

2004 TURKEY SEASON SUMMARY

Spring Seasons

Vermont's 2004 spring turkey seasons (April 24-25 youth weekend and May 1-31 regular season) resulted in a total harvest of 3,925 bearded birds, up slightly (6.3 %) from the 2003 spring total of 3,694. This compares with an average spring harvest of 4,058 during 2001-2002.

The 2004 two-day youth season produced 371 birds, also up slightly (4%) from the previous year's youth season harvest of 356 birds and compares with an average of 422 birds taken by youths during 2001-2002.

Many hunters complained the male birds seemed unusually "quiet" this spring. Although breeding activity may have occurred earlier in 2004 than in recent years, hunter success remained virtually unchanged. In 2004, 22.9% of hunters harvested at least one turkey, compared with 21.9% of hunters taking at least one bird in 2003.

Spring hunting pressure in 2004, measured by estimated sales of spring turkey licenses (13,942), was nearly identical to 2003 license sales of 13,986

This flattening trend in turkey hunting license sales is a fairly significant change from the rapid rise in sales experienced from 1998 to 2002, when sales increased 214%.

Hunting weather always plays a significant role in the overall harvest. Rains during the May season (and especially throughout the third week) challenged hunters and may have dampened harvest numbers somewhat. The effect of the April youth hunt on subsequent May gobbling activity and harvest is unknown, but disturbance from early hunting activity may also influence bird behavior and hunting success during the regular spring season.

Adult birds comprised 43% of the harvest. The lower percentage of adults in the harvest may be the result of lower spring productivity in 2002, dampening numbers of birds in the two-year age class. Spring birds were harvested in a record 231 of Vermont's 253 towns by 3,200 successful hunters. Among these successful hunters, 22.7% harvested an additional bearded bird to fill the two-bird spring bag limit.

For the first time, the entire state of Vermont was open to hunting for all licensed turkey hunters in 2004. This included the northern portion of Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) E and all of WMU C, areas that had previously been closed to turkey hunting. As a result of this change, 95 birds were harvested in WMU E in 2004, compared to the previous year's total of 28 birds taken from a limited area in the most southerly portion of zone E. In zone C, 69 birds were harvested. Counties with the highest harvest were Rutland (540) followed by Orange (539) and Addison (503) while notably, the harvest from Bennington County continued to decline, accounting for 194 birds.

The vagaries of weather and its impact on spring productivity, turkey populations and harvests are unpredictable and difficult to gauge. Harvest levels from recent years suggest that Vermont's turkey population may be stabilizing at a level somewhat below the peak numbers experienced in 2001. Cool, rainy weather during the spring of 2003 reduced chick production and survival, and this scenario may have been repeated in 2004. If so, fewer birds will be available for harvest in the spring of 2005. In light of this and in the interest of maintaining Vermont's high quality spring turkey hunting season, a continued, conservative fall harvest structure is warranted.

2004 Fall Season

The 2004 fall season resulted in a harvest of 1,168 either-sex birds, up 11% from the fall 2003 harvest of 1,049 birds and somewhat higher than the previous three fall seasons' average of 962 birds. Once again in 2004, a relatively poor, hard mast crop likely inflated the overall harvest as is typical for Vermont in poor mast years. In general, fall harvests are poor indicators of Vermont's turkey population trend.

The 2004 fall archery-only season accounted for 137 of the harvested birds, with the balance of the birds (1,031) taken in the shotgun season. Fall birds were taken in 151 Vermont towns.

As many of our reporting agents and hunters have a difficult time discerning the sex and age of fall harvested birds, particularly immature birds. We have learned to view the accuracy of our fall sex and age reported data with caution and some skepticism. Final tallies indicate immature birds comprised 50% of the harvest, while females accounted for about 45% of the total harvest. Of the females, 75% were adult birds and 25 % were immature. The immature to adult female ratio was 1: 0.7, suggesting fair spring nesting success. Wildlife Management Unit J1 reported the highest number of fall birds with 184, followed by WMU K2 with 134 birds and F1 reporting 132.

