Columbia	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Manitoba	Unknown	Unknown	31,080	12,000	N/A	N/A
Nova Scotia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ontario	29,340	11,328	88,060	34,000	2,590	1,000
Quebec	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saskatchewan	30	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	2,349,764 ^d	909,509 ^d	3,041,009	1,174,134	20,195	7,797

^a Tapley et al. (2001a).

^b Includes White Mountain Apache Reservation.

^c N/A = not available.

^d Total occupied range corrected after publication of 8th National Wild Turkey Symposium.

Table 5. Status of wild turkey restoration programs by state and province, 2004.

State/province	Year begun	Year ended/ expected completion	No. release sites to date	No. birds moved to date	Source of birds
United States:					
Alabama	1943	follow ups until 2010	133	1,891	In state
Arizona	1939 Merriam's	1993 ^a	N/A ^b	633	In state
Arkansas	1983 Gould's	2010	25	310	In state and Mexico
	1932				Game farm stock failed ^a
California	1950 ^a	2003	450	7,200	In state and Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, Texas
	1928				Game farm stock failed ^a
Colorado	1959	2001	300	5,000 ^c	In state and Idaho, Kansas, South Dakota, Washington, Wyoming
	1980	Unknown	55	2,700+	In state and Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas
Connecticut	1975	1992	14	356	In state and New York
Delaware	1984	1999	12	300	New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia
Florida	1949	1969	3+	6,185	In state
Georgia	1973	1996	400+	4,845+	In state
Hawaii	Unknown	Unknown	2	50	In state
Idaho	1925	1946			Game farm stock failed ^a
	1961	2001–2002	205	5,074	In state and British Columbia, California, Colorado, Kansas, New Brunswick, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, Wyoming
Illinois	1958	2000	273	4,669	In state and Arkansas, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, West Virginia
Indiana	1956	1999	185	2,795	In state and Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri
Iowa	1966	1990	260	3,583	In state and Missouri, North Dakota
Kansas	1962	1990 ^a	105 (counties)	235	In state and Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas
Kentucky	1978	1997	433	6,785	In state and Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Wisconsin
Louisiana	1962	2002	230	3,814	In state and Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, South Carolina, Wisconsin
Maine	1977	2005	55	862	In state and Connecticut, Vermont
Maryland	1966	1997	71	1,306	In state and Florida, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia
Massachusetts	1972	1996	27	598	In state and New York
Michigan	1954	2000–2001	135	4,248 ^d	In and out of state
Minnesota	1926				Game farm stock failed
	1976	2007	190	4,300	In state and Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri, New York, Oklahoma, Wisconsin
Mississippi	1934				Game farm stocked failed
	1940	2000	272	2,948	In state
Missouri	1954	1979	91	2,400	In state
Montana	1950s		91	2,686	In state
Nebraska	1959	Late 1980s	120	1,700	In state and South Dakota, Texas, Wyoming
Nevada	1962	1963			Arizona and South Dakota
	1986	2005	18+	1,531+	In state and California, Idaho, Texas
New Hampshire	1969	1970			West Virginia stock failed
	1975	1995	16	344	In state and New York, West Virginia
New Jersey	1977	2000	41+	1,600	Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, New York, South Carolina, Vermont
New Mexico	late 1920s, early 1930s		82+	1,465+	In state and Oklahoma, Texas
New York	1960	1994	Unknown	1,400	In state
North Carolina	1970	2000	350	6,000	In state and Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Iowa, Michigan, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin
North Dakota					Birds are only trapped in problem areas and moved for nuisance control ^a

Table 5. Continued.

