

2025 Spring Wild Turkey Harvest

Activity:

In 2025, Delaware's spring turkey hunting season ran from April 12th to May 10th with a special two-day hunt for youth and non-ambulatory hunters on April 5th and 6th. Only bearded birds may be legally harvested. Private land hunters were allowed to hunt all 29 days of the season. Public land hunters were selected through a preseason lottery to hunt one of four, weeklong season segments (A, B, C, and D) during the same 29-day period. Sunday hunting is now allowed in the first state since Delaware's first turkey hunting season in 1991, except for no hunting on Sunday, May 11th. The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control implemented a new, online harvest registration process, near identical to that for hunters registering White-tailed Deer in Delaware. This was done either online through the hunters Digital DNREC account, the Digital DNREC app or by calling 855-DEL-Hunt (855-335-4868).

Remarks:

At the end of the 2025 spring hunting season, a total of 801 Wild Turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) were harvested in the State of Delaware, a 10.8% increase from the previous year ($n=723$; figure 1.1) making this the highest-ranking season since spring turkey hunting opened in 1991. For the purpose of harvest reporting, Delaware is divided into 4 management regions, comprised of 18 wildlife management zones (Figure 1.2). The Interior Region (i.e. zones 2, 4, 6 - 8 and 10) accounted for 42.7% ($n=342$) of the total harvest. 35.5% ($n=284$) of harvests came from the Southern Region (i.e., Zones 11 - 17), 19.3% ($n=155$) from the Bayshore Region (i.e., Zones 3, 5 and 9) and finally 2.5% ($n=20$) from the Northern Region (i.e., Zones 1A and 1B). Reported harvest was greatest within wildlife management zone 6, which accounted for 13.1% of harvest with 105 turkeys (Table 1.1).

Most harvested birds were taken on private lands ($n=630$, 79%). This year a record high of 171 birds (21%) were taken from public lands. The top public lands for harvesting wild turkeys in 2025 were: Redden State Forest ($n=26$, 15%), Norman G Wilder Wildlife Area ($n=22$, 13%) and Milford Neck Wildlife Area ($n=13$, 8%; Table 1.2).

The two-day youth and non-ambulatory hunt gave eligible hunters more opportunity in the first state, with Sunday now allowed - a record high 49 harvests on the first day (Saturday April 5th) and an additional 14 harvests on the second (Sunday April 6th) giving a total of 63 birds for the weekend (7.875% of total birds harvested). From Saturday alone, the harvest rate was up 68.97% from last year's one-day youth and non-ambulatory hunt. Adult birds made up 79.3% ($n = 635$) of the total harvest, while 20.1% ($n = 161$) were juveniles and 0.6% ($n = 5$) were unspecified/bearded hens. By week during the regular season, 39.3% ($n = 315$) of total birds harvested were taken in week 1; 19.85% ($n = 159$) in week 2; 16.23% ($n = 130$) in week 3; 16.73 and ($n = 134$) in week 4 (Figure 1.3).

This year the division moved to an online registration process, no longer using in – person check stations staffed by Division volunteers and employees. Sunday hunting was also introduced this year for wild turkey, giving hunters more opportunity to hunt in the First State. A total of 114 birds were harvested on Sundays this season, making up 14.23% of the overall harvest.

