



SHOW-ME GOBBLER

A Tri-Annual Publication of the George C. Clark Missouri Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation

Volume 42 Number 1 • Summer 2021

Twelfth Annual Governors Youth Turkey Hunt



Back row L to R: Freshman Representative Tim Taylor, Governor Mike Parson, Freshman Representative Bruce Sassmann with (front) Abby and Charlie Tanksley and their resolution plaques they received at The Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundations Lewis and Clark Annual Award Dinner.

By John Burk and Tyler Schwartz

This hunt is a cooperative effort between Governor Mike Parson, the Conservation Federation of Missouri, National Wild Turkey Federation, the Missouri Department of Conservation, and private landowners.

The 2021 Governors Youth Turkey Hunt marks the 12th year of this very special event. The hunt serves as a recognition by our government, of the importance of natural resources and outdoor recreation to the Missouri citizenry. It is also a celebration of

Missouri's leading role in recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters.

The youth started the weekend off on the day before the season opened by attending an informational session on turkeys and turkey calling. The youth learned the basics of calling, woods etiquette, and other things to be aware of when pursuing wild turkeys. They also had an opportunity to pattern their shotguns and learn about hunter safety. This very informative clinic was put on by the dedicated staff at the Missouri Department of Conservation.

The evening portion of Friday's festivities took place at the Governor's mansion where the youth and a guest were able to enjoy an elegant dinner. Representatives from the partnering agencies and organizations spoke briefly about the importance of the event as well as elevated the anticipation of what awaited the young hunters throughout the remainder of this special weekend. The speakers included Dan Zerr, the State Chapter President from the National Wild Turkey Federation, Sara Parker Pauley from the Missouri Department of Conservation, Tyler Schwartz, Executive Director of the Conservation Federation of Missouri, and Representative Bruce Sassmann. The youth were then each given a custom call made by Jim Clark before taking their picture with Sara and Commissioner Steven Harrison who also offered his property for the hunt and mentored the youth assigned to his property. From there the youth departed across the state to meet up with their landowners and guides to try and notch their first turkey tag.

Turkey hunting is a pretty weather dependent activity. To get the best opportunity to experience "the show" you pray for clear calm conditions at dawn. A few of the youth were hunting in the southern part of the state and the rain held off there until a little later on opening morning. However, most of the kids were hunting in central Missouri and woke to torrential rain Saturday morning

Continued page 3

From The President

By Dan Zerr

Anticipation. That was what was running through my head and my heart since 2021 dawned and 2020 mercifully slipped away. I thought that the spring would bring welcome relief and more adventures and stories to share with family and friends.

April took longer to get here than Christmas did back in the 1960's. Despite all of my shortcomings, both then and now, there was no disappointment. Just being outdoors and participating in the hunt left me giddy. We had just closed on some property north of us in the fall as an investment. We were looking for a return on agricultural opportunities. While that was foremost on our minds, in the back of my greedy little brain, there was anticipation. In surveying the property before we bought, we did see some turkey sign and plenty of deer. My anticipation told me that if there are deer there, there will be turkeys there also. I always thought that one of the best feelings in the world is to harvest a turkey on your own property. Anticipation. Long story – short, it was everything I had hoped it would be. We saw and worked birds besides getting lucky. Almost everyone I talked with over the course of the spring were somewhat disappointed in how the season was progressing and their lack of opportunities. I have felt their pain many times before, but still feel there is no such thing as a bad season. No matter how things turn out. There are participation trophies if you know where to look.

Probably another sign of my advancing years is that I did get a chance to talk with some new turkey hunters, guys with experience in hunting other game but a novice to turkey hunting.

As much as so called “normal” people don't understand the hold that the wild turkey has on our mind, heart and souls, I am just as guilty as not understanding how these outdoorsmen can attempt to take up turkey hunting and not be eaten up with it. Comments like, “it was OK, but I like to deer (or duck, or rabbit, or squirrel, take your pick) hunt more.” gives me pause and makes me wonder what did I do wrong? What part did I leave out for them to show such a nonchalant attitude toward turkey hunting. But bless their hearts, everybody has their thing. It will take all of us working together to keep us all on the right path.

We are beginning to claw our way out of this Covid mess. Be proud to be from Missouri, through the hard work and foresight of your State Board, we bit the bullet and made hard choices, all designed to help NWTF weather the storm and get back on solid ground. There is still a lot of work to be done. If you have hosted a Hunting Heritage Banquet, thank you for your efforts. The hard work of your committees and the generous support of your attendees are helping us turn the corner. If you have not hosted a Banquet due to Covid restrictions, or some other reason, please consider doing so, your efforts will be appreciated. Every event will help. We will continue our mission.

Thanks for everything you do. There will be opportunities to run for the State Board this fall, if you are dedicated to conservation please consider running.

*Thanks For All You Do,
Dan*



SHOW-ME GOBBLER

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The Show-Me Gobbler is published three times per year by the George C. Clark Missouri State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation and is circulated statewide to its membership as well as other interested parties. As the official publication of the George C. Clark Missouri State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Show-Me Gobbler serves to inform, educate and entertain wild turkey enthusiasts throughout Missouri and is committed to supporting conservation through sound wildlife management, and sport hunting through safety and ethics education.