State/province	Year begun	Year ended/ expected completion	No. release sites to date	No. birds moved to date	Source of birds
Ohio	1956/2000 ^e	1997	238	4,804	In state and Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Missouri, Texas, West Virginia
Oklahoma	1956	1997	1,000	10,000	In state and Arkansas, Missouri, Texas
Oregon	1920s ^a	1930s ^a			Game farm stock failed ^a
	1961	2005	584	9,634	In state and Arizona, California, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
Pennsylvania	1956	2003	47	3,573	In state
Rhode Island	1980	1998	7	137	New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont
South Carolina	1951	1958 ^a	Unknown	328	In state
	1976	Unknown	205	3,562	In state
South Dakota	1948	1970sM/ 60sRG ^g / 2005E ^h	200	2,000	In state and Colorado, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
Tennessee	1935	1949			Game farm stock failed
	1951	2000	682	31,220	In state and Florida, Missouri
Texas	1924	1996 ^c	Unknown	Unknown	In state and Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Wisconsin, West Virginia
	1979	1999 ^g	319 ^g	7,091 ^g	
Utah	1925/1952 ^a	Unknown			In state and out of state ^a
	1989	Unknown	52	N/A	In state and Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Wyoming
Vermont	1969	1994	18	620	New York
Virginia	1929				Game farm stock failed
	1955	1993	25	925	In state
Washington	1960	1964	N/A	N/A	Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico
	1984	1990 ^a	125–150	3,000	In state and Iowa, Missouri, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas
West Virginia	1950	1989	62	2,278	In state
Wisconsin	1976	1993 ^a	80–100	4,364 ⁺	In state and Missouri
Wyoming	1935	2005	70	5,000	In state and New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
Canada:					
Ontario	1984	2005	275	4,400	In province and Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Tennessee, Vermont

^a Kenamer and Kenamer (1996).

^b N/A = not available.

^c Since 1959.

^d Since 1983.

^e Reopened to fill in 10 western counties.

^f Merriam's subspecies.

^g Rio Grande subspecies.

^h Eastern subspecies.

Harvest

The 2004 harvest was estimated to be more than 730,000 birds in the spring and over 189,000 in the fall (Table 6). The total harvest of 920,012 birds represented a 24% increase from 1999. During the spring, Missouri accounted for the largest harvest with 60,744 birds taken, followed by Alabama with 57,100. Alberta and Hawaii recorded the lowest harvest with 15 and 56 birds, respectively. Between 1999 and 2004, the spring harvest increased for 39 states and 2 provinces, and decreased for 8 states. Maine had the highest spring harvest increase (444%).

Forty-two states held a fall season in 2003. The largest fall harvests occurred in Texas with 36,000 birds and Pennsylvania with 31,100 birds taken. Mas-

sachusetts and Nevada recorded the smallest harvests with 111 and 31, respectively. Between 1999 and 2004, the fall harvest increased in 27 states and decreased in 9 states. Idaho had the largest increase (1,820%). Maine and North Carolina were the latest states to institute fall seasons between 1999 and 2004, leaving 7 states and 3 provinces that had spring seasons with no fall seasons.

Hunter Numbers

The total number of wild turkey hunters during the fall 2003 and spring 2004 hunting seasons were estimated to number 2.8 million compared to 2.6 million in 1999. This is a 6% increase (Table 7).

Spring 2004 hunters totaled 2,019,090 with Penn-

Table 6. Number of wild turkeys harvested in spring and fall hunting seasons by state and province, 1998–1999 and 2003–2004.

