



Minnesota's Wild Turkey Harvest – 2016

This report summarizes the fall 2015 and spring 2016 Minnesota wild turkey harvest information. The fall turkey season was 30 days in length (October 3- November 1) and allowed for an unlimited number of hunters to take one wild turkey of either sex.

Significant changes were made to the spring turkey season structure in 2016. The new structure for 2016 spring turkey season was intended to regulate harvest and distribute hunting pressure by allocating permits across 12 permit areas (Figure 1), however the 12 permit areas now include the entire state. Previous to 2016, much of the northcentral and northeastern portions of the state were not open to turkey hunting. There are now only 6 time periods using a quota system for the first 2 time periods. In 2015 there were 8 time periods, with the first 3 using a quota. In 2016 the first 5 time periods were all one week long, while the last time period was 14 days long, and all unsuccessful licensed turkey hunters from the previous time periods could hunt during this final time period. The first time period began on April 13, and the final time period concluded on May 31.

During spring, adult hunters interested in pursuing turkeys for the first 2 time periods were required to apply for a permit through a lottery system, but youth hunters, and for the first time licensed archery hunters, were able to purchase a permit over-the-counter, and hunt in any permit area for the entire season. Preference for this lottery system was determined by the number of years a valid but unsuccessful application had been submitted since last receiving a permit. Hunters could apply individually or in a group of up to 4 hunters. Successful applicants were notified through U.S. Mail and unsuccessful applicants were awarded a preference point.

Alternatively, firearms hunters could simply purchase a permit over-the-counter for one of the last 4 time periods. The goal of this new season structure is to provide additional quality turkey hunting opportunities while still managing hunter interference rates by maintaining 12 permit areas and 2 quota time periods.

Fall 2015 Turkey Season

The number of permits issued to hunters decreased slightly from 8,339 permits in 2014 to 8,210 in 2015 (Table 1, Figure 2). Hunters still needed to select and hunt within one of the 12 permit areas, except for youth who could hunt in all permit areas. There were 1,124 turkeys harvested during fall 2015, which was a 1% increase from 2014 (Table 1). Hunter success rates in 2015 remained similar to 2014 (13.7% vs. 13.6% respectively), and remained below the 5-year average (15%).

Spring 2016 Turkey Season

There were 49,991 permits issued during the spring season, including 11,329 general lottery and landowner permits, 11,449 youth permits, 10,343 archery permits, and 16,870 surplus over-the-counter permits (Table 6). The number of youth permits increased from 2015 by 1% (116). Archery permits increased by 105% (5291), likely a result of the expanded opportunity that allowed archers to hunt the entire season. Both lottery (-13.4%) and surplus gun permits (-1.9%) purchased decreased from 2015. The total number of permits purchased increased from 2015 by 7.1% (3,316), primarily as a result of archery license sales more than doubling. Hunters registered 12,313 turkeys (Tables 3, 5, and 6), which was the second highest harvest recorded and above the 5-year average (11,442; Figure 3). The winter of 2015-16 was again mild, and likely was not a significant mortality factor beyond normal winter mortality for turkeys. Spring weather was generally warm, and spring “green-up” was earlier than normal.

Table 1. Permits available and issued, applicants, registered harvest, and hunter success rates for fall wild turkey seasons 1990 – 2015, Minnesota.

Year	Permits available	Applicants	Permits issued	Registered harvest	Hunter success (%) ^a
1990	1,000	4,522	951	326	34
1991	2,200	2,990	2,020	552	27
1992	2,200	2,782	2,028	588	29
1993	2,400	3,186	2,094	605	29
1994	2,500	3,124	2,106	601	29
1995	2,500	3,685	2,125	648	30
1996	2,500	4,453	2,289	685	30
1997	2,580	4,574	2,378	698	29
1998	2,710	4,526	2,483	828	33
1999	2,890	5,354	2,644	865	33
2000	3,090	5,263	2,484	735	30
2001	2,870	4,501	2,262	629	28
2002	3,790	5,180	2,945	594	20
2003	3,870	5,264	2,977	889	30
2004	4,380	5,878	3,277	758	23
2005	4,410	4,542	2,978	681	23
2006	4,290	4,167	2,802	618	22
2007	4,490	4,464	2,837	695	24
2008	7,560	5,834	4,981	1,187	24
2009	9,330	7,738	5,019	1,163	23
2010	10,430	6,869	6,607	1,353	20
2011	10,430	3,538	5,382	953	18
2012	Unlimited	N/A	10,779	1,753	16
2013	Unlimited	N/A	8,193	1,078	13
2014	Unlimited	N/A	8,339	1,137	14
2015	Unlimited	N/A	8,210	1,124	14