ARTICLE SUBMISSION NOTE:

Please feel free to submit future articles with photos to the contact information listed above. Submission requirements: Digital copy submitted in Microsoft Word. Digital photographs only. Please use at least 225 resolution (dpi), or medium to high settings from your phone. Photos submitted outside of these guidelines may not be suitable for printing. Please include photo captions and credits for each photo submitted. Thank you for your contributions and we look forward to your participation in the future.



Left to right top row: B.J. and Abby Tanksley; Matthew Ellis and Bruce Sassmann; Jaz Giles and Kevin Hess; R.L. Bennett and Amiah Goddard
 Left to right bottom: Jared and Jake Obrien; Jackson, Annie, and Emma Houser, Landon Meredith

with showers of varying intensity occurring for most of the day. Sunday was more what the doctor ordered for a good “turkey day.” Despite a literal washout for day one of a 2 day season, the results were good with 9 out of the 15 kids participating harvesting birds. Freshman representative and 12 year supporter of this event, Bruce Sassmann put a cherry on top this year. Bruce had plaques made for each of the kids that harvested turkeys with an official resolution capturing their special weekend.

The perennial success that this event has accomplished is largely a product of the overall quality of the experiences it has been able to provide the participants. All of these hunts throughout the 12 year history of this event have occurred on private land. We are therefore indebted to the generosity of the private landowners and guides that make it possible

every year. The 2021 Guides and Landowners included: R.L. Bennett, Justin Furgeson, Bill Haag, Bruce Sassmann, Steven Harrison , Don Masek, Brandt Masek, Lucas Oil, Jim Cihy, Cole Cihy, John Burk, Logan Burk, Tim Taylor, B.J. Tanksley, Kevin Hess.

Thanks, once again, to everyone that made this year’s hunt so special for Missouri’s youth. Most of the landowners and guides are dedicated NWTf and/or CFM members and without them, this event would not be possible. We especially thank the landowners, this incredibly special gift that you willingly give year after year cannot be repaid. Please know that all involved are aware of this and that your efforts truly are making a difference in the cherished memories that you made possible.

Advertising & Article Deadlines for the Show Me Gobbler Publication
Fall Deadline = October 15, 2021

The George C. Clark Missouri State Chapter Member Harvest Page



Chariton River Full Strut Chapter Committee Member Brent Vandeloetch with a unique trophy taken during the 2021 spring season.



Vaugh Sell, Cooper County Limbangers President with a 27+ pounder.



Larry Edwards, Missouri Longbeard, Walt Beumer Memorial Chapter



Kimberly and Dean Bauman are with the Thundering Hills Longbeards Chapter Kim with a fine bull taken October and her MO spring turkey and Dean with his bull from October.



Eldo Meyer of the 4 Rivers Chapter with his 2021 spring bird and his grandson Liam Rasmussen with a 2021 prize of his own.

RD Larry Neal with his 2021 bird.



Putnam County Chapter scholarship winner Jack Hartwig with his parents and committee member Heath Halley.



Maycee Hubbard of the Ray County Short Spurs with a fine 2020 rifle buck.



National Forestry Initiative Forester Tyler Cooper with a big'n from northwest MO.



Colton English, great nephew of Jacomo Strutters Chapter member Kirk Phillips, with his first deer and turkey taken during the 2020/21 seasons.





State Board Member Jay Herring with his 2021 Goulds turkey and bird number 1 for the MO 2021 season.

Joe Schieffer, great nephew of State Board Member Jay Herring with his 2021 bird.



Lilly Peace with a fine multiple bearded bird taken while being mentored by State Board Member Dave Howlett.



State Board Members Kevin Hess (right) and R.L. Bennett (left) with their 2021 Tennessee bounty.

Share your outdoor experiences with your NWTF peers, PLEASE submit them to John Burk at jburk@nwtf.net with a brief photo description and they will be considered for the harvest page section of your Show Me Gobbler newsletter.

Missouri NWTf Banquets & Events

Please contact the event coordinator to ensure your local event is active.

Branson Tri-Lakes

07/10/2021 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Charles J Livingston / (417) 699-3481

Location: STONEBRIDGE

50 Stone Bridge Parkway

Branson West, MO 65737

Gentry County Gobblers

07/10/2021 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Mitch Holtman / (816) 273-6774

Location: Tri Meadows

34499 St Hwy VV

Conception Jct., MO 64434

Cooper County Limbhangers

07/15/2021 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Vaughn Sell / (660) 882-7833

Location: Knights of Columbus Hall

1515 Radio Hill Road

Boonville, MO 65233

Hocomo Big Beards

07/24/2021 - 5:30 PM

Contact: David Glaskey / (573) 631-5533

Location: St Josephs Church Hall

300 N. Cleveland

Fayette, MO 65248

Yellow Creek Gobblers

07/24/2021 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Dennis Paalhar / (660) 537-3459

