

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

# **The Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission**

**Will Meet at 10:30 AM  
On Wed., November 16, 2022  
Department of Natural Resources  
Google Meet**

**Meeting Agenda:**

**Presentation of 2021 Conservationist of the Year – (Clarissa Harris and Harry Spiker)**

**Approval for the November 16, 2022, Meeting Agenda**

**Approval for Minutes from October 19, 2022, Meeting**

**Anne Arundel County Senator Sarah Elfreth**

**Wild Turkey Project Update (Bob Long)**

**Break**

**Maryland Farm Bureau Update (Colby Ferguson)**

**Natural Resources Police Update (Captain Shawn Garren)**

**Old Business:**

- **WHS Regulations Status (Paul Peditto)**
- **Hunter Education Programming (WAC Members' Discussion)**
- **Future Hunting License and Stamp Model (WAC Members' Discussion)**

**New Business:**

**Public Comment:**

**Adjourn**

***NOTE: Free Parking will be available on the Navy Stadium Parking Lot, which is the third entrance on right off of Taylor Avenue.***

**The Proposed Schedule for the 2022 meetings  
Of the Wildlife Advisory Commission is as follows:**

<b>January 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>February 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>March 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>April 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>May 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>No Meeting</b>
<b>June 15</b>	<b>In-Person Meeting at Tawes State Office Building</b>
<b>July 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>No Meeting</b>
<b>August 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>September 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>In-Person Meeting at Tawes State Office Building</b>
<b>October 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>November 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>December 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>No Meeting</b>

***PLEASE NOTE THAT MEETING DATES ARE HELD  
ON THE THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH***

**Note:** Unless notified otherwise, all meetings will be held via Google Meet. When meeting in person, the meetings will be held in the C-1 Conference Room Department of Natural Resources - Tawes State Office Building beginning at 10:30 AM. Available parking is located at the Navy Stadium Parking Lot.

***NOTE: Free Parking will be available on the Navy Stadium Parking Lot, which is the third entrance on right off of Taylor Avenue.***

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 16, 2022

Chairman Carl Wagner called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. This meeting was held via teleconference. Chairman Wagner asked for a roll call of individuals on the “call.” Unfortunately, because of the anonymity of Google Meet callers, it was impossible to determine the identity of every participant.

Director Peditto introduced Mr. Robert Horner. Mr. Horner’s son attended the Wildlife Advisory Commission Meeting because his son is completing his Communications Merit Badge for Boy Scouts. Chair Wagner welcomed them to the meeting.

**Presentation of 2021 Conservationist of the Year – Don and Lisa Calhoun – Presented by Western Region Wildlife Response Biologist Clarissa Harris**

- Clarissa Harris expressed that Mr. and Mrs. Calhoun have been partners with the Department of Natural Resources for several years. The Calhouns are conservationists and hunters.
- Ms. Harris summarized the Don and Lisa Calhoun nomination letters that were compiled [ATTACHMENT A] and presented in support of the award to Mr. and Mrs. Calhoun.
- Mr. Calhoun mentioned how much they have enjoyed mentoring and helping young hunters.
- Chair Wagner thanked the Calhouns for all their hard work and dedication and congratulated them on this important recognition. Chair Wagner also encouraged the Calhouns to continue hunting.

**Approval for November 16, 2022, Meeting Agenda**

- Motion to Approve the Agenda:
  1. Commissioner Parks moved to accept the November 16, 2022, Wildlife Advisory Commission Meeting Agenda.
  2. Commissioner Showalter seconded.
  3. All in favor. Motion passed.

**Approval for Minutes from October 19, 2022, Meeting**

- Motion:
  1. Vice Chair Schroyer moved to accept the October 19, 2022, Meeting Minutes.
  2. Commissioner Cole seconded.
  3. All in favor. Motion passed.

**Wild Turkey Project Update – Bob Long, Upland Game Bird, Turkey, and Grouse Project Leader**  
Project Leader Long gave an update on the Wild Turkey Program via a PowerPoint Presentation.  
[ATTACHMENT B]

- Maryland underwent a period of turkey restoration, nearly a 30-year process where staff trapped turkeys and relocated birds to unoccupied locations in the State.
- Staff relocated 1,129 turkeys during the entire project. As a result, the turkeys were able to reproduce, and the statewide population grew to an estimated 30,000 wild turkeys in the late 90s.
- During the early 2000s, the turkey population stabilized.
- Maryland had abundant turkeys in the western and eastern regions. However, there were portions of the State where densities were low.
- Recently, there has been a welcoming change in the urban and suburban turkey population in the Central Region, where there has been an exceptional amount of growth in the last decade. The Eastern Shore still has plenty of turkeys, but the turkeys have declined some on the Eastern Shore.
- The Turkey Fall Season has declined in harvest, but it is not because of a population decline; it is because hunter participation in the Turkey Fall Season has decreased.
- Maryland has around 12,000 turkey hunters. Turkey hunting is still very popular in Maryland, and it remains one of the most popular game species.

- Biologists, hunters, stakeholder groups, and others are concerned about the decrease in the number of poult produced by hens based on the summer wild turkey observation surveys, so this survey effort will help inform the agency going forward.
- Q&A Section
  1. Vice Chair Schroyer asked when staff are reviewing harvest numbers and does staff factor in poaching.
    - a. No, staff examine harvest numbers since poaching and other non-hunting factors generally remain the same throughout time – rising with increasing populations and dropping as populations subside.
  2. Commissioner Showalter asked about the tagging element of the study.
    - a. There are two components to the study - one is the hen segment of that population that will be getting the radio transmitters and GPS radios, and a second segment where gobblers (adult males) will be banded. The gobbler banding will be distributed across the region, trying to get a broad cross-section to better understand what is occurring on the landscape.
  3. Chair Wagner asked if staff are looking at any changes or recommendations to season dates or bag limits.
    - a. No, hopefully, this research will inform some things. For example, Maryland has fairly conservative turkey seasons and bag limits compared to some southern states that noticed significant population declines.

#### **Anne Arundel County Senator Sarah Elfreth Addressed the Commission**

- Chair Wagner introduced Senator Sarah Elfreth to the Commission. Senator Elfreth is a representative for Anne Arundel County. Senator Elfreth attended the Commission meeting at the request of the Chair. The Commission is hoping to better connect with lawmakers and to become better informed about the process and role they might play in the future.
- Senator Elfreth thanked the Commission for the opportunity to spend a few minutes with them. Also, Senator Elfreth expressed her gratitude to Chair Wagner for his work with Ducks Unlimited and other conservation-driven organizations that are actively engaged in many important wildlife and hunting issues.
- Senator Elfreth mentioned some questions that should be thought through: how we expand the hunting community and conservation community; how do we further our goals and accomplishments of preserving land; and how do we move Maryland into the 21<sup>st</sup> century when it comes to hunting and conservation?
- Senator Elfreth recognized that hunting license fees have not increased since 1989 and suggested it is long past the time when this should be addressed. Doing so will bring Maryland into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and provide Maryland with the resources to continue delivering on the mission of the wildlife agency.
- Senator Elfreth indicated that there is a need to also think through how we utilize the opportunity to match potential federal funds, particularly during this period of fiscal growth on the federal side of the ledger.
- Chair Wagner reiterated that the Wildlife Advisory Commission represents a wide variety of stakeholders, and in many cases, it will take a broad coalition of local senators and delegates to support a bill, and few bills pass with only a handful of advocates and supporters. Chair Wagner advised the Commission that it will also require the WAC members to discuss with their stakeholders the need to engage in the legislative process.
- Q&A Section
  1. Commissioner Keithley asked about the impact of legislation during the first legislative session after an election.
    - a. Senator Elfreth responded that she is confident that we can get legislation done, especially if the hard work is done pre-session. Senator Elfreth admitted that there might be some shake-up within the committee structures and that information will be known around mid-December; if necessary, a strategy readjustment will be done.

- b. Chair Wagner announced that this discussion would continue at another session. Chair Wagner thanked Senator Elfreth for taking a few minutes to address the Commission, especially on very short notice.
- c. Senator Elfreth thanked the Commission for their time and expressed that she looks forward to working with the Commission in the future.

**Maryland Farm Bureau Update** – No Report. The Farm Bureau representative has not been in attendance for several months.

**Natural Resources Police Update** – Captain Garren gave a presentation.

- Captain Garren pointed out that NRP officers are transitioning to the peak of hunting season and oystering season.
- Captain Garren outlined that from January 1<sup>st</sup> to November 16<sup>th</sup>, natural resources numbers are 15,619 warnings and 6,179 citations: for a total of 21,798.
- There were 6% wildlife violations, 35% boating, 15% public lands, 30% fisheries, and 15% traffic violations.