^a Success rates not adjusted for non-participation.

Table 2. Permits issued, registered harvest, and hunter success during the 2016 Minnesota spring wild turkey season.

Permit area	Regular permits issued ^a	Total registered harvest ^b	Regular gun harvest ^c	Regular gun success rates
501	6,496	2,974	2,319	35.7%
502	563	194	129	22.9%
503	3,076	1,493	1,039	33.8%
504	704	361	239	33.9%
505	2,186	1,040	776	35.5%
506	1,029	409	271	26.3%
507	6,172	3,120	2,067	33.5%
508	3,166	1,453	995	31.4%
509	206	166	89	43.2%
510	1,831	1,010	621	33.9%
511	104	42	19	18.3%
512	78	50	24	30.8%

^a Permits issued for the Camp Ripley disabled veterans hunt, archery, and youth permits were not included.

^b Total harvest for all license types.

^c All lottery, military, and surplus permit harvest, excluding youth and archery licenses.

Table 3. Permits available, permits issued, registered harvest, and relative success rates from 1978 – 2016 for all spring wild turkey hunting seasons in Minnesota.

Year	Permits			Registered harvest	Success (%) ^a
	Available	Issued	Issued (%)		
1978	420	411	97.9	94	23
1979	840	827	98.5	116	14
1980	1,200	1,191	99.3	98	8
1981	1,500	1,437	95.8	113	8
1982	2,000	1,992	99.6	106	5
1983	2,100	2,079	99.0	116	6
1984	3,000	2,837	94.6	178	6
1985	2,750	2,449	89.1	323	13
1986	2,500	2,251	90.0	333	15
1987	2,700	2,520	93.3	520	21
1988	3,000	2,994	99.8	674	23
1989	4,000	3,821	95.5	930	24
1990	6,600	6,126	92.8	1,709	28
1991	9,170	8,607	93.9	1,724	20
1992	9,310	9,051	97.2	1,691	19
1993	9,625	9,265	96.3	2,082	23
1994	9,940	9,479	95.4	1,975	21
1995	9,975	9,550	95.7	2,339	25
1996	12,131	10,983	90.5	2,841	26
1997	12,530	11,610	92.7	3,302	28
1998	14,035	13,229	94.3	4,361	33
1999	18,360	16,387	89.3	5,132	31
2000	20,160	18,661	92.6	6,154	33
2001	22,936	21,404	93.3	6,383	30
2002	24,136	22,607	93.7	6,516	29
2003	25,016	22,770	91.0	7,666	34
2004	27,600	25,261	91.5	8,434	33
2005	31,748	27,638	87.1	7,800	28
2006	32,624	27,876	85.4	8,241	30
2007 ^b	33,976	28,320	83.4	9,412	33
2008 ^b	37,992	31,942	84.1	10,994	34
2009 ^b	42,328	36,193	85.5	12,210	34
2010 ^b	55,982	46,548 ^c	83.0	13,467	29
2011 ^b	Unlimited	43,521 ^c	N/A	10,055	23
2012 ^b	Unlimited	38,906 ^c	N/A	11,325	29
2013 ^b	Unlimited	34,281 ^c	N/A	10,390	30
2014 ^b	Unlimited	43,305 ^c	N/A	11,447	25
2015 ^b	Unlimited	41,623 ^c	N/A	11,734	28

2016 ^b	Unlimited	39,648 ^c	N/A	12,313	31
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^a Success rates not adjusted for non-participation

^b Youth hunt data included

^c Permits issued to archery hunters were not included. There were 2,462, 3,911, 4,550, 4,899, 5052, and 10,343 permits issued to archers in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016 respectively.