HARVEST BY COUNTY Spring 2004

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>ADULT</u>	<u>IMMATURE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
ADDISON	272	231	503
BENNINGTON	80	114	194
CALEDONIA	145	272	417
CHITTENDEN	135	155	290
ESSEX	44	53	97
FRANKLIN	61	75	136
GRAND ISLE	23	34	57
LAMOILLE	49	88	137
ORANGE	202	337	539
ORLEANS	44	99	143
RUTLAND	307	233	540
UNKNOWN	3	4	7
WASHINGTON	129	184	313
WINDHAM	82	143	225
WINDSOR	164	163	327
Totals	1740	2185	3925

HARVEST BY DAY Spring 2004

<u>DATE</u>	<u>RESIDENT</u>	<u>NON-RESIDENT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
4/24/2004	255		255
4/25/2004	116		116
5/1/2004	898	101	999
5/2/2004	424	54	478
5/3/2004	155	16	171
5/4/2004	107	14	121
5/5/2004	120	11	131
5/6/2004	135	14	149
5/7/2004	135	13	148
5/8/2004	153	20	173
5/9/2004	121	12	133
5/10/2004	59	5	64
5/11/2004	56	6	62
5/12/2004	58	9	67
5/13/2004	68	5	73
5/14/2004	70	8	78
5/15/2004	132	17	149
5/16/2004	91	4	95
5/17/2004	26	2	28
5/18/2004	35	5	40
5/19/2004	32	4	36
5/20/2004	26	3	29
5/21/2004	32	4	36
5/22/2004	53	5	58
5/23/2004	42	6	48
5/24/2004	8	2	10
5/25/2004	13	3	16
5/26/2004	10		10
5/27/2004	22	1	23
5/28/2004	13	6	19
5/29/2004	54	1	55
5/30/2004	26	4	30
5/31/2004	24	1	25
TOTALS	3569	356	3925

Sex and Age of Harvest
Spring 2004

<u>SEX</u>	<u>ADULT</u>	<u>IMMATURE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Bearded Female	70		70
Male	1669 (43%)	2186 (57%)	3855
Total	1739	2186	3925

HUNTER SUCCESS BY RESIDENCE
Spring 2004

	<u>RESIDENT</u>	<u>NONRESIDENT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
TOTAL HARVEST	3569	356	3925
% HARVEST BY RESIDENCE	91%	9%	100%
SUCCESSFUL HUNTERS BY RESIDENCE	2917	283	3200
% SUCCESSFUL HUNTERS TAKING TWO BIRDS	22.40%	25.80%	22.70%
ESTIMATED TOTAL HUNTING PARTICIPATION	12,597	1,395	13,992
ESTIMATED HUNTER SUCCESS RATE	23.20%	20%	22.90%

VERMONT TURKEY HARVEST REPORT SPRING 2004

Turkey Harvest By Town

<u>TOWNKILL</u>	<u>NON-RESIDENT</u>	<u>RESIDENT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
ADDISON	1	33	34
ALBANY		9	9
ALBURG		14	14
ANDOVER		8	8
ARLINGTON	1	17	18
ATHENS		2	2
BAKERSFIELD		8	8
BARNARD	3	6	9
BARNET	5	28	33
BARRE	1	28	29
BARTON		9	9
BELVIDERE		1	1
BENNINGTON	2	17	19
BENSON	2	24	26
BERKSHIRE		4	4
BERLIN	3	25	28
BETHEL	3	17	20
BLOOMFIELD	2	5	7
BOLTON	1	2	3
BRADFORD	4	24	28
BRAINTREE		21	21
BRANDON	6	26	32
BRATTLEBORO	2	14	16
BRIDGEWATER	2	14	16
BRIDPORT		28	28
BRIGHTON		7	7
BRISTOL		27	27
BROOKFIELD	2	26	28
BROOKLINE		4	4
BROWNINGTON		4	4
BRUNSWICK	2	4	6
BURKE		8	8
CABOT		35	35
CALAIS		23	23

