

Minnesota's Wild Turkey Harvest – Fall 2021, Spring 2022

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Summary of Season Structure

The fall 2021 turkey season opened October 2 and closed October 31. An unlimited number of permits were available, but hunters could only harvest a single bird of any sex in any turkey permit area (TPA). All hunters, regardless of license type (archery/firearm), could hunt the entire season.

The spring 2022 hunting season was open April 13 through May 31. Hunters were limited to harvesting a single bird: either a tom, jake, or bearded hen. Firearm hunters were restricted to hunting one of 5 week-long time periods (A-E) in addition to the final two weeks of the season (F) if they did not harvest a bird earlier. Archery and youth hunters could hunt the entire season. An unlimited number of permits were available during all time periods, except for 3 TPAs (502, 511, 512) that maintained a lottery during the A-C periods. All hunters declared a TPA at the time of license purchase but could harvest a bird within any TPA.

Fall 2021 Season

Permits Issued

The number of fall turkey hunters in 2021 (9,026) was similar to the number of hunters in fall 2020 (+7%; Table 1) and was 15% above the 10-year average (8,087). The proportion of youth hunters was consistent with the previous season (22%). The number of fall turkey hunters participating in the 2021 season was second only to 2012, the first season after the fall license permit system was ended.

Harvest

The fall 2021 harvest (1,238) was 9% greater than the fall 2020 harvest (Table 1), and 2021 was the second greatest harvest since the inception of a fall hunting season in 1990. Hunter success was 13.7% which was similar to the long-term average (14.4%). Hens comprised 54.7% of the total harvest, with jakes and toms comprising 19.5% and 25.8% of the total fall harvest, respectively. Two TPAs—507 and 508—accounted for 56% of the total fall harvest. These two permit areas were also the most hunted, accounting for 51% of total fall permit sales.

Spring 2022 Season

Permits Issued

The number of permits issued across all license types decreased in 2022 from 58,084 hunters in 2021 to 54,491 in 2022 (Tables 3 and 4). The greatest change was among general permit sales, which fell from 32,520 in 2021 to 29,603; all other permit category sales remained relatively constant (Table 4). Although permit sales have fallen since the record number issued in 2020 (Table 3, Fig. 3), the number of permits issued 2021 and 2022 are still at least 8,000-10,000 greater than the number issued in any season prior to 2020 (Table 4; Figure 3). All hunters had to declare a TPA in 2022, but they were not restricted to harvesting a bird in the declared area. Permit areas 502, 511, and 512 still instituted a lottery during the A-C time periods. Permit sales were greatest in TPA 507 and, along with TPAs 501, 503, and 508, comprised 70% of all permit sales (Table 5).

Harvest

During the 2022 spring turkey season, 12,309 turkeys were harvested (Tables 3 and 4). The harvest total increased compared to 2021 and is the second highest season harvest total for the modern turkey season (since 1978; Table 4, Figure 3). Permit areas 507 and 501 saw the greatest harvest, but 503, 508, and 510 all reported more than 1,000 birds harvested (Table 5). Harvest success increased among all license holders to an average success rate of 22.6% (Table 3).

Cold weather and snow during the early part of the spring season led to a decline in the harvest during the A period and accounted for only 26.1% of the total spring 2022 harvest (Table 6). Typically, 30%-40% of the total spring harvest occurs during the A season. Collectively, the A-C periods accounted for approximately 65% of the total spring turkey harvest (Table 6), whereas it accounts for more than 75% of the harvest in most years. The decline in harvest during the A season was compensated by greater proportional harvest during the D and E seasons.

Tables

Table 1. Permits issued, registered harvest, and hunter success rates for the ten most recent fall wild turkey seasons in Minnesota, 2012-2021.

Year	Permits issued	Registered harvest	Hunter success (%)^a
2012	10,628	1,752	16.5%
2013	8,060	1,137	14.1%
2014	8,236	1,216	14.8%
2015	8,109	1,213	15.0%
2016	8,496	1,176	13.8%
2017	7,650	1,015	13.3%
2018	6,719	834	12.4%
2019	6,481	855	13.2%
2020	8,408	1,136	13.5%
2021	9,026	1,238	13.7%

^a Total hunter success (registered harvest divided by all permits issued). Success rates not adjusted for non-participation or un-registered harvest.

Table 2. Permits issued, registered harvest by sex, and total registered harvest during the 2021 fall wild turkey season in Minnesota.

Permit area	General permits issued ^a	Youth permits issued	Toms ^a	Jakes ^a	Hens ^a	Total registered harvest ^a
501	806	211	27	18	59	104
502	104	29	6	1	6	13
503	620	150	32	22	58	112
504	196	77	10	2	16	28
505	343	108	19	10	21	50
506	299	78	14	12	21	47
507	1,653	530	97	66	204	367
508	1,945	464	80	70	171	321
509	317	171	8	23	48	79
510	597	136	27	16	64	107
511	99	25	0	1	6	7
512	58	10	0	0	3	3
Total	7,037	1,989	320	241	677	1,238

^a Total harvest for all license types.