Location: Walsworth Community Building

122 E. Ritchie

Marceline, MO 64658

Ozark Mountain Gobblers

07/31/2021 - 5:00

Contact: Kenneth Sherrill / (573) 546-3392

Location: Arcadia Valley Elks

204 S. McCune Street

Pilot Knob, MO 63663

Locust Creek Longbeards

07/31/2021 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Ashley Santee / (660) 292-1036

Location: Milan Community Center

203 N. Market Street

Milan, MO 63556

Crowleys Ridge Limbhangers

08/06/2021 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Dale Kemp / (573) 624-1283

Location: Gathering at Versity Crossing

1430 N. Outer Rd

Dexter, MO 63841

Sees Creek Strutters

08/07/2021 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Chris Kleindienst

(573) 822-6075

Location: Knights of Columbus Hall

Main St.

Monroe City, MO 63456

State Fair Strutters

08/07/2021 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Charles Mattingly

(660) 827-0758

Location: MEC Building

Missouri State Fair Grounds

Sedalia, MO 65301

Platte Purchase

08/07/2021 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Bryan Lukehart / (816) 244-6858

Location: Fraternal Order of Eagles

2004 N Belt Hwy

St. Joseph, MO 64503

Platte County Longspurs

08/07/2021 - 4:30 PM

Contact: Doug Yeager / (816) 807-4277

Location: Dearborn Community Center

202 Commercial

Dearborn, MO 64079

Perry County Gun Blast

08/12/2021 - 6:00 PM

Contact: Dominic & Erin Blythe / (573) 768-0878

Location: Perryville Eagles Club

2746 West St Joseph Street

Perryville, MO 63775

River Bottom Gobblers

08/14/2021 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Ship To Pending / (803) 637-3106

Location: Caruthersville Armory

801 West Third Street

Caruthersville, MO 63830

St. Louis Longbeards

08/14/2021 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Russ Ode / (314) 704-4398

Location: Elks lodge

6330 Heege Road

Affton, MO 63123

David Blanton Memorial

08/21/2021 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Darren Jones / (417) 746-4854

Location: Mt. Grove YMCA

1 YMCA Drive

Mt. Grove, MO 65711

Clay Howlett Memorial

09/25/2021 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Clinton Jarrett / (573) 855-1442

Location: VFW Post 3168

26050 Swindell Dr

Richland, MO 65556

Bunt Cumbea Laclede Co Chapter

10/02/2021 - 5:00 PM

Contact: Cindy Jones / (417) 589-6831

Location: Cowan Civic Center

500 E. Elm St.

Lebanon, MO 65536

River Hills Thunderin Gun Bash

10/04/2021 - 6:00 PM

Contact: Butch Stephens / (573) 543-2165

Location: Ste Gen K of C Hall

600 Market Street

Ste Genevieve, MO 63627

Bootheel Boss Gobblers Gun Blast

10/05/2021 - 6:00 PM

Contact: Bronson Senn / (573) 225-3087

Location: Jackson K of C Hall

Hwy 61 North

Jackson, MO 63755

Front Porch Gun Bash

12/02/2021 - 6:00 PM

Contact: Bronson Senn / (573) 225-3087

Location: Front Porch Rental Hall

1408 Main

Scott City, MO 63780

Union Covered Bridge Gobblers

01/22/2022 - 5:30 PM

Contact: Bruce Mills / (573) 721-2268

Location: Madison Community Building

115 South Main St

Madison, MO 65263

MORE Missouri Hunting Heritage Banquets
& Wheelin' Sportsmen Events can be found online.



Quality Habitat Key During Harsh Weather

By Will Rechkemmer,
NWTF Project Forester

As I write this, I am watching the 7+ inches of snow melting after a bitter cold February week in South Central Missouri. I can't help but wonder how are the turkeys, deer and quail handling the unusual weather for this part of the world?

Many thoughts are going through my mind, but a few seem to stand out. The wildlife we cherish and enjoy hunting each spring and fall, have been around long before we were slipping through the woods, 12 gauge and box call in hand. These species have survived bitter cold, and other extreme weather events before. Sure, some don't make it through, but the species as a whole has been fighting mother nature long before turkey and deer seasons were around. So, what has changed, and why do these thoughts come to our mind every time we have extreme weather?

First off, I think it is worth noting, habitat availability, quality, and fragmentation has changed



Diverse grasses and wildflowers of the prairies are an important part of the complete habitat picture.

tremendously. Prior to European settlement, Missouri was covered in contiguous quality turkey, deer, and quail habitat, oak woodlands and prairies, intermixed with mature oak forests, glades and riparian corridors. Today, the habitat across Missouri is much different, fragmented by agriculture, overstocked oak woodlands invaded with invasive shrubs, and glades grown up into giant

cedar patches. The habitat we have now is smaller in area and of lower quality than prior to our settlement. When extreme weather events occur, such as the bitter cold we've had this February, our wildlife need quality thermal cover, and native food sources. If we are talking prairie, think diverse grasses and wildflowers, intermixed with native shrubs such as plum thickets and sumac. On the other hand, woodlands

should have lower tree densities and a sparse mid-story with robust ground layer vegetation. This ground layer vegetation provides many native seeds for wildlife, and lower tree density promotes acorn production.

