

Connecticut Wild Turkey Program Report

2025 Spring and Fall Seasons

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Bureau of Natural Resources
Wildlife Division



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Photo by Paul Benjunas



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Introduction

The wild turkey is an important component of Connecticut's wildlife diversity. The goal of the Connecticut Wild Turkey Management Program is to manage the wild turkey population at a level compatible with available habitat and various land uses, and to allow for a sustained yield of turkeys for use by the people of Connecticut.

To successfully manage a statewide wild turkey population, biologists must take a holistic approach. Factors that should be considered include harvest, hunter participation and effort, annual productivity, predator-prey interactions, seasonal weather conditions, species density dependence, diseases, and habitat modifications. On an annual basis, the Turkey Program Reports discuss harvest, hunter dynamics, and productivity. Because many factors play a role in the dynamics of a statewide wild turkey population, biologists must consider all parameters to facilitate positive changes and ensure that turkey populations are managed properly.

Connecticut maintains three wild turkey hunting seasons, which include spring, fall archery, and fall firearms. Spring is the most popular season for most of Connecticut's wild turkey hunters, and for this reason, the spring season highlights are presented first, followed by the spring turkey hunter survey information, annual brood survey data, fall firearms season highlights, and fall archery season information

2025 Spring Turkey Season

Overall Results

The 45th annual statewide spring turkey season was open from April 30 through May 31, 2025. A total of 3,577 Resident Game Bird (RGB) hunters participated in the spring season and 1,186 birds were harvested (Figure 1). The 2025 spring harvest consisted of 342 juvenile and 837 adult males, 5 bearded females, and two unknowns. The number of participating hunters decreased by 16.6% (712 hunters) and harvest decreased by 2.7% (33 birds) from the 2024 totals (Table 1 and 2).

To provide a quality turkey hunting experience for Connecticut's junior hunters (ages 12 to 15), the 21st annual Junior Wild Turkey Hunter Training Days took place from Saturday, April 19, to Saturday, April 26, 2025. Participants harvested 34 wild turkeys, two fewer birds than the previous year. For the 2025 season, 40 juniors harvested their first wild turkey, 35% (14) of which were during the junior season. Overall, 50 juniors (79% as derived from the spring turkey hunter survey) took part in the Junior Hunter Days with a 67% success rate.

Figure 1. Connecticut's spring wild turkey season harvest, 1981 through 2025.

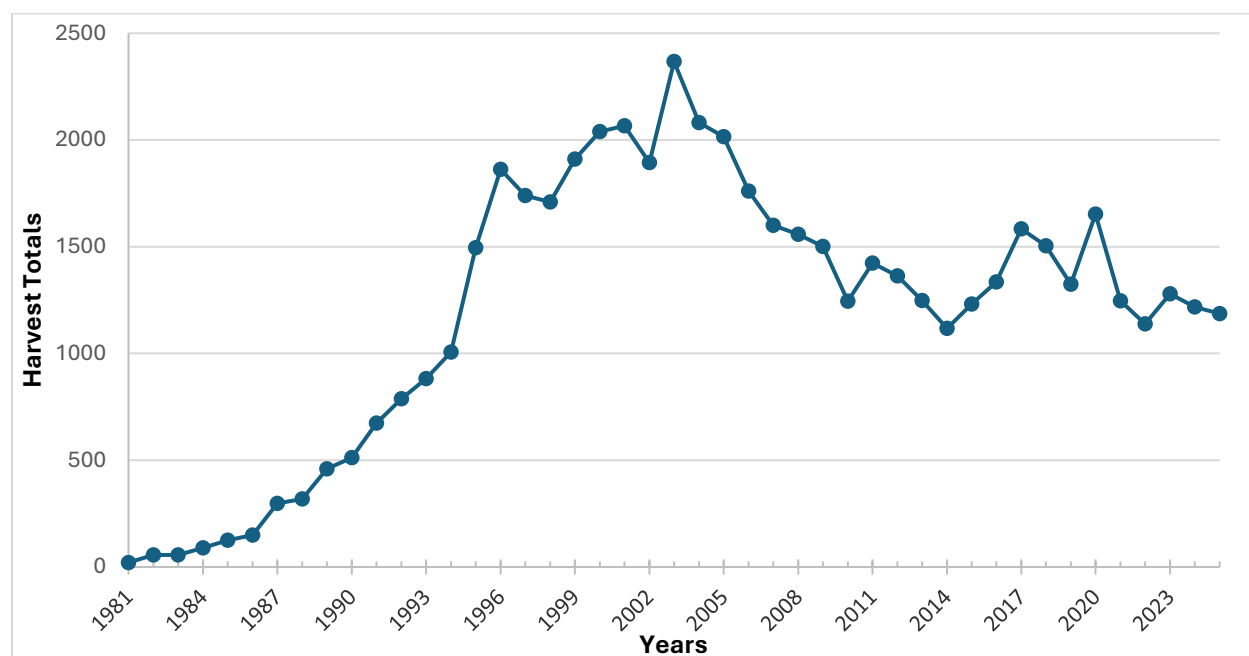


Table 1. Connecticut's spring turkey harvest on private and state lands, 2024 and 2025.

