

TURKEY HUNTING SAFETY AND REGULATIONS

SAFE TURKEY HUNTING

- Do not squeeze the trigger until you have positively identified your target.
- Do not wear red, white, black, or blue clothing in the woods. A hunter could mistake these colors for a turkey.
- Do not stalk a turkey. The chances of getting close enough for a shot are slim, but the chances of becoming involved in an accident are increased.

SAFETY FIRST

The calls you hear could be another hunter. In fact, some hunters call so well they sound better than the turkeys. Therefore, never fire at the sound of a turkey.

Select a calling location from which you can see well in all directions so another hunter cannot accidentally sneak up on you. If you sit with your back to a tree, make sure it's wider than the width of your shoulders.

WILD TURKEY HUNTING SAFETY

Minnesota had its first turkey season in 1978 and since that time has had only a handful of firearm related turkey hunting incidents like firing at movement or partially obscured object in the woods that looked like a wild turkey but turned out to be another hunter. One of the primary reasons for safe turkey hunting seasons in Minnesota are the Turkey Clinics sponsored by the Department and provided by volunteer instructors. These clinics teach hunters the safest methods to hunt turkeys and how to avoid firearm incidents. All turkey hunters are encouraged to attend one of these clinics.

Wild Turkey Hunt Information

Licenses may be purchased by going to one of 1,600 electronic License System (ELS) point-of-Sale (POS) agents, or by telephone (1-888-665-4236) or Internet mndnr.gov. There is a \$3.50 convenience fee for telephone purchases. Purchases by Internet, an additional fee of 3% of the transaction plus \$1.65 for mailing the license will be added.

Residents age 18 and over \$27.00, spring code 610, fall code 650. Residents ages 13-17, \$6.00, spring code 601, fall code 655. Residents age 12 and under, \$1.00 issuing fee, spring code 619, fall code 641.

Nonresidents age 18 and over \$97.00, spring code 611, fall code 651. Nonresidents ages 13-17, \$6.00, spring code 602, fall code 656. Nonresidents age 12 and under, \$1.00 issuing fee, spring code 594, fall code 593.

Archery only licenses for the spring season are now valid for the entire season. Winners in the lottery who purchase a firearms license are not eligible to purchase archery only permits. If winners do not purchase the regular (firearms) license, they may purchase an archery license.

The \$5.00 Wild Turkey Stamp validation is included in the license price. You do not need to purchase an additional stamp.

Landowner permission is required for private agricultural land or posted land. If you have forgotten which wild turkey permit area and/or time period you applied for, it is printed on your mailing label.

The DNR hopes you have a safe and enjoyable wild turkey hunt.

WILD TURKEY HUNT RULES

The following general regulations apply to the taking of wild turkeys during the spring and fall hunts in Minnesota.

IMPORTANT: This is a summary of Minnesota's hunting regulations. For complete regulations, consult state statutes and rules.

LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

Licenses for the Spring Turkey Hunts are awarded in a computerized preference drawing for the A-B time periods. C-F time period licenses can be purchased over the counter in mid-March. Turkey hunters, other than licensed archery hunters and youth are restricted to the **WILD TURKEY PERMIT AREA** and **TIME PERIOD** selected at time of purchase. However all licensed hunters who do not tag a turkey in their selected time-period may hunt the last time-period (F) in their selected permit area. All youth 17 and younger may purchase a license which is valid for any area and valid for the entire season. Persons who purchase an archery license may hunt in any area for the entire season. **PERSONS CANNOT PURCHASE BOTH A FIREARMS AND ARCHERY LICENSE.**

Fall turkey season has no lottery and licenses can be purchased over the counter after August 1. Persons other than youth still need to select and hunt in a single turkey permit area.

Method of taking

Firearms

- A person may only use shotguns 20 gauge or larger, including muzzle-loading shotguns.
- Only fine shot size No. 4 and smaller diameter may be used.
- Red dot scopes and range finders are legal.

