

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
WILDLIFE DIVISION  
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909

Report No. 2967  
December 15, 1983

Michigan's 1983 Spring Turkey Season

by  
John Urbain

A total of 1746 turkeys were taken by hunters during the 1983 season; two less than in 1982, when 1,748 birds were harvested.

A comparison of harvest is shown in Table 1 for the years 1977-1983.

Unit	Michigan Wild Turkey Spring Season Harvest						
	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Southwest (Allegan Co.) L & M	27	28	26	53	47	44	41
Northwest (Baldwin) K & J	126	118	113	147	163	335	377
Northeast (Mio)	323	472	488	644	797	1329	1277
Upper Peninsula (Menominee)					26	40	51
TOTALS	476	618	627	844	1033	1748	1746

A total of 23,233 hunters applied for the 24,030 available licenses. A random drawing was held to determine successful licensees. Seventy Nine percent (18,337) of the persons applying received a permit. Many of the hunters applied for oversubscribed areas for all three of their hunt choices.

Several changes in the hunting areas and rules were instituted in 1983:

1. The area open to turkey hunting was increased by 900 square miles. A new area J (see attached map) was added. In 1983 there were 8,699 square miles open to hunting. This compares with 7,799 square miles open to hunting in 1982.
2. The number of turkey licenses available for hunting was increased by 865. In 1983 there were 24,030 permits available, compared with 23,165 in 1982.
3. The application procedure was modified to allow three choices of hunts on the original application as an effort to distribute as many licenses as possible within the recommended quotas.

Applicants were also allowed to apply with a partner. It is evident that for many the social aspects of turkey hunting are very important; e.g. father and son hunting together, and this would provide an opportunity for such experiences.

4. The prohibition of the use of live decoys while hunting turkeys was enacted. Michigan was one of the few states to allow this practice, considered by many to be unethical and unsafe.

### Winter Weather

The winter of 1982-83 was the mildest winter in 101 years. Experts say the cause of Michigan's mild winter resulted from a change in patterns of high-altitude air currents that steer Arctic air masses into this region of the Midwest. There were no known starvation losses. Winter trapping operations were largely unsuccessful because the birds were scattered, and did not respond to baiting and trap locations.

### Hunting

The weather during the hunting season was quite variable. About 20 percent of the hunters complained of bad weather. A total of 22.9 percent commented that they did not see enough turkeys or turkey sign. Not seeing birds was probably a factor of the weather. Frequent spring rains played an important part in reducing hunter satisfaction. "Gobbling" activity was generally erratic and birds responded poorly to calling. Hunters spent 45,914 days hunting compared to 45,220 days in 1982, even though there were 593 more hunters afield.

1983 SPRING TURKEY SEASON  
MAIL SURVEY RESULTS

Area	Licenses Issued	Estimated Number of Hunters	Percent of Licensees Hunting	Estimated Harvest	Licenses Successful	Percent of Hunters Successful	Estimated Days of Hunting	Days Per Hunter
A	984	852	87	124	13	15	2,461	2.9
B	953	811	85	184	19	23	2,294	2.8
C	1,761	1,443	82	152	9	11	4,322	3.0
D	1,971	1,669	85	215	11	13	4,806	2.9
E	1,098	937	85	203	18	22	2,670	2.8
F	1,504	1,204	80	83	6	7	3,601	3.0
G	2,040	1,741	85	196	10	11	5,369	3.1
H	2,285	1,925	84	120	5	6	5,527	2.9
Northeastern Area Total	12,596	10,582	84	1,277	11.3	13.5	31,050	2.9
J	203	157	77	29	15	18	438	2.8
K	4,734	4,032	85	348	7	9	12,415	3.1
Northwestern Area Total	4,937	4,189	81	377	11	13.5	12,853	2.9
L	280	246	88	36	13	15	707	2.9
M	184	155	84	5	3	3	432	2.8
Southwestern Area Total	464	401	86	41	9	10	1,139	2.8
Upper Peninsula Area	340	296	87	51	15	17	872	2.9
STATE TOTALS	18,337	15,468	84	1,746	10	11	45,914	3.0

# 1983 WILD TURKEY HUNTING UNITS