What can we do to improve habitat, to ensure the wildlife we enjoy make it through these tough weather conditions? First, the time to start planning habitat management is now! If you want to improve your property for next year, the time to start planning and implementing those activities can't start soon enough. There are a variety of professionals that will help you start planning and implementing habitat management for no cost, including NWTf Foresters, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Missouri Department of Conservation Private Land Conservationists.

When planning your objectives, the key is to think about providing diverse habitat that will benefit wildlife at different times of the year. In oak woodlands, a combination of prescribed fire and timber stand improvement (thinning the tree density) can improve turkey brood rearing and nesting cover, by providing lush ground layer vegetation with a plethora of insects to feed on in the spring. It will also provide woody browse and bedding cover for deer in the winter months. Leaving some mature oak stands associated with your oak woodlands also provides foraging and roosting habitat for turkeys during other months of the year. Improving grasslands is equally important, diverse grass and wildflower mixes with shrub thickets or feathered edges provides year-round food sources, thermal cover, bedding areas, and woody browse for wildlife. Quality habitat is something we can all make a difference in! If you own property consider selecting a part of it to begin making habitat improvements, if you aren't a landowner there are also ways to get involved, such as contacting a landowner whose property you hunt on and offering to help out with some habitat work, or volunteering to lend a hand when there are opportunities to improve public land habitat. The key to improving habitat across Missouri starts with us, the dedicated conservationists and stewards of the land.

Find your local NWTf Forester or Biologist: <https://www.nwtf.org/about/nation>

Find your local Missouri Department of Conservation Contact: <https://mdc.mo.gov/regional-contacts?county=All>

Find your local Natural Resources Conservation Service Office: <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>



Lisa Beumer with the Walt Beumer Memorial Chapter had a great 2021 spring season. Birds taken in Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, North Dakota and South Dakota. Way to go Lisa!

**Advertising & Article Deadlines
for the Show Me Gobbler Publication**
Fall Deadline 10/15/21

Factors Influencing Wild Turkey Nest Success and Poults Survival in North Missouri: Research Update

By Reina M. Tyl
Wild Turkey and Ruffed Grouse Biologist
Missouri Department of Conservation

In my last Show-Me Gobbler article, I discussed some of the major discoveries from a recently concluded wild turkey research project in northeast Missouri. This project provided us with updated demographic rates and brought to light that some of our reproductive rates were much lower than they were in the 1980s when a similar study was conducted. However, this recently concluded study was not designed to determine why turkey production is lower than it was a few decades ago.

A lot has changed over the last several decades. There have been broad-scale losses in quality nesting and brood-rearing habitat. Many of our forests and woodlots have matured into closed-canopy forests which impede the growth of understory grasses and herbaceous vegetation which provide food and cover for turkeys. We are seeing more frequent, severe rainfall during the spring and summer. We have seen increasing populations of some wild turkey nest and poult predator species. Additionally, there is evidence that insect abundance—the main source of food for young poults—is in decline. A new research project, led by University of Missouri researchers, aims to determine how these different factors are affecting wild turkey reproduction and what we can do to mitigate the negative effects on production.

One main objective of this new study is to determine what is causing most poult deaths. To do this, we plan to attach very small VHF radio transmitters to individual poults after they hatch. This will allow us to track poults for individual survival, instead of monitoring survival at the brood level. Additionally, we will be able to locate the poults after mortality events and diagnose the cause of death.

Attaching transmitters to young poults can be a tricky business because you want to ensure your attachment method and the transmitter do not impede poult growth or movement, while also ensuring the transmitter does not fall off prematurely. To determine the best method for attaching transmitters to turkey poults, we constructed an aviary at the University of Missouri's South Farm Research Center that was designed to house 8 broods of heritage breed domestic turkey poults. Within each brood, 3 poults received a transmitter that was attached using a glue-on method, 3 poults received a transmitter that was attached by surgical sutures under the skin, and at least 3 poults did not receive a



Aviary Poults Trials – MU PhD Student, Alisha Mosloff, and MDC Wild Turkey Program Assistant, Kevin Ostrander, weigh and measure captive heritage breed domestic turkey poults to determine if transmitter attachment is impacting their development.



Aviary Hen Trials – MU PhD Student, Alisha Mosloff, pushes two heritage breed domestic turkey hens fitted with GPS-ACC transmitters around the aviary to determine what the behavior “walking” looks like in the accelerometer data.

transmitter at all. We monitored their growth, survival, and transmitter retention for several weeks. The suture method proved to be the superior way to attach the transmitters because it did not interfere with poult growth and all the transmitters were retained.