State/province	1998–1999 ^a			2003–2004			Percent change		
	Fall (1998)	Spring (1999)	Total	Fall (2003)	Spring (2004)	Total	Fall	Spring	Total
United States:									
Alabama	5,100 ^b	51,800 ^c	56,900	5,500 ^d	57,100 ^e	62,600	+8	+10	+10
Arizona	516	760	1,276	893	811	1,704	+73	+7	+34
Arkansas	199	15,571	15,770	1,316	16,993	18,309	+561	+9	+16
California	5,165	5,798	10,963	5,823	19,125 ^e	24,948	+13	+230	+128
Colorado	539	1,445	1,984	690	1,960 ^e	2,650	+28	+36	+34
Connecticut	148	1,910	2,058	134	2,081	2,215	-9	+9	+8
Delaware	NS ^f	99	99	NS	108	108	NS	+9	+9
Florida	12,112 ^b	23,419 ^c	35,531	3,850 ^d	15,500 ^e	19,350	-68	-34	-46
Georgia	NS	29,168	29,168	NS	24,000	24,000	NS	-18	-18
Hawaii	156	317	473	N/A ^g	56	56	N/A	-82	-88
Idaho	100	5,500	5,600	1,920	4,310 ^e	6,230	+1,820	-22	+11
Illinois	1,502	10,076	11,578	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indiana	NS	6,548	6,548	NS	10,765	10,765	NS	+64	+64
Iowa	3,468	18,290	21,758	8,559	25,504	34,063	+147	+39	+57
Kansas	1,755 ^b	16,954 ^c	18,709	5,468 ^d	29,868 ^h	35,336	+212	+76	+89
Kentucky	1,725	17,500 ^c	19,225	2,781	26,963	29,744	+61	+54	+55
Louisiana	NS	4,000 ^c	4,000	NS	9,000 ^e	9,000	NS	+125	+125
Maine	NS	890	890	246	4,839	5,085	N/A	+444	+471
Maryland	300	2,650	2,950	163	2,760	2,923	-46	+4	-1
Massachusetts	270	2,363	2,633	111	2,068	2,179	-59	-12	-17
Michigan	6,427	24,973	31,400	5,000	37,580	42,580	-22	+50	+36
Minnesota	828	5,132	5,960	889	8,434	9,323	+7	+64	+56
Mississippi	791	32,017 ^c	32,808	1,827 ^d	40,125 ^e	41,952	+131	+25	+28
Missouri	15,343	50,299	65,642	13,249	60,744	73,993	-14	+21	+13
Montana	1,350	1,100	2,450	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nebraska	3,020	6,200	9,220	3,300	12,860	16,160	+9	+107	+75
Nevada	25	120	145	31	93	124	+24	-23	-14
New Hampshire	200	1,500	1,700	270	2,700	2,970	+35	+80	+75
New Jersey	157	2,560	2,717	179	3,073	3,252	+14	+20	+20
New Mexico	157	1,216	1,373	149	663	812	-5	-45	-41
New York	15,000	25,000	40,000	15,800	26,300	42,100	+5	+5	+5
North Carolina	NS	5,340	5,340	181	8,846	9,027	N/A	+66	+69
North Dakota	2,114	1,173	3,287	4,410	2,532	6,942	+109	+116	+111
Ohio	1,250	14,419	15,669	2,060	16,927	18,987	+65	+17	+21
Oklahoma	4,800	20,000	24,800	7,000	40,000	47,000	+46	+100	+90
Oregon	113	2,621 ^c	2,734	755	4,093 ^e	4,848	+568	+56	+77
Pennsylvania	33,628	36,900	70,528	31,100	41,000	72,100	-8	+11	+2
Rhode Island	NS	147	147	NS	220	220	NS	+50	+50
South Carolina	NS	11,261	11,261	NS	12,950	12,950	NS	+15	+15
South Dakota	2,730	3,675	6,405	3,200	5,500	8,700	+17	+50	+36
Tennessee	450	16,511	16,961	2,393	33,560	35,953	+432	+103	+112
Texas	33,369	24,706	58,075	36,000	27,100	63,100	+8	+10	+9
Utah	NS	400	400	NS	703	703	NS	+76	+76
Vermont	538	3,126	3,664	1,049	3,925	4,974	+95	+26	+36
Virginia	8,802	12,762	21,564	6,556	14,338	20,894	-26	+12	-3
Washington	N/A	973	973	630	3,837	4,467	N/A	+294	+359
West Virginia	1,678	11,175	12,853	1,841	10,519	12,360	+10	-6	-4
Wisconsin	9,000	30,000	39,000	12,466	47,477	59,943	+39	+58	+54
Wyoming	720	1,420	2,140	1,682	2,370 ^e	4,052	+134	+67	+89
Canada:									
Alberta	NS	9	9	NS	15 ^e	15	NS	+67	+67
Brit. Columbia	NS	100	100	NS	N/A	N/A	NS	N/A	NS
Manitoba	50	250	300	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ontario	NS	1,934	1,934	NS	8,246	8,246	NS	+326	+326
Total	175,595	564,077	739,672	189,471	730,541	920,012	+8	+30	+24

^a Tapley et al. (2001b).^b Fall of 1997.^c Spring of 1998.^d Fall of 2002.^e Spring of 2003.^f NS = no season.^g N/A = not available.^h Spring of 2002.