### **Old Business**

- WHS Regulations Status – Director Peditto
  1. Director Peditto informed the Commission on the status of the Deer Cooperator Permit (DCP) Regulations. DCPs are the night-shooting sharpshooter provisions for farmers, landowners, and other operations. The Department approved these changes at the Maryland Farm Bureau's request and to expand the window to shoot rifles at night - from two months to three months.
- Questions and Answers Section on Pending WHS Regulations:
  1. Chair Wagner asked if it is fair to determine that these regulations will not get pushed through.
    - a. Director Peditto could not answer that question. However, these regulations are behind. Staff are getting requests for these permits to begin shooting in January.
    - b. The regulations were supposed to be done in July or August.
    - c. These regulations have at least three more months of process remaining because they must be posted to the Maryland Register for a minimum of 30 days. Then staff must review any public comments that came through the Maryland Register.
  2. Chair Wagner asked if there is anything the Commission needs to do, revisit and re-address through the legislative process.
    - a. Director Peditto expressed that he was hoping that the Maryland Farm Bureau was in attendance at this meeting because DCP regulations were borne of the Maryland Farm Bureau's request.
    - b. The Commission rejected the recommendation to move DCP regulations; however, staff were informed to move it forward with the three months extension.
    - c. Chair Wagner suggested that it may be up to the Maryland Farm Bureau to help move these regulations.
- Future Hunting License and Stamp Model Discussion
  1. There was a lengthy conversation about various options for increasing revenues for wildlife management in Maryland. Additional dialogue was focused on the fact that the federal matching funds remain at all-time highs and Maryland risks leaving 'money on the table' without a new source of stateside revenues.
    - a. Commissioner Showalter emphasized that the opportunities Maryland's sportspeople received for the current fee are tremendous. Commissioner Showalter acknowledged people's economic climate and understood that any increase would challenge some. Still, it's essential that the Commission carefully explain what that fee increase will do.
    - b. Commissioner Showalter advised that the Commission should connect the fee increase to Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) opportunities in educating the public about how

the DNR, Wildlife and Heritage Service (WHS) is funded. Commissioner Showalter raised that the vast majority of Maryland residents do not hunt, and Maryland hunters pay for almost all of the wildlife management provided in the State. It is more important that the Commission generate additional revenue, and he understood the goal to expand hunting opportunities for sportspeople. However, Commissioner Showalter expressed that he wanted to make sure that the Commission maximized the opportunity to generate additional funds to leverage that federal opportunity.

- c. Commissioner Showalter drew attention to possibly getting authorization for some wildlife conservation raffle similar to Tennessee. Commissioner Showalter agreed to share the link with the Commission after the meeting. Tennessee formed a non-profit organization with a statewide outdoor recreation raffle. All the proceeds go to their 501C3; it funnels back into the state for wildlife conservation and habitat management. Furthermore, Tennessee has a combination of licenses for firearms, hunts, boats, and ATVs; Tennessee has broad support from retailers in the business community. Therefore, the Commission has an opportunity to create an additional mechanism for funding that would be a manageable lift. Still, it would need some statutory authorization and potentially a bill.
- d. Vice Chair Schroyer concurred with Commissioner Showalter's suggestions. However, Vice-Chair Schroyer reiterated that WHS needs the fee increase.
- e. Commissioner Jenkins discussed creating a sika stamp for non-residents with hunters, and the outcome was favorable as long as the money would go into sika deer research.
- f. Commissioner Keithley asked Director Peditto if the Commission can get a fee increase, and it generates the proposed million dollars; what does that generate in federal funds?
- g. Chair Wagner responded that he processed some numbers, which is more than a million once if we include the stamps and licenses. WHS is looking at an eight million dollar increase in the budget if the Commission can get a 20 to 25 percent increase in licenses. However, the non-resident license should be more.
- h. Commissioner Showalter said he did not think 22% is an unreasonable increase for non-resident hunting licenses.
- i. Chair Wagner agreed to organize an informal meeting.

- Hunter Education Programming

1. Commissioner Parks reported to the Commission that he received a request from a colleague that needed help locating a field day after his son completed the online course. Commissioner Parks questioned what needed to be done to rectify this situation.
2. Commissioner Rossignuolo mentioned that she had a class scheduled on October 14 that was set up to have 20 people, but only 10 people showed up for that class. Commissioner Rossignuolo added that it is not necessarily the fact that the classes are few between. Still, the majority of it is that the classes are getting filled, and then people are not showing up, which is the biggest issue facing NRP and the volunteers. Commissioner Rossignuolo suggested that the Commission focus on finding a way to resolve the no-show issue.
3. Sergeant Burton recommended the apprentice license for the son that Commissioner Parks discussed, which would allow the youth to hunt with a certified resident hunter for an entire year; during that period, the son could obtain a hunter certificate.
4. Sergeant Burton outlined the number of field days conducted as of January 1, which were 100; there were 2400 total students, with 350 empty seats.
5. Sergeant Burton pointed out that in January, he arranged to post all the hunting education classes online and open the registration up to 30 days in advance. Therefore, the public will know when times, dates, and how many seats are available within 30 days of the class, then proceed with opening the registration, so hopefully, it will be fewer no-shows.
6. Commissioner Parks reminded the Commission about the discussion related to the apprentice side, developing a mechanism that people could sign up to help certify someone instead of having a one-day field or workshop.

- a. Sergeant Burton responded that he did not think that would be possible. NRP does not allow one-on-one certification due to the possibility of liability issues.
  - b. Chair Wagner added that the Commission discussed having a youth hunt with somebody for a year under the apprentice license program and required so many hours with an adult mentor would qualify as a field day for the youth hunter.
  - c. Chair Wagner recalled the inconsistencies that Maryland accepts license courses from states that do not require field days. For example, a person could go to the Texas website, take the course, and present that certificate to purchase a Maryland hunting license. In addition, Maryland does not require a hunter certification for the three-day hunting license. The goal is to make it easier for individuals to obtain a hunting license and eliminate these inconsistencies.
7. Chair Wagner highlighted that the Commission would like no youth to have to go outside Maryland to take a course online or be denied a license because they already used the apprentice license, and now the child has no other option because the child needs to locate a field day.
    - a. Sergeant Burton replied that he was unsure how that would work with the apprentice license and the mentor. The mentor would have to become a certified instructor. Sergeant Burton could not outline how this mentor method would work.
    - b. Sergeant Burton raised that it is hard to grasp that someone cannot take a field day for two years once that person has obtained an apprentice license.
  8. Commissioner Rossignuolo emphasized the need for more instructors to help with the issue because having more instructors will result in more classes.
  9. Sergeant Burton informed the Commission that NRP is recruiting new instructors.
  10. Director Peditto reminded the Commission of the WHS R3 initiatives data showing that young professionals and college students are a 'target opportunity' for WHS. Director Peditto acknowledged that young adults have full-time jobs and have difficulty taking time off for a three-day class.
  11. Chair Wagner acknowledged it is a struggle for the Commission and staff to reconcile the fact that NRP accepts hunter safety course certificates from these online classes from other states, such as North Carolina, Arkansas, or Texas. Maryland does not know what the material is on those other sites. Maryland could design an online course similar to the apprentice license with questions specific to Maryland. Director Peditto gave the summary of New York State, which has two options: New York State has a sort of an express version which would take a person a few hours, or the learn-to-hunt version, which is more interactive that would probably take two days to complete at a person's pace.
  12. Commissioner Parks concluded that he does not think anyone is advocating getting rid of the field days; however, most states have developed an online course with an option to attend a field day. With the current model, Maryland will always need more qualified instructors to manage the demand during the window that the public wants to participate.
  13. Commissioner Alder emphasized with the view of youth is certainly a challenge on the timing, and he thinks Maryland should be more consistent with other states surrounding Maryland. Commissioner Alder drew attention to understanding the actual goal of the field days and do we want it to be a barrier to entry to be able to go out in the afield.
  14. Chair Wagner requested NRP to come up with some ideas and explore options to resolve the issue and report to the Commission. One of the biggest goals is to recruit more people and get more people outside and more access.

#### **No New Business -**

#### **Public Comment –**

- The public may contact the Members of the Commission at [wac.dnr@maryland.gov](mailto:wac.dnr@maryland.gov).
- There were no further public comments.

### Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 12:22 p.m.  
The next meeting will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, January 18, 2023, using Google Meet.

### Attendance

Members:	B. Alder, M. Cole, T.J. Jenkins, S. Keithley, J. Parks, K. Rossignuolo, J. Schroyer, R. Showalter, and C. Wagner
Absent:	
Guest:	D. Calhoun, L. Calhoun S. Boyles-Griffin, S. Elfreth, P. Horner, and R. Horner,
Staff:	S. Burton, B. Eyler, S. Forest, S. Garren, C. Harris, B. Harvey, J. Homyack, R. Karge, P. Peditto, T. Spencer, and H. Spiker





Larry Hogan, Governor  
 Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor  
 Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary  
 Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

2/15/22

Dear Wildlife Advisory Committee,

I would like to take this opportunity to nominate Don and Lisa Calhoun of Wild Wings Hunting Preserve as *Wildlife Conservationists of the Year* for 2021. Wild Wings Hunting Preserve is an upland hunting preserve featuring a variety of game birds and is located in Garrett County, Maryland. Don and Lisa also provide a 5-stand sporting clay range at their facility where shooters can practice and improve their wing shooting.

Don has been guiding upland hunting adventures for over 24 years and strongly believes in the importance of teaching sportsmanship, hunting safety and wildlife conservation to people of all ages. The Calhouns have worked cooperatively with MD DNR/WHS for many years in promoting these concepts. It began in 2014 and 2015 when WHS held Mentored Youth Pheasant Hunts across the state and Don was involved in helping to guide several hunts in Garrett County. In 2017, Don and Lisa hosted a Beyond BOW (Becoming an Outdoors Woman) Wing-Shooting workshop where the women were given individual shotgun shooting lessons prior to a pheasant hunt and a wild game lunch.

In 2019 and 2021, Don and Lisa once again welcomed the WHS in planning and conducting four mentored shooting/hunting workshops for new, youth and lapsed hunters. The participants were welcomed with open arms by Don and Lisa. They were given expert advice on shotgun shooting prior to hunting pheasants as well as individual instruction on game bird cleaning and cooking.

Don and Lisa are very warm and amiable people. They have always made people feel welcome and always encourage questions and learning. Their love for the outdoors, wildlife and conservation is infectious and is often passed along to the folks who visit and take part in shooting and hunting at their facility. In addition to their own work, Don and Lisa have also supported local organizations such as the National Wild Turkey Federation and the Ruffed Grouse Society in fundraising efforts and promotion of wildlife conservation.

These are just some of the reasons I feel they should be nominated as *Wildlife Conservationists of the Year* for 2021. Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Clarissa Harris  
 MD DNR WHS  
 Western Region Wildlife Response Mgr.