Another important piece of this project is evaluating brood-rearing habitat selection and how habitat selection impacts poult survival. To track not only where hens and their brood are going, but how they are using those habitats, the transmitters we attach to wild turkey hens not only record the location of the hen using GPS, but they are also equipped with an accelerometer (ACC) that records the direction and speed of their movement.



Hen Capture – MDC Wild Turkey Program Leader, Reina Tyl, holds a captured wild turkey hen while MU PhD Student, Alisha Mosloff, attaches a transmitter to the hen.



Mammal Capture – The research team is using box traps to capture wild turkey nest predators to estimate their densities across the study area.

To translate the ACC data into behaviors—foraging, walking, running, loafing—we need to be able to identify these behaviors in the ACC data. We attached GPS-ACC transmitters to two heritage breed domestic turkey hens and filmed them engaging in various behaviors while in the MU South Farm Aviary. By matching the time of ACC data collection up to the time the film was recorded and identifying what behavior the hens were engaging in at that time, we can determine what the ACC data “signature” looks like for each behavior. This will allow us to ascertain where, when, and for how long our marked wild hens are engaging in particular behaviors.

In January of this year, the real work began. To accomplish any of our research objectives, we needed to first deploy about 50 transmitters on wild turkey hens. The research team began scouting for flocks of hens across Putnam County, and once flocks were located, the team baited the flock into a capture site with permission from the landowner.

The first capture event occurred on February 10th when 45 hens were captured in western Putnam County. The last transmitter was deployed on February 28th during a mixed-flock capture in northeast Putnam County. Five of the hens captured this past winter were recaptured hens that were originally banded during the last north Missouri research project. Three of these hens were captured as adults during the last project and were recaptured about one mile from their previous capture site. Two of these hens were captured as juveniles during the last project and were captured 8 and 10 miles from their previous capture site. This gave us an idea of how far we might expect some of the juvenile hens to travel before they settled into their spring and summer homes this year.

The research team has been busy tracking the hens as winter flocks broke up and is now monitoring several nesting attempts. In addition to keeping track of the whereabouts and reproductive attempts of our marked hens, the team has been busy trapping and marking nest predators. By conducting a mark and recapture effort, we can estimate the density and occupancy of raccoons, opossums, and other mammalian nest predators across the county. We will use this information to evaluate the relative effect nest predators have on turkey nest success rates.

With many of our hens incubating nests and June quickly approaching (as I write this), we hope to have our first brood hatch before the end of the month. Additionally, the team will be putting out trail cameras to evaluate occupancy of larger poult predators—coyote, fox, etc.—throughout the study area as well. We will use this information to determine where broods are most likely to interact with predators and how we might be able to manipulate the landscape to minimize negative interactions.

We are about halfway through the first of four field seasons. Conducting this effort over a four-year period will allow us to capture annual variation in weather so that we can determine its relative effect on turkey nest success and poult survival as well. I look forward to providing you all with updates on our progress over the next several years, including some of our initial findings from this first field season in the next newsletter.

NWTF/QF/MDC/MPF Cooperative New Hunter Recruitment Dove Field Initiative

As part of the National Wild Turkey Federation's (NWTF) Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. Initiative, Missouri initiated a new hunter recruitment program in partnership with Quail Forever (QF), the Conservation Federation of Missouri, the Missouri Prairie Foundation, Friends of the NRA, and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). September of 2021 will be the 9th year the program will be offered and 6 sunflower fields will be available for first time hunters of any age, first time migratory bird hunters, hunters that have lapsed from hunting at least one season, and any youths 11-15.

This project, from start to finish, was an excellent example of the true value of a cooperative effort in that all partner agencies and organizations gave equally of their resources to make it a success. Two grants, one from MDC and one from

Friends of the NRA, paid for the seed, herbicide, fertilizer and contracted installation costs of establishing the fields. All partners helped promote the opportunity and MDC and QF conducted some workshops to educate the new hunters. QF was very instrumental in locating landowners that provided 2 of the fields, planted the fields, and will provide mentors for their fields.

The total cost to date of the 9 year program is was \$100,291 with \$43,704 spent on seed and herbicide, \$26,487 for contracting some of the fields, \$27,028 for fertilizer, \$2478 for fencing, and \$600 for road repair. Therefore, providing this opportunity cost \$109/hunter and \$160.47/hunter created.

We are providing this opportunity to anyone, regardless of age, that has never hunted previously but would like to give it a try. If you, or someone you know, may be interested in participating this September please fill out the application at the link below and give it shot. You won't be disappointed! https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1HRj6WrrgAY_ryq9W-RNtnYr2-FiD3eBQfGGc3plfH44/edit

Counties	20	Table 1. Counties where dove fields were planted, number of fields planted, acres planted, number of hunts, number of mentors/experienced hunters, number of new hunters, and total number of hunters for the 8 year effort.
Fields	64	
Total Acres	622	
Total Hunts	119	
Total Experienced Hunters	920	
Total New Hunters	625	
Total Hunters	1,545	