Land Type	Total Harvest 2024	Total Harvest 2025	% Change
Private Land	951	911	-4.21
State Land	268	275	2.61
Overall Total	1,219	1,186	-2.71

Table 2. Connecticut's spring turkey hunter participation rate and estimated hunter numbers, 2024 and 2025.

Year	RGB Hunters	Participation Rate ³	Estimated Hunter Numbers
2024	6,808 ¹	63%	4,289
2025	5,961 ²	60%	3,577

¹ RGB hunters permitted from 12/01/23 to 5/24/24.

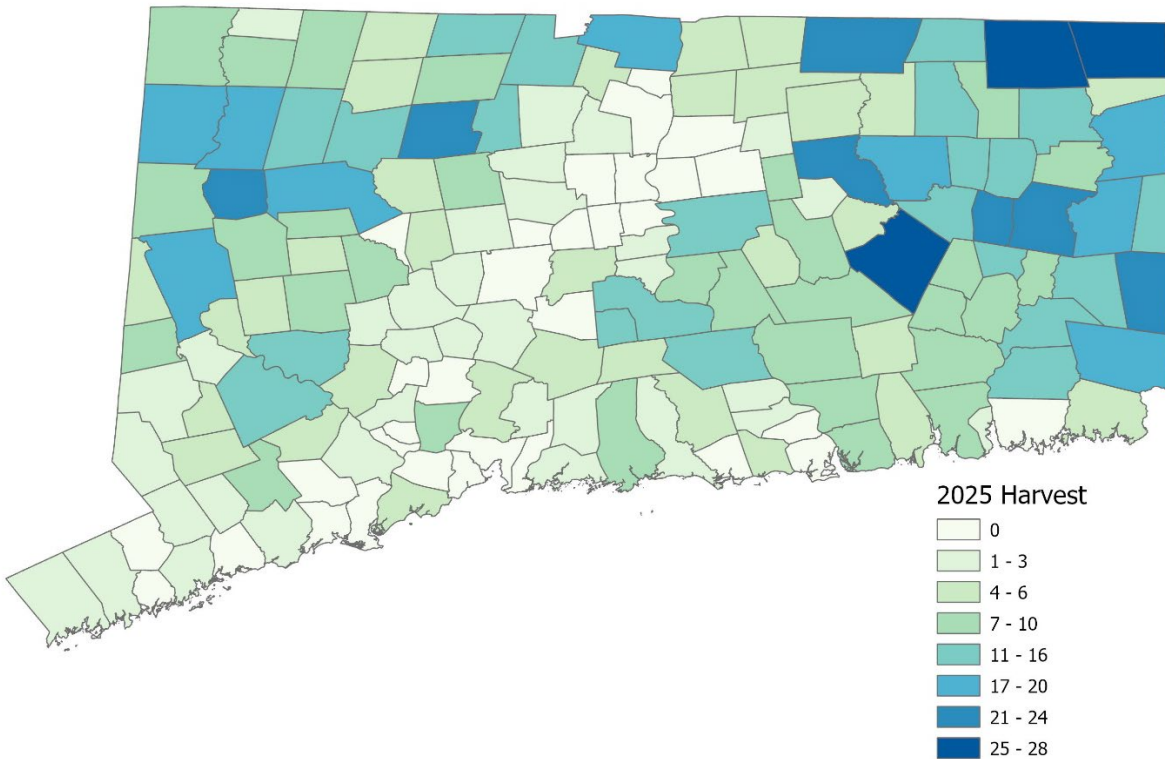
² RGB hunters permitted from 12/01/24 to 5/31/25.

³ Participation rates derived from the respective year's Spring Turkey Hunter Surveys.

Harvest by Town

At least 1 bird was taken from 137 of Connecticut's 169 towns (Figure 2, Appendix A). Twenty or more birds were taken from 13 towns. Thirty or more birds were not taken from any towns this season. The towns of Thompson (28), Lebanon (26), and Woodstock (25) had the highest reported turkey harvest.

Figure 2. Distribution of the 2025 spring turkey harvest in Connecticut.