Nominee

Don & Lisa Calhoun – Wild Wings Hunting Preserve

Nominated By:

Clarissa Harris – MD DNR WHS  
 12512 Pleasant Valley Rd  
 Flintstone, MD 21530  
 Phone: 301-777-2136



Larry Hogan, Governor  
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor  
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary  
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

To: Wildlife Advisory Commission  
From: Harry Spiker  
Date: March 4, 2022  
Subj: Letter of Support – Conservationist of the Year Nomination

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Dear Wildlife Advisory Commission Members,

I would like to offer this letter in support of awarding the Wildlife & Heritage Service '2021 Conservationist of the Year' award to Don & Lisa Calhoun, owners of Wild Wings Hunting Preserve in Garrett County, Maryland. Don and Lisa have guided upland bird hunts for both new and experienced hunters in Garrett County for 30 years. In addition to guiding hunts, they have operated Wild Wings Hunting Preserve where both hunting and shotgun shooting sports opportunities have been offered to the public.

Through the years, Don & Lisa have generously volunteered their time, their knowledge, their facilities, their trained pointing dogs and other resources to several DNR-sponsored R3 events. They have never charged DNR for utilizing their facilities for our educational events and have even covered the costs of other guides and supplies so that the Department could hold successful R3 events offering a unique experience for new hunters from across the state. Often, this has meant closing their facilities down to paying customers during peak season yet Don and Lisa have always placed a higher value on helping to teach true sportsmanship and sharing their strong conservation ethic.

Beyond the R3 events hosted at their facilities by DNR, Don and Lisa have even held their own events inviting youth to come learn to shoot and hunt birds free of charge just to pay it forward and share their love of the shooting sports and hunting. I remember one year when they advertised that they would host up to 10 youth who applied. When 11 youth applied, they bought additional supplies to welcome the 11<sup>th</sup> youth so that nobody would have to be turned away.

In 2021, they once again partnered with DNR to host a two-day R3 event that included sporting clay shooting and pheasant hunting. People of all ages came from across the state to attend the event which was a huge success thanks in large part to Don and Lisa's knowledge, facility and enthusiasm for what they do. Unfortunately for us, Don and Lisa are hanging it up and closing down the RSA so they can focus on their other business ventures but those of us who have worked with them over the years will forever appreciate the difference they've made. I truly feel that Don and Lisa are deserving of this special honor.

Nominee  
Don & Lisa Calhoun – Wild Wings Hunting Preserve

Nominated By:  
Clarissa Harris – MD DNR WHS  
12512 Pleasant Valley Rd  
Flintstone, MD 21530

Letter of Support Offered By:  
Harry Spiker, MD DNR WHS  
1728 King's Run Rd.  
Oakland, MD 21550

# Wild Turkey Program Update

Bob Long

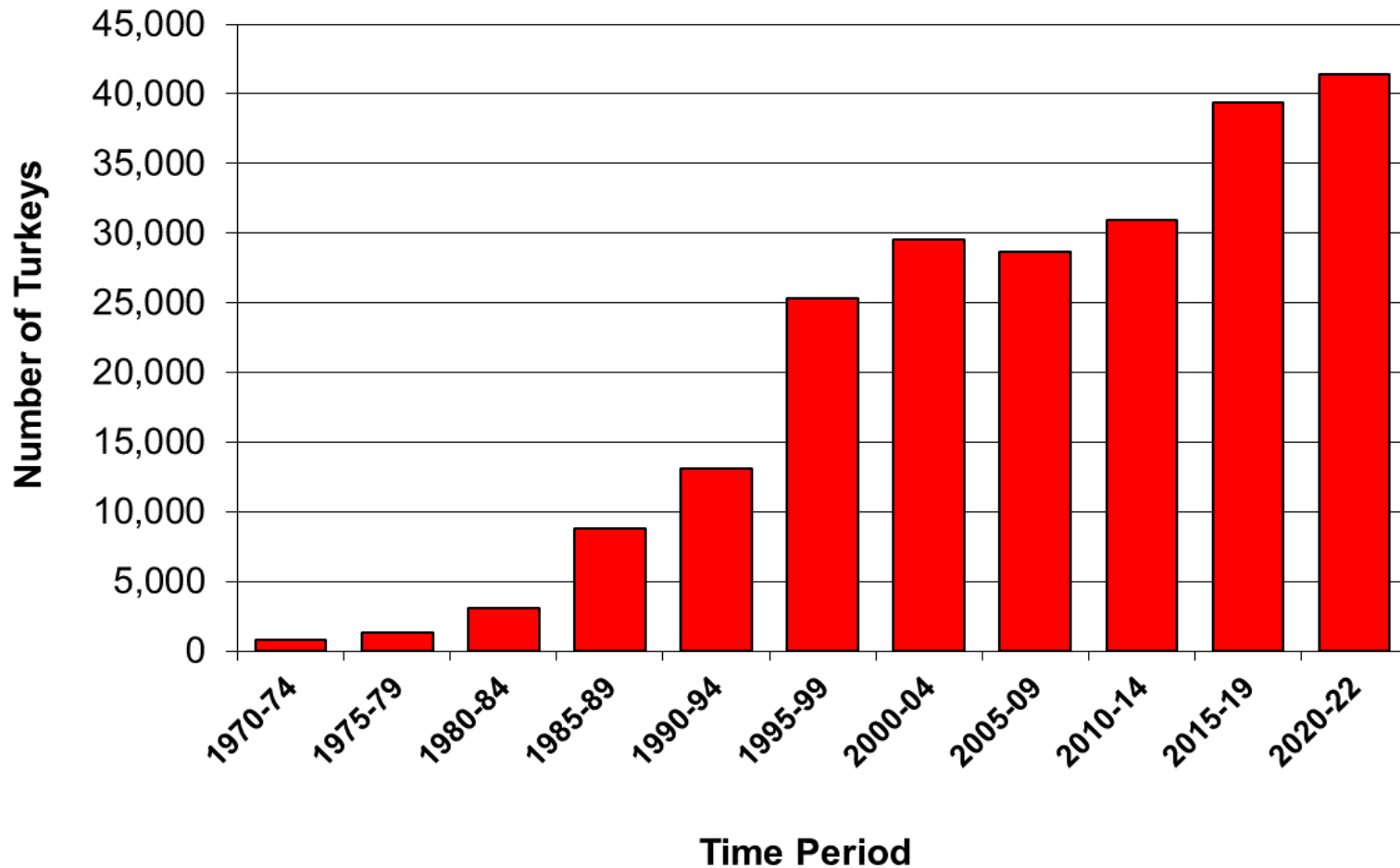
Wildlife and Heritage Service



# POPULATION STATUS



## Estimated Wild Turkey Population in Maryland



# POPULATION STATUS



## 1970 Wild Turkey Range

Less than 2,000 turkeys existed in western mountains

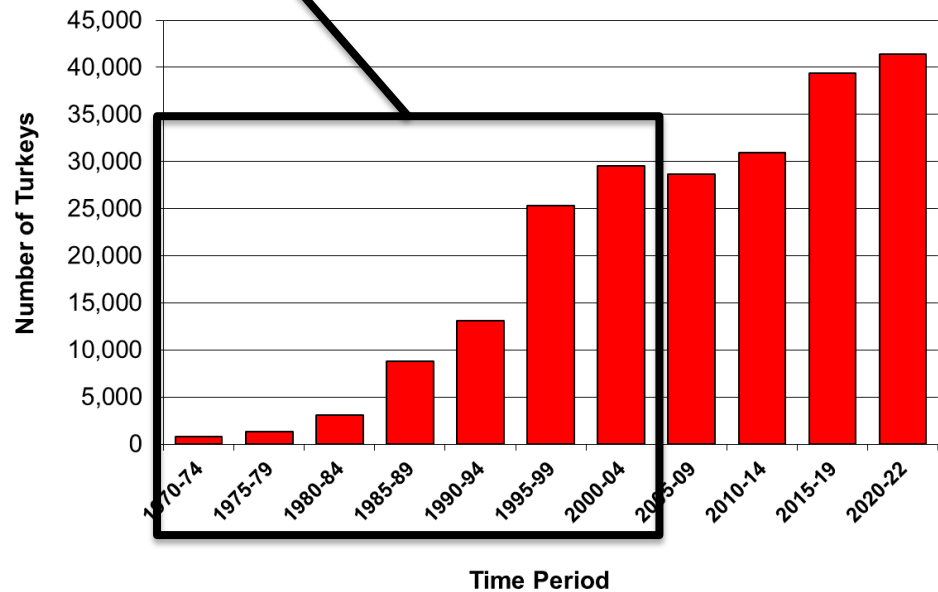
# POPULATION STATUS



Restoration phase: 1,129 wild turkeys translocated



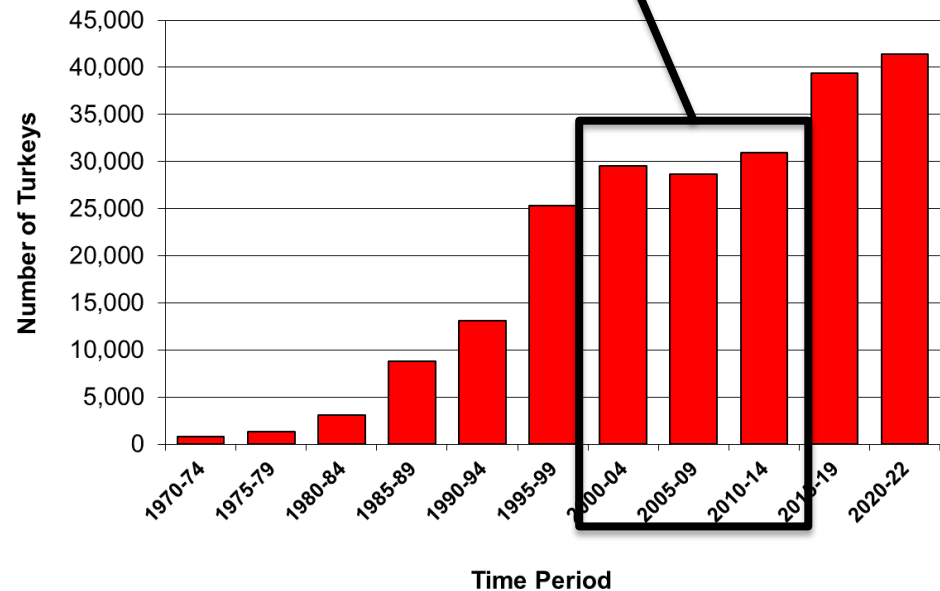
Photo credit: National Wild Turkey Federation



