

2023 SPRING TURKEY



APPLICATION DEADLINE

Resident/Nonresident Prairie Turkey.....	Feb. 15
Resident Custer State Park Turkey	Feb. 15
Resident/Nonresident Archery Turkey	No Deadline
Resident/Nonresident Black Hills Turkey	No Deadline

LANDOWNER PERMISSION REQUIRED

Permission is required to hunt private land in South Dakota. Every year Game, Fish and Parks receives comments from hunters who drew a license but couldn't obtain permission to hunt private land once the season opened. Do not apply for a license until you receive permission to hunt. You may not be able to obtain it during the season.

APPLY ONLINE: gfp.sd.gov

Click the "Licenses" link on the GFP homepage, then "Purchase License." From there, the system walks you through step by step. If you do not have an account, you will be required to create one. Begin by selecting a season and your first-choice hunting unit. Please note that a credit or debit card number is required to finish the transaction. Upon completion and submission of your application, you are placed directly into the drawing for the unit you selected. Preference points are automatically included if you possess preference points from previous years.

NOTE: All applications must be submitted online.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Residency

To apply for a resident license, a person must:

- Have a domicile (person's established, fixed and permanent home to which the person, whenever absent, has the present intention of returning) within South Dakota for at least 90 consecutive days immediately preceding the date of application for, purchasing, or attempting to purchase any hunting, fishing, or trapping license/permit; and
- Make no claim of residency in any other state or foreign country for any purpose; and
- Claim no resident hunting, fishing, or trapping privileges in any other state or foreign country; and
- Prior to applying for any license, transfer to SD the person's driver's license and motor vehicle registrations.

EXCEPTION: The following persons are eligible for resident licenses:

- Any person who previously had a domicile in SD who is absent due to business of the United States or SD, is serving in the armed forces of the US, or is the spouse of an active duty military person;
- Any person who previously had a domicile in this state who is absent due to the person's regular attendance at a post-high school institution as a full time student or in a medical or dental residency program;
- Any person in the active military of the US or that person's spouse who is continuously stationed in SD;
- Any person who is a patient in any war veterans' hospital within SD;
- Any person who is an employee of the veterans' administration or any veterans' hospital in SD;
- Any person residing on restricted military reservations in SD;
- Any person attending regularly a post-high school institution in SD as a full-time student for 30 days or more immediately preceding the application;
- Any foreign exchange student over 16 years of age attending a public or private high school who has resided in the state for 30 days or more preceding the application;
- Any foreign exchange student who is between the ages of 12 and 16, has completed GFP's hunter safety course and has been issued a certificate of competency upon completion of instruction, and has resided in SD for 30 days or more preceding application for a license;
- Any person who is a minor dependent of a resident of SD.

Termination of Residency

A person (*other than a person who fits into one of the previous EXCEPTIONS*) is deemed to have terminated their South Dakota resident hunting, fishing, and trapping status if the person does any of the following:

- Applies for, purchases, or accepts a resident hunting, fishing, or trapping license issued by another state or foreign country;
- Registers to vote in another state or foreign country;
- Accepts a driver's license issued by another state or foreign country;
- Moves to any other state or foreign country and makes it their domicile or makes any claim of residency for any purpose in the other state or foreign country.

However, a person who has lawfully acquired a resident hunting, fishing, or trapping license and who leaves the state after acquiring the license to take up residency elsewhere may continue to exercise all the privileges granted by the license until the license expires if the person's respective privileges are not revoked or suspended.

Social Security Number

The last four digits of your Social Security Number are required. The Social Security Number information is required from all U.S. residents before this application will be processed [SDCL 25-7A-56.2]. The information is required to be in compliance with state law on collection of delinquent child support payments. This information will be kept confidential.

South Dakota law prohibits the issuance or renewal of any hunting or fishing license if an individual owes \$1,000 or more in past due child support unless the individual enters into a repayment agreement with the Dept. of Social Services for payment of the delinquent child support [SDCL 25-7A-56; 25-7A-1(28)]. There is a requirement to enter into a repayment agreement with the Dept. of Social Services even if the individual is presently making child support payments, or if child support is being withheld from wages or income. To enter into the required repayment agreement, individuals must contact the Dept. of Social Services, Division of Child Support, 700 Governor's Drive - Kneip Building, Pierre SD 57501, or call 605-773-6456.