CAMBRIDGE	1	15	16
CANAAN		2	2
CASTLETON		38	38
CHARLESTON	2	12	14
CHARLOTTE	4	61	65
CHELSEA	5	30	35
CHESTER		13	13
CHITTENDEN		16	16
CLARENDON		26	26
COLCHESTER		9	9
CONCORD	2	13	15
CORINTH	3	23	26
CORNWALL	1	37	38
COVENTRY		3	3
CRAFTSBURY		21	21
DANBY	1	27	28
DANVILLE	6	41	47
DERBY		3	3
DORSET	3	27	30
DOVER		7	7
DUMMERSTON	3	14	17
DUXBURY		5	5
E MONTPELIER	2	33	35
EDEN		8	8
ELMORE		10	10
ENOSBURG		14	14
ESSEX		4	4
FAIR HAVEN	1	10	11
FAIRFAX		15	15
FAIRFIELD		27	27
FAIRLEE	1	10	11
FAYSTON		2	2
FERDINAND	1	2	3
FERRISBURG	1	47	48
FLETCHER		8	8
FRANKLIN		5	5
GEORGIA		12	12
GLOVER	1	16	17
GOSHEN		1	1

GRAFTON	1	12	13
GRANBY	1	3	4
GRAND ISLE	1	22	23
GRANVILLE		1	1
GREENSBORO		13	13
GROTON	5	20	25
GUILDHALL	4	7	11
GUILFORD	8	22	30
HALIFAX	2	6	8
HANCOCK		2	2
HARDWICK		24	24
HARTFORD	3	8	11
HARTLAND	5	33	38
HIGHGATE		1	1
HINESBURG		37	37
HOLLAND		3	3
HUBBARDTON	1	14	15
HUNTINGTON		20	20
HYDE PARK		13	13
IRA		11	11
IRASBURG		15	15
JAMAICA		5	5
JAY		1	1
JERICO		14	14
JOHNSON		18	18
KIRBY		18	18
LANDGROVE		2	2
LEICESTER		13	13
LEMINGTON	2	2	4
LINCOLN	1	10	11
LONDONDERRY		2	2
LOWELL		3	3
LUDLOW		4	4
LUNENBURG	16	14	30
LYNDON	2	29	31
MAIDSTONE	3	4	7
MANCHESTER		8	8
MARLBORO	2	7	9
MARSHFIELD		19	19

MENDON		2	2
MIDDLEBURY		34	34
MIDDLESEX		9	9
MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS	1	28	29
MILTON		30	30
MONKTON		40	40
MONTGOMERY		15	15
MONTPELIER	1	4	5
MORETOWN		12	12
MORGAN		7	7
MORRISTOWN		23	23
MT HOLLY		6	6
MT TABOR	2	4	6
N HERO		4	4
NEW HAVEN	5	55	60
NEWBURY	28	66	94
NEWFANE	2	12	14
NEWPORT		6	6
NORTHFIELD	2	28	30
NORWICH	10	20	30
ORANGE	1	20	21
ORWELL	1	33	34
PANTON	1	12	13
PAWLET	11	45	56
PEACHAM	5	36	41
PERU		1	1
PITTSFIELD		6	6
PITTSFORD		36	36
PLAINFIELD		26	26
PLYMOUTH	1	10	11
POMFRET	3	5	8
POULTNEY	4	34	38
POWNAL	1	20	21
PROCTOR		7	7
PUTNEY		9	9
RANDOLPH	8	46	54
READING	1	1	2
RICHFORD		8	8
RICHMOND	1	18	19