Edge Feathering

By Tyler Cooper
NFI Forester NW MO

Edge feathering is a management practice that can be implemented on stands that are bordered by a field. Here in northern Missouri a majority of our forested acres are in smaller patches or blocks, since historically most of the Americas Crossroads area was Prairie and Savanna habitat. Therefore, Edge feathering is a very popular and effective type of management. This practice simply drops some of the trees on, or just inside the edge of the stand so that the tops fall into, and near the edge of the field. This breaks up the straight edge between either agricultural fields or native grass fields and mature timber. This creates a soft edge effect and allows for more habitat diversity providing escape and brood rearing

and nesting cover with the woody and herbaceous vegetation that will rapidly respond. This management practice is also a very popular management technique that benefits rabbits and quail. Hard edges are very lacking in species diversity, as well as there is typically not a thick herbaceous layer transition into the forest making it easier for predators to prey on ground dwelling species such as the wild turkey, quail, and small game. With the added benefit of the thick transitional edge to grasses or field to moderate low-lying thick cover, then to forest, this allows a comfort zone that is safe from predators. This management practice is also available for cost-share options through our state and federal programs. For more information on edge feathering implementation and cost share options contact your local NRCS office or one of the NWTF Foresters within the state.



Fresh edge feathering shown above.



An older edge feathering showing the thick escape cover created.

Back to Business



By John Burk

While 2020, in many ways, was certainly a year many of us would like to forget, it also proved to be a fire that will help forge

the NWTF's collective future. Some challenges presented by the pandemic are still before us. However, thanks in large part to tough decisions made by our leadership at every level and including both staff and volunteers and the support of everyone over the last 15 months, things finally seem to be reaching some sense of normalcy. From folks attending traditional events when and where those were possible, to taking advantage of a myriad of virtual options, to individual chapter fund forgiveness, to Super

Fund forgiveness, all of these efforts made a difference. We are into our final quarter and, with your help, we hit every challenging financial target established for the first three and expect to achieve our year end organization goals. All of these exceptional shows of support also demonstrate your appreciation for this organization and your willingness to make the heavy lifts to keep it afloat.

One necessarily tough decision made during 2020 was to place a freeze on the Super Fund and not only stop spending from those accounts but also stop deposits into them. Over the last six months a work group comprised of national and local volunteers advised by members of the management team met frequently to discuss the future of the Super Fund. Recently, this committee presented recommendations that were accepted by the National board. These recommendations included some additional tough decisions to

help the NWTF climb out the other end of COVID-19 but was balanced by the good news the Super Fund would be opened up from a spending standpoint, although not at full capacity. Starting September 1st, 2021, states will be allowed to spend up to 75% of their three-year average spend rate. Additionally, deposits will continue to be held to ensure overall organizational financial health coming out of Covid-19. All these changes in the Super Fund will be revisited by the work group over the next year and adjustments made as needed for the NWTF's next fiscal year. For Missouri, this means our Super Fund balance will be \$204,000 on 9/1/21 and we will be back to business delivering upon our mission. Thank you ALL for your past, present, and future support!

Missouri has done a great job of managing their Super Funds and putting every dime of the money raised every year on mission delivery.

An opportunity to improve habitat on private land in Southern Missouri: Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Program (JCLRP)

In 2020, the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Program was approved to the tune of approximately \$250,000 to be used in private land restoration. This program is centered on private land restoration in 10 counties of the Missouri Ozarks: Pulaski, Phelps, Texas, Howell, Douglas, Ozark, Taney, Christian, Stone and Barry. These funds will be administered via cost-share through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on a variety of habitat improvement practices including forest stand improvement (FSI), glade and woodland restoration, prescribed burning, native grass establishment, tree planting and many others. The main priorities of this program are to restore at-risk ecosystems, reduce wildfire risk, improve water quality and quantity and benefit the communities in the area. At a larger scale, the JCLRP is a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and NRCS to meet common restoration goals at a landscape level.

Many of the goals and objectives within JCLRP align with improving habitat for wild turkeys, deer and quail.

The forested areas, woodlands, and glades in this region are in dire need of restoration to improve brood range and nesting habitat for turkeys, in an area which showed the poorest Poults to Hen ratio in the state in 2020. With the addition of this \$250,000, it opens up a larger funding pool for this type of restoration to occur on private lands across the ten counties, and potential to make greater impacts on habitat in an area we need it most. If you own property in these counties, or know someone who does, I encourage you to consider some habitat work on your property! Additionally, if you do own property in these counties and are considering applying for funding through NRCS, please feel free to contact me or your local NRCS office to discuss how we can best help you.

NRCS Office Locator: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/contact/local/>

Will Rechkemmer, NWTF Forester, Southern Missouri:
Email – wrechkemmer@nwtf.net , Cell – (319) 572-3887.

Moving Forward

By Mike Allen, Regional Director, Missouri

2021 is moving along, and for the NWTF it will soon be over. Our fiscal year runs September-August, and we are in the fourth quarter of our year.

So far, your organization has managed to hit all our budget numbers for each of the first three quarters, and that is great news! Decisions were made by your national board and senior staff that, while painful, were necessary to ensure the organization could survive the pandemic, and be in position to prosper and continue the great work we do into the future. Assuming we stay on track, 2022 should return to “normal”, whatever that is.

