

# Results of the 2023 Virginia Turkey Hunter Survey



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Authors:

**Rene X. Valdez, Ph.D.**

Human Dimensions Specialist

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

**Mallory Gyovai White**

Survey Coordinator

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

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## **SUMMARY**

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) serves the Commonwealth by managing wildlife to balance the biological needs of a species and consideration of the public. A strategic management plan is created for select game species, including the Wild Turkey, and is reviewed and revised every 10 years. As we approach the decade since its inception, the revision process for the Virginia Wild Turkey Management Plan began and input was needed to evaluate the motivations, attitudes, preferences, and opinions of hunters as it relates to Turkey management in Virginia.

An online survey was developed and piloted to select DWR staff, and then sent out to hunters in October 2023. Surveys were sent to two sample groups 1) residents who purchased a deer-turkey tag between July 1, 2021 – July 1, 2023, and 2) fall turkey harvesters from recent seasons (Fall 2020, 2021, and 2022). A survey invitation with a direct link to the online survey was emailed to 18,156 hunters in total, and 2,204 hunters completed the survey. Results for the sample groups of hunters are reported separately due to the combined use of a random and non-random sample.

Selected results are as follows:

- In both samples, the majority of turkey hunters agree that DWR makes good management decisions for turkeys (62.2% random sample; 67.1% fall harvester sample), makes reasonable efforts to educate hunters about turkey management (65.1% random sample; 71.3% fall harvester sample), and incorporates hunters' input into management efforts (64.9% random sample; 67.6% fall harvester sample).
- Spring-only turkey hunters select top reasons for NOT hunting in the fall are that they prefer the experience of the spring turkey season (81%), and they prefer to target other game species in the fall (80.5%).
- 54.4% of hunters that have not hunted nor harvested a turkey in recent years, have done so during their lifetime.

These results will be used to directly inform the next iteration of the Turkey Management Plan. Biologists with turkey management responsibilities, members of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), and members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will review the results of the survey and take them into consideration.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) strives to conserve and manage wildlife populations and their habitat across the state, and connect people to the outdoors through wildlife-related activities. To accomplish this for wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*), DWR developed the Virginia Wild Turkey Management Plan (hereafter referred to as the turkey plan) as a strategic blueprint for future management directions (Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries, 2014). This comprehensive turkey plan includes input from a Stakeholder Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee, as well as public comment periods and public input processes.

In preparation for a revision to the turkey plan, DWR staff sought to update hunter input on several goals and objectives related to wild turkey management. A survey was developed and distributed to hunters across Virginia to collect accurate and detailed information that would be used to inform updates to the turkey plan. This survey was conducted ahead of stakeholder meetings with the expectation that survey results could be shared and discussed with stakeholders early in the revision process.

## **METHODS**

### *Survey Development*

Survey questions were developed with DWR Wildlife Division staff who have turkey management responsibilities (Appendix 1). For this survey, we were broadly interested in motivations for hunting turkey, participation in fall and spring seasons, equipment used to hunt turkey, hunter attitudes towards the turkey population in Virginia, and hunter attitudes towards potential changes to turkey hunting regulations. Questions related to turkey hunting regulations included season length, season timing, and bag limit. There was a subset of questions specifically for turkey hunters who hunt in the spring but not fall, hunters who no longer hunt turkey, and for hunters that do not hunt turkey at all.

After the survey instrument was drafted, we conducted a pilot test to ensure that the survey instructions and language were easy to comprehend. We developed a list of 26 DWR staff that were known to hunt turkey, had previously hunted turkey, or had turkey management responsibilities to be included in the pilot test. This list was comprised of biologists, law enforcement officers, lands and access managers, and outreach staff that work with and regularly talk with hunters in a variety of capacities. We asked respondents to review the language of the survey from the perspective of turkey hunters that would be taking the survey. A

total of 15 DWR staff completed the pilot survey. We used their feedback and suggestions to adjust question formatting and improve survey language.

### *Sampling*

The survey was developed and distributed using Qualtrics software (Qualtrics, Provo, UT) and all survey invitations were distributed via email. Hunters were eligible to receive a survey invitation if they had purchased a resident deer-turkey tag between July 1, 2021 – July 1, 2023, and were 18 years or older. For this population, we randomly selected  $n = 16,000$  individuals. The purchase of a deer-turkey tag is required to legally harvest a deer or turkey in Virginia, but the purchase of this tag does not indicate whether a hunter participated in a season or if they hunt turkey. There are considerably more deer hunters compared to turkey hunters in Virginia (White and Valdez, 2022). We anticipated that deer hunters that were uninterested in turkey hunting would be less likely to respond to the survey invitation and we increased the number of invitations accordingly. Survey responses from wildlife constituent groups in Virginia have been regularly biased towards older individuals (Valdez and White, 2022; White and Valdez, 2022). To achieve a more representative sample of respondents, we oversampled younger hunters and under sampled older hunters.

We developed a supplemental sample of fall turkey hunters to return an adequate number of responses for the survey questions focused on the fall turkey season. There are fewer fall turkey hunters compared to spring turkey hunters (White and Valdez, 2022), and there is no way to identify fall turkey hunters using license information. Instead, we used records of hunters that reported harvesting turkeys during recent fall seasons (2020, 2021, and 2022). All individuals with a valid email address were included ( $n = 2,733$ ) were included in this sample. If a fall harvester had already been selected in the random sample, they were kept in the random sample and removed from the fall harvester email invitation list. Because this supplemental sample of fall turkey hunters is not random, we reported survey responses from this group separately.

Survey invitations were distributed on September 28, 2023, and three reminder emails were distributed in October 2023. Excluding bad addresses and bounced emails, a total of,  $n = 18,156$  invitations were distributed. A total of 2,204 surveys were completed for an overall response rate of 11.6%. Among hunters from the random sample, the response rate was 8.8% and for the fall harvesters the response rate was 24.6%.