Table 4. Permits available and issued by license type (resident and non-resident) and time period for the spring 2016 wild turkey season, Minnesota.

Time period	Permits available	General lottery ^a	Surplus	Youth ^b	Archery ^c
A: Apr. 13-19	6,983	6,017	179	X	X
B: Apr. 20-26	6,983	5,233	1,024	X	X
C: Apr. 27-May 3	Unlimited	7	8,217	X	X
D: May 4-10	Unlimited	4	3,978	X	X
E: May 11-17	Unlimited	0	602	X	X
F: May 18-31	Unlimited	0	245 ^d	X	X
Total ^a	Unlimited	11,329	16,870	11,449	10,343

^a Includes landowner licenses.

^b Youth permits were valid for all time periods.

^c Archery permits were valid for all time periods.

^d Number of surplus licenses sold for this time period. Actual number of hunters in unknown because all unsuccessful hunters from previous time periods could hunt.

Table 5. Total harvest by time-period, spring 2016 wild turkey season, Minnesota.

Time period	Total harvest	Percent harvest (%)
A	3,997	32.5
B	2,857	23.2
C	2,487	20.2
D	1,330	10.8
E	611	4.9
F	1,031	8.4
Total	12,313	100

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Table 6. Total permits issued, harvest and success rate by type of permit, spring 2016 wild turkey season, Minnesota.

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	Total permits sold	Harvest	Success (%) ^a
Lottery	11,329	4,245	37
Surplus	16,870	4,344	26
Youth	11,449	2,243	20
Archery	10,343	1,481	14
Total	49,991	12,313	25

^a Success rates not adjusted for non-participation.

