



No.	Author	Date
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	Title	
	2014-15 Fall Wild Turkey Harvest Results	

Abstract: Hunters harvested 548 wild turkeys during the 10th fall turkey hunting season, 67(-11%) less than the 615 bird harvest in 2013-14. The combined shotgun and archery portion of the season accounted for 53% of the harvest with archery hunters taking 58% of the total harvest. Adult birds made up 72% of the harvest with a juvenile to adult ratio of 1:2.6. The proportion of adults in the fall harvest is relatively high and likely reflects a combination of low summer brood success, hunter selection for larger adult birds, and age determination errors. Counties harvesting at least 15 birds were Steuben (21), Harrison (20), Jefferson (19), Warrick (19), Dearborn (18) and Switzerland (18) and Greene (15). The web-based “Check-In-Game” harvest reporting system accounted for 69% of the 2014-15 harvest reports. During the first 10 years of fall hunting in Indiana, the mean annual harvest was 640 birds with an average of 8,771 hunters annually participating with an estimate mean success rate of 7.4%. The interest in fall turkey hunting in Indiana remains relatively low.

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The 10th modern day fall wild turkey hunting season in Indiana was held with statewide early and late archery portions (October 1-26, 2014 and December 7 – January 5, 2015; 57 days) and one combined shotgun and archery portion with regionally different length (5 days from October 15-19 in 7 northern Indiana counties; 12 days from October 15-26 in 43 west-central and southern Indiana counties). Hunters harvested a total of 548 birds with 53% of the birds harvested during combined shotgun and archery portion of the season (Table 1) with archery hunters taking 58% of the total harvest. The 2014-15 fall harvest was 67 birds less (-11%) than the 615 taken in the 2013-14 with 56% harvested on weekends (Table 2). The web-based “Check-IN-Game” harvest reporting system implemented in 2012 accounted for 69% of the harvest reports.

Comprehensive lifetime license holders harvested 46% of the birds followed by resident fall turkey license holders (34%) with 12% of the harvest by exempt landowners and active military on leave (Table 3). The number of resident fall turkey licenses increased by 66 permits (+2%). The proportion of the harvest by youths (8%) was similar to the previous 5 years (2009-2013). The number of license-exempt landowners and active military personnel participating in the fall hunting seasons is unknown.

The determination of the sex and age of harvested wild turkeys was done by hunters and check station operators using a combination of spur and fall plumage characteristics (wing and breast feathers) as depicted in illustrations provided either on-line or in the Indiana Hunting and Trapping Guide. Juvenile birds made up 28% of the harvest for a juvenile to adult ratio of 1:2.6 (Table 4). Adult hens composed the largest proportion (45%) of the harvest, followed by adult gobblers (27%). A high proportion of adults in the fall harvest, especially adult hens often reflects a summer of poor brood production. Annual brood production in Indiana has been below average since 2005 with a long term declining trend toward lower levels as the statewide population matures at a lower, hopefully stabilized level. Hunter selection for larger birds, when given the opportunity, also contributes to a higher proportion of adult males in Indiana’s fall harvests. Finally, the interpretation of the fall sex and age criteria by hunters and check station operators is an undetermined error factor. Accurate sex and age determinations of fall turkeys are a common problem, even in states with more fall turkey hunting experience.

Counties harvesting at least 15 birds ($\geq 2.4\%$ of the total harvest) were Steuben (21), Harrison (20), Jefferson (19), Warrick (19), Dearborn (18), Switzerland (18) and Greene (15) (Table 5; Figure 1). Seventeen counties open to archery only hunting did not harvest a single bird. The proportion of the fall to spring harvest by county ranged from 0% to 63% and the statewide fall to spring harvest proportion was 5% due to the conservative season structure and relatively low hunter interest. Despite the substantial increases in hunter opportunity starting in 2010 (increased hunter days and expanded hunting range), the fall harvest has not exceeded the record high fall harvest of 773 in 2009 (Table 6). Consecutive years of poor summer production likely contributed to the lower than expected harvests as did lower hunter interest due to other competing hunting opportunities and recreational activities. The estimated overall fall turkey hunter success for 2014-15 was 6%. During the 10 years of fall hunting in Indiana, the mean annual harvest was 640 birds with an estimated mean of 8,771 hunters annually participating, with an estimate mean success rate of 7.4%. The interest in fall turkey hunting remains relatively low (Figure 2) and hunter participation has not climbed back to the level of participation observed in the first “novelty” season of 2005 despite increases in opportunity.

Table 1. Fall wild turkey harvest by portion of the season - Indiana, 2014-15.

