



Tennessee Wild Turkey Management Program Status Report

TN-NWTF State Board Meeting
June 12, 2025

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Wildlife and Forestry Division

2025 Spring Turkey Season

- 29,037 turkeys reported
 - 13% below 5-yr average (33,304)
- 23,785 hunters reported harvesting at least 1 turkey
 - 1% lower than 5-year average (23,996)
- Influences on harvest
 - Not as many 2-yr old birds – poor hatch in 2023
 - Rainy spring (5th wettest spring on record in Nashville)



Take Home Message

- 2025 spring turkey season lower than recent years
 - Below the 5-year avg. (~33,000)
- Weather impact on hunter behavior may help explain drop
 - Lower participation/effort => lower harvest
- Additional data being collected
 - Hunter harvest survey obtaining effort data, opinion, more...



Regulations for 2025-26 Season – No Changes

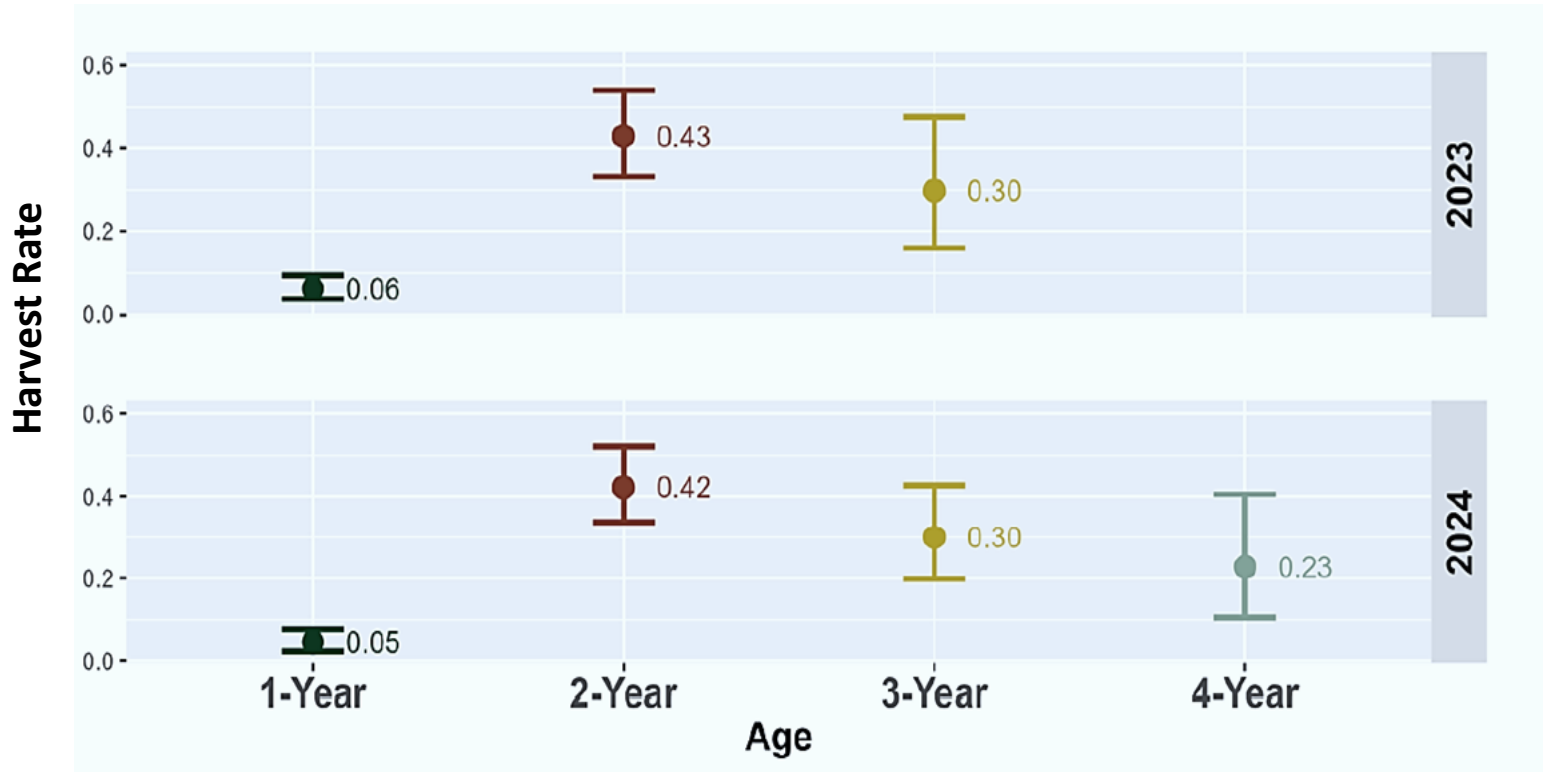
- Begin 2nd Saturday of April
 - April 11 - May 24
- 2-bird bag limit statewide
 - Only 1 jake
- No bearded hens (all hen harvest prohibited)
 - Applies both fall and spring
- Fall season bag limit: 1 gobbler statewide
 - 11 counties still closed