Our plan will be to offer a core package for 2022. While the final decisions have not been made, it will probably be 14-15 items. These items will most likely have our NWTF logo on them, and should give each banquet a great base for the live auction. We will no longer warehouse product as we have in the past. That means that we will have to make our plans a little

further out than we have in the past.

Your local chapter will have the ability to order product through our network of preferred vendors. If your regional director had not gotten instructions on accessing the system to your chapter, they will shortly. Most of the vendors require 30-45 days lead time for merchandise, and the firearm vendors are requesting 60-90 days. The more lead time the better in my opinion. I would encourage your chapter to plan a meeting within the next few months to get product ordered. The first step should be to set your budget. Work with your regional director if you need help with the numbers. 50% net profit is a realistic target, and should be attainable. If your chapter normally has a \$25,000.00 banquet, and you spend \$3,000.00 on meals, rent, etc., that leaves \$12,000.00 for product. If all the numbers work out, your event would net \$12,500.00, and make 50% net profit.

If this past banquet season has taught us anything, it is that we don't have to do everything the way we always have. We have had much smaller live and

silent auctions, fewer raffles, and often shorter duration events. The attendees have had a great time, and our fund-raising efforts have exceeded our expectations.

Each chapter will have the ability to manage their banquet to best support the NWTF mission for their area. Meet with your regional director or any of our state board members if you need any ideas.

We are planning our annual state event for January 8, 2022. As of now, we believe we will be back at Margaritaville Resort at Lake of the Ozarks. We will have more information as the plans are finalized, check our state website, MONWTF.org for update.

I would encourage you to monitor our website and our state Facebook page to stay on top of things in Missouri. We are working hard to keep it current, and appreciate any feedback on making it better for our members.

Thanks for your continued support of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Controlled Burn in the Glades of Missouri

By David Gladkowski - NWTF Website

The NWTF teamed up with the USDA Forest Service for a controlled burn in the glades of Missouri.

The nearly 9,000-acre controlled burn contributes to more wildlife openings and provides an ideal landscape for native plants and wildlife.

“Fire will keep red cedars from invading the woodlands and glades, which allows for more growth of native plant species,” said Reggie Bray of the Forest Service. “Indicator species, such as the Eastern collared lizard, should be more prominent the more open the glades and surrounding woodland become. Increased habitat for upland

game birds, such as the bobwhite quail, and an increase in plant diversity should increase pollinators and other invertebrates in both the glades and the woodlands.”

The project's overall budget was about \$136,292, while the NWTF contributed \$13,600 to pay for helicopter hours to ignite the fire from above.

The controlled burn took place on three units, which lessened the smoke impact and reduced resources needed on the ground.

Wild turkeys and several other wildlife species benefitted from the controlled burn.

“As with any prescribed fire, you may see wild turkeys foraging just after the fire has burned through an area, because it exposes food of some sort, i.e., acorns or invertebrates,” Bray said. “It creates new growth, which provides food for not only the wild turkey but for many invertebrates that they feed on as well. The glades provide excellent nesting cover for hens and new hatchlings. In the later summer, the glades are full of invertebrates and are a buffet for young poult.”

Bray also spoke of the resiliency of the project: “The landscape typically responds very quickly after a burn. This ecosystem is very fire adaptive.”

OUTDOORSMEN and OUTDOORSWOMEN

FUND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

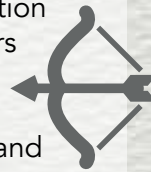
In 1937, sportsmen encouraged Congress to impose an excise tax on the sale of firearms, ammunition (and later archery equipment) to **help fund wildlife conservation in the U.S.**

NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION

THE PITTMAN-ROBERTSON WILDLIFE RESTORATION ACT



10-11% excise tax on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment, provides up to three quarters of the cost for states to support projects, such as habitat improvement, population surveys, species reintroductions, wildlife research, hunter education, and the building and maintenance of public shooting ranges



To date, more than **\$12.5 billion** has been disbursed for state conservation and education projects

These funds for state fish and wildlife agencies have also resulted in the recovery and wise management of deer, turkeys and more, plus many nongame species with benefits to hunters and nonhunters, alike



NEVER-ENDING CYCLE

- Hunters and shooting sports **enthusiasts** purchase firearms, ammunition and archery equipment 
- Manufacturers of those products pay an **excise tax**
- **Taxes** are collected and distributed to state wildlife agencies 
- Funds are used to **improve** wildlife habitat, research wildlife populations, recruit and educate new hunters, build public shooting ranges and more 
- Our land, forests and water, as well as our outdoors experience, improves, and **all types of wildlife benefit** from this system of funding

BY THE NUMBERS

\$796 Million:

Amount hunters spend annually by purchasing licenses, permits and/or paying mandatory fees that go directly to state wildlife agencies to manage wildlife

\$1.8 Billion:

Annual revenue generated by hunters and shooters for wildlife conservation in the U.S.