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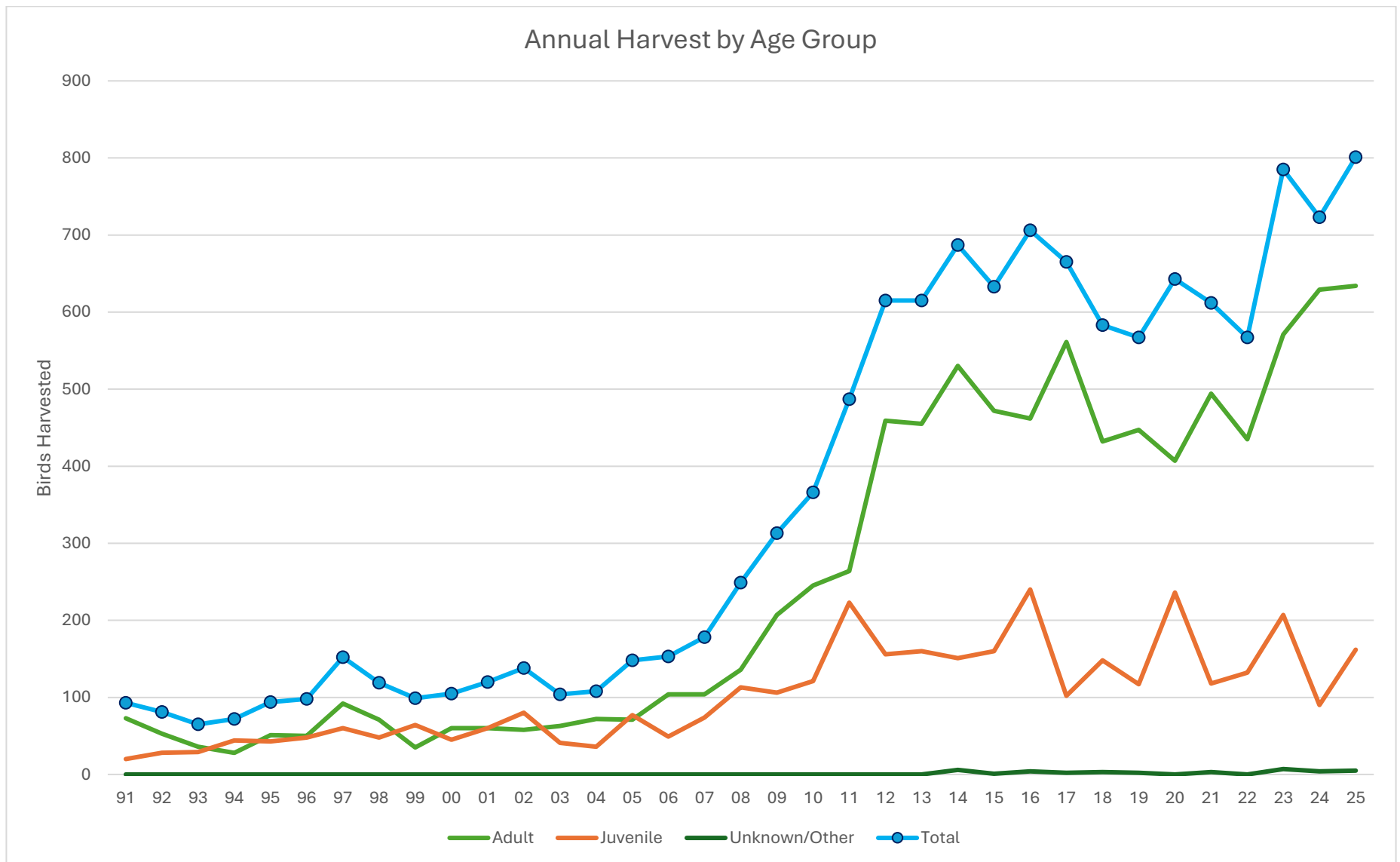


Figure 1.1. Annual harvest of Eastern Wild Turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) in Delaware from 1991 – 2025 classified by age groups (i.e., adult, juvenile, and unknown).

Zone	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
1A	0	0	0	0	0	0
1B	17	13	7	11	12	20
2	30	40	29	43	44	39
3	18	16	25	38	40	53
4	61	53	60	87	75	61
5	35	20	21	35	36	44
6	78	87	84	112	96	105
7	55	46	46	63	59	53
8	59	47	47	49	39	64
9	37	37	30	47	44	58
10	20	21	7	17	21	20
11	62	50	50	62	52	73
12	40	36	41	57	41	38
13	19	28	17	18	22	34
14	21	27	24	30	37	26
15	23	33	23	23	34	38
16	38	36	34	42	43	48
17	27	22	19	35	28	27
Unknown	3	0	3	16	0	0
Total	643	612	567	785	723	801

Table 1.1. Spring 2025 Delaware Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) harvest by hunting zone; includes 2020 - 2025.