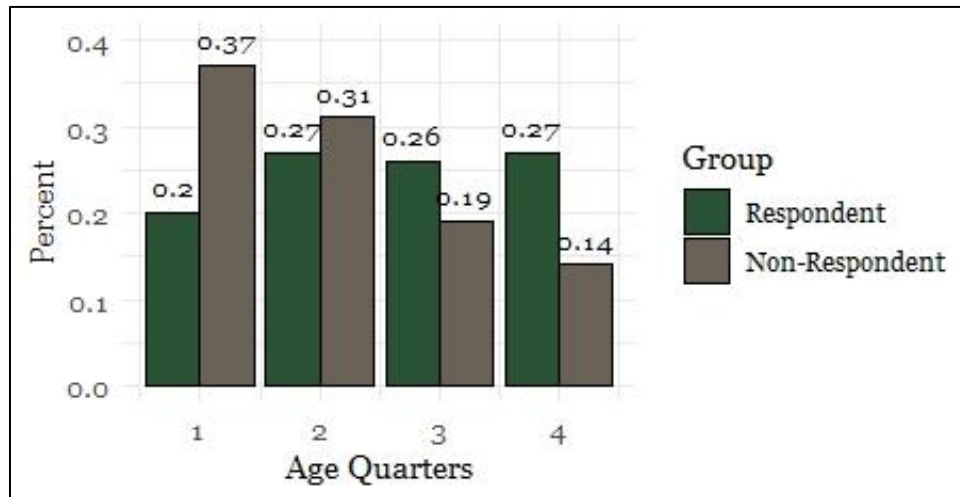
### *Analysis*

Based on the responses regarding turkey season participation, it is probable that turkey hunters were more likely to respond to the survey. In the 2021-2022 Virginia Hunter Survey,

resident hunters were more likely to hunt or harvest a deer than turkey (White and Valdez, 2022). In the first two questions of this survey, respondents were asked if they participated in the two most recent spring and fall turkey seasons. Among respondents, 81.2% reported hunting or harvesting turkey in the spring and 70.2% reported hunting or harvesting turkey in the fall (Table 1). Because the population of interest for this survey was turkey hunters, we did not attempt to correct this potential bias.

With data available in the GoOutdoors Virginia license database, we compared respondents and non-respondents to observe for potential nonresponse biases. The adjusted sampling rates produced the desired balance between the percentage of respondents by age quarters (at or near 0.25), and the percentages for non-respondents are near the sampling rate per age quarter (.35, .30, .20, .15, respectively) (Figure 1). Survey respondents were in fact older compared to non-respondents ( $\bar{x} = 45.6$ ,  $\bar{x} = 38.2$ , respectively;  $t = 17.22$ ,  $p < .001$ ). However, when comparing the mean age of respondents ( $\bar{x} = 45.6$ ) to the mean age of the population ( $\bar{x} = 45.0$ ), there was no significant difference ( $t = 1.47$ ,  $p = .143$ ). Therefore, we did not weight results based on age.

Figure 1. Percent of respondents and non-respondents of the 2023 Virginia Turkey Hunter Survey per age quarter.



When comparing avid and non-avid license purchasers, a similar pattern emerged. We defined an avid hunter as someone that purchased a hunting license, consecutively, during the three previous years. Among respondents, 77.1% were avid purchasers and among the population, 69.5% were avid purchasers. Although the difference was significant ( $\chi^2 = 36.2$ ,  $p$

<.001), the effect size was minimal (Cramer's  $V = .013$ ) and we did not weight based on this data.

## **RESULTS**

All survey results are presented in tabular form. Results are displayed in three sections: responses from all hunters who took the survey (Tables 1-2), responses from the random sample of identified turkey hunters (Tables A1 – A21), responses from fall turkey season harvesters (Tables B1 – B21), and responses from inactive turkey hunters (hunters who haven't recently hunted/harvested a turkey or who have never hunted/harvested a turkey) (Tables C1 – C5).

*All Hunter Responses*

Table 3. Hunters reporting hunting or harvesting turkeys during the Spring 2022, Spring 2023, Fall 2021 or Fall 2022 seasons in Virginia.

	Percent	Count
<b>Spring</b>		
Yes	81.2	1257
No	18.8	291
<b>Fall</b>		
Yes, hunted specifically for turkey	18.9	296
Yes, hunted turkey while primarily hunting for other game	32.7	513
Both (hunted specifically for turkey while hunting other game)	18.6	292
No	29.9	469

Table 4. Responses to the question, “You indicated that you have participated in a recent spring season but not a recent fall season. How much do you agree or disagree with the following reasons for why?” (Only hunters reporting participating in a recent spring season and NOT participating in a recent fall season received this question).

	Mean	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I prefer the experience of the spring turkey season	4.3	9.6	1.5	7.9	12.7	68.3
I prefer to target other game species in the fall	4.2	6.3	3.3	9.8	20.8	59.7
Hen harvest in the fall season harms the turkey population	3.3	12.7	12.5	33.1	20.0	21.7
Any harvest in the fall season harms the turkey population	2.9	18.0	16.7	38.5	15.6	11.2
Hunting turkeys in the fall is challenging	3.1	9.7	15.2	38.0	25.1	12.1
Few opportunities to harvest turkey in the fall	2.8	15.6	19.6	38.7	18.5	7.7
Have not had the time in recent years	2.8	21.4	14.3	38.0	18.8	7.5

*Random Sample Turkey Hunter Responses*

Table A1. Responses to the question, “Considering both fall and spring seasons, where do you most often hunt turkeys? (If you do not know or are not sure, select Don’t know/Not sure)” Responses reported by DWR region.

	Percent	Count
Region 1	28.3	233
Region 2	25.9	213
Region 3	14.1	116
Region 4	31.6	260

Table A2. Responses to the question, “How important are the following when you hunt turkeys? Consider both fall and spring seasons”

	Mean	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Seeing turkeys	3.9	1.5	6.7	22.4	41.7	27.8
Hearing turkeys	4.2	0.9	3.6	13.8	39.8	42.0
Calling or working turkeys	4.0	2.5	5.3	18.4	39.9	33.8
Harvesting turkeys	3.0	7.7	22.3	44.5	17.6	8.0
Spending time hunting with friends and family	4.2	2.6	4.5	10.7	34.3	48.0
Mentoring new hunters	3.8	4.6	9.0	19.3	34.0	33.1
Feeling safe while hunting	4.5	1.0	2.0	6.1	24.7	66.2
Seeing and hearing other wildlife while hunting	3.9	2.1	5.5	24.2	37.9	30.3
Taking a turkey home for food	3.0	12.6	20.5	33.7	19.8	13.5
Harvesting a big, mature turkey (long beard or large spur)	3.3	7.3	16.5	32.3	27.0	16.8
Spending time outdoors	4.7	0.0	0.3	4.0	23.7	72.0
Opportunities to hunt with a rifle	2.3	43.7	13.5	19.9	12.3	10.6

Table A3. Responses to the question, “Which of the following do you typically use during the **fall turkey season?** (Select all that apply)”

	Percent	Count
Archery	27.0	223
Crossbow	18.9	156
Muzzleloader	20.6	170
Rifle	26.6	220
Shotgun	70.8	585
Handgun	1.9	16
Dogs	4.0	33
Decoys	14.6	121
Turkey Call	39.3	325

Table A4. Responses to the question, “How important is the opportunity to hunt with dogs during the **fall turkey season?**”

	Percent	Count
Not at all important	73.3	666
Somewhat important	8.8	80
Important	8.7	79
Very important	9.2	84

Table A5. Responses to the question, “Which of the following do you typically use during the **spring turkey season?** (Select all that apply)”

	Percent	Count
Archery	7.8	72
Crossbow	6.0	55
Muzzleloader	1.1	10
Rifle	7.3	67
Shotgun	95.9	882
Handgun	0.4	4
Female Decoy	51.6	475
Male Decoy	38.9	358
Tail Fan (real or synthetic feathers)	15.4	142
Turkey call	72.2	664



Table A6. Responses to the question, “How familiar are you with the turkey harvest summaries and trends reported by Virginia DWR?”

