



# Missouri Wild Turkey Strategic Plan Synopsis



LARRY PRICE/NWTF

The wild turkey (*Meleagris gallapavo*), the largest gallinaceous bird in North America, exists in a variety of habitats throughout its range. This now abundant bird was almost forced to extinction in the early 1900s through unregulated hunting and improper land management. Today, the wild turkey population is more than 7 million birds strong thanks to state, federal and provincial agencies and hunters across North America who supported restoration efforts. Currently, wild turkeys can be found in 49 states, 7 Canadian provinces and across Mexico.

As the need to trap and transfer wild turkeys becomes less necessary, it is critically important to look toward the future of North America's greatest game birds and work to make sure that future is bright. The North American Wild Turkey Management Plan: An Intergraded Approach to Wildlife Management, is designed to do just that.

**Mission:** To ensure that wild turkey populations and their habitats are managed and conserved to benefit all associated wildlife species through collaborative conservation.

The North American Wild Turkey Management Plan is a compilation of regional and state/provincial plans that will outline goals to help wildlife management agencies and the NWTF's dedicated volunteers target the most important factors in wild turkey conservation and protecting our hunting traditions.

In support of the North American Wild Turkey Management Plan and the continued efforts of wild turkey conservation and the preservation of the hunting tradition, the NWTF's Missouri State Chapter and its members have spent more than \$2.8 million in Missouri since 1985. The money has been raised through Hunting Heritage Banquets and administered jointly by the NWTF, its state chapters and state wildlife agencies. The Missouri State Chapter's priorities fall into four categories: Habitat Enhancement, Hunter Access, Wild Turkey Research and Outreach.

## Habitat Enhancement Goals:

- Goal** Expand and support prescribed fire efforts during the next five years in all areas of Missouri except the southeastern swamplands along the Mississippi River Alluvial Basin.
- Goal** Increase timber stand improvement on private forests, primarily in the Ozark Highlands in the southern portion of the state, to clear overstocked forests that dominate the landscape and keep sunlight from reaching the forest floor.
- Goal** Restore savanna and woodland habitat in all but the Mississippi River Alluvial Basin.
- Goal** Assist in the restoration and expansion of native warm season grass habitats.

## Hunter Access Goals:

- Goal** Advocate the concept of no net loss of public hunting lands.
- Goal** Promote public land access and hunting in state, federal and local land management plans.
- Goal** Support legislation and programs that preserve hunting and/or reduce the threat of the urbanization of private lands.
- Goal** Work with corporate partners and other industrial landowners to provide more hunting opportunities.
- Goal** Reduce landowner concerns about hunting and access issues through targeted educational programs.
- Goal** Influence legislation and funding for programs that provide critical long-term land access opportunities for hunters.
- Goal** Strengthen grassroots involvement in public land management planning.



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## Wild Turkey Research Goals:

**Goal** Partner with the Missouri Department of Conservation, other agencies and local universities to address issues concerning wild turkeys, and support an existing gobbling chronology study to address concerns about season structures and investigate declining turkey populations in southwestern and northeastern Missouri.

## Outreach Goals:

**Goal** Further the NWTf's mission locally and statewide by assisting local chapters with JAKES, Women in the Outdoors and Wheelin' Sportsmen NWTf outreach events, funding local scholarships and providing schools with Wild About Turkey Education Boxes.

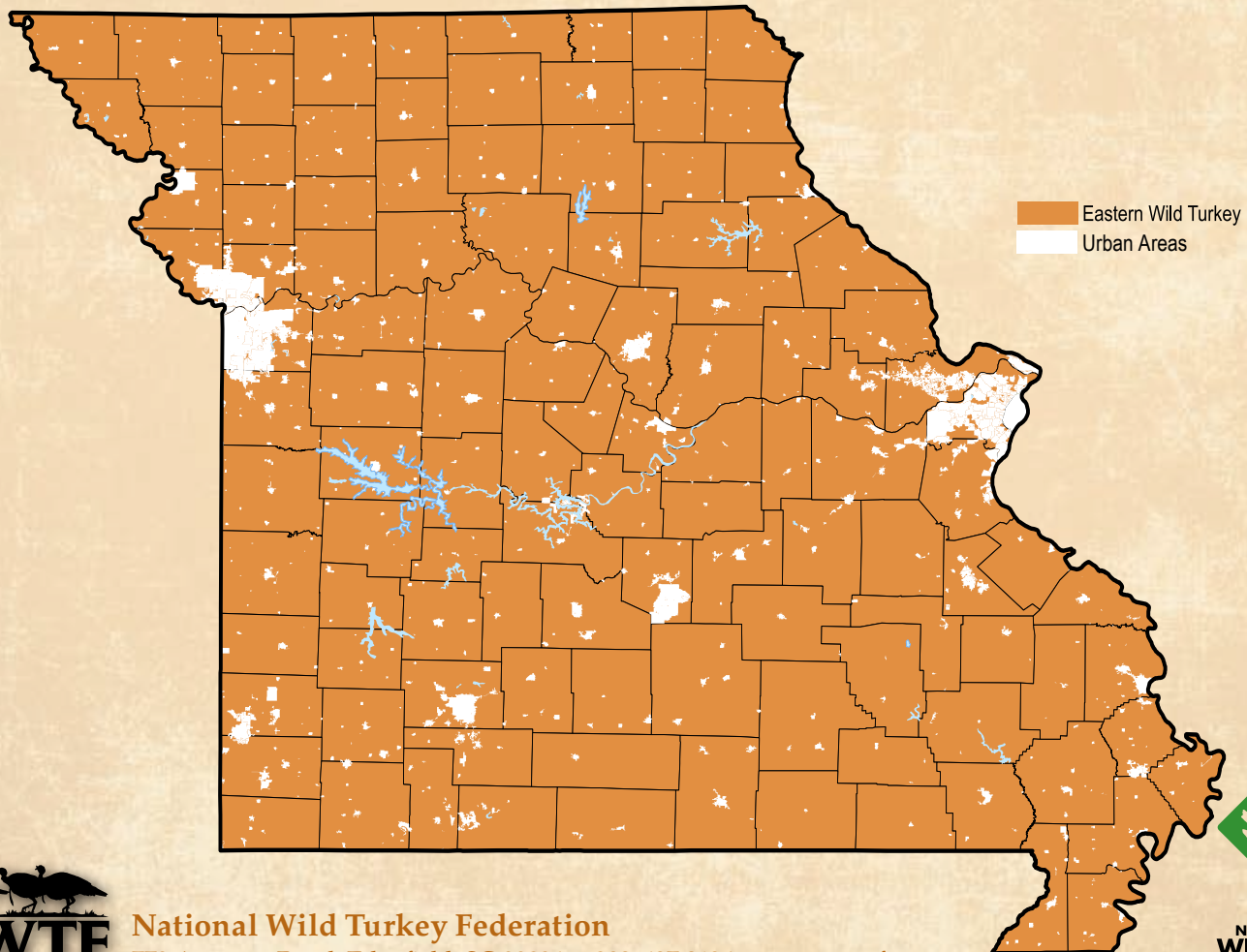
**Goal** Support shooting programs at the state and local levels through 4H and NASP development



HENRY ZEMAN/NWTf

Missouri is home to the eastern wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*), which can be found in every Missouri county. The eastern wild turkey is the most widely distributed, abundant and hunted turkey subspecies of the five distinct subspecies found in the United States. It inhabits the eastern half of the country and is primarily found in the hardwood and mixed forests from New England and southern Canada to northern Florida and west to Texas, Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota.

## Missouri Eastern Wild Turkey Distribution Map



**National Wild Turkey Federation**

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