

TURKEY PROPOSED RULE CHANGES SUMMARY (7/26/2022)

PURPOSE

Maintain current turkey populations and offer hunting opportunity that does not negatively impact turkey populations across the state.

TURKEY BIOLOGY & BACKGROUND

Wild turkey populations are characterized by annual fluctuations, largely dependent on environmental conditions. Wild turkeys exhibit a moderate potential for population growth. Reproduction is seasonal and the mating system is polygamous; males play no role in rearing young. All males ≥ 2 years old can breed. Females are capable of reproducing at 1 year of age, but adult hens are usually more successful at hatching nests than are yearlings. Spring gobbler hunting is biologically the most conservative hunting approach, and is unlikely to result in overharvest. Fall harvest has the potential to depress population growth and therefore hunting should be lighter during this time. Turkey hunting in New Mexico is structured so that it does not negatively impact the turkey population.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TURKEY RULE

- 1) Extend the spring season, including Entry Permit hunts, to close on May 15
- 2) Adjust hunt dates by calendar date
- 3) Evaluate the potential to open certain closed GMUs based on turkey population status
- 4) Add a once-in-a-lifetime Entry Permit hunt for Gould's Turkey in GMU 26 and 27 with up to 5 permits. The hunt will occur from May 1 - 30 to reduce potential impacts of hunting on breeding activity and to accommodate later breeding activity of Gould's turkeys compared to other NM turkey subspecies.
- 5) Remove W.S. Huey WMA youth hunt due to low turkey numbers
- 6) Define dates and permit numbers for the Washington Ranch Youth Hunt and add BLM Black River Management Area to the hunt area
- 7) Add the LBar acquisition to the Marquez WMA entry hunt
- 8) Prohibit shooting turkeys on the roost

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Department is inviting public comment. If you would like to comment on the proposals, please send an email to: DGF-Gamebird@state.nm.us