Table 3. Total permits issued, harvest, and success rate by permit type during the spring 2022 wild turkey season in Minnesota.

	Total permits issued	Harvest	Success (%) ^a
General	29,603	8,309	28.1%
Youth	12,551	2,303	18.3%
Archery	12,337	1,697	13.8%
Total	54,491	12,309	22.6%

^a Success rates (registered harvest divided by number of permits issued) not adjusted for non-participation.

Table 4. Permits issued, registered harvest, and hunter success rates for the ten most recent spring wild turkey hunting seasons in Minnesota, 2013-2022.

Year	General permits issued	Youth permits issued	Archery permits issued	Registered harvest ^a	Success (%) ^b
2013 ^c	35,202	5,965	4,014	10,321	23.3%
2014 ^c	35,451	7,374	4,893	11,425	24.4%
2015 ^c	34,554	7,042	5,046	11,694	25.6%
2016 ^c	32,535	7,101	10,336	12,277	25.0%
2017 ^c	31,605	6,984	11,237	11,803	24.1%
2018 ^c	28,667	6,022	11,399	10,706	23.6%
2019	28,295	6,169	11,794	10,699	23.0%
2020	34,173	14,292	14,729	13,996	22.1%
2021	32,520	12,598	12,966	12,070	20.8%
2022	29,603	12,551	12,337	12,309	22.6%

^a Includes all license types.

^b Total hunter success (registered harvest divided by number of permits issued). Success rates not adjusted for non-participation or un-registered harvest.

^c Permits issued, derived issued %, registered harvest, and derived hunter success (%) were reviewed and adjusted to address inconsistencies in data query and previous reporting.

Table 5. Permits issued by license type and registered harvest within each TPA during the 2022 spring wild turkey season in Minnesota^a.

Permit area	Archery permits declared	General permits declared	Youth permits declared	Total registered harvest
501	1,496	5,799	1,655	2,188
502	163	671	154	244
503	1,173	3,301	1,278	1,342
504	456	872	413	384
505	628	1,789	595	796
506	653	1,143	676	501
507	3,302	7,284	3,903	3,305
508	2,314	5,516	2,219	1,975
509	458	794	541	370
510	1,440	2,029	888	1,096
511	165	248	146	65
512	89	157	83	43
Total	12,337	29,603	12,551	12,309

^a Beginning in 2020, all hunters declared but were not restricted to harvesting a turkey in their declared TPA.

Table 6. Permits issued and harvest by license type and time period for the spring 2022 wild turkey season in Minnesota.

Time period	Archery permits issued ^a	Youth permits issued ^a	General permits issued	Registered harvest ^b	Percent of total harvest ^b
Any	12,337	12,551			
A			6,932	3,211	26.1%
B			7,756	2,845	23.1%
C			5,822	1,869	15.2%
D			4,884	1,666	13.5%
E			2,658	870	7.1%
F			1,551	1,841	15.0%

^a Archery and youth permits were valid during any time period.

^b Includes harvest from all license types.