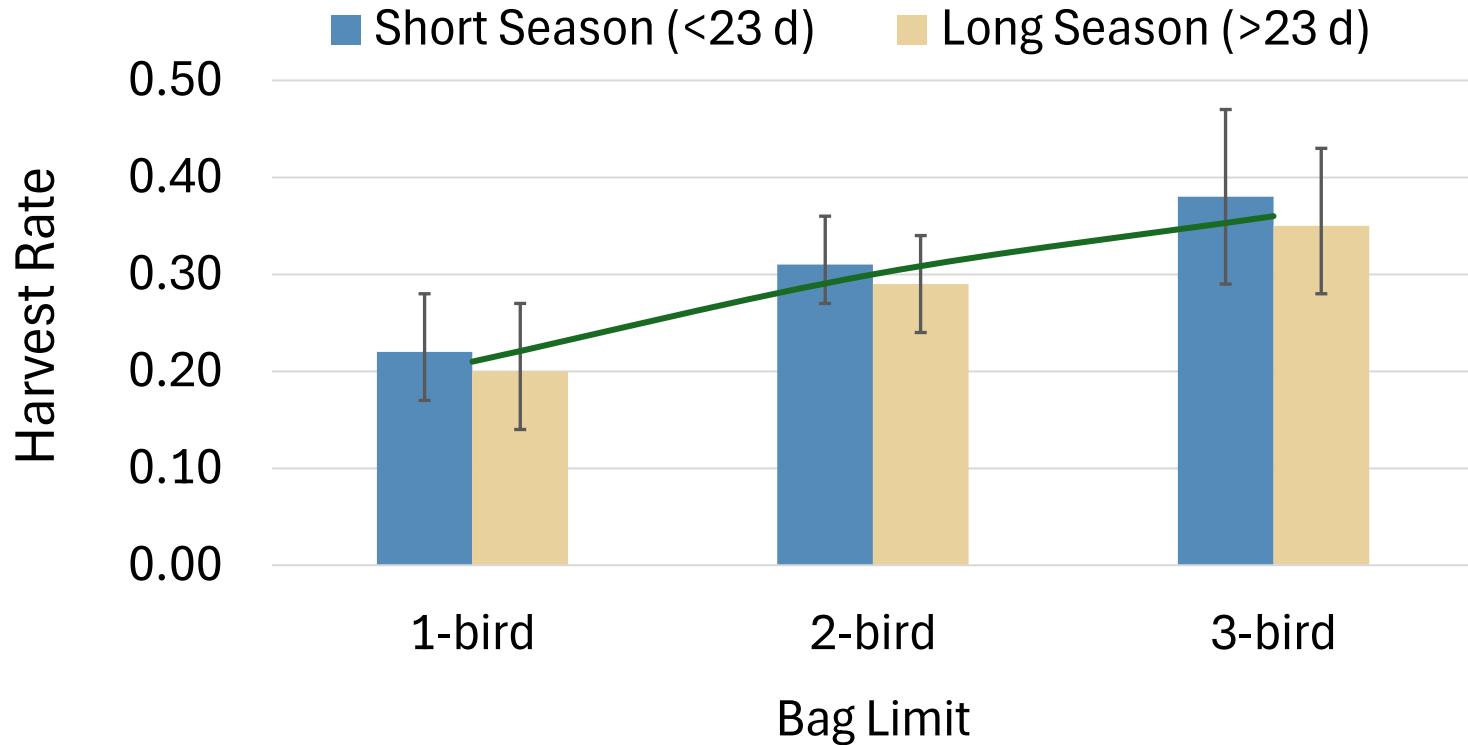


Gobbler Banding Project

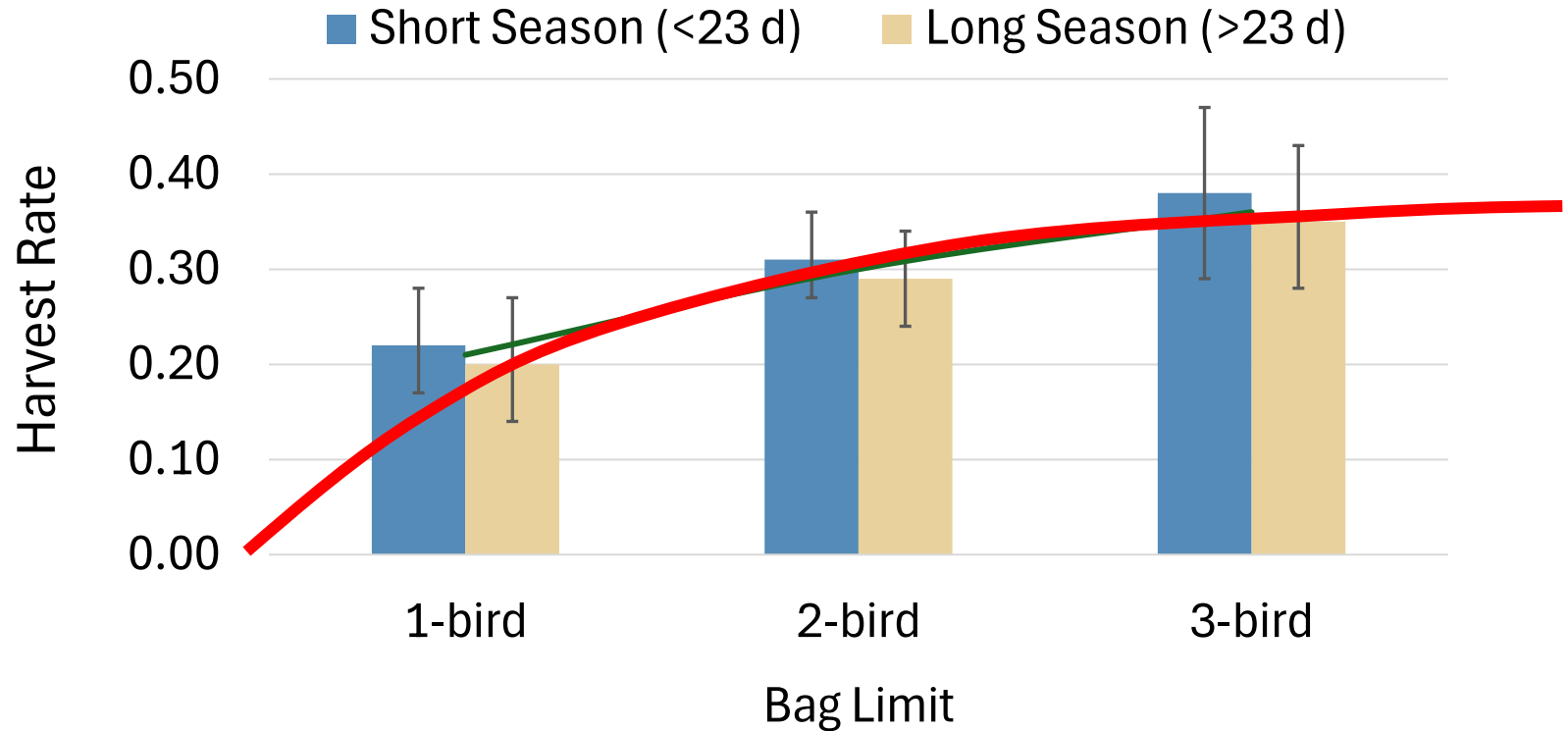
Harvest Rates by Age Class



Regulations Effect on Harvest Rate



Regulations Effect on Harvest Rate



Regulations Effect on Hunter Success

# of Birds Harvested	Proportion of Successful Hunters by Bag Limit		
	2019-2020 (4-bird)	2021-2022 (3-bird)	2023-2024 (2-bird)
1	62%	67%	76%
2	22%	23%	24%
3+	16%	10%	0.3%



Other Factors Effect on Harvest Rate

Factor	Scale	Effect
Hunter Density*	Fine-scale	Increased
Forest Cover	County	Reduced
Open Habitat	County	Increased
Gobbler Density**	Both	Reduced
Hunter Pressure	Both	Increased

* As inverse function of road density

** PPH index 2 years prior





Miscellaneous Items

Wild Turkey Observation Survey

- Summer “Brood” Survey
 - But not just broods
- Submit observations online or via cell phone app
- Visit:

www.tn.gov/twra/turkeyobs



2025 Legislative Session

- Several bills passed impacting wildlife/hunters
- Hunter pink – fulfills requirement for hunter orange
- Baiting (for deer) by permit – not until 2026 season
- Drones for recovering deer – not until rules are set
- Reelfoot waterfowl guide license established
- Wetlands – definition redefined



License Restructure and Increase

- Due to lack of support by Government Operations Committee, TWRA pulled the rule
 - Legislature supports the agency; committed to working toward a more tenable solution
- Current pricing and structure will NOT change



Wild Turkey Working Group Meeting

- Norris Dam SP, May 19-22
- 31 Attendees + 10 Others
- Corn hole tournament, sport shooting, hunting, state reports and business mtg
- Thank you for sponsorship
- Big “Thank you” to Derek, Skeeter and Jereme



Thank you!!





Questions