# POPULATION STATUS



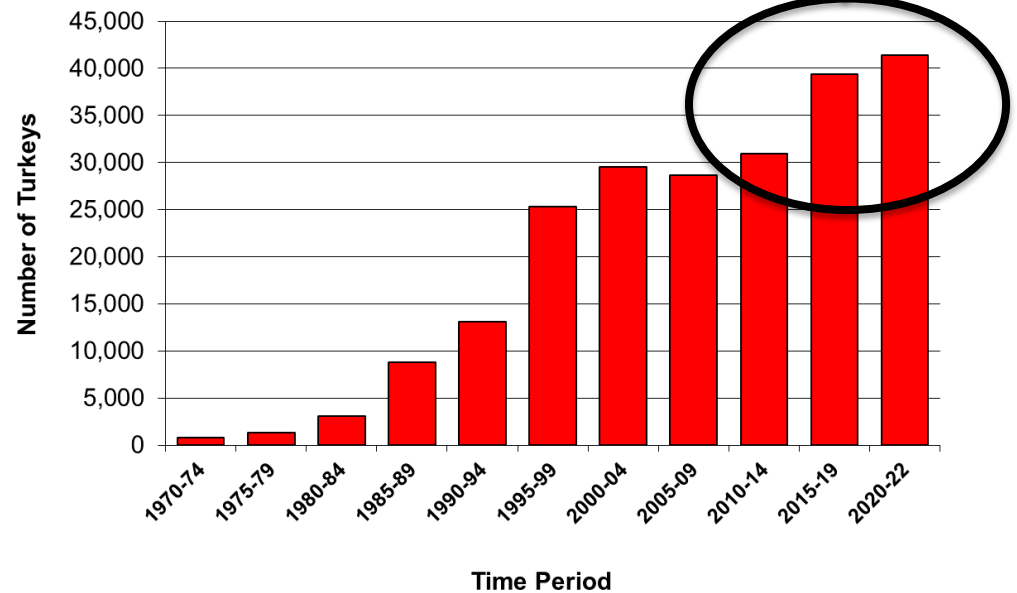
Period of stabilization: Abundant turkeys in western and eastern regions, low densities elsewhere



# POPULATION STATUS



Recent increase due to growth in “non-traditional” regions of state

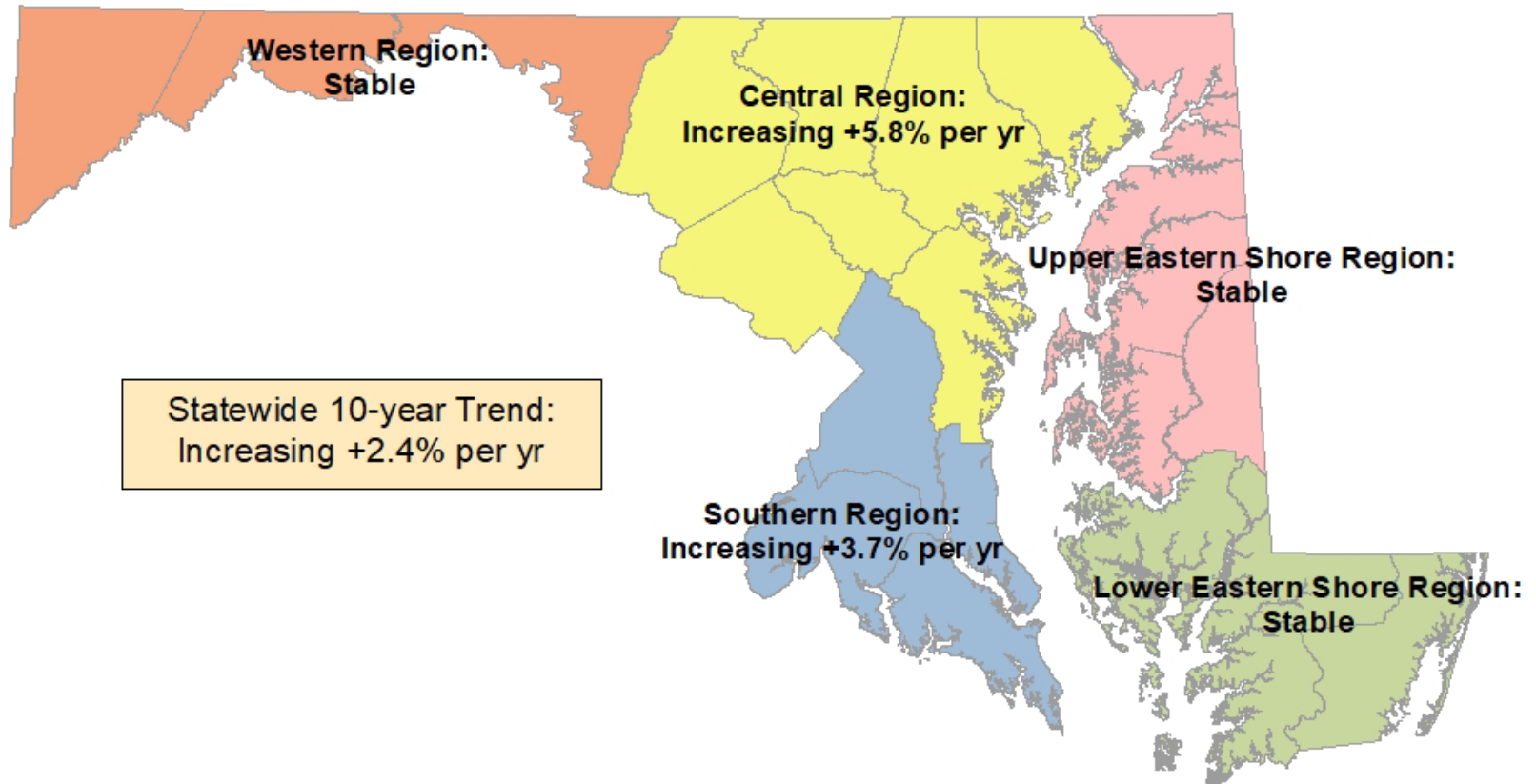




# POPULATION TRENDS



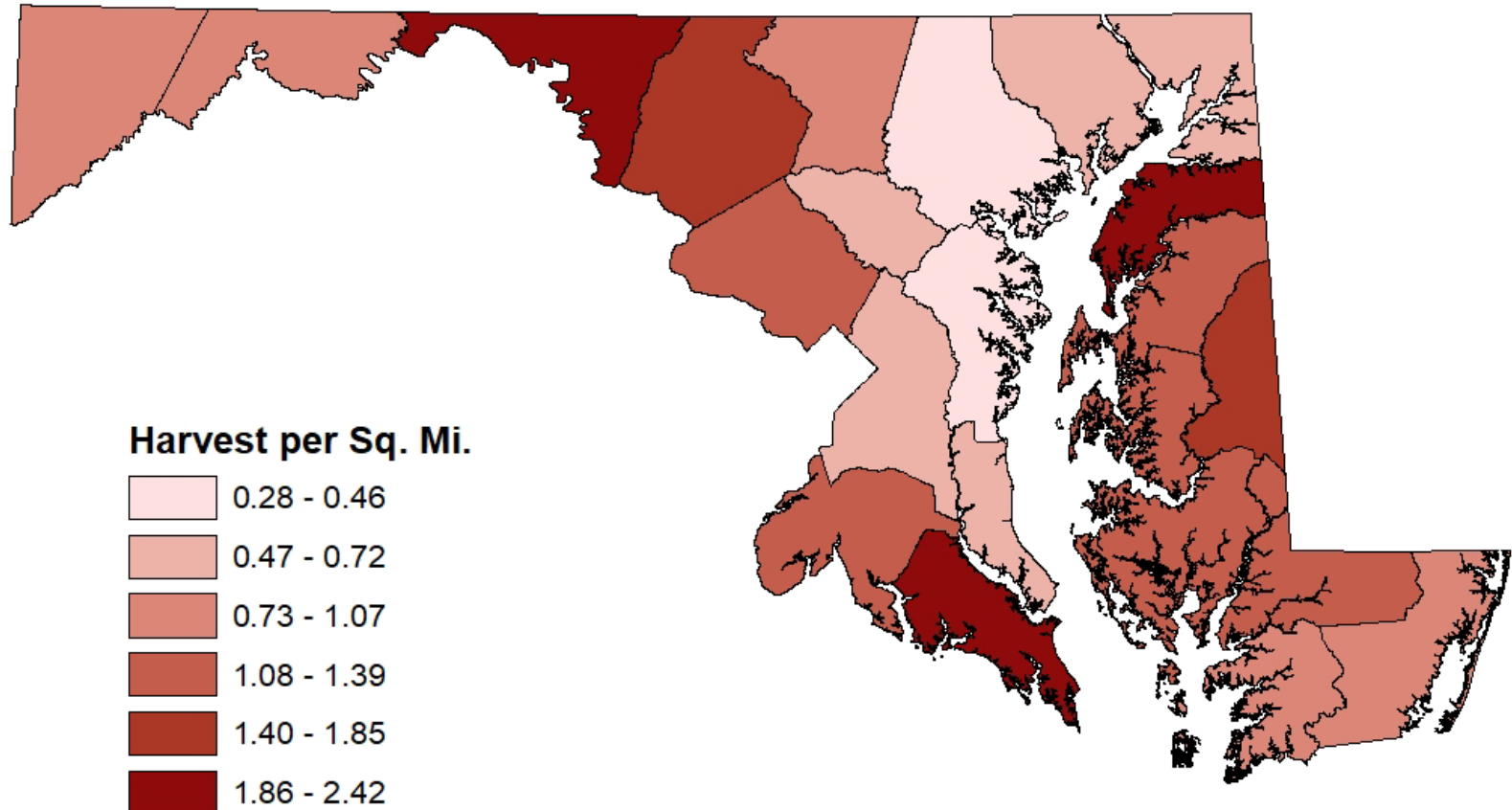
## Maryland Estimated 10-year Wild Turkey Population Trends by Region Based on Spring Turkey Harvest, 2013-2022