	Percent	Count
Very familiar	13.3	123
Somewhat familiar	42.6	395
A bit familiar	24.1	223
Not at all familiar	20.1	186

Table A7. Responses to questions, “In your opinion, the number of turkeys harvested in the area where you hunt in recent **fall/spring seasons** has been:”

	Fall Season		Spring Season	
	Percent	Count	Percent	Count
Very low	18.4	115	7	53
Low	40.6	254	31.1	235
About right	37.4	234	51.5	389
High	3.2	20	8.6	65
Very high	0.5	3	1.9	14

Table A8. Responses to the question, “When compared to previous years, would you say the number of turkey in the area you hunt has:”

	Percent	Count
Declined dramatically	7.8	66
Declined	27.7	234
Remained about the same	41.5	350
Increased	19.5	165
Increased dramatically	3.4	29

Table A9. Responses to the question, “Currently, the annual bag limit for turkeys in Virginia is three, and no more than two turkeys can be harvested in the fall. What is your opinion of the three bird annual bag limit?”

	Percent	Count
Too low (Bag limit should be higher)	9.0	83
Right size	75.1	695
Too high (Bag limit should be lower)	16.0	148

Table A10. Responses to the question, “If the annual bag limit is decreased, would the following options be acceptable or unacceptable?” (Only hunters reporting the current annual bag limit as too high received this question).

	Unacceptable	No opinion	Acceptable
One turkey annual limit, any season	61.0	11.6	27.4
Two turkey annual limit, any season	9.7	2.8	87.5
Two turkey annual limit, no more than one turkey can be harvested in the fall	8.9	9.6	81.5
Two turkey annual limit, no more than one turkey can be harvested in the spring	53.1	7.6	39.3
Three turkey annual limit, only one of which may be an unbarbeared bird (hen) in the fall	41.4	24.1	34.5

Table A11. Responses to the question, “If DWR considers options to **increase turkey populations** in certain areas, please indicate how acceptable or unacceptable the following options are:”

	Mean	1 (Unacceptable)	2	3 (Neutral)	4	5 (Acceptable)
Reduce the length of the fall turkey season	3.1	20.4	8.7	39.5	8.2	23.2
Reduce the length of the spring turkey season	2.1	46.3	16.1	24.1	5.9	7.5
Reduce afternoon hunting during the spring season	2.8	28.2	11.7	33.7	9.6	16.8
Delay the opening of spring turkey season	1.9	52.8	15.3	22.1	4.0	5.8
Reduce the total bag limit	2.6	30.8	12.5	33.1	8.8	14.8
Reduce the fall bag limit	3.2	19.4	8.1	34.9	11.6	26.1
Reduce the spring bag limit	2.5	35.4	14.1	29.0	8.1	13.4

Table A12. Responses to the question, “If DWR considers changes to the **fall turkey season**, please indicate how acceptable or unacceptable the following options are:”

	Mean	1 (Unacceptable)	2	3 (Neutral)	4	5 (Acceptable)
Increase overlap with deer seasons	3.4	12.6	5.7	38.8	11.6	31.3
Reduce unbearded bird (hen) harvest	3.3	10.9	9.5	41.0	12.9	25.6
Eliminate unbearded bird (hen) harvest and only allow bearded bird harvest	2.7	26.7	14.4	35.0	6.8	17.1
Increase season length	3.4	10.6	7.8	41.9	13.0	26.6
Increase bag limit	2.7	25.3	13.2	43.1	6.9	11.5

Table A13. Responses to the question, “If DWR considers changes to the timing of the **fall turkey season**, please indicate how important the following options are:”

	Mean	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Opportunities to hunt turkey during the week of Thanksgiving	2.8	17.4	20.5	31.8	30.3
Overlap with deer firearm seasons	2.2	35.2	26.0	24.9	14.0
Overlap with deer muzzleloader seasons	2.0	45.2	25.7	17.7	11.4
Opportunities to hunt turkeys outside of deer seasons	2.3	28.4	26.8	27.5	17.2
Overlap with small game or gamebird seasons (squirrel, rabbit, quail, grouse)	2.1	37.5	28.7	21.7	12.1

Table A14. Responses to the question, “Consider the most recent spring turkey season you participated in. Indicate how much of your hunting time was spent during the first two weeks, during the mornings of the last three weeks, and during the afternoons of the last three weeks. (If you have not hunted in the spring season within the past few years, leave all responses as zero)”

	Mean
First two weeks (Half day only)	53.2
Last three weeks - Morning to Noon	30.1
Last three weeks - Afternoon to Evening	12.2

Table A15. Responses to the question, “If DWR considers changes to the **spring turkey season**, please indicate how acceptable or unacceptable the following options are:”

	Mean	1 (Unacceptable)	2	3 (Neutral)	4	5 (Acceptable)
Expanding all day hunting to the entire season	3.0	22.5	9.6	33.5	10.0	24.4
Expanding all day hunting to the entire season, but the spring season starts a week later	2.3	42.6	13.0	27.1	6.7	10.6
Reducing all day hunting, so that only half day hunting is allowed the first three weeks	3.3	14.0	10.5	37.0	13.6	25.0
Reducing all day hunting, so that only half day hunting is allowed throughout the entire season	2.9	23.9	13.2	32.0	9.4	21.5
Keep all day hunting as it is, and move the spring season so it starts a week later	2.3	35.9	16.5	33.8	6.1	7.7

Table A16. Responses to the question, “If DWR considers allowing all day hunting during the first two weeks of the **spring turkey season**, how important do you think the following factors should be when considering this option?”