Table 7. Number of wild turkey hunters by state and province, 1998–1999 and 2003–2004.

State/province	1998–1999 ^a			2003–2004			Percent change		
	Fall (1998)	Spring (1999)	Total ^b	Fall (2003)	Spring (2004)	Total ^b	Fall	Spring	Total ^b
United States:									
Alabama	5,100	51,800	56,900	5,500 ^c	59,800 ^d	65,300	+8	+15	+15
Arizona	4,225	4,700	8,925	4,750	5,300	10,050	+12	+13	+13
Arkansas	N/A ^e	65,000	65,000	N/A	75,000	75,000	N/A	+15	+15
California	7,637	11,270	18,907	11,892	24,949	36,841	+56	+121	+95
Colorado	2,025	6,550	8,575	1,150	10,300 ^d	11,450	-43	+57	+34
Connecticut	3,750	6,700	10,450	3,300	7,600	10,900	-12	+13	+4
Delaware	NS ^f	1,125	1,125	NS	1,300	1,300	NS	+16	+16
Florida	25,276	29,316	54,592	N/A	23,600 ^d	23,600	N/A	-19	-57
Georgia	NS	40,510	40,510	NS	36,800	36,800	NS	-9	-9
Hawaii	N/A	350	350	500	200	700	N/A	-43	+100
Idaho	450	13,000	13,450	4,584	18,232	22,816	+919	+40	+70
Illinois	17,850	40,600	58,450	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indiana	NS	25,581	25,581	NS	40,350	40,350	NS	+58	+58
Iowa	9,000	48,000	57,000	13,566	50,846	64,412	+51	+6	+13
Kansas	4,700	23,000	27,700	6,700	53,000	59,700	+43	+130	+116
Kentucky	8,050	55,000	63,050	22,375	87,614	109,989	+178	+59	+74
Louisiana	NS	13,140	13,140	NS	26,500	26,500	NS	+102	+102
Maine	NS	3,700	3,700	2,000	15,600	17,600	N/A	+322	+376
Maryland	5,000	17,000	22,000	3,660	13,300	16,960	-27	-22	-23
Massachusetts	12,787	13,712	26,499	14,230	13,912	28,142	+11	+1	+6
Michigan	28,925	66,790	95,715	20,100	111,000	131,100	-31	+66	+37
Minnesota	2,750	16,600	19,350	2,977	27,600	30,577	+8	+66	+58
Mississippi	2,500	46,000	48,500	3,778	46,640	50,418	+51	+1	+4
Missouri	32,593	109,663	142,256	30,500	140,000	170,500	-6	+28	+20
Montana	3,500	2,500	6,000	9,942	10,418	20,360	+184	+317	+239
Nebraska	5,370	14,000	19,370	7,500	24,000	31,500	+40	+71	+63
Nevada	50	210	260	116	308	424	+132	+47	+63
New Hampshire	3,300	10,900	14,200	6,700	17,755	24,455	+103	+63	+72
New Jersey	2,500	13,750	16,250	3,100	11,550	14,650	+24	-16	-10
New Mexico	752	6,957	7,709	1,200	12,000	13,200	+60	+72	+71
New York	96,000	105,000	201,000	80,000	100,000	180,000	-17	-5	-10
North Carolina	NS	N/A	N/A	N/A	42,000	42,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Dakota	3,141	1,835	4,976	6,886	4,497	11,383	+119	+145	+129
Ohio	9,000	55,000	64,000	26,484	68,975	95,459	+194	+25	+49
Oklahoma	16,500	48,000	64,500	28,000	78,000	106,000	+70	+63	+64
Oregon	366	10,263	10,629	2,675	14,700	17,375	+631	+43	+63
Pennsylvania	249,937	233,287	483,224	211,965	246,821 ^d	458,786	-15	+6	-5
Rhode Island	NS	1,100	1,100	NS	1,600	1,600	NS	+45	+45
South Carolina	NS	37,000	37,000	NS	47,674	47,674	NS	+29	+29
South Dakota	3,550	9,100	12,650	4,200	12,200	16,400	+18	+34	+30
Tennessee	4,010	53,500	57,510	15,650	95,258	110,908	+290	+78	+93
Texas	83,171	121,840	205,011	94,118	64,391	158,509	+13	-47	-23
Utah	NS	3,830	3,830	NS	1,324	1,324	NS	-65	-65
Vermont	1,900	9,500	11,400	16,300	14,000	30,300	+758	+47	+166
Virginia	86,005	68,824	154,829	64,000	61,000	125,000	-26	-11	-19
Washington	150	7,500	7,650	2,000	15,800	17,800	+1,233	+111	+133
West Virginia	32,000	140,000	172,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	80,300	132,000	212,300	76,630	158,600	235,230	-5	+20	+11
Wyoming	1,200	2,595	3,795	2,313	4,831 ^e	7,144	+93	+86	+88
Canada:									
Alberta	NS	50	50	NS	45	45	NS	-10	-10
Brit. Columbia	NS	225	225	NS	N/A	N/A	NS	N/A	N/A
Manitoba	N/A	450	450	200	700 ^d	900	N/A	+56	+100
Ontario	NS	7,925	7,925	NS	21,200	21,200	NS	+168	+168
Total	855,320	1,806,248	2,661,568	811,541	2,019,090	2,830,631	-5	+12	+6