# ESTIMATED DENSITY



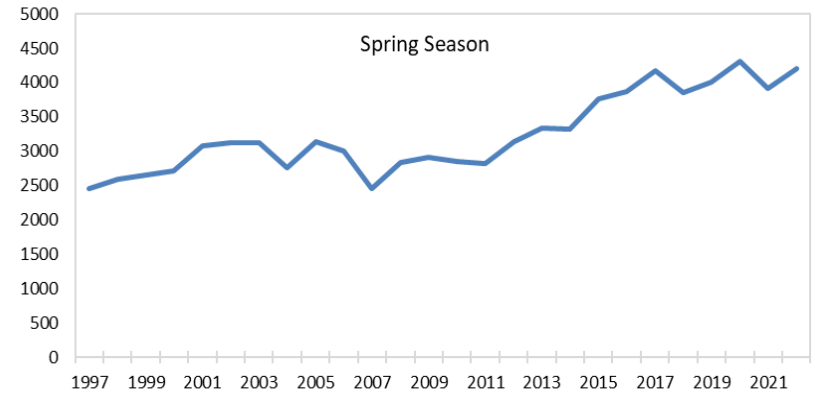
## Average Spring Turkey Harvest per Square Mile of Forest, 2020-22



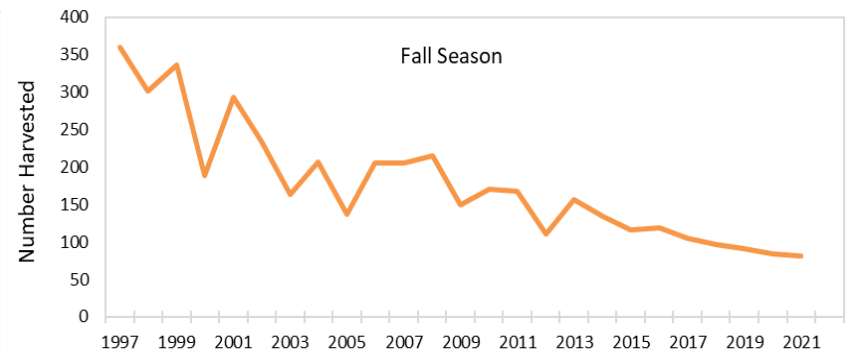
# HUNTER HARVEST



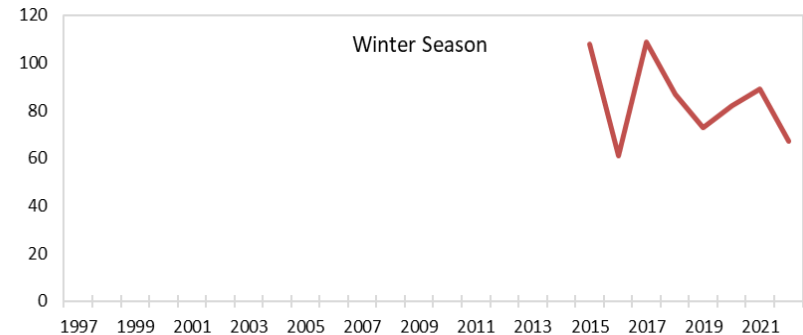
**SPRING  
SEASON**



**FALL  
SEASON**



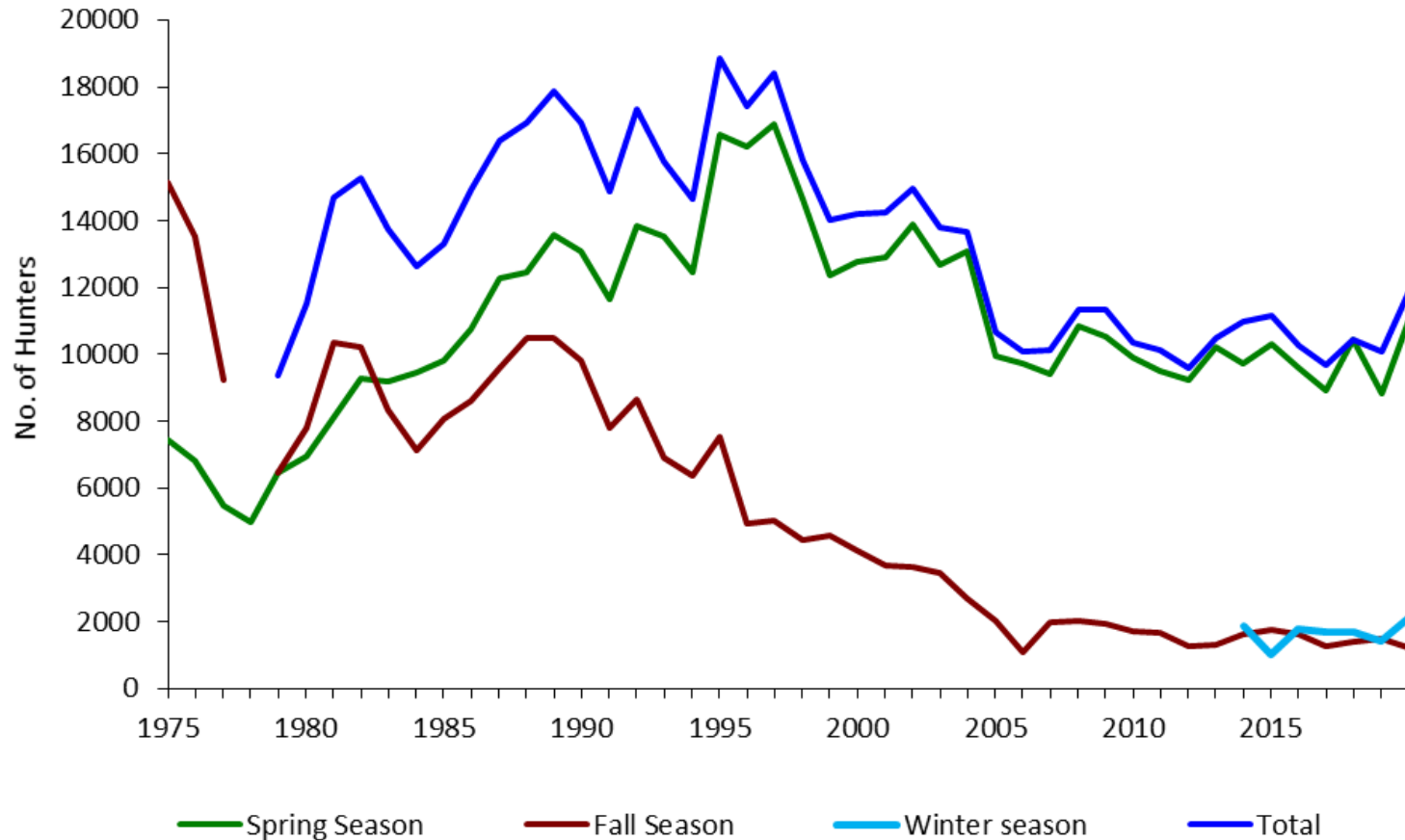
**WINTER  
SEASON**



# HUNTER PARTICIPATION



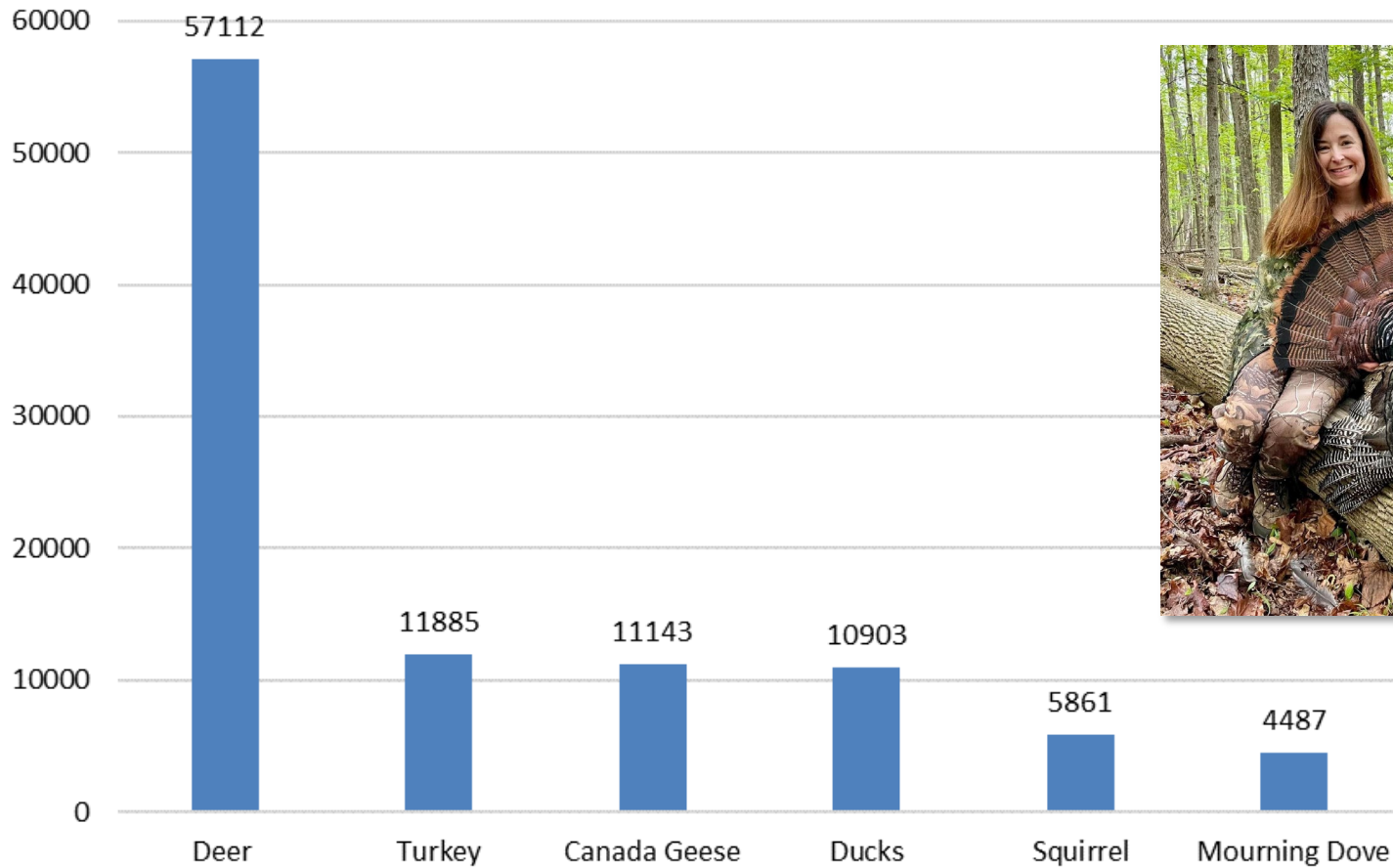
- Number of turkey hunters has declined from peak in mid-90's