	Mean	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
More opportunities for hunters	2.5	19.3	32.1	28.9	19.7
More opportunities for youth hunts	2.8	11.8	26.8	33.1	28.4
Less hunter crowding	2.6	19.2	27.7	31.2	21.9
Higher chance hens will be flushed from nests	2.9	9.6	25.4	30.1	34.9
Higher chance of disrupting breeding behaviors	2.9	10.2	23.5	30.4	35.9
Higher chance of unbearded birds (hens) being harvested	2.7	17.8	26.7	27.4	28.0

Table A17. Responses to the question, “If all day hunting were to be allowed during the first two weeks of the **spring turkey season**, how likely are you to hunt during the afternoon in the first two weeks?”

	Percent	Count
Extremely unlikely	26.3	225
Somewhat unlikely	18.6	159
Neither likely or unlikely	11.8	101
Somewhat likely	24.6	211
Extremely likely	18.7	160

Table A18. Responses to the question, “Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. When answering, consider the area where you typically or most often hunt turkey.”

	Mean	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The area I hunt for turkeys is crowded	2.6	26.2	22.5	22.2	20.4	8.7
Using stationary decoys to attract turkeys is a safety issue	2.3	36.3	23.7	22.1	14.0	3.9
Using stalking decoys (tail fans or full strut) to attract turkeys within close range is a safety issue	3.0	20.2	15.3	24.4	25.1	15.0
Stationary decoys are appropriate equipment for hunting turkey	4.2	3.8	3.4	14.9	24.9	53.0
Stalking decoys (tail fans or full strut) are appropriate equipment for hunting turkey	3.3	11.6	12.8	29.5	22.1	24.1

Table A19. Responses to the question, “Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about DWR’s management of the turkey population in Virginia.”

	Mean	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Makes good management decisions for wild turkey in Virginia	3.7	4.1	6.5	27.2	36.2	26.0
Makes reasonable efforts to educate hunters about turkey management	3.7	4.2	7.9	22.9	38.8	26.3
Incorporates hunters’ input in their turkey management efforts	3.8	3.5	6.7	24.8	37.1	27.8

Table A20. Responses to the question, “Where do you typically receive information about turkey hunting? (Select all that apply)”

	Percent	Count
DWR Hunting Regulations Booklet	61.9	524
DWR Social Media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram)	19.6	166
DWR Website	63.2	535
DWR Notes from the Field Blog	9.8	83
Virginia Wildlife magazine	22.1	187
Family and friends	41.8	354
Newspaper	1.5	13
Outdoor magazine (non-DWR)	16.2	137
Outdoor blogs and website (non-DWR)	11.2	95
Social media (non-DWR)	15.9	135
Podcasts	8.7	74
Other	7.6	64

Table A21. Demographics of respondents that were identified as turkey hunters from the random sample.

	Percent	Count
Gender		
Male	95.4	796
Female	2.6	22
Transgender	0.1	1
A gender not listed here (Please specify:)	1.3	11
Prefer not to answer	0.5	4

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Ethnicity		
Hispanic	1.5	12
Non-Hispanic	98.5	793
Race		
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.5	12
Asian	0.2	2
Black or African American	2.1	17
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.1	1
White	96.5	798
Not listed here (Please specify:)	1.5	12
	Mean	SD
Age	46.4	14.6
Highest Education Level		
Less than high school	1.2	10
High school diploma or equivalent	26.2	218
Some college, no degree	22.9	190
Associate's degree	9.4	78
Bachelor's degree	27	224
Master's degree	8.5	71
Professional degree	1.9	16
Doctorate degree	2.9	24
Income		
Less than \$24,999	5.9	46
\$25,000 - \$49,999	12.4	97
\$50,000 - \$74,999	25.4	198
\$75,000 - \$99,999	20.6	161
\$100,000 - \$124,999	16	125
\$125,000 or more	19.6	153
Current Residency		
Urban	10.2	84
Suburban	28.8	238
Rural	61	504

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*Fall Turkey Harvester Responses*

Table B1. Responses to the question, “Considering both fall and spring seasons, where do you most often hunt turkeys? (If you do not know or are not sure, select Don’t know/Not sure)” Responses reported by DWR region.

	Percent	Count
Region 1	23.2	120
Region 2	25.1	130
Region 3	20.3	105
Region 4	31.3	162

Table B2. Responses to the question, “How important are the following when you hunt turkeys? Consider both fall and spring seasons”

	Mean	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Seeing turkeys	3.9	0.7	4.9	24.9	40.2	29.3
Hearing turkeys	4.1	1.5	3.1	17.0	42.4	36.0
Calling or working turkeys	3.8	3.4	6.5	21.8	39.1	29.3
Harvesting turkeys	3.0	7.3	20.5	46.5	19.1	6.6
Spending time hunting with friends and family	4.0	4.1	6.1	12.7	35.1	42.0
Mentoring new hunters	3.7	4.4	12.6	22.1	34.0	26.9
Feeling safe while hunting	4.6	0.5	1.9	5.4	25.3	66.9
Seeing and hearing other wildlife while hunting	3.9	1.2	6.0	24.9	37.3	30.7
Taking a turkey home for food	3.0	10.9	18.5	38.7	20.0	11.9
Harvesting a big, mature turkey (long beard or large spur)	3.1	8.5	18.6	40.2	21.9	10.8
Spending time outdoors	4.7	0.0	0.3	2.1	28.0	69.6
Opportunities to hunt with a rifle	2.6	38.0	12.7	18.5	16.6	14.1



Table B3. Responses to the question, “Which of the following do you typically use during the **fall turkey season**? (Select all that apply)”

	Percent	Count
Archery	26.0	153
Crossbow	25.9	152
Muzzleloader	23.3	137
Rifle	35.5	209
Shotgun	69.7	410
Handgun	2.2	13
Dogs	7.5	44
Decoys	12.4	73
Turkey Call	42.5	250

Table B4. Responses to the question, “How important is the opportunity to hunt with dogs during the **fall turkey season**?”

	Percent	Count
Not at all important	71.9	427
Somewhat important	8.1	48
Important	7.4	44
Very important	12.6	75

Table B5. Responses to the question, “Which of the following do you typically use during the **spring turkey season**? (Select all that apply)”

	Percent	Count
Archery	7.5	43
Crossbow	5.2	30
Muzzleloader	1.7	10
Rifle	13.2	76
Shotgun	94.9	545
Handgun	1.2	7
Female Decoy	52.1	299
Male Decoy	35.7	205
Tail Fan (real or synthetic feathers)	12.5	72
Turkey call	75.4	433

Table B6. Responses to the question, “How familiar are you with the turkey harvest summaries and trends reported by Virginia DWR?”