Wild Turkey Permit Areas

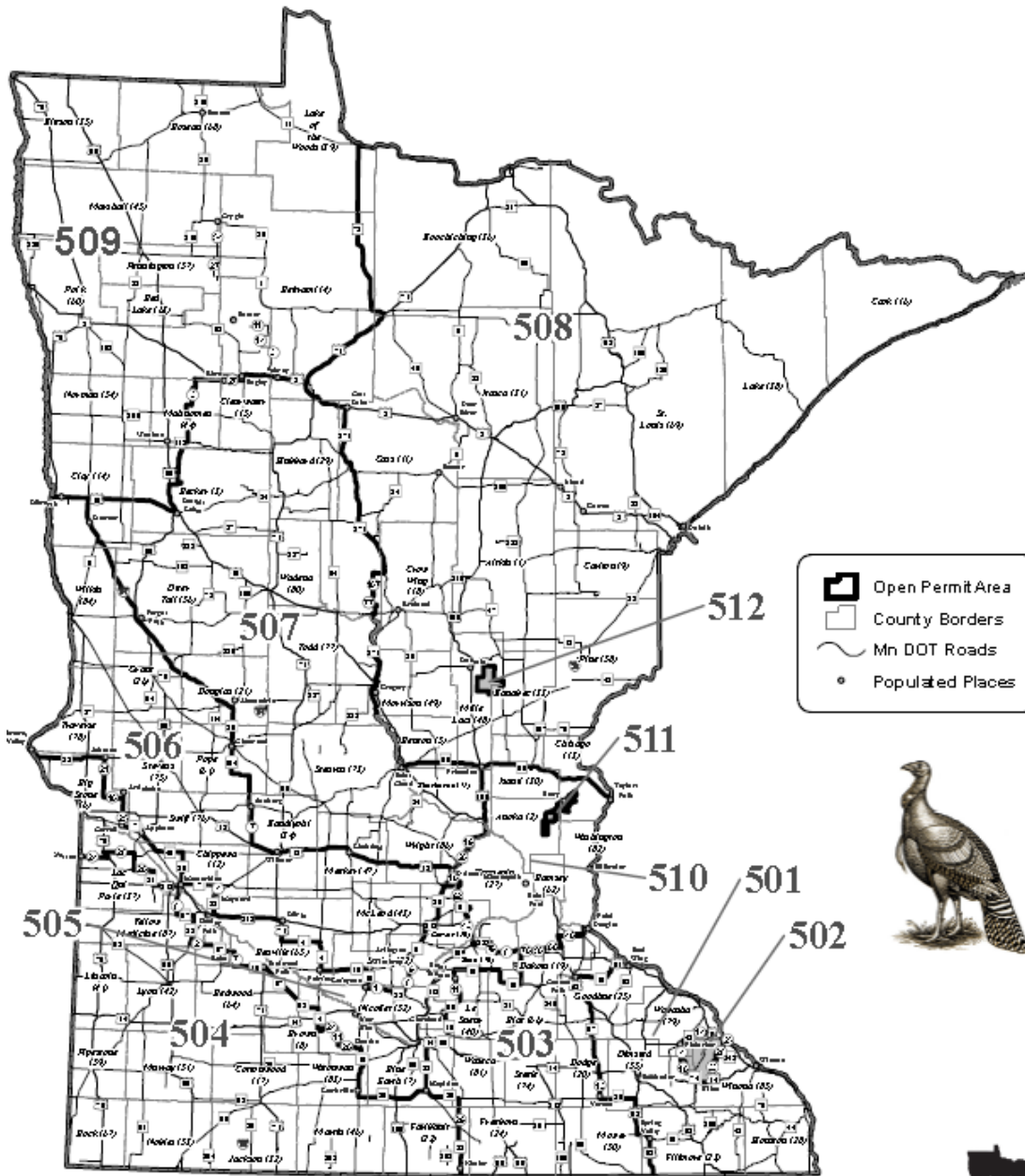


Figure 1. Permit areas open for hunting during the 2016 spring turkey hunting season, Minnesota.