\$2.2 Million:

Decline in hunter numbers from 2011-2016, which means less funding for wildlife conservation

WILD TURKEY POPULATION



EARLY 1900s ~200,000

TODAY more than **6 MILLION**



NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION

NWTF.org





Predator Control; Yes or NO?

By John Burk

Ask any hunter or landowner; or for that matter, even some resource professionals their opinion on predator/prey relationships and how these maybe effecting game bird populations and you are liable to be in for a heated discussion on the topic. Everyone will admit that there are a lot more predatory animals on the landscape now than when we were setting turkey harvest records annually in the late 1990's and early 2000's. It is also pretty obvious that these inflated populations are negatively impacting ground nesting bird populations. As such, many in our fold are arguing the need and regulatory accommodations for extended furbearer seasons

to enable more effective predator control. It is also evident that, with the exception of black bears, there is probably not another furbearing mammal in our state needing the protection of a closed season.

Many studies have identified raccoons as one of the most significant nest predators and raccoons are also one of the most omnivorous and least dependent upon prey densities to support their population growth. Raccoon populations do appear, currently, to be significantly higher in many areas and putting significant pressure on ground nesting bird populations. In the absence of trapping I have seen dramatic increases in raccoon abundance but

these periods are usually eventually followed by a regional outbreak of distemper that craters the population. This phenomena results in a cyclical pattern of booms and busts centered around contiguous drainage systems that tends to equal out at the landscape level with some areas being up while others are down. If you put steady harvest pressure on the resource you will maintain a stable strong population that will draw up the troughs but also knock off the peaks.

Every recreational landowner wants to know the best way to maximize wildlife populations on their property. In their quest for the "silver bullet" most landowners are also hopeful that

their search will reveal a cheap and easy way to achieve success. Predator control, to a growing number, appears to provide this false promise. While predator calling and trapping is to be encouraged it is not justifiable, solely, as a means to “manage” game bird populations. I am not saying that predator removal is not effective but what I will say is that it is probably the most expensive thing you can do to effectively influence game populations and should absolutely be the last box checked on your land management “to do” list. To be effective, predator “control” is a full time, never ending job; especially during a suppressed fur market when few other people are harvesting predators. Most predators have large home ranges (several square miles) and are extremely mobile. Therefore, for every one you take out there is at least one to take its place. An analogy would be that it is like placing a hoola hoop in the center of an Olympic-sized swimming pool and removing only the water from inside the hoop with a tea cup. You cannot drain only the water from within the hoop and unless you get really busy you’re probably going to give up long before you notice any difference in the level of the pool.

Fluctuating harvest rates are usually good population trend indicators of wildlife species that are pursued recreationally. However, in the case of trapping where considerable time and effort is required to successfully participate and economics influences participation, changing harvest rates are more a measure of fluctuations in effort rather than population changes. Although I would be in favor of expanding the current furbearer season, I would point out that the season has never been more than 3 months long and that has always been plenty of time in the past to achieve desired harvest levels. I don’t think that the Department will ever go with

a “wide open” regulatory framework for a variety of legitimate reasons. However, I do think it may be time to consider some sort of compromise regarding predator management. For those landowners that are doing all of the heavy lifting necessary to get their habitat where it needs to be and still want to do more, maybe some sort of a special use permit could be created that allows them to take furbearers beyond the current season framework. I am not a proponent of predator control but I am a proponent of providing landowners with every available tool to achieve their objectives.

Most people do not have the time, equipment, or knowledge to run a large enough trap line to remove enough predators to make a difference. However, some people do have the financial ability to hire somebody to do it for them. I worked with a wealthy landowner in Texas that had a lot of room for improvement with his turkey habitat. Despite my advice to address the habitat concern first, this landowner hired a professional trapper. The trapper was paid his standard rate of \$35.00/hr. for his efforts and trapped for a month (\$5,600.00). The trapper caught a lot of fur but spotlight surveys conducted 2 months later reflected no significant reduction in predator densities and hen/poult surveys the following summer reflected no change in turkey populations. The standard rate for contracting prescribed burning at the time was \$25.00/acre. If that landowner would have spent his \$5,600.00 wisely he could have burned 224 acres and created some ideal nesting and brood rearing habitat that he was lacking.

It all boils down to the same thing. Habitat management is the key to

successfully managing any wildlife population and if it were cheap and easy everybody would have bountiful wildlife populations. Knowing what good habitat is and providing it at a landscape level is where the attention and energy needs to be focused. Popping a coyote loping across a pasture with a .22-250 may give you a warm and fuzzy; and the chick, poult, and hen eating days of that individual are guaranteed to be over. In the bigger context, however, absolutely nothing was accomplished. If you predator call and trap because you love the sport...good for you... me too! If you predator call and trap because you’re making a better place for quail, turkeys, and pheasants; be sure that your first investment was in a drip torch, spray tank, and chainsaw. If you still have some time and money on your hands after you’ve restored and maintained high quality brood range, it certainly won’t hurt to try and balance your predator numbers.