	Portion of the fall wild turkey season						Total
	Early archery ^a		Combined shotgun & archery ^b		Late archery ^c		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Turkeys Harvested	191	35%	292	53%	65	12%	548

^a Early archery portion of fall turkey season. Dates 1-26 October 2014 (26 days); fall archery hunting open statewide (92 counties)

^b Combined shotgun and archery portion: Dates: south in 43 counties 15-26 October (12 days shotgun); north in 7 counties 15-19 October 2014 (5 days shotgun).

^c Late archery portion 6 December 2014 - 4 January 2015 (30 days); statewide.

Table 2. Fall wild turkey harvest by weekday period during the 2014-45 season, Indiana.

Weekday Period	No. Days	No. Harvested	Percent of Total
<u>Early Archery Only^a</u>			
Weekdays	10	96	17.5%
Weekends	4	95	17.3%
Season Subtotal	14	191	34.9%
<u>Combined Archery and Shotgun^b</u>			
Weekdays	3N-8S	174	31.8%
Weekends	2N-4S	118	21.5%
Season Subtotal	5N-12S	292	53.3%
<u>Late Archery^c</u>			
Weekdays	22	35	6.4%
Weekends	10	30	5.5%
Season Subtotal	32	65	11.9%
<u>Season Totals</u>			
Weekdays	40	305	55.7%
Weekends	18	243	44.3%
Season Totals	58	548	100.0%

^a Early archery portion of fall turkey season. Dates 1-26 October 2014 (26 days); fall archery hunting open statewide (92 counties)

^b Combined shotgun and archery portion: Dates: south in 43 counties 15-26 October (12 days shotgun); north in 7 counties 15-19 October 2014 (5 days shotgun).

^c Late archery portion 6 December 2014 - 4 January 2015 (30 days); statewide.

Table 3. Fall wild turkey harvest by permit type - Indiana, 2014-15.

Type of Permit	Harvest by Permit	% of Harvest	No. Licenses Sold by Season End Date ^a	Differences in Licenses Sold from Prior Year (%)
Resident Fall Turkey	184	33.6%	2,890	+66 (+2%)
Non-Resident Fall Turkey	1	0.2%	31	-6 (-18%)
Comprehensive Lifetime	252	46.0%	44,425 ^b	---- ^b
Comprehensive Youth	43	7.8%	39,289	-1,882 (-5%)
Landowner/active military	68	12.4%	Unknown & Exempt	Unknown & Exempt
Harvest Subtotal	548			

^a Apprentices licenses (new 2008) included in respective license type totals.

^b Comprehensive lifetime hunt and hunt & fish licenses as of July 2005 when the lifetime licenses discontinued. Value represents the number of lifetime license holders who could potentially hunt.

Table 4. Age and sex structure of the fall wild turkey harvest - Indiana, 2014-15.

	Juvenile ^a		Adult ^b		Total ^c	
	No.	% ^c	No.	% ^c	No.	% ^c
Male	69	12.8%	147	27.2%	216	40.0%
Female	81	15.0%	243	45.0%	324	60.0%
Total ^c	150	27.8%	390	72.2%	540	
					Juvenile : Adult 1 : 2.6	

^a Juvenile were birds estimated to be < 6 months old.

^b Adults were birds estimated to be ≥ 14 months old.

^c Percents are based on 540 birds; sex/age not recorded for 8 birds of 548 total harvest.

Table 5. Fall and spring wild turkey harvests in Indiana, 2014-15. ^a

County	Type of Fall Season ^b	2014-15 Fall Harvest	Percent of Fall Harvest	2014 Spring Harvest	Percent of Fall / Spring
Adams	Archery †	0	0.0%	7	0%
Allen	Both †	3	0.5%	45	7%
Bartholomew	Both ‡	5	0.8%	99	5%
Benton	Archery	0	0.0%	10	0%
Blackford	Archery †	0	0.0%	11	0%
Boone	Archery †	5	0.8%	8	63%
Brown	Both	9	1.5%	162	6%
Carroll	Archery	1	0.2%	23	4%
Cass	Archery	2	0.3%	56	4%
Clark	Both	11	1.8%	241	5%
Clay	Both	5	0.8%	99	5%
Clinton	Archery †	0	0.0%	1	0%
Crawford	Both	13	2.1%	199	7%
Daviess	Both ‡	3	0.5%	93	3%
Dearborn	Both	18	2.9%	313	6%
Decatur	Archery	3	0.5%	49	6%
DeKalb	Both ‡	11	1.8%	154	7%
Delaware	Archery †	0	0.0%	2	0%
Dubois	Both	5	0.8%	165	3%
Elkhart	Archery	14	2.3%	119	12%
Fayette	Both ‡	4	0.7%	57	7%
Floyd	Both	7	1.1%	96	7%
Fountain	Both	4	0.7%	100	4%
Franklin	Both	10	1.6%	268	4%
Fulton	Archery	5	0.8%	141	4%
Gibson	Both ‡	5	0.8%	132	4%
Grant	Archery	1	0.2%	9	11%
Greene	Both	15	2.4%	260	6%
Hamilton	Archery †	0	0.0%	0	---
Hancock	Archery †	0	0.0%	3	0%
Harrison	Both	20	3.3%	363	6%
Hendricks	Archery †	2	0.3%	36	6%
Henry	Archery †	0	0.0%	5	0%
Howard	Archery	0	0.0%	2	0%
Huntington	Archery	0	0.0%	36	0%
Jackson	Both	10	1.6%	192	5%
Jasper	Archery	6	1.0%	112	5%
Jay	Archery †	2	0.3%	26	8%
Jefferson	Both	19	3.1%	360	5%
Jennings	Both	9	1.5%	176	5%
Johnson	Archery	1	0.2%	40	3%
Knox	Both ‡	6	1.0%	105	6%
Kosciusko	Archery	8	1.3%	151	5%
Lagrange	Both ‡	11	1.8%	175	6%
Lake	Archery	2	0.3%	16	13%
LaPorte	Both ‡	14	2.3%	161	9%
Lawrence	Both	5	0.8%	192	3%

