

Developed in partnership with



Ontario



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This publication is part of Ontario's Hunter Education Manual

# Ontario **WILD TURKEY** Hunting

## Mandatory Hunter Reporting

Hunters are excellent observers of wildlife. Hunter reports collect the observations across the province. This pool of data helps wildlife managers plan for the future.

All hunters that purchase or are issued a tag to hunt wild turkey must complete a hunter report even if they did not hunt or harvest an animal. This includes apprentice hunters who have purchased their own licences and tags.

Hunters will be required to submit a single report for each season within 14 days of the close of the turkey season for the province (i.e. June 14<sup>th</sup> for the spring season and November 14<sup>th</sup> for the fall season, where applicable).

**REPORT ONLINE:** [Ontario.ca/hunterreporting](https://ontario.ca/hunterreporting)

**REPORT BY PHONE:** 1-800-288-1155

## Wild Turkey Hunting in Ontario

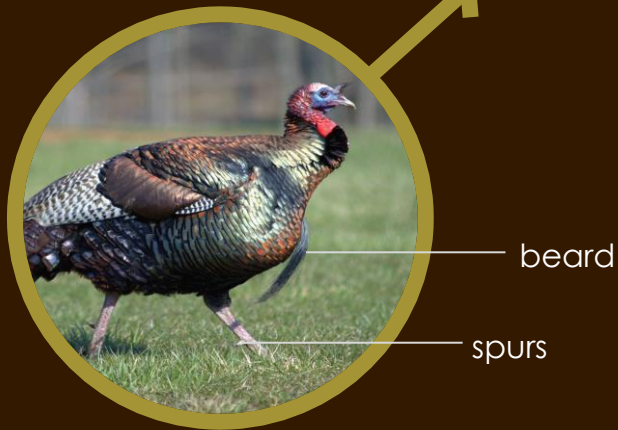
Wild turkey can be a challenging, yet rewarding, type of hunting. The information provided here has been developed to promote knowledgeable and responsible hunting of wild turkey in Ontario.

Wild turkeys disappeared from Ontario in the early 1900's due to habitat loss and unregulated harvest. In the 1980's, a restoration program began to bring wild turkeys back to Ontario. Due to the success of the program, the first regulated wild turkey hunt was held in 1987.



# IDENTIFICATION

male



female



- Adults are called "toms"; a young male is a "jake"
- Have a beard and leg spurs
- Have a red, white, blue head
- Have black-tipped breast feathers so can appear darker than females
- Strut and gobble to gain the attention of female birds

- Adults are called "hens"; a young female is a "jenny"
- Typically have no beard or spurs, however a small percentage may have these features
- Have a grey head
- Have brown-tipped breast feathers so can appear lighter than males
- Do not strut or gobble
- Smaller and less colourful than male birds

# TURKEY HUNTING REGULATIONS

## LICENCE REQUIREMENTS:

Successful completion of the Ontario Hunter Education Course

Small game licence, a wild turkey tag and proof of firearms accreditation (if hunting with a gun)

Hunters must purchase separate tags for the spring and the fall season

Apprentice hunter (12-14 years old) have the option to buy their own wild turkey tag or they may use their mentor's tag. If the apprentice hunter chooses to use their mentor's tag the apprentice only requires an outdoors card, proof of hunting accreditation and proof of firearms accreditation (if hunting with a gun).

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPRING AND FALL TURKEY HUNTING SEASONS:

### Spring

- Legal shooting time: ½ hour before sunrise to 7pm
- Harvest ONLY BEARDED BIRDS
- Harvest only one bird per day
- Harvest 2 birds maximum per spring season (one per tag)

### Fall

- Legal shooting time: ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset
- Harvest a male or a female bird
- Harvest only ONE bird per fall season

## LEGAL FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION FOR TURKEY HUNTING:

Shotguns and muzzle-loading shotguns not larger than 10 gauge or smaller than 20 gauge

Shot sizes, 4, 5, 6 or 7 (shot size 7.5 is NOT allowed)

Bows (bows/crossbow specifications as per Hunting Regulations Summary)

Rifles CANNOT be used to hunt wild turkey

## BAITING:

It is **ILLEGAL** to hunt wild turkey within 400m of any place where bait has been deposited unless the place has been free of bait for at least seven days

Bait means corn, wheat, oats, other grain, pulse, any other feed that may attract wild turkey or any imitation of such feed

Standing crops, crops stacked in accordance with normal farming practices and grain scattered as a result of normal farming operations are not considered bait

## HUNTING:

Respect private landowners and get permission to hunt for each season

No live decoys or electronic calls can be used

No party hunting (you **MUST** use your own tag)

Hunter orange is required during a gun season for deer, elk or moose

Immediately notch the tag with the day, month, and time immediately after the kill, at the site of the kill and before moving the turkey

You may attach the tag to the turkey at any time; however, you must attach the tag if you are not immediately accompanying the turkey or immediately available to produce the tag for inspection. The tag must remain on your person, or attached to the turkey (when required), until the bird is prepared for consumption.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT** [Ontario.ca/hunting](http://Ontario.ca/hunting)

# SHOT PLACEMENT

## Gun



### Head shot

Use a tight/full choke for an effective kill

Minimum 5-7 pellets in head & neck

Understand your capabilities and the effective range of your firearm

## Bow



### Heart/lung shot

Minimum draw weight 39.7 lbs (18kg)

Arrow that has a head with at least 2 sharp cutting edges

# SAFETY

- DO NOT wear RED, WHITE or BLUE (these mimic the colours of a male turkey's head)
- A decoy should NEVER be visible while being carried (could be mistaken for a real turkey)
- Always be alert for other turkey hunters
- When choosing a hunting spot, select a tree or background that is wider than your shoulders and taller than the top of your head
- Signal your presence to other hunters by yelling out in a loud, clear voice
- Make your pop-up blind visible to other hunters
- It can be unsafe to stalk a wild turkey (it might be another hunter calling or you might be mistaken for a wild turkey)
- It can be unsafe to use a gobble call (other hunters may mistake you for a wild turkey)
- Be 100% sure of your target and beyond
- A harvested turkey should be concealed or carried in a hunter orange bag

FOR MORE RESOURCES AND SAFETY INFORMATION ON WILD TURKEY HUNTING IN ONTARIO VISIT: [huntercourse.com/canada/ontario](http://huntercourse.com/canada/ontario)