Figures

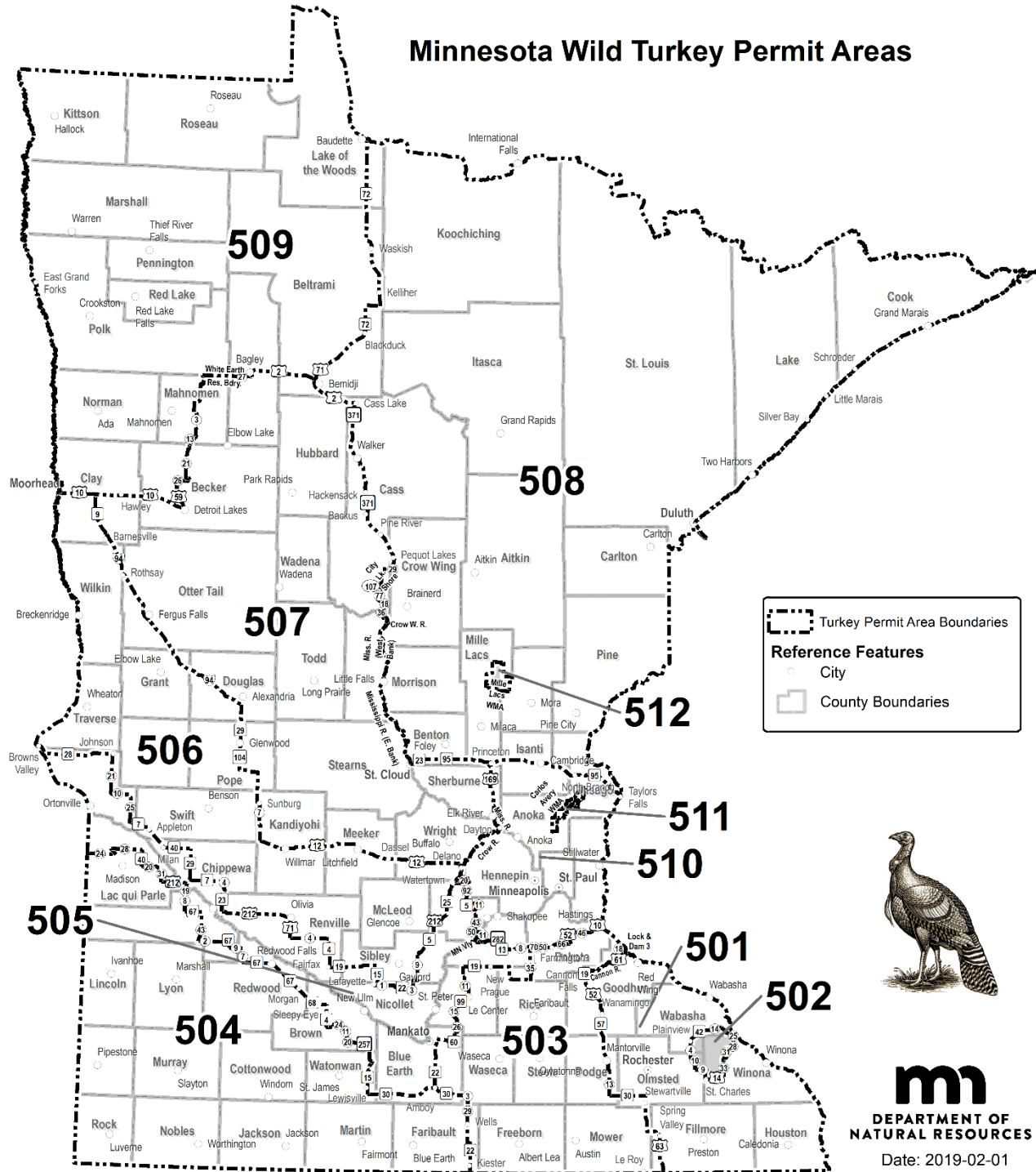


Figure 1. Permit areas open for hunting during fall 2021 and spring 2022 wild turkey seasons in Minnesota.