	Percent	Count
Very familiar	17.9	106
Somewhat familiar	44.2	261
A bit familiar	23.5	139
Not at all familiar	14.4	85

Table B7. Responses to questions, “In your opinion, the number of turkeys harvested in the area where you hunt in recent **fall/spring seasons** has been:”

	Fall Season		Spring Season	
	Percent	Count	Percent	Count
Very low	13.2	65	5.8	29
Low	41.3	203	30.6	153
About right	42.4	208	53.6	268
High	2.6	13	8.4	42
Very high	0.4	2	1.6	8

Table B8. Responses to the question, “When compared to previous years, would you say the number of turkey in the area you hunt has:”

	Percent	Count
Declined dramatically	3.9	22
Declined	28.0	158
Remained about the same	43.2	244
Increased	22.3	126
Increased dramatically	2.7	15

Table B9. Responses to the question, “Currently, the annual bag limit for turkeys in Virginia is three, and no more than two turkeys can be harvested in the fall. What is your opinion of the three bird annual bag limit?”

	Percent	Count
Too low (Bag limit should be higher)	11.9	70
Right size	77.1	455
Too high (Bag limit should be lower)	11.0	65

Table B10. Responses to the question, “If the annual bag limit is decreased, would the following options be acceptable or unacceptable?” (Only hunters reporting the current annual bag limit as too high received this question).

	Unacceptable	No opinion	Acceptable
One turkey annual limit, any season	68.3	9.5	22.2
Two turkey annual limit, any season	14.1	3.1	82.8
Two turkey annual limit, no more than one turkey can be harvested in the fall	13.8	0.0	86.2
Two turkey annual limit, no more than one turkey can be harvested in the spring	42.2	10.9	46.9
Three turkey annual limit, only one of which may be an unbarbeared bird (hen) in the fall	50.0	17.2	32.8

Table B11. Responses to the question, “If DWR considers options to **increase turkey populations** in certain areas, please indicate how acceptable or unacceptable the following options are:”

	Mean	1 (Unacceptable)	2	3 (Neutral)	4	5 (Acceptable)
Reduce the length of the fall turkey season	2.5	37.3	12.8	28.4	5.6	15.8
Reduce the length of the spring turkey season	2.2	43.4	16.9	22.9	6.1	10.7
Reduce afternoon hunting during the spring season	3.0	24.4	10.2	32.0	8.6	24.7
Delay the opening of spring turkey season	2.0	50.3	14.9	22.9	3.9	8.0
Reduce the total bag limit	2.4	37.9	15.8	26.0	7.1	13.1
Reduce the fall bag limit	2.6	36.1	12.8	27.0	6.5	17.7
Reduce the spring bag limit	2.4	37.8	16.2	27.7	4.6	13.8

Table B12. Responses to the question, “If DWR considers changes to the **fall turkey season**, please indicate how acceptable or unacceptable the following options are:”

	Mean	1 (Unacceptable)	2	3 (Neutral)	4	5 (Acceptable)
Increase overlap with deer seasons	3.5	13.8	7.2	28.2	13.3	37.4
Reduce unbearded bird (hen) harvest	3.1	19.8	11.5	34.5	10.9	23.2
Eliminate unbearded bird (hen) harvest and only allow bearded bird harvest	2.3	42.7	14.5	23.2	7.3	12.3
Increase season length	3.5	10.1	6.0	36.8	13.7	33.3
Increase bag limit	2.8	24.8	13.4	36.3	7.4	18.2

Table B13. Responses to the question, “If DWR considers changes to the timing of the **fall turkey season**, please indicate how important the following options are:”

	Mean	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Opportunities to hunt turkey during the week of Thanksgiving	3.0	13.7	16.9	29.4	40.1
Overlap with deer firearm seasons	2.4	27.1	26.4	25.9	20.6
Overlap with deer muzzleloader seasons	2.2	36.3	24.9	20.4	18.4
Opportunities to hunt turkeys outside of deer seasons	2.7	16.5	23.0	34.0	26.6
Overlap with small game or gamebird seasons (squirrel, rabbit, quail, grouse)	2.2	33.3	28.7	22.3	15.6

Table B14. Responses to the question, “Consider the most recent spring turkey season you participated in. Indicate how much of your hunting time was spent during the first two weeks, during the mornings of the last three weeks, and during the afternoons of the last three weeks. (If you have not hunted in the spring season within the past few years, leave all responses as zero)”

	Mean
First two weeks (Half day only)	50.4
Last three weeks - Morning to Noon	28.1
Last three weeks - Afternoon to Evening	11.7

Table B15. Responses to the question, “If DWR considers changes to the **spring turkey season**, please indicate how acceptable or unacceptable the following options are:”

	Mean	1 (Unacceptable)	2	3 (Neutral)	4	5 (Acceptable)
Expanding all day hunting to the entire season	2.9	24.0	10.5	35.2	9.1	21.3
Expanding all day hunting to the entire season, but the spring season starts a week later	2.2	43.7	14.2	28.3	4.4	9.4
Reducing all day hunting, so that only half day hunting is allowed the first three weeks	3.2	16.3	8.3	37.3	12.2	26.0
Reducing all day hunting, so that only half day hunting is allowed throughout the entire season	2.9	25.3	8.5	35.0	9.2	21.9
Keep all day hunting as it is, and move the spring season so it starts a week later	2.4	36.3	14.5	34.9	5.5	8.8

Table B16. Responses to the question, “If DWR considers allowing all day hunting during the first two weeks of the **spring turkey season**, how important do you think the following factors should be when considering this option?”

	Mean	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
More opportunities for hunters	2.4	23.7	33.1	26.3	16.9
More opportunities for youth hunts	2.7	14.8	28.1	29.5	27.5
Less hunter crowding	2.5	20.3	32.6	28.5	18.5
Higher chance hens will be flushed from nests	3.0	8.0	25.2	27.4	39.4
Higher chance of disrupting breeding behaviors	3.0	9.4	21.8	30.2	38.5
Higher chance of unbearded birds (hens) being harvested	2.8	16.1	22.5	27.9	33.6

Table B17. Responses to the question, “If all day hunting were to be allowed during the first two weeks of the **spring turkey season**, how likely are you to hunt during the afternoon in the first two weeks?”

	Percent	Count
Extremely unlikely	26.5	150
Somewhat unlikely	20.3	115
Neither likely or unlikely	11.1	63
Somewhat likely	23.8	135
Extremely likely	18.3	104

Table B18. Responses to the question, “Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. When answering, consider the area where you typically or most often hunt turkey.”