Age Eligibility

- Residents and nonresidents must be 12 years old to hunt.
- Residents under age 16 must successfully complete a HuntSAFE course.
- Nonresidents under age 16 must include the certificate number from their hunter safety card, or a current or previous hunting license issued to them from any state.
- Residents and nonresidents who have not completed the HuntSAFE course at the time of application must leave that information blank during the application process. If successfully drawn, their license will be withheld until their HuntSAFE card number once the course has been successfully completed, is entered in their online profile.
- Information on the “Mentored Hunt” program is found in the Mentor Hunting information sheet.

Fees

Online payment for applications must be made with a valid credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover). Your credit card will be charged only if you are successful in the drawing. Nonpayment in the form of a cancelled/invalid credit card will result in your license being withheld and the blocking of any future license purchases until the unpaid fee, along with any penalties, is paid in full.

Habitat Stamp

A Habitat Stamp is required for anyone 18 years of age or older who applies for or purchases a hunting or fishing license (\$10 for Residents and \$25 for Nonresidents). Only one Habitat Stamp is required per calendar year.

Application Rules

- You may submit only one application per season for the first drawing and receive no more than one license. See “Application Deadlines” for rules allowing additional licenses.
- Licenses may not be transferred to another person.

Group Applications

- Applications must have matching first and second choices.
- No more than six applicants may be in the same group.
- Applicants with preference points should be aware that when applying with applicants with fewer preference points, the lowest preference point balance is then represented within the entire group.
- Residents and nonresidents may apply together in the same group. Either all in the group will be successfully drawn together or all will be unsuccessful.

Residents will be charged the resident fee and nonresidents will be charged the nonresident fee. This is valid only in seasons and units where both resident and nonresident licenses are available for a specific drawing. It should be noted that in most instances, residents who apply with nonresidents will have a diminished chance of drawing a first-choice license.

Submitting Applications

Applications must be submitted online. In the case where an online application is not possible, applicants can visit a GFP office or call 605.223.7660. Mailed paper applications will NOT be accepted.

Successful Applicants

Successful applicants for limited licenses are selected at random by computer lottery.

Unsuccessful Applicants

Unsuccessful applicants will not be charged a license fee unless an application fee or a Habitat Stamp purchase is required.

Resident Landowner Preference

- One-half of the resident permits for Prairie Spring Turkey are set aside for the first choice in the first drawing for residents who qualify for landowner preference.
- Nonresident landowners do not qualify for this preference.
- To be eligible for landowner preference, a resident landowner or tenant must operate at least 160 acres of private land within the unit applied for as first choice and complete the online declaration, including the legal description of the qualifying property.
- “Operate” means: to lease or hold fee title to farm or ranch real property and be directly involved in the management decisions made for agricultural purposes on the farm or ranch.
- “Agricultural purposes” includes the producing, raising, growing, or harvesting of food or fiber upon agricultural land, including dairy products, livestock, crops, timber, and grasslands.
- Land leased solely for hunting, fishing or trapping does not qualify for landowner preference.
- A landowner or tenant, but not both, may claim landowner preference for the same qualifying property.
- Immediate family members are eligible, and include the applicant’s spouse and the applicant’s children residing with the applicant.
- Employment on a farm or ranch alone does not qualify an individual for landowner preference.
- Shareholders of a corporation, members of a limited liability company holding a membership interest in the company, partners in a partnership, and beneficiaries of a trust entitled to the current income and assets held in trust; all organized and in good standing under the laws of South Dakota are eligible for landowner preference if:
 1. The entity holds title to 160 acres or more of private land located within the hunting unit applied for;
 2. The shareholder, member, partner, or trust beneficiary applying for landowner preference is a resident; and
 3. The shareholder, member, partner, or trust beneficiary has responsibility for making the day-to-day management decisions for agricultural purposes on the farm or ranch.

Preference Points

A fee (\$5 resident, \$10 nonresident) is required for all preference points. Purchasing a preference point is optional. Unsuccessful first choice applicants will not receive a preference point unless checked during the online application process.