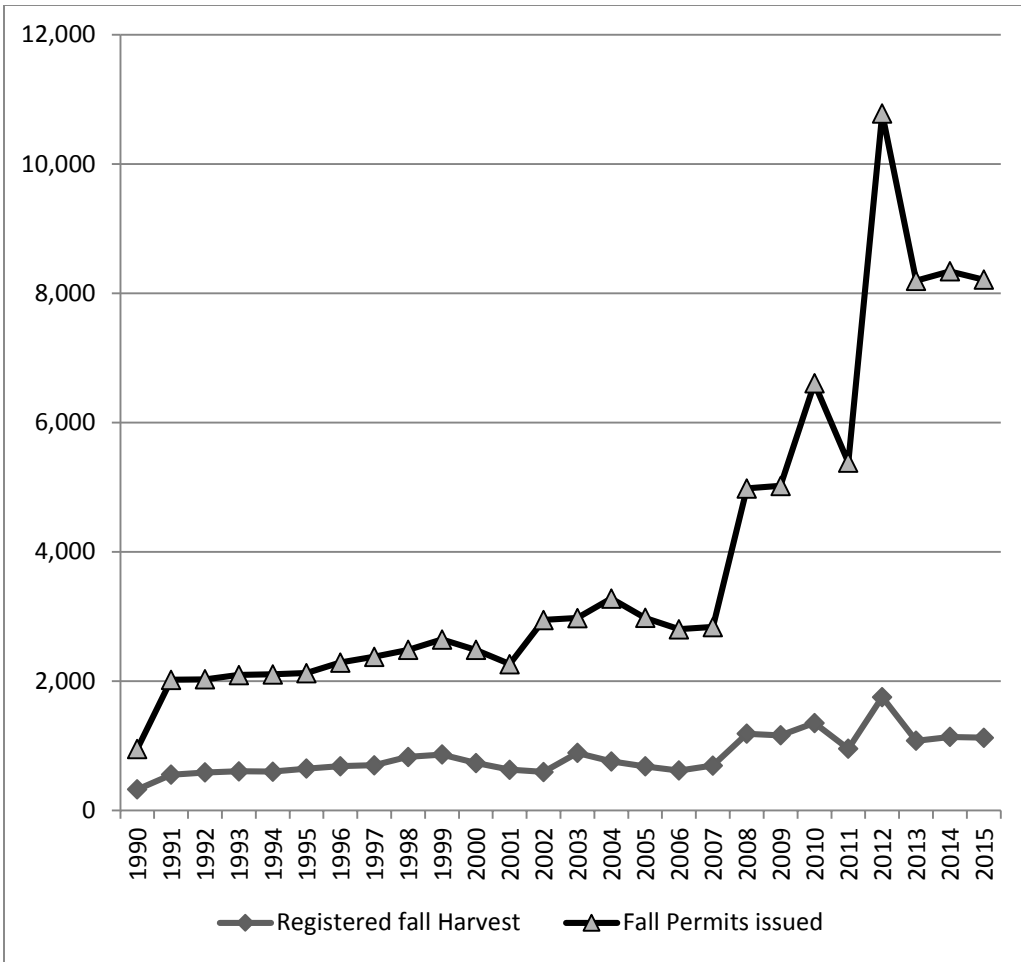


Figure 2. Permits issued and registered harvest for fall wild turkey seasons, 1990-2016, Minnesota.

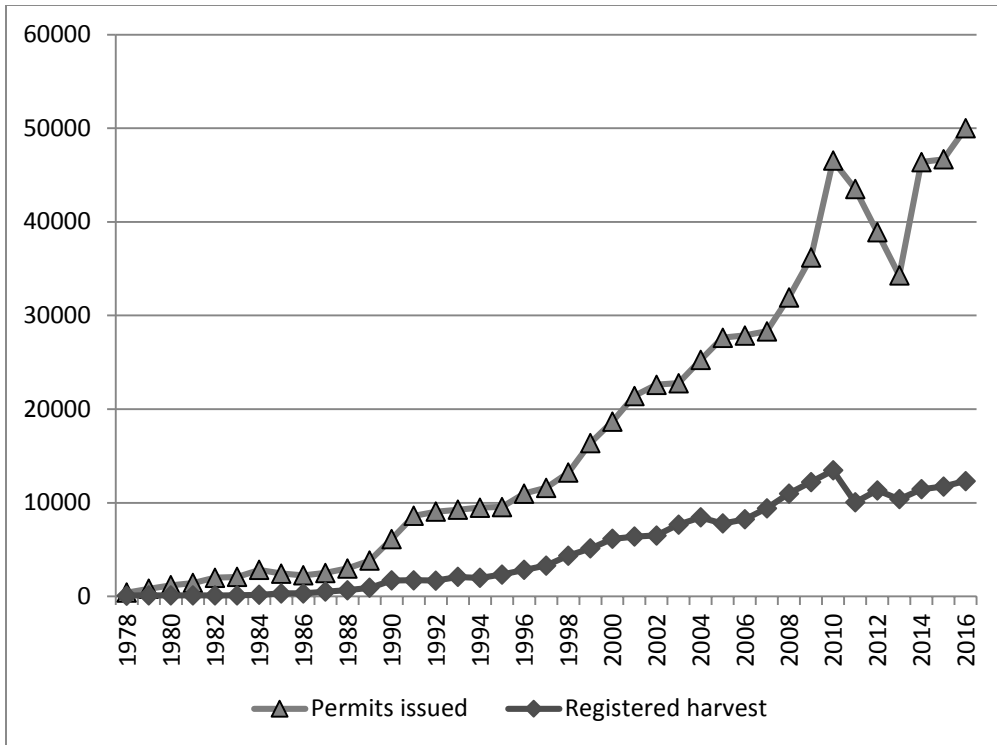


Figure 3. Permits issued and registered harvest for spring wild turkey seasons, 1978-2016, Minnesota.

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