	Mean	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The area I hunt for turkeys is crowded	2.4	30.0	25.2	24.5	14.2	6.0
Using stationary decoys to attract turkeys is a safety issue	2.3	35.2	25.6	22.0	13.3	3.9
Using stalking decoys (tail fans or full strut) to attract turkeys within close range is a safety issue	3.1	16.9	16.5	21.9	27.4	17.3
Stationary decoys are appropriate equipment for hunting turkey	4.2	4.3	3.4	15.7	23.9	52.8
Stalking decoys (tail fans or full strut) are appropriate equipment for hunting turkey	3.2	14.1	12.8	34.9	19.8	18.5

Table B19. Responses to the question, “Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about DWR’s management of the turkey population in Virginia.”

	Mean	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Makes good management decisions for wild turkey in Virginia	3.8	3.1	7.6	22.2	38.5	28.6
Makes reasonable efforts to educate hunters about turkey management	3.9	2.0	7.5	19.2	42.3	29.0
Incorporates hunters’ input in their turkey management efforts	3.9	1.8	6.1	24.6	39.8	27.8

Table B20. Responses to the question, “Where do you typically receive information about turkey hunting? (Select all that apply)”

	Percent	Count
DWR Hunting Regulations Booklet	70.9	395
DWR Social Media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram)	14.0	78
DWR Website	64.1	357
DWR Notes from the Field Blog	8.8	49
Virginia Wildlife magazine	22.4	125
Family and friends	40.6	226
Newspaper	2.3	13
Outdoor magazine (non-DWR)	19.6	109
Outdoor blogs and website (non-DWR)	10.1	56
Social media (non-DWR)	12.7	71
Podcasts	6.8	38
Other	6.1	34

Table B21. Demographics of respondents from the fall turkey harvester sample.

	Percent	Count
Gender		
Male	97.1	533
Female	1.3	7
Transgender	0	0
A gender not listed here (Please specify:)	0.9	5
Prefer not to answer	0.7	4

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Ethnicity		
Hispanic	0.6	3
Non-Hispanic	99.4	530
Race		
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.9	5
Asian	0.4	2
Black or African American	0.7	4
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.2	1
White	98	529
Not listed here (Please specify:)	0.9	5
	Mean	SD
Age	54	14.9
Highest Education Level		
Less than high school	1.5	8
High school diploma or equivalent	23.5	128
Some college, no degree	23.2	126
Associate's degree	12.3	67
Bachelor's degree	24.3	132
Master's degree	11.2	61
Professional degree	1.8	10
Doctorate degree	2.2	12
Income		
Less than \$24,999	4.4	22
\$25,000 - \$49,999	15.1	76
\$50,000 - \$74,999	27.1	136
\$75,000 - \$99,999	18.9	95
\$100,000 - \$124,999	13.1	66
\$125,000 or more	21.3	107
Current Residency		
Urban	8.2	44
Suburban	31.2	168
Rural	60.7	327

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*Inactive Turkey Hunter Responses*

Table C1. Responses to the question, “In the past two years, which of the following game species have you hunted? (Select all that apply)”

	Percent	Count
Deer	98.0	348
Bear	14.6	52
Waterfowl	14.6	52
Small game mammals (e.g., rabbit, squirrel)	31.8	113
Small game birds (e.g., quail, grouse, dove)	15.5	55
Furbearer (e.g., fox, coyote, raccoon)	9.0	32

Table C2. Responses to the question, “Have you ever hunted or harvested a turkey in Virginia?”

	Percent	Count
Yes	54.4	203
No	45.6	170

Table C3. Responses to the question, “You indicated you have hunted or harvested turkeys in Virginia before, but not recently. How much do you agree or disagree with the following reasons why?” (Only hunters that reported hunting or harvesting a turkey, but not recently, received these questions)

	Mean	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I have moved and no longer have a place to hunt turkeys	2.0	47.4	22.2	17.0	12.4	1.0
I no longer have friends or family to hunt turkeys with	2.2	36.6	28.9	17.5	14.9	2.1
I have not had time to hunt turkeys in recent years	3.1	16.4	16.9	20.5	36.4	9.7
I prefer hunting other game species more than turkeys	3.3	8.3	16.6	24.4	36.3	14.5
I’m satisfied with my previous turkey hunts	3.4	7.2	12.8	29.2	37.9	12.8
Hunting turkeys is too difficult	2.2	23.0	38.7	30.9	6.3	1.0

The turkey population where I hunt is too low	2.6	18.6	32.0	26.8	16.5	6.2
Other	2.9	10.2	13.6	59.3	10.2	6.8

Table C4. Responses to the question, “How much do you agree or disagree that the following explain why you have not hunted turkey?” (Only hunters that reported never hunting or harvesting a turkey received these questions)”

	Mean	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I prefer hunting other game	3.1	9.3	15.5	38.5	24.2	12.4
I don't have friends or family that are interested in turkey hunting	2.7	18.5	29.0	21.0	25.9	5.6
I do not have the time to hunt turkey	2.9	12.2	25.0	33.5	23.2	6.1
Turkey hunting seems difficult	2.7	11.0	32.5	34.4	21.5	0.6
The turkey population where I hunt is too low	2.6	17.8	28.2	33.7	14.1	6.1
Other	3.3	2.1	2.1	63.8	23.4	8.5

Table C5. Demographics of inactive turkey hunters (not recently hunted/harvested a turkey or never hunted/harvested a turkey).

	Percent	Count
Gender		
Male	93.5	330
Female	4	14
Transgender	0	0
A gender not listed here (Please specify:)	1.7	6
Prefer not to answer	0.8	3
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	1.5	5
Non-Hispanic	98.5	321

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Race		
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.1	4
Asian	0.9	3
Black or African American	2.8	10
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0
White	94.6	332
Not listed here (Please specify:)	2	7
	Mean	SD
Age	49.1	15.6
Highest Education Level		
Less than high school	3.7	13
High school diploma or equivalent	30.1	106
Some college, no degree	22.4	79
Associate's degree	10.2	36
Bachelor's degree	19.3	68
Master's degree	10.2	36
Professional degree	3.1	11
Doctorate degree	0.9	3
Income		
Less than \$24,999	10.3	33
\$25,000 - \$49,999	21.2	68
\$50,000 - \$74,999	20.3	65
\$75,000 - \$99,999	16.6	53
\$100,000 - \$124,999	12.5	40
\$125,000 or more	19.1	61
Current Residency		
Urban	12.3	43
Suburban	28.9	101
Rural	58.9	206

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. 2023 Virginia Turkey Hunter Survey

# 2023 Turkey Hunter Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete the Virginia Wild Turkey Hunter Survey! The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is committed to managing wild turkey populations and providing hunting opportunities across the Commonwealth. The input from hunters like you is critically important for balancing these objectives and updating the Virginia Wild Turkey Management Plan.