Bows and Arrows

- Bows must have a pull of no less than 30 pounds at or before full draw.
- Bows may not be drawn, held, or released by mechanical means, except by disability permit. A person may use a mechanical device attached to the bowstring if the person's own strength draws and holds the bowstring.
- Arrowheads must be broadheads that are sharp, have at least two metal cutting edges, are of barbless design, and are at least 7/8 inch in diameter, or must be of a blunthead design.
- "Retractable" broadheads that meet all other requirements of law are legal for wild turkeys if they: 1) are at least 7/8 inch in width at or after impact, and 2) are of a barbless design and function in a barbless manner.
- No person may use any arrow that is poisoned or has an explosive tip.
- Crossbows can be used: (1) as a choice of arms under a firearms license in the A-E time periods; (2) by persons 60 years of age or older under an archery only license without a disability permit; or (3) with a disability permit under an archery only license.

LEGAL SHOOTING HOURS. The legal shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

BAG LIMIT.

The bag limit for the spring hunt is one (1) wild turkey with a visible beard. The beard is a feathered appendage protruding from the breast that is generally found only on males. The bag limit for the fall hunt is one bird of either sex.

TAGGING

- The tag provided with the license must be punched with the date of the kill, and attached to the wild turkey immediately after taking the bird. The tag must remain attached to the bird during transit.
- The license stock (blue in color) has an eyelet hole (upper middle of each license square) that must be used to tie to the turkey leg. **All hunters must carry a string or wire to attach the turkey tag to leg.**

REGISTRATION

- Every person who takes a wild turkey must register the bird within 24 hours of taking the turkey.
- You may now register by three methods: at a registration station (see mndnr.gov for the list), by phone, or by Internet.
- Wild turkeys must be transported with one leg or fully feathered wing attached.
- No person may possess an unregistered wild turkey outside the wild turkey permit area where the bird was taken unless it is being transported in a direct route to a registration station.

Assisting

A licensed wild turkey hunter may assist another turkey hunter, but may not shoot or tag a turkey for another hunter. An unlicensed adult age 18 or older may assist a licensed wild turkey hunter. The unlicensed adult may not shoot or possess a firearm or bow while assisting a hunter and may not charge a fee for the assistance.

GENERAL RESTRICTIONS

- Wild turkeys may not be taken with the aid of dogs. No person may be accompanied by a dog or dogs while hunting or assisting in hunting wild turkeys.
- Wild turkeys may not be taken with the aid of any electronic device, except that red dot scopes, electronic rangefinders, and hearing aids or other devices designed to enhance hearing may be used.
- The use of live turkey decoys is prohibited.
- No persons who are a field hunting wild turkeys may have in their possession or in their control any firearms or
- Bow and arrow except those defined as legal for taking wild turkeys.
- Hunting turkeys over bait is prohibited. See hunting and trapping regulations handbook for details.

TRESPASS LAW

Trespass is the most frequent complaint landowners have against hunters. Trespassing is illegal and can ruin hunters and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) relations with private landowners. This could, in turn, hamper habitat programs, cut-off land access, and possibly eliminate the future of hunting in many areas of Minnesota.

Always ask permission before entering private land. If you are caught trespassing, you may be issued a citation and assessed a fine under civil penalties, and repeat violators can lose their license or registration. Alternatively, if you are convicted of violating trespass laws under criminal procedures, you may lose your hunting privileges for up to two (2) years, lose hunting equipment, and be subject to fines and possibly a jail sentence. All DNR conservation officers and all other licensed peace officers enforce trespass laws and may issue a citation to a person who trespasses in violation of the law or who removes a sign without authorization. The following is a summary of the Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Trespass Law:

Restrictions (see below for Exceptions, Definitions, and Posting Requirements)

- A person may not enter legally posted land for outdoor recreation purposes without permission.

- A person may not enter agricultural land, for outdoor recreation purposes without permission.
- A person may not remain on private land for outdoor recreation purposes after being told to leave.
- On another person's private land or public right-of-way, a person may not take a wild animal with a firearm within 500 feet of a building occupied by humans or livestock without written permission.
- A person may not take a wild animal with a firearm within 500 feet of a stockade or corral confining livestock for the purpose of normal livestock holding or sorting operations without permission.
- A person may not take a wild animal on any land where the person is prohibited from lawfully entering by this law.
- A person may not wound or kill another person's domestic animal, destroy private property, or pass through a closed gate without returning it to the original position.
- Exceptions
- A person on foot may, without permission, enter land that is not legally posted to retrieve a wounded animal that was lawfully shot.