# HUNTER PARTICIPATION



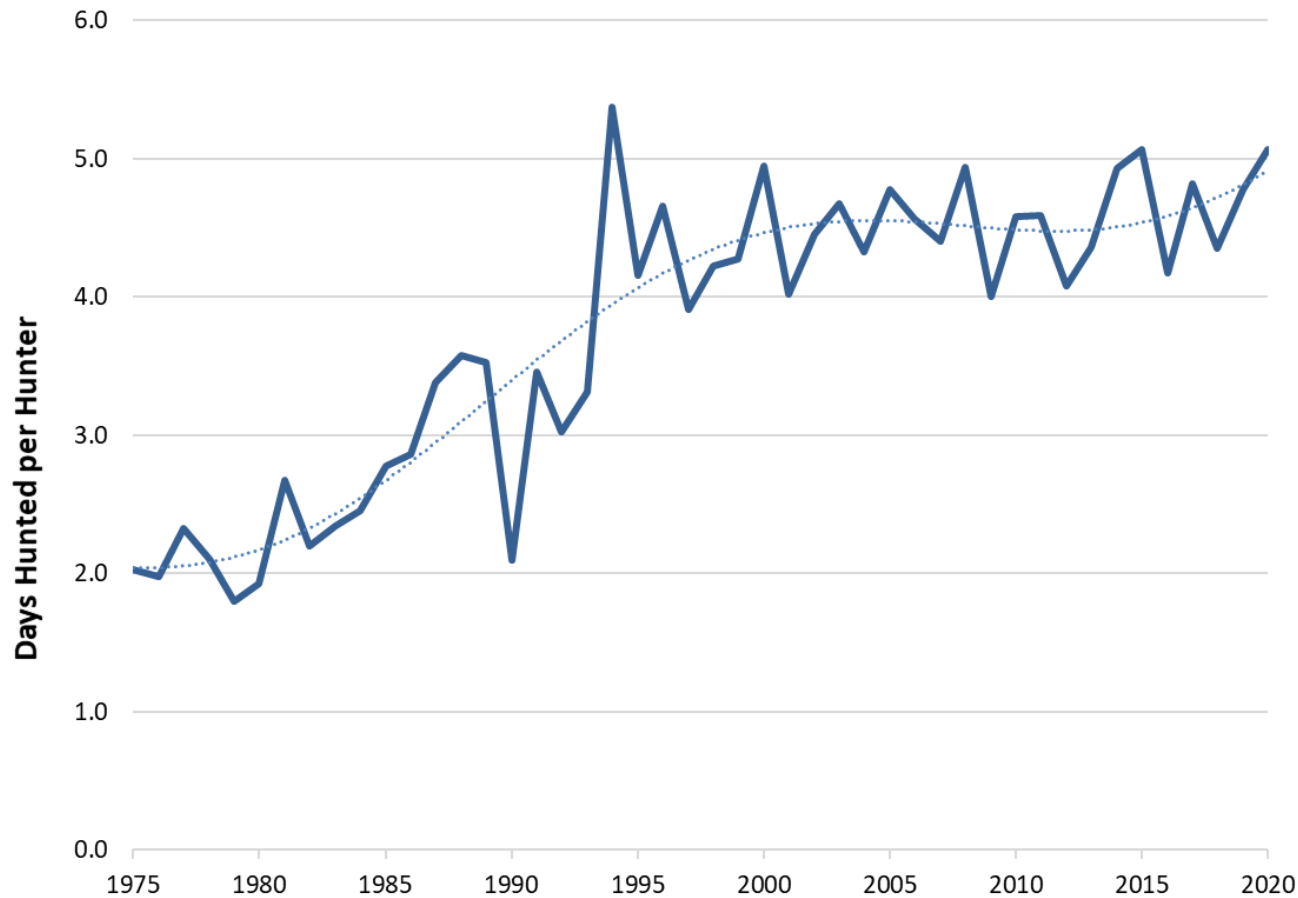
Number of Hunters, 2020-21 Hunter Mail Survey



# HUNTER PARTICIPATION



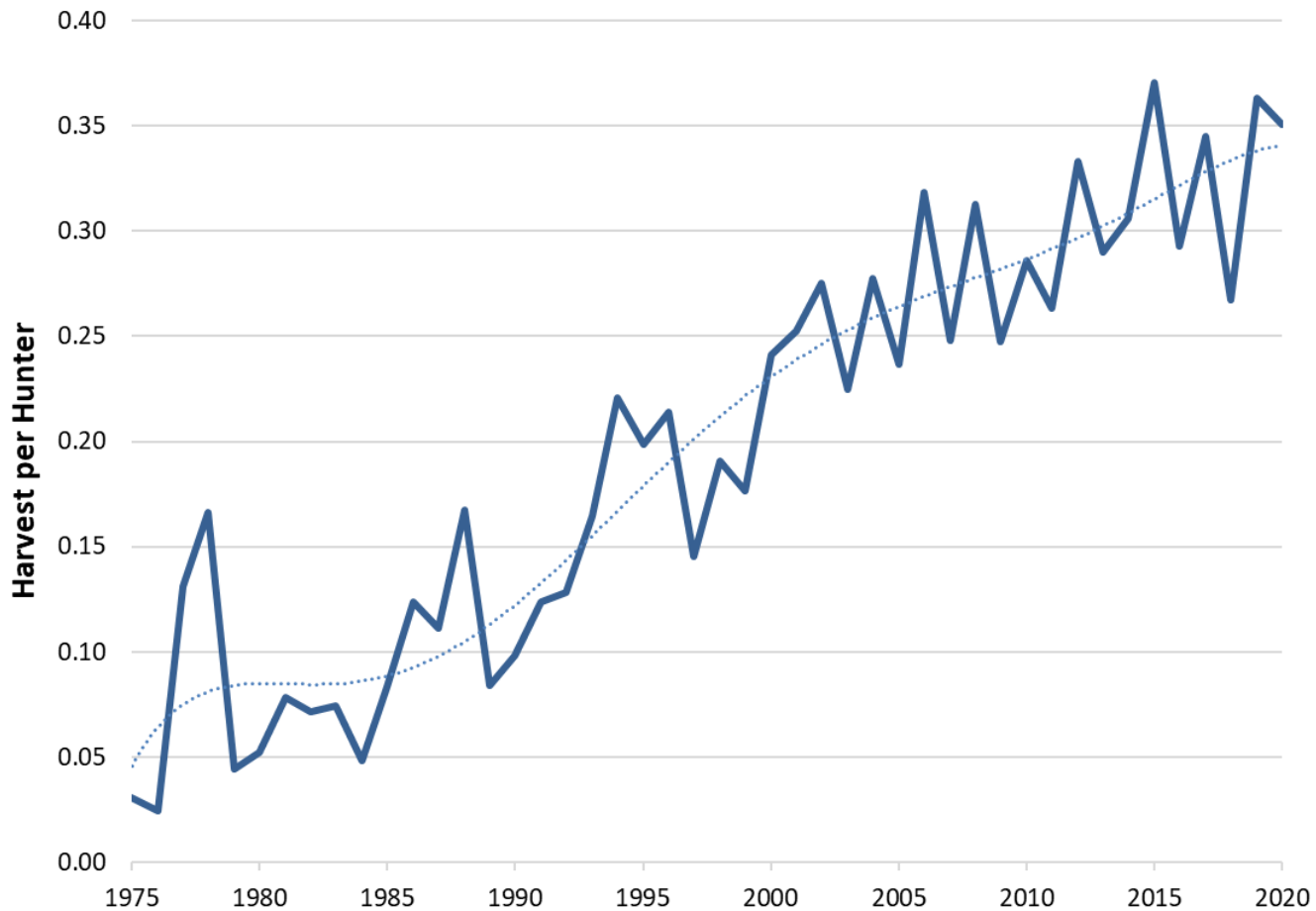
- Amount of time spent turkey hunting per hunter is increasing



# HUNTER SUCCESS



- Hunter success is increasing



# WILD TURKEY

- Restoration of the wild turkey is a true CONSERVATION SUCCESS STORY!