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Table 5. Fall and spring wild turkey harvests in Indiana, 2014-15. ^a (continued)

County	Type of Fall Season ^b	2014-15 Fall Harvest	Percent of Fall Harvest	2014 Spring Harvest	Percent of Fall / Spring
Madison	Archery †	0	0.0%	0	---
Marion	Archery †	1	0.2%	0	---
Marshall	Both ‡	11	1.8%	205	5%
Martin	Both	4	0.7%	181	2%
Miami	Archery	2	0.3%	33	6%
Monroe	Both	11	1.8%	176	6%
Montgomery	Archery	3	0.5%	58	5%
Morgan	Both ‡	5	0.8%	88	6%
Newton	Archery	4	0.7%	82	5%
Noble	Archery	8	1.3%	162	5%
Ohio	Both	5	0.8%	152	3%
Orange	Both	7	1.1%	205	3%
Owen	Both	12	2.0%	203	6%
Parke	Both	6	1.0%	187	3%
Perry	Both	10	1.6%	269	4%
Pike	Both	7	1.1%	211	3%
Porter	Archery	0	0.0%	33	0%
Posey	Both ‡	5	0.8%	132	4%
Pulaski	Archery	5	0.8%	134	4%
Putnam	Both	5	0.8%	190	3%
Randolph	Archery †	0	0.0%	7	0%
Ripley	Both	13	2.1%	241	5%
Rush	Archery †	0	0.0%	2	0%
St. Joseph	Both ‡	12	2.0%	163	7%
Scott	Both	4	0.7%	156	3%
Shelby	Archery †	0	0.0%	10	0%
Spencer	Both	2	0.3%	195	1%
Starke	Both ‡	13	2.1%	223	6%
Steuben	Both ‡	21	3.4%	306	7%
Sullivan	Both	8	1.3%	184	4%
Switzerland	Both	18	2.9%	394	5%
Tippecanoe	Archery	4	0.7%	47	9%
Tipton	Archery †	0	0.0%	0	---
Union	Both	5	0.8%	62	8%
Vanderburg	Both ‡	8	1.3%	63	13%
Vermillion	Both	3	0.5%	91	3%
Vigo	Both	8	1.3%	142	6%
Wabash	Archery	5	0.8%	69	7%
Warren	Both ‡	7	1.1%	97	7%
Warrick	Both	19	3.1%	216	9%
Washington	Both	7	1.1%	248	3%
Wayne	Archery	3	0.5%	48	6%
Wells	Archery †	0	0.0%	13	0%
White	Archery	2	0.3%	74	3%
Whitley	Archery †	1	0.2%	50	2%
Totals		548	100.0%	10,872	5%

^a Harvest totals from check station reports, on-line web check, tele-check.

^b Archery = archery only. Both = archery and shotguns.

† New county open to archery only fall turkey hunting in 2010.

‡ New county open to shotgun hunting in 2010, previously open to archery only fall turkey hunting.