At the end of this survey you will have the opportunity to provide further comments about wild turkey management issues not directly addressed in the survey. You will also be asked if you would like to receive email updates about the results of this survey and announcements and updates to the Virginia Wild Turkey Management Plan.

Click on the arrow below to begin the survey.

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Did you hunt or harvest turkeys in Virginia during the **Spring 2022** season or the **Spring 2023** season?

- Yes
  - No
- 

Did you hunt or harvest turkeys in Virginia during the **Fall 2021** season or the **Fall 2022** season?

- Yes, hunted specifically for turkey
  - Yes, hunted turkey while primarily hunting for other game
  - Both (hunted specifically for turkey while hunting other game)
  - No
-

Display This Question:

If Did you hunt or harvest turkeys in Virginia during the Spring 2022 season or the Spring 2023 season? = Yes

And Did you hunt or harvest turkeys in Virginia during the Fall 2021 season or the Fall 2022 season? = No

You indicated that you have participated in a recent spring season but not a recent fall season. How much do you agree or disagree with the following reasons for why?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I prefer the experience of the spring turkey season	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer to target other game species in the fall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hen harvest in the fall season harms the turkey population	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Any harvest in the fall season harms the turkey population	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hunting turkeys in the fall is challenging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Few opportunities to harvest turkey in the fall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have not had the time in recent years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the past two years, which of the following game species have you hunted? (*Select all that apply*)

- Deer
  - Bear
  - Waterfowl
  - Small game mammals (e.g., rabbit, squirrel)
  - Small game birds (e.g., quail, grouse, dove)
  - Furbearer (e.g., fox, coyote, raccoon)
- 

Have you ever hunted or harvested a turkey in Virginia?

- Yes
  - No
-

Display This Question:

If Have you ever hunted or harvested a turkey in Virginia? = Yes

You indicated you have hunted or harvested turkeys in Virginia before, but not recently. How much do you agree or disagree with the following reasons why?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have moved and no longer have a place to hunt turkeys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I no longer have friends or family to hunt turkeys with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have not had time to hunt turkeys in recent years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer hunting other game species more than turkeys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm satisfied with my previous turkey hunts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hunting turkeys is too difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The turkey population where I hunt is too low	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If Have you ever hunted or harvested a turkey in Virginia? = No



How much do you agree or disagree that the following explain why you have not hunted turkey?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I prefer hunting other game	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't have friends or family that are interested in turkey hunting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not have the time to hunt turkey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Turkey hunting seems difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The turkey population where I hunt is too low	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Considering both fall and spring seasons, where do you most often hunt turkeys? (If you do not know or are not sure, select Don't know/Not sure)

▼ Don't know /Not sure ... Other

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How important are the following when you hunt turkeys? Consider both fall and spring seasons.

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Seeing turkeys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hearing turkeys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Calling or working turkeys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harvesting turkeys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spending time hunting with friends and family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentoring new hunters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling safe while hunting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeing and hearing other wildlife while hunting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taking a turkey home for food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harvesting a big, mature turkey (long beard or large spur)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spending time outdoors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities to hunt with a rifle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which of the following do you typically use during the **fall turkey season**? (Select all that apply)

- Archery
  - Crossbow
  - Muzzleloader
  - Rifle
  - Shotgun
  - Handgun
  - Dogs
  - Decoys
  - Turkey Call
- 

How important is the opportunity to hunt with dogs during the **fall turkey season**?

- Not at all important
  - Somewhat important
  - Important
  - Very important
-

Which of the following do you typically use during the **spring turkey season**? (Select all that apply)

- Archery
  - Crossbow
  - Muzzleloader
  - Rifle
  - Shotgun
  - Handgun
  - Female Decoy
  - Male Decoy
  - Tail Fan (real or synthetic feathers)
  - Turkey Call
- 

How familiar are you with the turkey harvest summaries and trends reported by Virginia DWR?

- Very familiar
  - Somewhat familiar
  - A bit familiar
  - Not at all familiar
-

In your opinion, the number of turkeys harvested in the area where you hunt in recent **fall seasons** has been:

- Very low
  - Low
  - About right
  - High
  - Very high
  - Don't know
- 

In your opinion, the number of turkeys harvested in the area where you hunt in recent **spring seasons** has been:

- Very low
  - Low
  - About right
  - High
  - Very high
  - Don't know
-

When compared to previous years, would you say the number of turkey in the area you hunt has:

- Declined dramatically
  - Declined
  - Remained about the same
  - Increased
  - Increased dramatically
  - Don't know
- 

Currently, the annual bag limit for turkeys in Virginia is three, and no more than two turkeys can be harvested in the fall. What is your opinion of the three bird annual bag limit?

- Too low (Bag limit should be higher)
  - Right size
  - Too high (Bag limit should be lower)
-

Display This Question:

If Currently, the annual bag limit for turkeys in Virginia is three, and no more than two turkeys ca... = Too high (Bag limit should be lower)

If the annual bag limit is decreased, would the following options be acceptable or unacceptable?

	Unacceptable	No opinion	Acceptable
One turkey annual limit, any season	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Two turkey annual limit, any season	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Two turkey annual limit, no more than one turkey can be harvested in the fall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Two turkey annual limit, no more than one turkey can be harvested in the spring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Three turkey annual limit, only one of which may be an unbearded bird (hen) in the fall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If DWR considers options to **increase turkey populations** in certain areas, please indicate how acceptable or unacceptable the following options are:

	<b>1</b> (Unacceptable)	<b>2</b>	<b>3 (Neutral)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 (Acceptable)</b>
Reduce the length of the fall turkey season	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduce the length of the spring turkey season	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduce afternoon hunting during the spring season	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Delay the opening of spring turkey season	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduce the total bag limit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduce the fall bag limit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduce the spring bag limit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



If DWR considers changes to the **fall turkey season**, please indicate how acceptable or unacceptable the following options are:

	<b>1</b> (Unacceptable)	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> (Neutral)	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> (Acceptable)
Increase overlap with deer seasons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduce unbearded bird (hen) harvest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eliminate unbearded bird (hen) harvest and only allow bearded bird harvest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase season length	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase bag limit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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If DWR considers changes to the timing of the **fall turkey season**, please indicate how important the following options are:

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Opportunities to hunt turkey during the week of Thanksgiving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overlap with deer firearm seasons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overlap with deer muzzleloader seasons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities to hunt turkeys outside of deer seasons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overlap with small game or gamebird seasons (squirrel, rabbit, quail, grouse)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Consider the most recent **spring turkey season** you participated in. Using the boxes below, indicate how much of your hunting time was spent during the first two weeks, during the mornings of the last three weeks, and during the afternoons of the last three weeks. (*Your responses should equal 100%. If you have not hunted in the spring season within the past few years, leave all responses as zero*)

First two weeks (Half day only) : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Last three weeks - Morning to Noon : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Last three weeks - Afternoon to Evening : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total : \_\_\_\_\_

DWR strives to balance hunting opportunities with protection of the wild turkey population in Virginia. If DWR considers changes to the **spring turkey season**, please indicate how acceptable or unacceptable the following options are:

	<b>1</b> (Unacceptable)	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> (Neutral)	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> (Acceptable)
Expanding all day hunting to the entire season	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expanding all day hunting to the entire season, but the spring season starts a week later	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reducing all day hunting, so that only half day hunting is allowed the first three weeks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reducing all day hunting, so that only half day hunting is allowed throughout the entire season	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keep all day hunting as it is, and move the spring season so it starts a week later	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If DWR considers allowing all day hunting during the first two weeks of the **spring turkey season**, how important do you think the following factors should be when considering this option?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
More opportunities for hunters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More opportunities for youth hunts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Less hunter crowding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Higher chance hens will be flushed from nests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Higher chance of disrupting breeding behaviors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Higher chance of unbearded birds (hens) being harvested	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If all day hunting were to be allowed during the first two weeks of the **spring turkey season**, how likely are you to hunt during the afternoon in the first two weeks?

- Extremely unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Extremely likely

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. When answering, consider the area where you typically or most often hunt turkey.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The area I hunt for turkeys is crowded	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using stationary decoys to attract turkeys is a safety issue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using stalking decoys (tail fans or full strut) to attract turkeys within close range is a safety issue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stationary decoys are appropriate equipment for hunting turkey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stalking decoys (tail fans or full strut) are appropriate equipment for hunting turkey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about DWR's management of the turkey population in Virginia.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Makes good management decisions for wild turkey in Virginia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Makes reasonable efforts to educate hunters about turkey management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Incorporates hunters' input in their turkey management efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Where do you typically receive information about turkey hunting? (Select all that apply)

- DWR Hunting Regulations Booklet
  - DWR Social Media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram)
  - DWR Website
  - DWR Notes from the Field blog
  - Virginia Wildlife magazine
  - Family and friends
  - Newspaper
  - Outdoor magazine (non-DWR)
  - Outdoor blogs and website (non-DWR)
  - Social media (non-DWR)
  - Podcasts
  - Other (please specify):
- 

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In what year were you born?

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What is your gender?

- Male
  - Female
  - Transgender
  - A gender not listed here (Please specify:)
- 

Prefer not to answer

What is your ethnicity?

- Hispanic
- Non-Hispanic

What is your race? (Select all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Not listed here (Please specify:)
-



What is your highest degree or level of school?

- Less than high school
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Some college, no degree
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree
- Doctorate degree

What was your total individual income during the past 12 months? (*Select one*)

- Less than \$24,999
- \$25,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$74,999
- \$75,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$124,999
- \$125,000 or more

Which of the following best describes where you currently live?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

If you have any further comments about turkey hunting in Virginia, please share them in the space below.

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If you would like to receive emails about the results of this survey or updates to the Virginia Wild Turkey Management Plan, please select the boxes below.

I would like to receive an email about the results of this survey

I would like to receive emails with updates about the Virginia Wild Turkey Management Plan

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you have questions regarding this survey, please contact the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) at [surveys@dwr.virginia.gov](mailto:surveys@dwr.virginia.gov).

In this survey you may have received questions asking about your preferences and opinions on potential changes to turkey hunting regulations. At this time, DWR does not have proposals to change any turkey hunting regulations. The responses to this survey will help DWR determine if any potential changes should be considered further in the future. Any proposals for changes to hunting regulation are publicly announced and members of the public are given the opportunity to provide feedback. Current opportunities to provide public comment are available here: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/about/public-comment-opportunities/>.

If you would like to learn more about wild turkey in Virginia or view the current Virginia Wild Turkey Management Plan, please visit: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/turkey>

## Appendix B. 2023 Virginia Turkey Hunter Survey email invitation

<First Name> <Last Name>,

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) invites you to complete the 2023 Virginia Wild Turkey Hunter Survey. We are interested in what makes your turkey hunting experiences memorable, how we can support your participation in turkey hunting, your opinions on potential adjustments to turkey hunting regulations, and any concerns about safe and ethical hunting in Virginia. Results from this survey are used to inform and update the Virginia Wild Turkey Management Plan, which guides DWR's efforts to manage wild turkey populations and provide turkey hunting opportunities across the Commonwealth and into the future.

### **Follow this link to the Survey:**

[Take the Survey](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[https://vdgif.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_afWV3qy4rysYEya?Q\\_DL=QUOiDFVZFSVWuu6\\_afWV3qy4rysYEya\\_CGC\\_iAAAssHD5RPEfAD&Q\\_CHL=email](https://vdgif.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_afWV3qy4rysYEya?Q_DL=QUOiDFVZFSVWuu6_afWV3qy4rysYEya_CGC_iAAAssHD5RPEfAD&Q_CHL=email)

You are among a select group of hunters that will be receiving an invitation because you have purchased a hunting license within the past two years. The responses to this survey will be reported in agency plans, reports, and presentations. All responses are confidential, and responses are only reported in summaries. Your personal information will not be associated with your responses. This survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey responses we receive will be incorporated into the updates for the Virginia Wild Turkey Management Plan. This survey is focused on wild turkey hunting and management but there are questions for other hunters, and we encourage you to complete the survey whether you are an avid turkey hunter or have not gone turkey hunting yet. If you have any questions or concerns, please email [surveys@dwr.virginia.gov](mailto:surveys@dwr.virginia.gov).

More information about Virginia turkey hunting regulations, the current Virginia Wild Turkey Management Plan, and information about DWR surveys can be found by following the links below:

- DWR Hunting Regulations: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/>
- DWR Virginia Wild Turkey Plan and information about wild turkey: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/turkey/>
- DWR Surveys: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/surveys/>