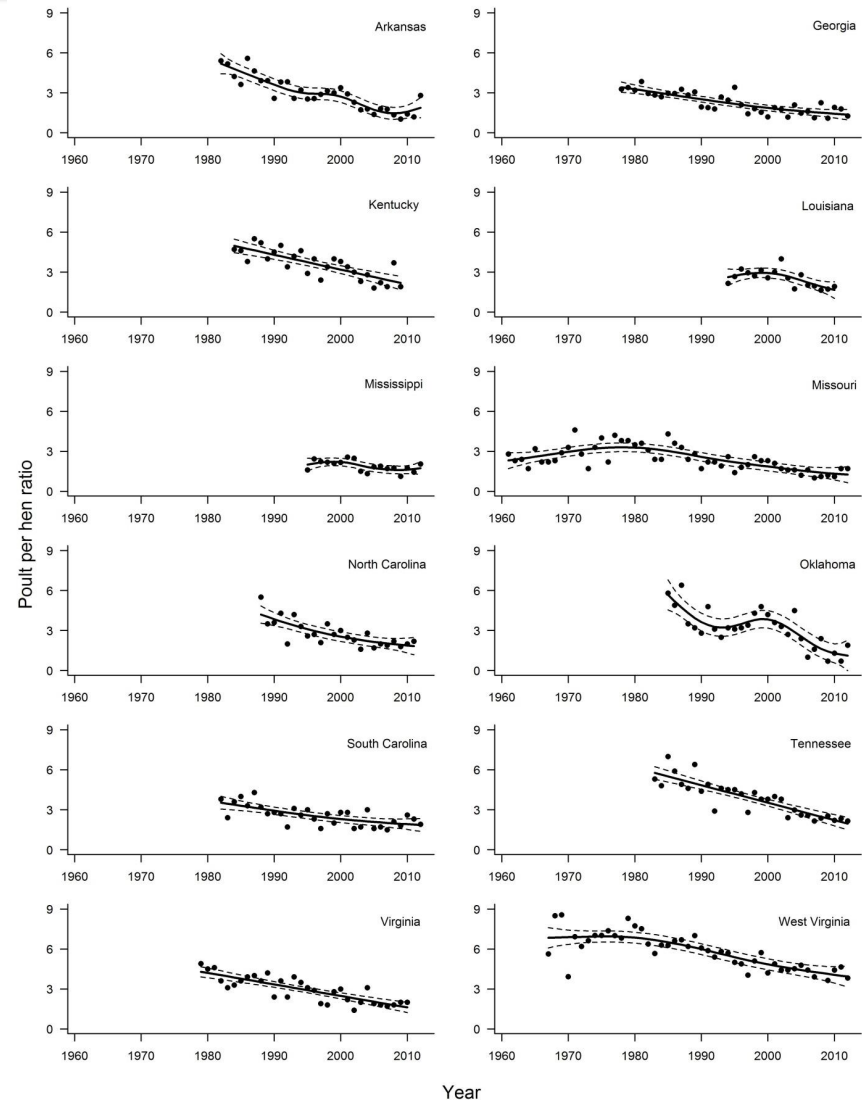
BUT..... The future is not as certain



# SIGNS OF PROBLEMS



- Southern states:
  - Declining number of poult produced over last few decades
  - Population declines >50% in many areas
  - Decreased hunter satisfaction



# SIGNS OF PROBLEMS



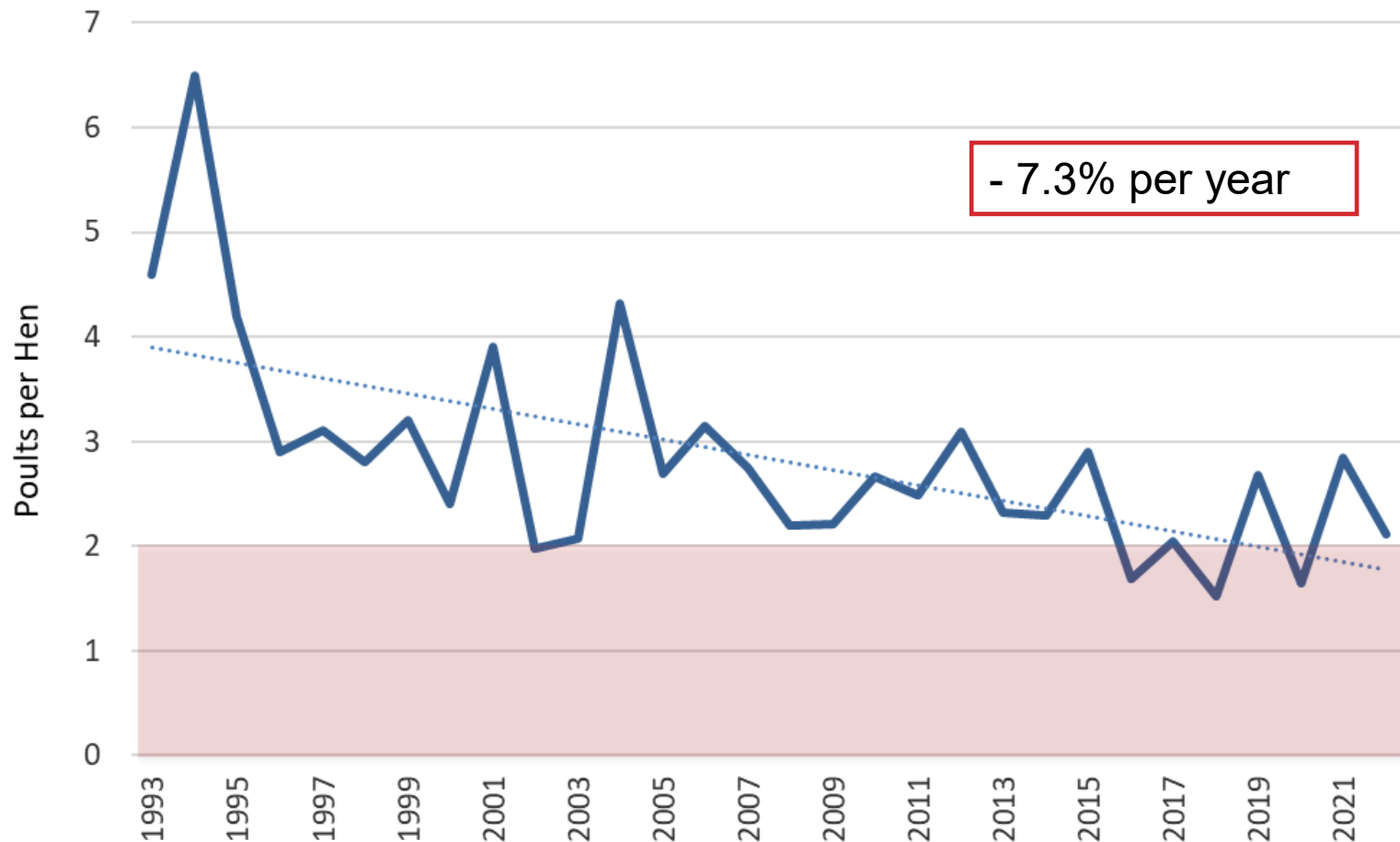
- Declines prompting significant attention and major regulation changes (season dates, bag limits, etc.)