Public Land	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Assawoman Wildlife Area	5	3	2	6	4	4
Augustine Wildlife Area	3	1	1	5	4	4
Blackiston Wildlife Area	9	6	7	8	11	6
Blackbird State Forest	7	12	5	9	12	8
Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge	0	0	0	0	0	9
C&D Canal Conservation Area	9	8	5	8	10	8
Cedar Swamp Wildlife Area	3	3	6	5	4	10
Eagles Nest Wildlife Area	4	5	2	5	8	9
Industrial Forest Lands - Barr and Laurel	3	0	4	1	1	4
Little Creek Wildlife Area	2	5	4	1	4	8
Marshy Hope Wildlife Area	4	3	0	0	2	1
Midlands Wildlife Area	4	9	8	11	6	9
Milford Neck Wildlife Area	4	8	4	11	10	13
Nanticoke Wildlife Area	3	5	4	6	6	6
Norman G. Wilder Wildlife Area	6	12	12	13	9	22
Old Furnace Wildlife Area	5	3	3	2	4	2
Prime Hook WA and NWR	0	1	0	0	1	7
Redden State Forest	21	19	18	26	17	26
Taber State Forest	2	2	5	2	3	3
Tappahanna Wildlife Area	3	4	4	4	8	4
Ted Harvey Conservation Area	6	1	1	5	3	5
Woodland Beach Wildlife Area	2	2	3	3	4	3
Total	105	112	98	131	131	171

Table 1.2. Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) harvest distribution among DNREC – Division of Fish and Wildlife and Department of Agriculture – Forest Service owned public lands hunted during the 2025 Delaware spring turkey season. Public lands harvest data from 2020 – 2024 are also displayed.