Seasons with a limited number of licenses have a preference point system for applicants who are unsuccessful on their first choice in the first drawing. One preference point may be purchased each year the applicant is unsuccessful. Preference point use is required on all first choices in the first drawing only. Preference points cannot be transferred to another person and are only valid for the first drawing in the applicant’s first unit-type choice unless the applicant selects to use preference points on a second choice or in subsequent drawing. If you have any questions about your preference, please contact GFP’s Information Office.

SEASON APPLICATION INFORMATION

When applying online, an applicant must select the season, unit, and license type. These designations apply to both resident and nonresident licenses.

The license fee includes a \$6 surcharge established by the South Dakota Legislature. Surcharge monies are divided between programs for wildlife damage management and public hunting land access, programs that benefit both landowners and hunters.

State licenses are valid on private, deeded lands within the exterior boundaries of an Indian reservation. Persons applying to hunt on tribal lands should contact the appropriate tribal office concerning tribal lands and licenses.

Legal Firearms/Muzzleloaders for Spring Wild Turkey

A person may not use a rimfire, centerfire, or muzzleloading rifle during any spring turkey season. No self-loading or auto-loading firearm that holds more than six cartridges may be used to hunt, pursue, shoot at, shoot, kill, or wound a wild turkey. No firearm that is capable of being operated as a full automatic may be used to hunt, pursue, shoot at, shoot, kill, or wound a wild turkey. No buckshot may be used, and no single ball or rifled slug weighing less than one-half ounce may be used in hunting wild turkey. Shotguns using ammunition which is factory-rated to produce at least 700 foot-pounds of energy at the muzzle and handguns using ammunition which is factory-rated to produce at least 500 foot-pounds of energy at the muzzle may be used for hunting wild turkey. Muzzleloading handguns that discharge a projectile of at least .50 caliber and muzzleloading shotguns may also be used for hunting wild turkey. Any person who holds a license to take a wild turkey during the firearm season may take the wild turkey by using a crossbow in lieu of a firearm. Crossbow means a device for propelling a bolt by means of traverse limbs mounted on a stock and a string. The crossbow may be drawn, held, and released by a mechanical device and shall have at least 125 pounds pull and have a working mechanical safety.

Legal Archery Equipment for Wild Turkey

Any person who holds a license to take a wild turkey during the archery season may not use or possess any of the following: (1) Explosive, poisonous, hydraulic, or pneumatic points; (2) Crossbows and draw-lock devices that hold the bow at partial or full draw except for persons with qualifying disabilities; (3) Electronic devices mounted to the bow that aid in the taking of game. However, cameras, video cameras, cell phones used exclusively for photographic purposes, lighted sight pins, and illuminated arrow nocks may be used; (4) Electronic arrow or electronic string releases; (5) Telescopic sights; (6) An arrow without a broadhead (fixed or mechanical) that has at least two metal cutting edges when hunting a wild turkey. However, an arrow tipped with any point may be possessed when used for practice; or (7) A bow that measures less than 30 pounds pull when hunting wild turkey.

SPRING PRAIRIE TURKEY SEASON

Season Dates: Apr. 8-May 31, 2023, for all units except Davison/Hanson (08A and B) and Lincoln (44A and B).
State parks and recreation areas are closed to hunting after Apr. 30, unless specified otherwise in unit descriptions below.

License Eligibility: Residents are eligible to apply for all units. Nonresidents are eligible to apply for all units west of the Missouri River, and leftover licenses east of the Missouri River remaining after the second drawing.

Individual License Quota: Applicants may have one license from the first or second drawing, up to five prairie turkey licenses in the third drawing, and an unlimited number after the third drawing as described under the application deadline section below.

APPLICATION DEADLINES: _____

First Deadline - Applications must be submitted online by 8 a.m. CDT Wednesday, Feb. 15. Results available online by Wednesday, Feb. 22. One application may be submitted per applicant.

Second Deadline - Applications must be submitted online by 8 a.m. CDT Wednesday, Mar. 8. Results available online by Monday, Mar. 13. Those who do not already have a license may submit one application.

Third Deadline - After the second deadline drawing, licenses remaining are pooled and available to both residents and nonresidents. Applications must be submitted online by 8 a.m. CDT Thursday, Mar. 23. Results available online by Monday, Mar. 27. Residents and nonresidents may apply for additional licenses (five maximum for this draw, including any license received in the first or second draw).