Figure 1. 2014-15 Fall Turkey Harvest

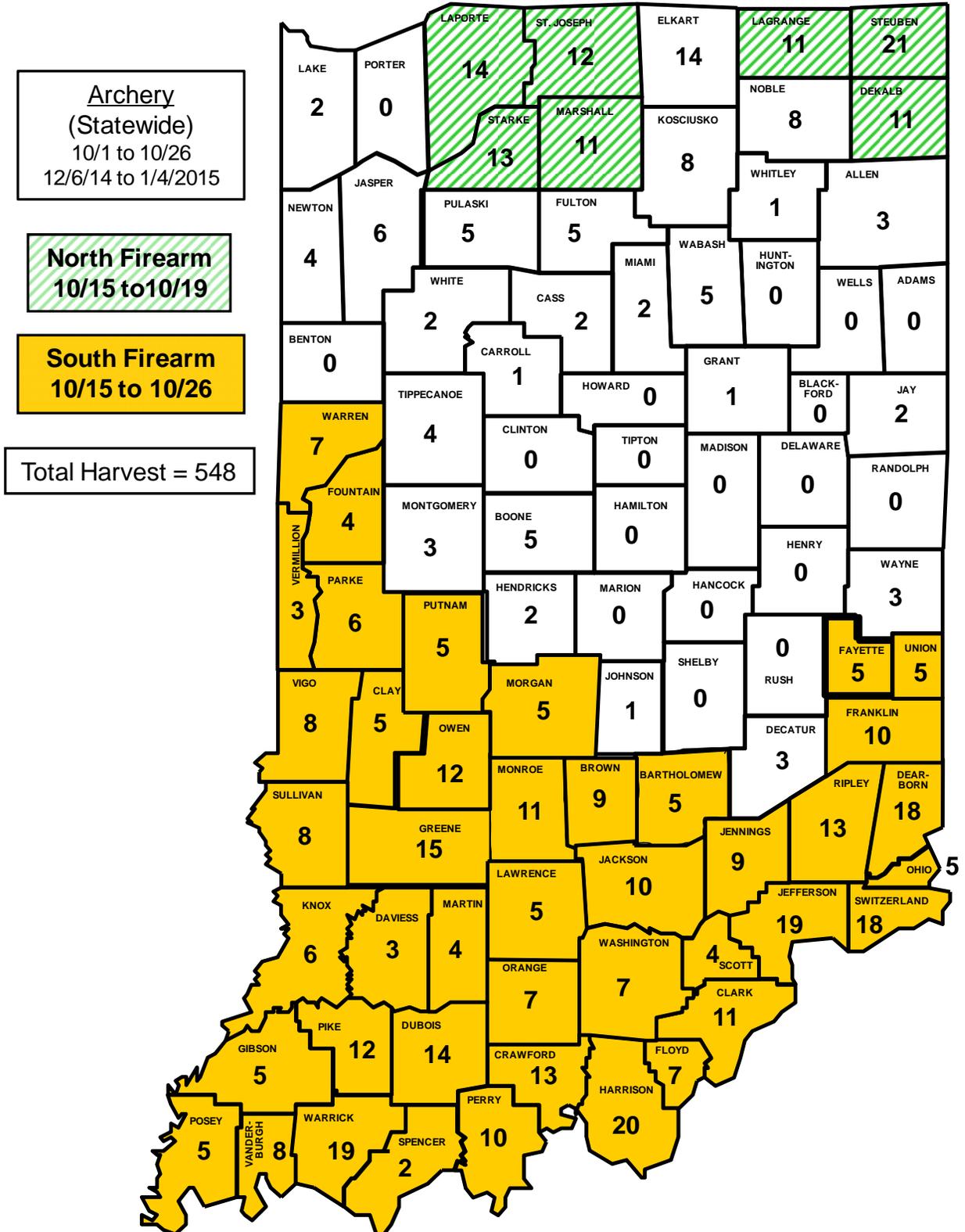


Table 6. Indiana Fall Wild Turkey Season Summary 2005 to 2014.

	YEAR									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Annual Harvest	716	646	585	610	773	751	549	610	615	548
Counties Open to Archery Hunting Only	60	74	74	74	74	92 (ALL)	92	92	92	92
Days of Archery Only	18	17	16	14	20	61	65	52	45	56
Counties Open to Shotgun and Archery	26	26	26	34	34	43S/7N	43S/7N	43S/7N	43S/7N	43S/7N
Days of Combined Shotgun and Archery	5	5	5	5	5	12S/5N	12S/5N	12S/5N	12S/5N	12S/5N
Statewide Fall/Spring Ratio in %	6%	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%
County F:S Ratios (range of values)*	0-15%	0-17%	0-18%	0-11%	0-17%	0-12%	0-25%	0-25%	0-25%	0-63%
No. Resident Fall Licenses Sold	2,225	1,682	1,557	1,689	2,054	2,591	2,476	2,411	2,824	2,890
Estimate of Fall Turkey Hunters**	11,787	7,455	7,312	7,493	7,955	8,980	8,887	8,849	9,332	9,660
Estimate of Fall Hunting Success	6%	9%	8%	8%	10%	8%	6%	7%	7%	6%

* High side of range related to counties with low spring harvests e.g., 1 fall/4 spring

** Estimate based on rough extrapolation of participation rates of approximately 43,000+ lifetimers, 38,000+ youth hunters, <30 nonresidents, and an undetermined but license exempt landowners/active military.

Figure 2. Fall Wild Turkey Harvests