Definitions and Posting Requirements

- "Outdoor Recreation" means any activity including hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, hiking, camping, and engaging in winter sports which is conducted primarily for the purposes of pleasure, rest, or relaxation and is dependent on or derives its principal benefit from natural surroundings.
- "Agricultural land" is land that: 1) is plowed or tilled; 2) has standing crops or crop residues; 3) is within a maintained fence for enclosing domestic livestock; 4) is planted native or introduced grassland or hay land; or 5) is planted to short-rotation woody crops (hybrid poplar and other woody plants that are harvested for their fiber within 15 years of planting).

IMPORTANT NOTE: All planted grassland and hay land and all hybrid poplar and other woody plants that are harvested for their fiber within 15 years of planting meet this definition, including grasslands enrolled in the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), or the state Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Reserve program. These lands do not need to be posted to prevent unauthorized trespass. However, land that is brush or trees, including CRP, CREP, and RIM Reserve that is brush or trees, (except short-rotation woody crops as defined above) does not meet this definition and must be posted or verbal notice given to trespassers for criminal enforcement to occur.

To be legally posted, land must have signs:

- Posted once each year that state "no trespassing" or similar terms either: 1) along the boundaries every 1,000 feet or less, or in wooded areas where boundaries are less clear, at intervals of 500 feet or less; or 2) at the primary corners of each parcel of land and at access roads and trails at points of entrance to each parcel, except corners only accessible through agricultural land need not be posted.
- With lettering at least 2-inch high and the signature or the legible name and telephone number of the owner, occupant, lessee, or authorized manager. An unauthorized person may not post land with signs prohibiting outdoor recreation or trespass.
- Notification to stay off private land, authorization to remove a sign posted to prevent trespass, or legal permission to enter private land or to take wild animals near occupied buildings or corrals, may only be given by the owner, occupant, or lessee.

Penalties

- Violating the Minnesota Trespass Law can make you subject to either civil or criminal penalties:
- Civil penalties are 1) \$50 for the first violation; 2) \$200 for the second violation in a 3-year period; 3) \$500 and loss of every license and registration being used for a third or subsequent violation in a 3-year period; and 4) \$50 for unauthorized removal of a sign posted under this law.
- Criminal penalties are at least a misdemeanor for violation of this law. In addition, it becomes a gross misdemeanor to: knowingly disregard signs prohibiting trespass, trespass after being told not to do so, or to violate the trespass law twice within a 3-year period. Anyone convicted under criminal procedures of violating the trespass law while hunting, fishing, trapping, or snowmobiling will have the applicable license and registration for that activity revoked. Anyone convicted of a gross misdemeanor under this law will have all hunting privileges suspended for two (2) years.

Duty to Render Aid

A person who shoots and injures another person with a firearm, or has reason to believe that another person might have been injured, and any witnesses to such a shooting, must immediately investigate the extent of the person's injuries and give reasonable assistance, including calling law enforcement or medical personnel to the scene. Failure to do so can result in imprisonment and a fine for the shooter and witnesses.

PRIVATE LANDS OPEN TO TURKEY HUNTING**Qualifying Applicants -- Landowner Tenant Drawing**

NOTE: Under State Law, qualified landowners or tenants who are successful in this special drawing shall permit turkey hunting on their land during the turkey season. Landowners may limit the number of hunters on their lands due to the number of turkeys present and the acres available to safely accommodate hunters.

Minnesota Statutes require that landowners or tenants who receive a permit through the special landowner preference provision shall permit turkey hunting on their land during the spring turkey season. Successful landowner information is available at this website or by calling the DNR Information Center at 651- 296-6157 or 888-646-6367. To locate landowners, we suggest you obtain either a county plat book or a county map. Contact the respective county government office to purchase a plat book for that county. County highway maps are available through the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Room B-20, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155, (651) 296-2216; the Minnesota Book Store, 660 Olive St, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155, (651) 297-3000, toll free 1-800-657-3757 or a local map store.

If you plan to hunt private land, please treat the landowner as a friend or neighbor and the property as if it was your own. Be sure to get permission before hunting on private agricultural land or posted land.