Leftover Licenses - An individual may have an unlimited number of licenses for this season in any unit or any combination of units. They will be issued first-come, first-served by online application only. This process will begin on Monday, Mar. 27, at 2 p.m. CDT.

SEASON/UNIT/TYPE CHOICES: _____

Prairie units bordering the Cheyenne and White Rivers also include an adjacent area one mile wide on the opposite side of the rivers. EXCEPT the portion of Fall River County within unit PST-27A

PST-01A-32: MINNEHAHA CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.
80 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-02A-32: PENNINGTON CO. east of the Cheyenne River.
Valid for one male wild turkey.
250 resident licenses (\$25); 20 nonresident (\$100)

PST-06A-32: BROOKINGS CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.
40 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-07A-32: YANKTON CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.
300 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-08A-32: DAVISON and HANSON counties. Season dates April 8-30. Valid for one male wild turkey.
100 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-08B-32: Same area as 08A. Season dates May 1-31. Valid for one male wild turkey.
100 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-10A-32: AURORA and DOUGLAS counties. Valid for one male wild turkey.
50 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

SPRING PRAIRIE TURKEY SEASON (cont.)

PST-11A-32: BENNETT CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

30 resident licenses (\$25); 3 nonresident (\$100)

PST-12A-32: BON HOMME CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

300 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-13A-32: BRULE and BUFFALO counties. Valid for one male wild turkey.

175 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-15A-32: BUTTE and LAWRENCE counties north of I-90. Valid for one male wild turkey.

350 resident licenses (\$25); 28 nonresident (\$100)

PST-16A-32: CAMPBELL and WALWORTH counties. Valid for one male wild turkey.

20 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-17A-32: CHARLES MIX CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

350 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-19A-32: CLAY CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

120 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-20A-32: CORSON CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

75 resident licenses (\$25); 6 nonresident (\$100)

PST-21A-32: CUSTER CO. east of SD 79 and PENNINGTON CO. south of I-90, west of the Cheyenne River and east of SD Hwy 79. Valid for one male wild turkey.

150 resident licenses (\$25); 12 nonresident (\$100)

PST-22A-32: DAY and CODINGTON counties. Valid for one male wild turkey.

125 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-23A-32: DEUEL CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

150 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-24A-32: DEWEY and ZIEBACH counties. Valid for one male wild turkey.

150 resident licenses (\$25); 12 nonresident (\$100)

PST-27A-32: FALL RIVER CO. south and east of a line beginning at the junction of the Wyoming border and US Hwy 18, east on US 18 to the Cheyenne River near Edgemont, east on the Cheyenne River to US Hwy 18/385, then north on US 18/385 to SD Hwy 79 at Maverick Junction, north on SD 79 to the Custer County line. Valid for one male wild turkey.

100 resident licenses (\$25); 8 nonresident (\$100)

PST-29A-32: GRANT CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

300 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-30A-32: GREGORY CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

700 resident licenses (\$25); 56 nonresident (\$100)

PST-31A-35: HAAKON CO. Valid for two male wild turkeys.

250 resident licenses (\$35); 20 nonresident (\$125)

PST-32A-32: HAMLIN and CLARK counties. Valid for one male wild turkey.

20 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-35A-32: HARDING CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

100 resident licenses (\$25); 8 nonresident (\$100)

PST-36A-32: HUGHES CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

30 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-37A-32: HUTCHINSON CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

70 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-39A-32: JACKSON CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

200 resident licenses (\$25); 16 nonresident (\$100)

PST-40A-32: JERAULD, BEADLE and HAND counties. Valid for one male wild turkey.

20 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-41A-32: JONES CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

75 resident licenses (\$25); 6 nonresident (\$100)

PST-44A-32: LINCOLN CO., including Newton Hills State Park and Lake Alvin Lakeside Use Area. Season dates Apr. 8-30. Valid for one male wild turkey.

50 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-44B-32: LINCOLN CO., excluding Newton Hills State Park and Lake Alvin Lakeside Use Area. Season dates May 1-31. Valid for one male wild turkey.

50 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-45A-32: LYMAN CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

150 resident licenses (\$25); 12 nonresident licenses (\$100)

PST-48A-32: MARSHALL and ROBERTS counties, including Sica Hollow State Park, open Apr 8-May 31. Valid for one male wild turkey.