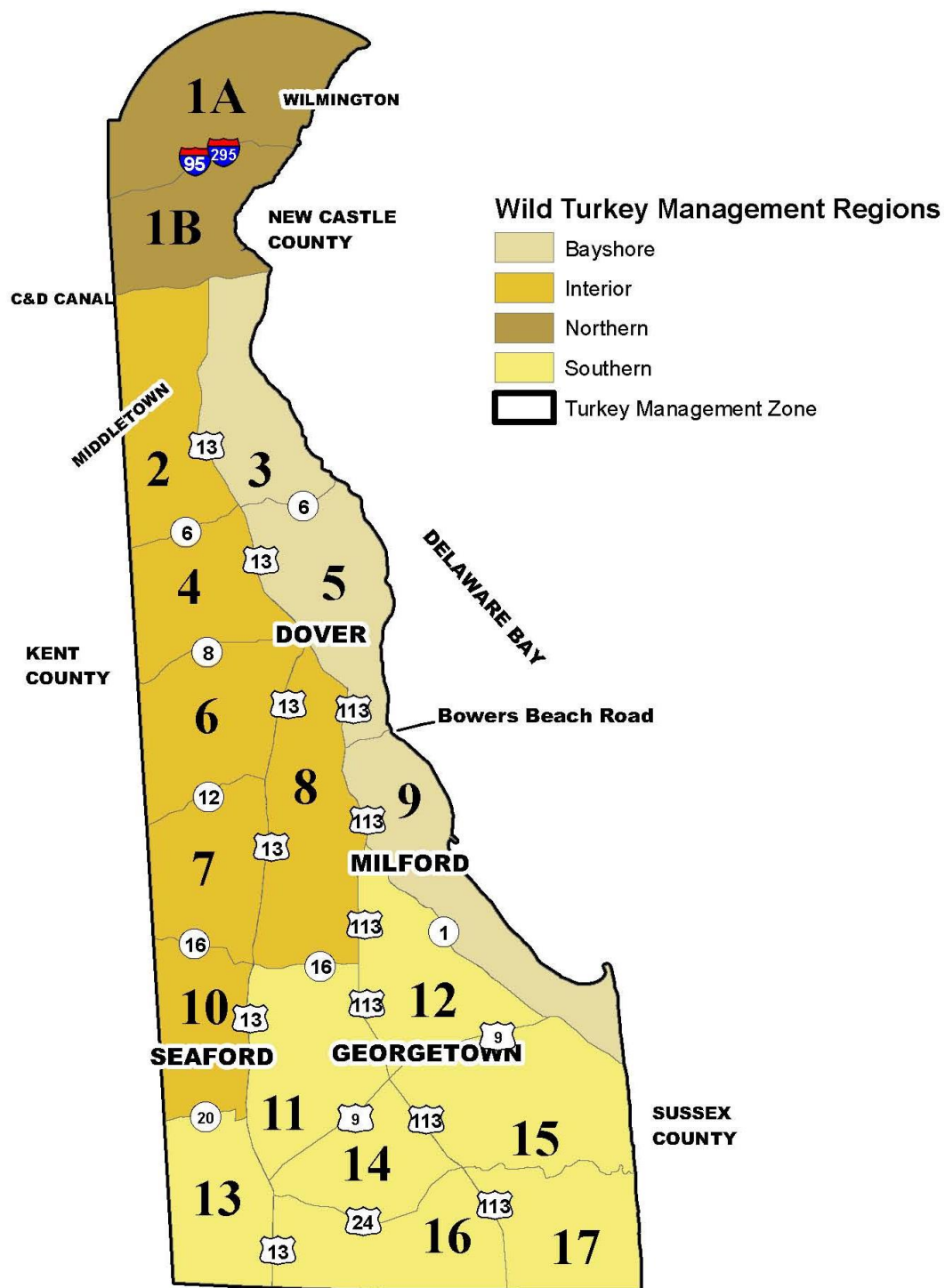


Figure 1.2. Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) management regions (Bayshore [tan], Interior [amber], Northern [light brown], and Southern [yellow]) and associated management zones (1A, 1B, and 2 – 17) in Delaware.

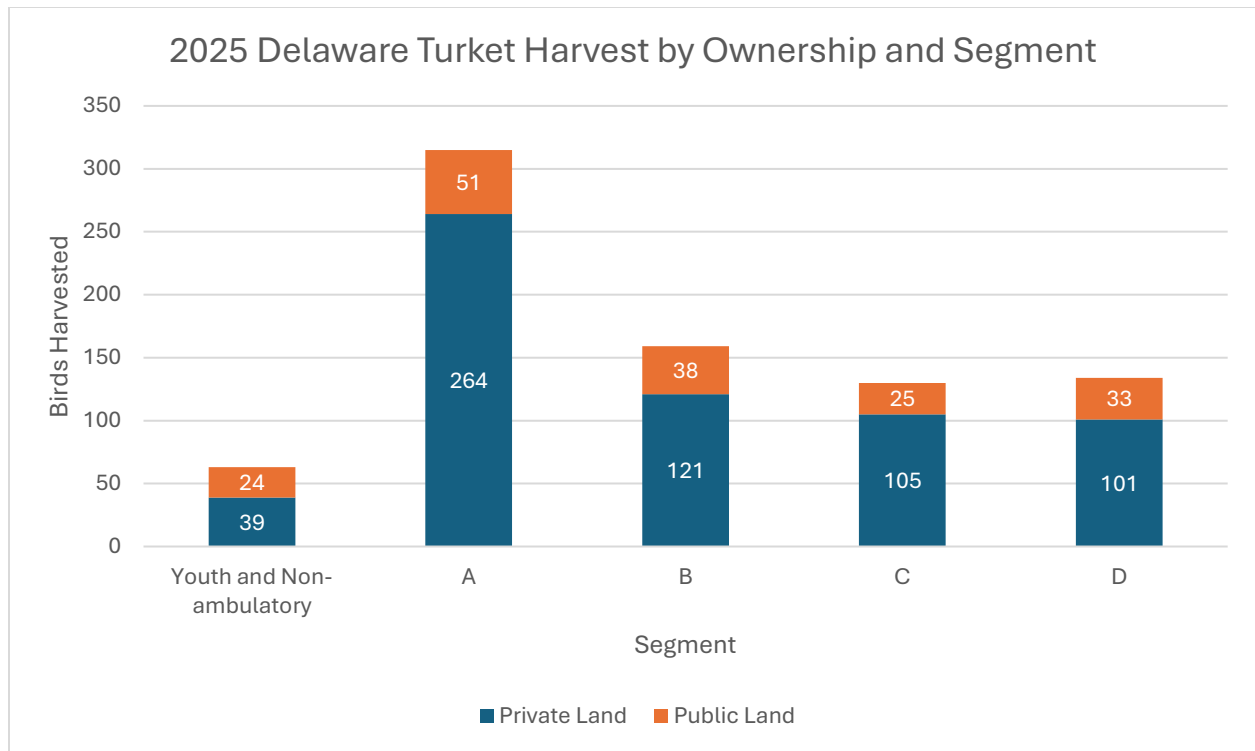


Figure 1.3. Spring 2025 Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) harvest by week (regular season 12 April – 10 May 2024) on public and private lands and includes the youth/non-ambulatory disabled person (5 and 6 April) hunt days.