RIPTON		7	7
ROCHESTER	6	22	28
ROCKINGHAM	5	22	27
ROXBURY	1	7	8
ROYALTON	1	19	20
RUPERT	9	25	34
RUTLAND TOWN		7	7
RYEGATE	16	45	61
S HERO		16	16
SALISBURY		18	18
SANDGATE	3	14	17
SEARSBURG		1	1
SHAFTSBURY	2	26	28
SHARON	1	16	17
SHEFFIELD		7	7
SHELBURNE		31	31
SHELDON		11	11
SHERBURNE	1		1
SHOREHAM	3	37	40
SHREWSBURY	1	17	18
SPRINGFIELD	5	22	27
ST ALBANS		5	5
ST JOHNSBURY	2	26	28
STAMFORD		2	2
STANNARD		6	6
STARKSBORO		16	16
STOCKBRIDGE		4	4
STOWE		28	28
STRAFFORD	8	16	24
SUDBURY	3	13	16
SUNDERLAND	1	4	5
SUTTON	6	19	25
SWANTON		3	3
THETFORD	2	16	18
TINMOUTH	1	31	32
TOPSHAM	1	26	27
TOWNSHEND	1	16	17
TROY		8	8
TUNBRIDGE	4	37	41

UNDERHILL		13	13
UNKNOWN	2	5	7
VERGENNES		2	2
VERNON	2	12	14
VERSHIRE	5	15	20
VICTORY		1	1
W FAIRLEE		13	13
W HAVEN	2	16	18
W RUTLAND	1	11	12
W WINDSOR	5	10	15
WAITSFIELD		10	10
WALDEN	2	14	16
WALLINGFORD		19	19
WALTHAM		10	10
WARDSBORO	1	5	6
WARREN		7	7
WASHINGTON	1	12	13
WATERBURY		21	21
WATERFORD	6	39	45
WATERVILLE	1		1
WEATHERSFIELD	7	21	28
WELLS	5	23	28
WESTFIELD		5	5
WESTFORD		13	13
WESTMINSTER		9	9
WESTMORE		2	2
WESTON		1	1
WEYBRIDGE	1	15	16
WHEELOCK		2	2
WHITING		10	10
WHITINGHAM		1	1
WILLIAMSTOWN	2	63	65
WILLISTON		32	32
WILMINGTON	1	12	13
WINDHAM		2	2
WINDSOR	2	8	10
WOLCOTT		19	19
WOODBURY		2	2
WOODFORD		8	8

WOODSTOCK	1	6	7
WORCESTER		7	7
Totals	356	3569	3925

SEX and AGE OF HARVEST (Fall 2004)

<u>SEX</u>	<u>ADULT</u>	<u>IMMATURE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
FEMALE	399	131	530
MALE	188	449	637
UNKNOWN		1	1
TOTAL	587	581	1168

HARVEST by WMU (Fall 2004)

<u>WMU</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
D2	2
E	5
F1	132
F2	88
G	39
H1	22
H2	123
I	20
J1	184
J2	121
K1	29
K2	134
L	16
M1	13
M2	33
N	66
O1	32
O2	58
P	23
Q	27
XX	1
TOTAL	1168

HARVEST by TOWN (Fall 2004)

<u>TOWNKILL</u>	<u>BOW</u>	<u>SHOTGUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
ADDISON		24	24
ANDOVER		3	3
ARLINGTON	1	2	3
ATHENS		2	2
BALTIMORE	2	1	3
BARNARD	1	3	4
BARNET	4	16	20
BARRE	2	3	5
BENNINGTON		6	6
BENSON	4	3	7
BERLIN	2	14	16
BETHEL	3	16	19
BRADFORD	2	11	13
BRAINTREE	1	15	16
BRANDON	1	10	11
BRATTLEBORO	1	2	3
BRIDGEWATER	1		1
BRIDPORT		7	7
BRISTOL		11	11
BROOKFIELD	1	17	18
CABOT	3	15	18
CALAIS	1		1
CAMBRIDGE	3	3	6
CASTLETON		6	6
CAVENDISH		3	3
CHARLOTTE	3	18	21
CHELSEA	3	7	10
CHESTER	1	6	7
CHITTENDEN		1	1
CLARENDON	1	16	17
CONCORD		3	3
CORINTH		3	3