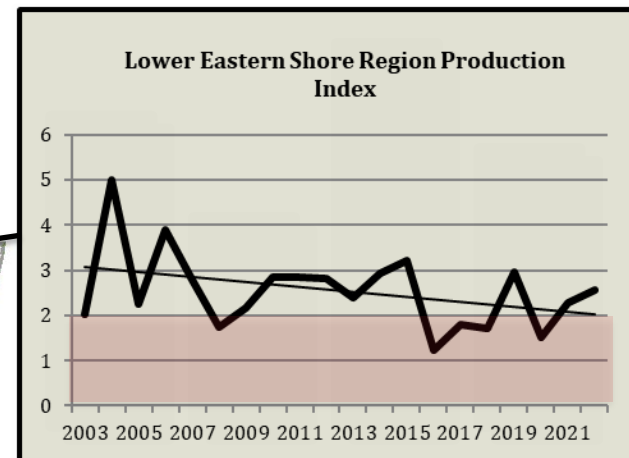
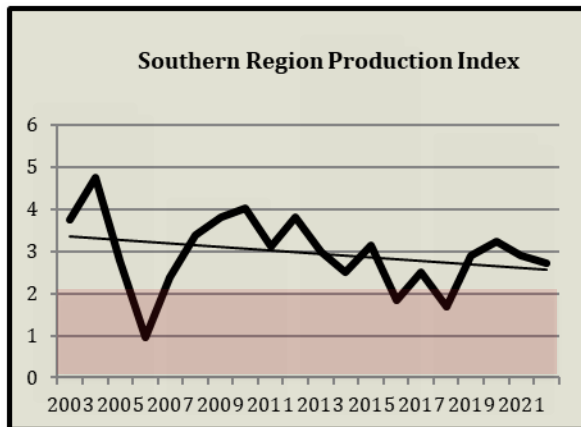
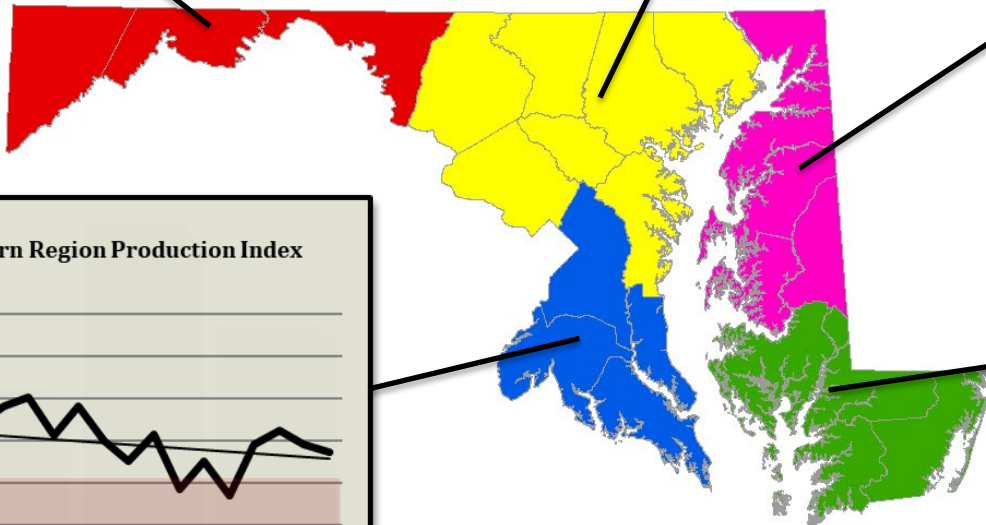
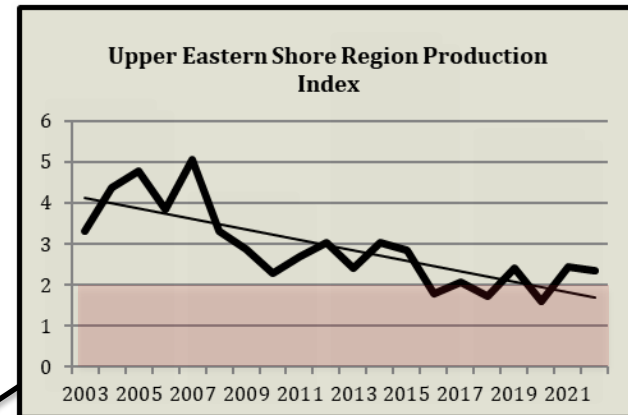
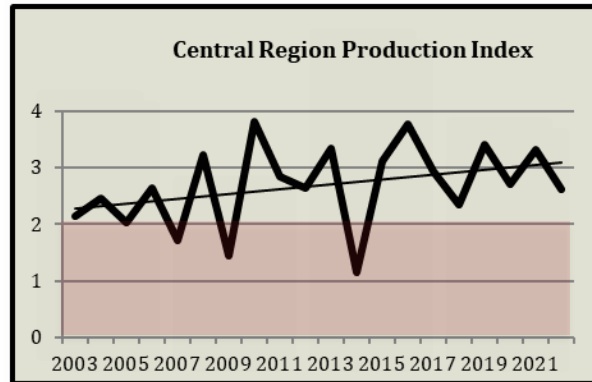
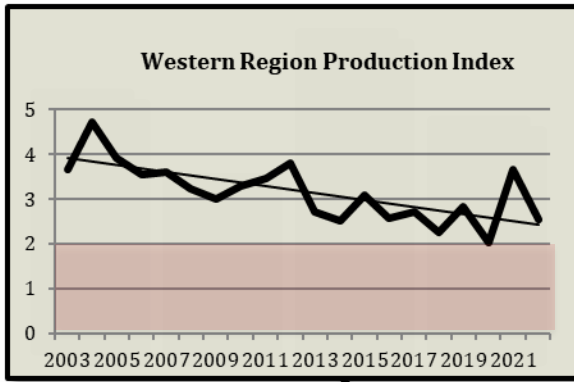
# MARYLAND POULT PRODUCTION DECLINES



Summer Wild Turkey Observation Survey



# REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN REPRODUCTION



# DECLINING HARVESTS



County	2022 Spring Harvest	% from Peak
Allegany	282	-34.4
Anne Arundel	85	Record High
Baltimore	82	Record High
Calvert	72	-61.9
Caroline	168	-6.7
Carroll	94	-9.6
Cecil	67	-28.7
Charles	334	-9.5
Dorchester	170	-49.1
Frederick	343	-1.4
Garrett	436	-23.1
Harford	91	-28.3
Howard	51	Record High
Kent	160	-22.3
Montgomery	164	Record High
Prince George's	115	Record High
Queen Anne's	144	-24.2
Somerset	176	-23.5
St. Mary's	204	-9.7
Talbot	84	-23.6
Washington	400	-12.9
Wicomico	193	-6.3
Worcester	293	-3.6
State	4208	-2.2

# MID-ATLANTIC WILD TURKEY RESEARCH PROJECT



- 3-4 year collaborative effort between MD, PA, NJ, and OH
- State agencies will conduct field work (trapping/data collection)
- Penn State University and University of PA will conduct data analysis and prepare reports
- NWTf to assist with equipment purchasing and funding



# WHY DO WE NEED THIS RESEARCH?



- Turkey population trends are complex and factors currently impacting them need to be better understood
- Many questions unanswered:
  - Why are turkey populations thriving in some areas and declining in others?
  - How many hens are successful in nesting and raising poults?
  - What is the impact of predators? Habitat? Weather? Disease?
  - When and where do hens nest? Successful vs. unsuccessful?
  - Where are successful hens taking broods?
  - What proportion of gobblers are being harvested?
  - Many more....

# OBJECTIVES

## Hen population/movement dynamics

1. Assess impacts of weather on nesting rates, nest success, poult survival and how they differ among study sites
2. Assess predation rates of hens and nests and how they differ among study sites
3. Assess how habitat use & movements vary by landscape, weather & predator densities
4. Determine nest initiation and incubation dates in Maryland





# OBJECTIVES

## Disease prevalence

1. Determine how prevalence of diseases vary by landscape
2. Assess if disease affects hen survival, nesting rates, clutch size, etc. by hen age class & landscape



# OBJECTIVES

## Gobbler Harvest Rates

1. Determine the proportion of gobblers being harvested by age and identify any differences among sites

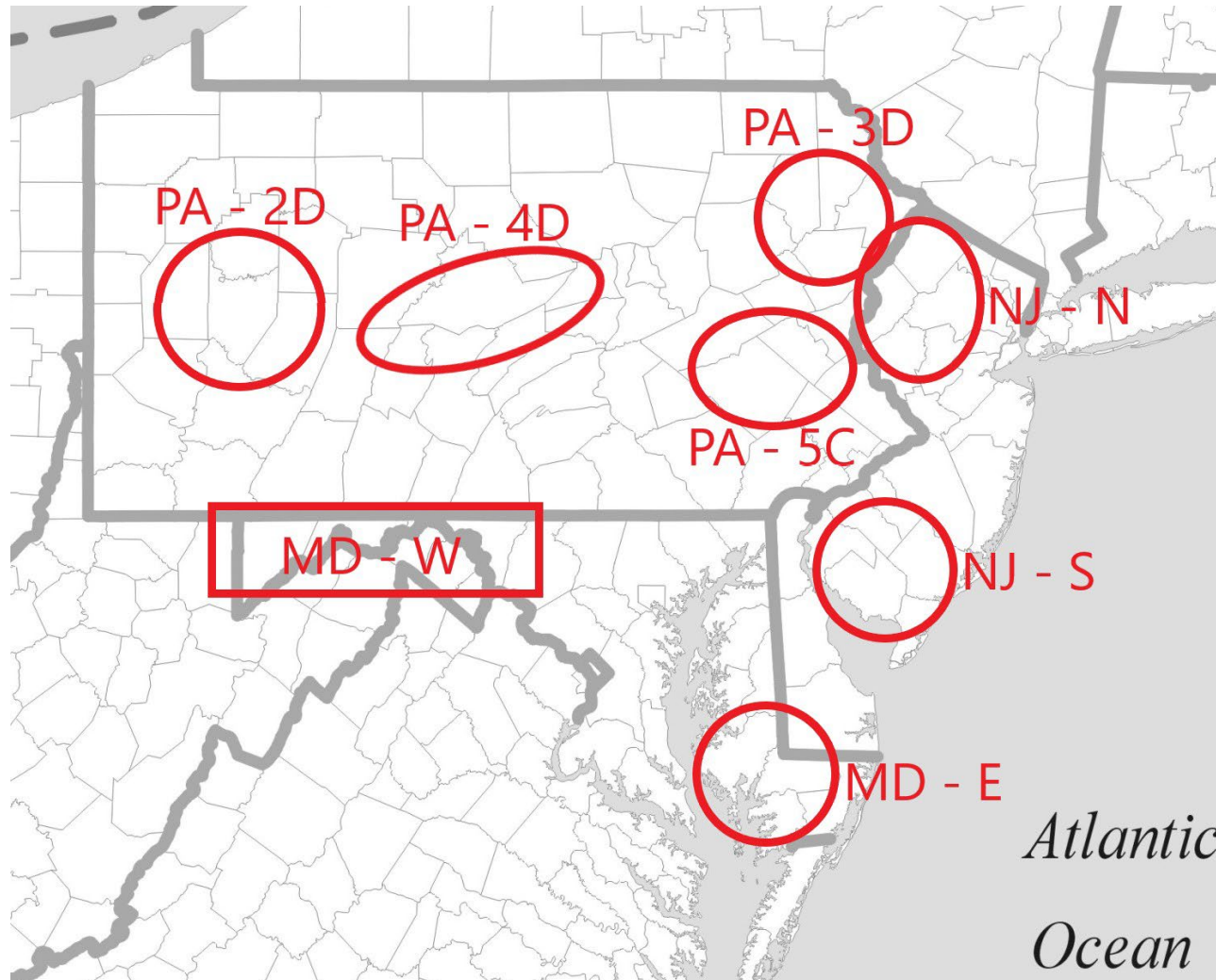


# METHODS

- Maryland will have 2 study areas
  - West: Garrett, Allegany, and Washington
  - East: Dorchester, Wicomico, Somerset, Worcester
- Trap and attach GPS transmitters to 25 hens per year, per site (Jan-Mar 2023-25)
  - Technicians will trap and track turkeys, download data, investigate mortalities, conduct habitat sampling
- Trap and band males (30 adults, 30 juvenile per year per site) with reward bands



# STUDY AREAS



# QUESTIONS?