450 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-49A-35: Those portions of MEADE CO. not included in Units BST-BH1 and PST-53A, and that portion of PENNINGTON CO. north of Interstate 90 and west of the Cheyenne River. Valid for two male wild turkeys.

350 resident licenses (\$35); 28 nonresident (\$125)

PST-50A-32: MELLETTE CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

350 resident licenses (\$25); 28 nonresident (\$100)

PST-52A-32: MOODY CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

60 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-53A-35: PERKINS CO, including Shadephill Recreation Area, and the portion of MEADE CO north of U.S. Highway 212. Valid for two male wild turkeys.

100 resident licenses (\$35); 8 nonresident (\$125)

PST-56A-32: SANBORN CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

10 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-58A-32: STANLEY CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

40 resident licenses (\$25); 4 nonresident (\$100)

PST-58B-32: STANLEY CO. Limited to persons who use a wheelchair for mobility. Licenses are valid for the area including U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Land and the GFP campground below Oahe Dam, south and east of Power House Road. Successful applicants will be allowed to take part in a special hunt April. 8-30. Valid for one male wild turkey.

2 resident licenses (\$25); 1 nonresident (\$100)

PST-60A-32: TRIPP CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

400 resident licenses (\$25); 32 nonresident licenses (\$100)

PST-61A-32: TURNER CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

30 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-62A-32: UNION CO., including Union Grove State Park. Valid for one male wild turkey.

120 resident licenses (\$25); 0 nonresident

PST-65A-32: OGLALA LAKOTA CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

40 resident licenses (\$25); 4 nonresident (\$100)

PST-67A-32: TODD CO. Valid for one male wild turkey.

75 resident licenses (\$25); 6 nonresident (\$100)

Preference points: People can purchase preference points from September 15 – December 15, 2023, through GFP's online licensing system at license.gooutdoorsouthdakota.com.

SPRING ARCHERY TURKEY SEASON

Season Dates: Statewide (see exceptions below) April 8-May 31, 2023

**Archery hunters cannot start hunting in the Black Hills unit until April 22.*

License Eligibility: Residents and nonresidents are eligible. Licenses are available by application online or the GFP License Office in Fort Pierre through the end of the season. There is no application deadline, but please allow a minimum of 7-10 days for delivery of your license.

Individual License Quota: Applicants may have one Archery Turkey License.

ACCESS PERMITS: A free Resident-Only Access Permit is required to hunt archery turkey in Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve in Union County and Good Earth State Park near Sioux Falls.

- Apply for these free Access Permits online only.
- Five resident archery licensees will be selected through a random drawing to hunt at Good Earth State Park and 20 resident archery licensees to hunt at Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve. Access permits valid from April 8-30.
- The deadline to apply for the Access Permits is March 1, 2023, at 8 a.m. CDT. For more information, visit: gfp.sd.gov/turkey

SEASON/UNIT/TYPE CHOICE:

AST-ST1-32: Statewide, except Custer State Park and south of Highway 34 in Lake County. Special rules apply to all other state park, recreation and lakeside use areas. Valid for one male wild turkey.

- Unlimited resident licenses (\$25);
- Unlimited nonresident licenses (\$100)

**Archery hunters cannot start hunting in the Black Hills unit until April 22.*

SPRING BLACK HILLS TURKEY SEASON

Significant changes for 2023: Unit BH2 is closed. Applicants may only purchase one BH1 license.

Season Dates: April 22-May 31, 2023

License Eligibility: Residents and nonresidents are eligible to apply. Licenses are available by application online or the GFP License Office in Fort Pierre through the end of the season. There is no application deadline, but please allow a minimum of 7-10 days for delivery of your license.

Individual License Quota: Residents and nonresidents may purchase one BH1 license.

SEASON/UNIT/TYPE CHOICE:

BST-BH1-32: That portion of Lawrence County south of Interstate 90; that portion of Meade County west and south of Interstate 90; those portions of Pennington and Custer Counties west of State Highway 79; that portion of Fall River County north and west of a line beginning at the junction of the South Dakota-Wyoming border and U.S. Highway 18, then east along U.S. Highway 18 to its junction with the Cheyenne River, then east along the Cheyenne River to its junction with State Highway 79; then north along State Highway 79 to its junction with the Custer County line. Closed to hunting: Custer State Park, Wind Cave National Monument, Mount Rushmore National Memorial, and Jewel Cave National Monument. Valid for one male wild turkey.