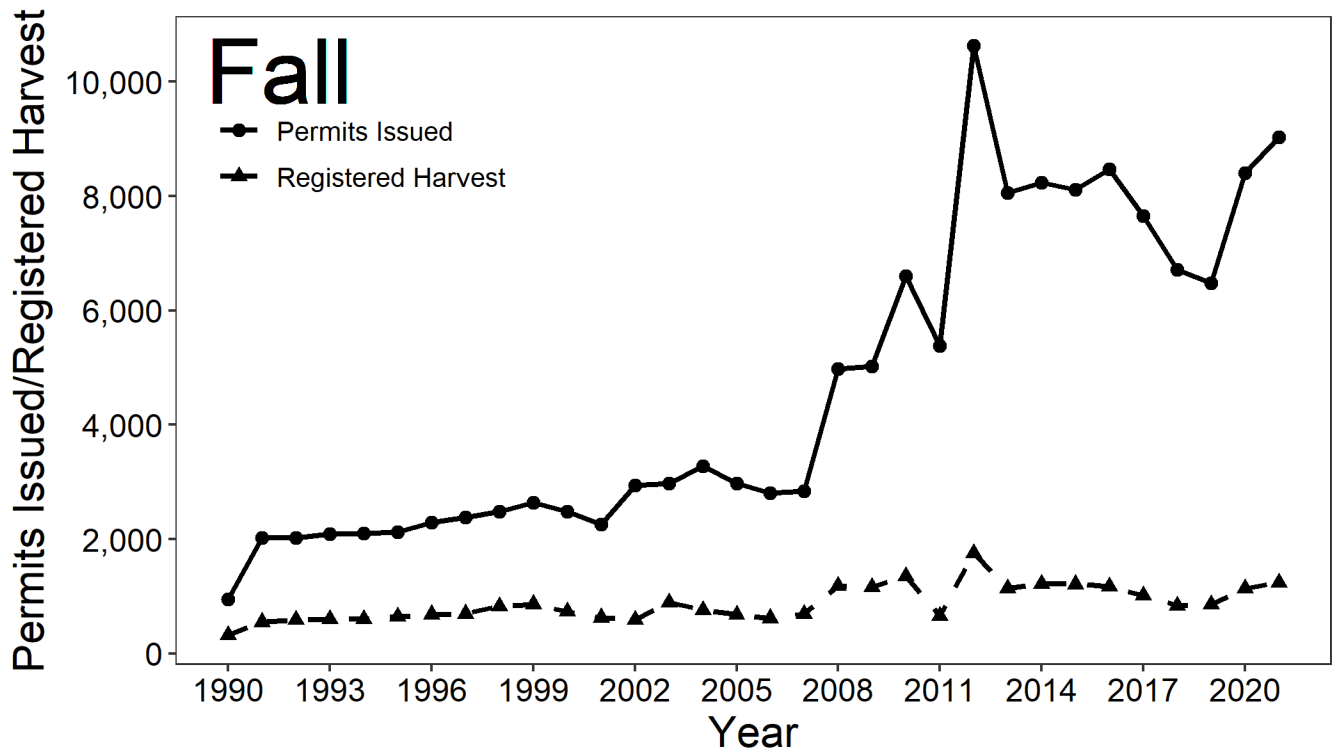


Figure 2. Permits issued and registered harvest for fall wild turkey seasons in Minnesota, 1990-2021.

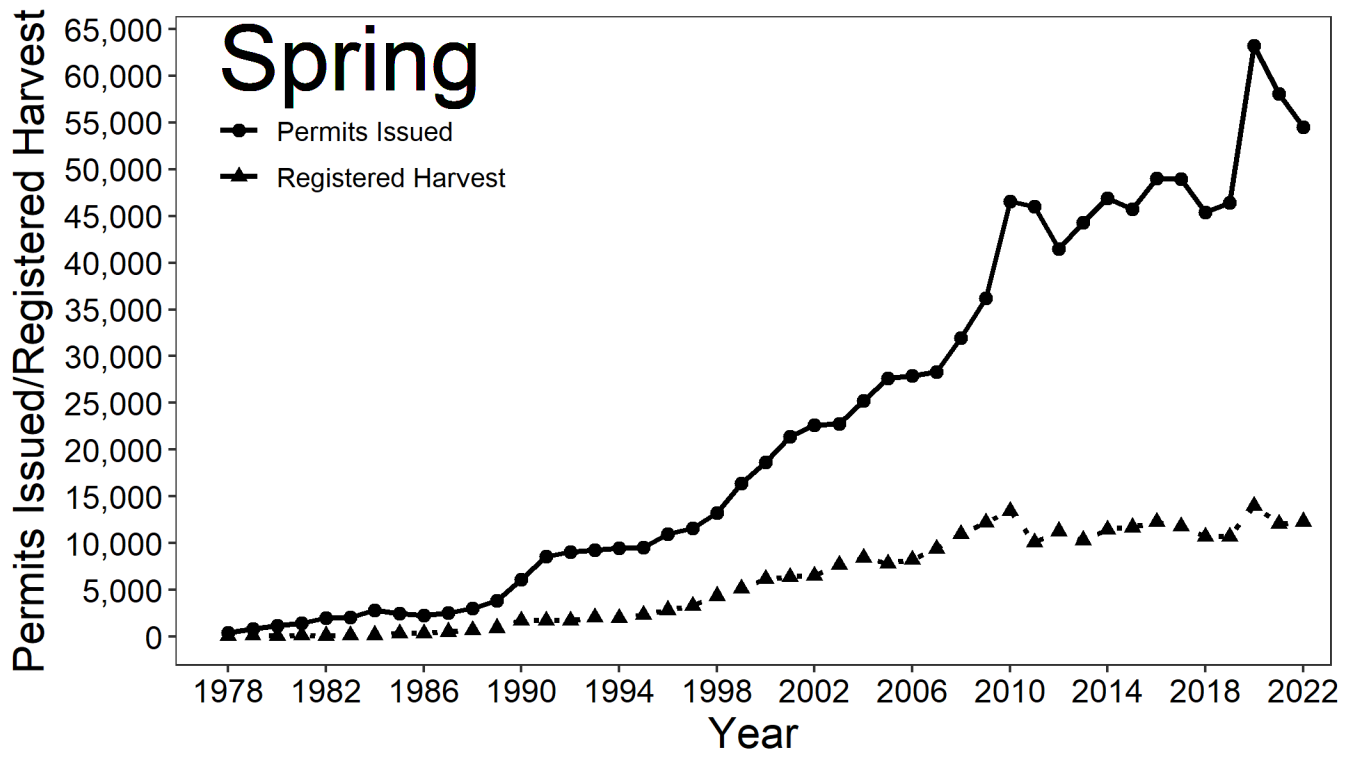


Figure 3. Permits issued and registered harvest for spring wild turkey seasons in Minnesota, 1978-2022.