^a Tapley et al. (2001b).

^b Total was sum of fall and spring hunters. This total overestimates number of hunters because hunters may participate in both seasons.

^c Fall of 2002.

^d Spring of 2003.

^e N/A = not available.

^f NS = no season.

sylvania (246,821) and Wisconsin (158,600) having the most hunters. Alberta (45) and Hawaii (200) reported the fewest hunters. Between 1999 and 2004, spring hunter numbers increased for 37 states and 2

provinces, and decreased for 9 states and 1 province. Maine had the largest increase (322%).

Fall turkey hunters numbered 811,541 for the fall 2003 hunting season. Pennsylvania and Texas reported

the highest number of fall hunters, with 211,965 and 94,118, respectively. Nevada (116) and Manitoba (200) had the fewest fall hunters. Between 1999 and 2004, fall turkey hunter numbers increased in 26 states and decreased in 9 states. Washington had the largest increase of 1,233%.

DISCUSSION

Since restoration began, the wild turkey has made a remarkable comeback and has increased its numbers to a population estimated between 6.6–6.9 million birds. The 49 states with wild turkey populations all have a spring season and 42 states have a fall season. Maine and North Carolina instituted a fall season within the past 5 years. Four of the 6 Canadian provinces with wild turkeys also have a spring season and 1 has a fall season.

In comparing 1999 population data to 2004 population data, the increase of between 1.2–1.4 million (22–27%) wild turkeys in the past 5 years was similar to the increase recorded for the previous 5-year period between 1994 and 1999 (1.3 million). The overall occupied range increased 29% because of more wild turkeys being restored to unoccupied habitat, and existing populations expanding normally into adjacent unoccupied habitat. This large increase in occupied range also was the result of better data collection in several key states.

The total harvest also increased 24%, while the total number of hunters only increased 6%. This 6% increase in hunter numbers was considerably less than the increase recorded during the previous 5-year period (21%).

The turkey hunter of the 21st century is experiencing rapidly expanding turkey populations, additional occupied range, and increased overall harvest while the growth in overall hunter numbers has slowed. It is anticipated that these trends will continue for the foreseeable future as wild turkeys continue to fill unoccupied habitat and expand into marginal habitats.

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