CORNWALL		10	10
DANBY	1	7	8
DANVILLE	1	6	7
DORSET	1	3	4
DOVER	2	2	4
DUMMERSTON		5	5
DUXBURY	1	2	3
E MONTPELIER	5		5
FAIR HAVEN		7	7
FAIRLEE	1	11	12
FAYSTON		1	1
FERRISBURG	1	15	16
GRAFTON	1	14	15
GROTON	5	6	11
GUILFORD		3	3
HALIFAX		6	6
HARDWICK	1		1
HARTFORD	3	6	9
HARTLAND	4	12	16
HINESBURG		8	8
HUBBARDTON		3	3
IRA		6	6
JAMAICA		6	6
JERICO		2	2
JOHNSON	1	2	3
LEICESTER		4	4
LONDONDERRY	1	3	4
LUDLOW		2	2
LUNENBURG		2	2
MANCHESTER		2	2
MARLBORO		2	2
MARSHFIELD	2	2	4
MENDON		1	1
MIDDLEBURY		7	7
MIDDLESEX	2		2
MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS		11	11
MONKTON		10	10

MONTPELIER		1	1
MORETOWN	3	9	12
MORRISTOWN	3	5	8
NEW HAVEN	1	17	18
NEWBURY	4	29	33
NORTHFIELD	2	10	12
NORWICH		3	3
ORANGE	4	4	8
ORWELL	1	24	25
PANTON		2	2
PAWLET		24	24
PEACHAM	2	14	16
PITTSFIELD	1		1
PITTSFORD		21	21
PLAINFIELD	1		1
POMFRET		3	3
POULTNEY		6	6
POWNAI	1	4	5
PROCTOR		8	8
PUTNEY		3	3
RANDOLPH	3	20	23
READSBORO		1	1
RICHMOND	3	7	10
ROCHESTER		7	7
ROCKINGHAM	3	7	10
ROXBURY	1		1
ROYALTON		3	3
RUPERT	1	16	17
RUTLAND TOWN		2	2
RYEGATE	6	23	29
SALISBURY	1	9	10
SANDGATE		6	6
SHAFTSBURY	2	8	10
SHARON		3	3
SHELBURNE	5	12	17
SHERBURNE		1	1
SHOREHAM	1	7	8

SHREWSBURY	1	2	3
SPRINGFIELD	6	7	13
ST JOHNSBURY		1	1
STAMFORD		1	1
STARKSBORO	1	3	4
STOCKBRIDGE		5	5
STOWE	4	6	10
STRAFFORD	1	7	8
STRATTON		1	1
SUDBURY		6	6
SUTTON		2	2
THETFORD		12	12
TINMOUTH		10	10
TOPSHAM		6	6
TOWNSHEND	1	7	8
TUNBRIDGE	4	7	11
UNDERHILL	1	1	2
UNKNOWN		1	1
VERGENNES		1	1
VERNON		4	4
VERSHIRE	1	4	5
W FAIRLEE	1	4	5
W HAVEN	1	5	6
W RUTLAND		10	10
W WINDSOR		4	4
WAITSFIELD		8	8
WALLINGFORD		13	13
WARREN		1	1
WASHINGTON		5	5
WATERBURY		3	3
WATERFORD	5	16	21
WEATHERSFIELD	2	10	12
WELLS		7	7
WESTMINSTER	1	4	5
WESTON		1	1
WEYBRIDGE		9	9
WHITING		5	5

WHITINGHAM	1	7	8
WILLIAMSTOWN	5	24	29
WILLISTON		6	6
WILMINGTON	1	6	7
WINDHAM		2	2
WINDSOR	1		1
WINHALL	1	2	3
WOODSTOCK	3	2	5
TOTAL	165	1003	1168