- Unlimited resident licenses (\$25);
- Unlimited nonresident licenses (\$100)

SPRING CUSTER STATE PARK TURKEY SEASON

Season Dates: April 22 - May 21, 2023

License Eligibility: South Dakota residents only.

Individual License Quota: Applicants may have one CSP turkey license.

APPLICATION DEADLINES:

First Deadline - Applications must be submitted online by 8 a.m. CDT Wednesday, Feb. 15. Results available online by Friday, Feb. 24. One application may be submitted per applicant. If there are licenses remaining after the first deadline drawing, they will be issued first-come, first-served by online application only.

SEASON/UNIT/TYPE CHOICE:

CST-CU1-32: CUSTER STATE PARK. Restricted to shotguns using shotshells, muzzleloading shotguns, crossbows and archery equipment only.

- Valid for one male wild turkey.
- 100 resident licenses (\$25)

Preference points: People can purchase preference points from September 15 – December 15, 2023, through GFP's online licensing system at license.gooutdoorsouthdakota.com.

KNOW YOUR WILD TURKEY



Considered among the grandest of game birds, the American wild turkey has many characteristics that distinguish it from other fowl. The unmistakable snood, caruncles, head coloring and beard truly set it apart.

BACK AND BODY FEATHERS

Provide insulation and shed water. When upraised they refract sunlight to add to a strutting gobblers grandeur.

TAIL COVERTS

Tip colors vary with subspecies.

BREAST FEATHERS

Black tips give a gobble a coal-black appearance.

PRIMARY WING FEATHERS

Marked by distinctive white bars (less barring on the Osceola). Gobblers rub off wing tips with extended strutting.

SPUR

Most spurs are black, some have red or blond tints. They appear as a short button on a jake; just less than a 1-inch straight spur on a 2-year-old; and as a sharp, curved, 1-inch or longer spur on a 3-year-old gobble.

TAIL FEATHERS OR RECTRICES

There are usually 18 present, but a gobble can lose a few when fighting. Tan- to brown-tipped on Eastern, Rio Grande and Osceola subspecies; Ivory-tipped on Merriam's and Gould's.

EAR OPENING

No flap to funnel sounds, but a gobble hears extremely well.

HEAD CROWN

Predominantly white during the spring, sometimes with a reddish tint.

EYE

Set into the side of the head for monocular vision; a slight turn of the head allows a 360-degree field of vision.

SNOOD

Long and prominent on a mature gobble, but no known function.

MAJOR CARUNCLES

Large and fleshy. Engorged with blood during the spring.

BEARD

Three to 4 inches on a jake; 7 to 9 inches on a 2-year-old; and 10 inches or longer on a 3-year-old gobble. Thickness varies. Some gobblers have multiple beards.

FOOT

Three long toes. The middle toe measures 2½ to 3½ inches on a gobble.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HENS & GOBBLERS

IT'S EASY TO DISTINGUISH A GOBBLER FROM A HEN BY DIFFERENCES IN THEIR SIZE, COLOR, HEADS AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS.

GOBBLER

MINOR CARUNCLES

VARIOUS REDS, WHITES & BLUES

DARK PLUMAGE APPEARS TO BE BLACK



WHITE CROWN

SNOOD

The gobble is most easily recognized by the long beard growing from his chest and the pronounced spurs, sometimes as long as 2 inches, found on the back of his legs. A gobble appears larger, darker, shinier and more colorful than a hen. His head can alternately appear red, white and blue. He often "puffs up" and struts during spring to attract hens for breeding.

MAJOR CARUNCLES

DEWLAP

HEN

FEATHERED HEAD

GRAY-BLUE COLOR

GRAY-BROWN PLUMAGE

SNOOD

The hen's overall look is for concealment and protection. She is smaller and more drab than the colorful gobble, so she can sit on her nest well camouflaged. Likewise, her head has more feathers to add to her camouflaged appearance.

DEWLAP

CARUNCLES



The American wild turkey now thrives in 49 states, Canada and Mexico thanks to the efforts of state wildlife agencies, the NWTF and its supporters!

SPRING TURKEY UNITS, other than archery, which is statewide

Please refer to the text in the unit descriptions for the official boundary lines.

