



PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION

ORGANIZED 1975

**Dedicated to the Conservation of the Wild Turkey and
Preservation of the Turkey Hunting Tradition**

Pa. Chapter NWTf home page www.panwtf.org E-mail: panwtfrep@panwtf.org

612 Harman Road
Trout Run, PA 17771
October 22, 2008

Executive Director Carl Roe
Pennsylvania Game Commission
2001 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17110-9797

Dear Executive Director Roe, Deputy Director Schmit, President Pallone and
Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on issues and proposals affecting the wildlife resources of this Commonwealth. The Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation appreciates the long-term quality working relationship we have with the Game Commission. Our members often compliment the dedication and hard work of the professional employees of the commission.

Our chapter has always supported regulation changes affecting the wild turkey resource that are designed to provide recreational opportunity with minimal impact on turkey numbers. Our members were particularly pleased with the addition of Memorial Day Monday to the spring season and the commission decision to make spring gobbler hunting "orange free". We recommend that the spring season be extended to close on May 31 annually providing up to six days of additional hunting in some years. Our members also request that mentored youth hunters be provided the chance to hunt fall turkeys as soon as conditions allow.

Regulation proposals that are based on sound data and the guidelines set forth in the Management Plan for Wild Turkeys in Pennsylvania will consistently merit our support. That said, we are firmly behind recommendations from the Bureau of Wildlife Management to reduce fall season length in units where spring harvest data indicates declining populations. On the other hand, if the data suggests that increases are possible we will support that action as well. At this time we are specifically concerned about recent turkey harvest trends in Wildlife Management Units 2D, 5C and 5D.

Our chapter members are very pleased with the intensive effort that has been devoted to the tri-state gobbler banding effort in the past three years. There is definite need for more precise fall turkey harvest rate data in Pennsylvania. It is our understanding that the commission biologists are planning a study to collect data on the impact of fall hunting. A study of this nature is outlined in the wild turkey management plan and should begin immediately after the conclusion of the current gobbler banding work. The Pennsylvania Chapter is willing to commit financially to this important work as we have with the gobbler banding initiative.

The Pennsylvania Chapter has always been dedicated to hunter safety and education. To that end we have placed safety reminders and articles in a number of publications. Our "Turkey Hunting Success and Safety" brochure has appeared in the digest and we have covered the cost of printing posters reminding turkey hunters to properly identify their targets. We want to remind the commissioners that we consistently budget for activities related to hunter safety and our members are available to assist the commission in any way possible to make our hunting tradition safer.

Please accept our compliments on the many habitat enhancement projects proposed and initiated by Game Commission land managers and biologists. We are pleased to work with land managers and provide funding for habitat improvement whenever possible. Our members are willing and able to provide volunteer labor for management and research operations. They are excited about the "hands on" work they can do to help commission personnel.

Thank you again for this chance to provide input on agency programs and for our many years of cooperative effort in working for the wild turkey and our other valuable wildlife resources.

Sincerely,

Jon Pries
President, Pennsylvania Chapter-NWTF