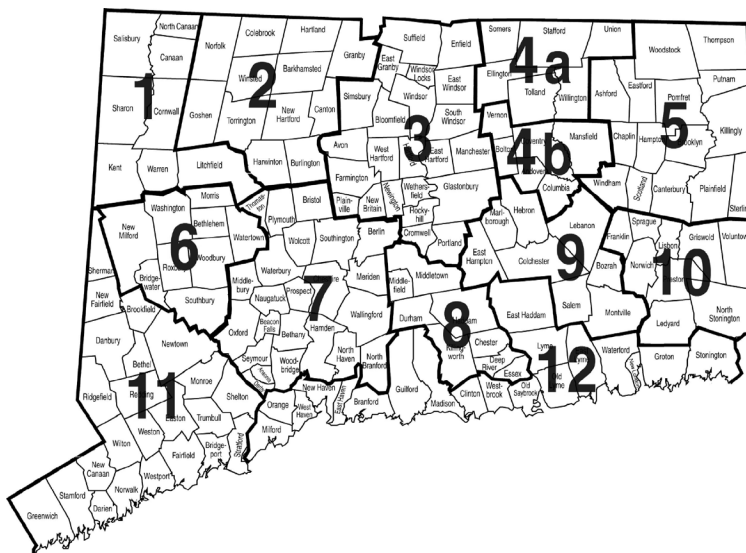
Zonal Harvest

Consistent with the past 8 years, the northeastern corner of the state (Turkey Management Zone 5) reported the highest harvest among Connecticut's 13 Turkey Management Zones (TMZs) during 2025 (Table 3, Figure 3). Prior to 2004, northwest Connecticut (Zone 1) had typically held this distinction. Zone 8 recorded the lowest harvest. Although harvest was variable among zones, turkey populations exist in all zones, and harvest is a function of hunter access and turkey densities.

Table 3. Turkeys harvested during the spring 2024 and 2025 seasons by Turkey Management Zone.

Zone	Harvest 2024	Harvest 2025	Percent Change
1	117	106	-9.40
2	139	127	-8.63
3	63	75	19.05
4A	71	57	-19.72
4B	41	62	51.22
5	243	243	0
6	56	50	-10.71
7	66	65	-1.52
8	64	57	-10.94
9	91	66	-27.47
10	114	117	2.63
11	72	71	-1.39
12	82	90	9.76
Total	1,218	1,186	-2.71

Figure 3. Connecticut's 13 Turkey Management Zones, 2025.



Private and State Land Hunting

Private land accounted for most of the harvest (77%). Private land encompasses the largest amount of land, includes the best turkey habitat, and likely has more experienced hunters with lower hunter densities than state land. Of the state-managed properties, Nachaug State Forest (24) and Pachaug State Forest (19) yielded the most turkeys in 2025. The most productive state

land turkey hunting areas (greater or equal to 5 birds harvested/mi² and a minimum harvest of 4 birds) was Enders State Forest (Appendix B).

Harvest Distribution Among Hunters

Analysis of hunter reporting data indicates the distribution of harvest among spring turkey hunters has remained relatively consistent over time (Table 4). Further analysis indicates that the harvest of additional birds, of what would have been allowed under the pre-2020 spring regulations (3/private, 2/state bag limits, morning only harvest) for the 2025 season, makes up 5.4% (n=64) of the total harvest. This percentage is identical to 2020 when regulations first changed. In 2025, 56 individuals harvested 3 birds (1.1%), 31 hunters harvested 4 birds (0.6%), and 15 hunters harvested 5 birds (0.3%).

Harvest Distribution through the Season

Prior to the general season in 2022 (i.e., Junior Hunter Training Days were omitted), errors within the Harvest Reporting System prevented accurate recording of harvest time as submitted by hunters, some errors persist, though are more likely attributable to data entry error. In 2022, the reported data indicated that the median number of birds harvested were taken by 7:00 AM; in 2023 the median time of harvest increased to 8:00 AM and has remained as such since. In 2025, 19% of the harvest took place after noon.

Table 4. Harvest distribution among hunters, 2018-2025.

Year	Birds Harvested	# of Hunters	Percentage of Spring Hunters	Additional Birds
2018	5	19	0.3%	n/a
2018	4	21	0.4%	
2018	3	96	1.8%	
2018	2	252	4.6%	
2018	1	518	9.5%	
2018	0	4,642	85.2%	
2019	5	10	0.2%	n/a
2019	4	16	0.3%	
2019	3	80	1.5%	
2019	2	210	3.9%	
2019	1	545	10.0%	
2019	0	4,584	84.2%	
2020	5	27	0.4%	89
2020	4	38	0.5%	(5.4%)
2020	3	84	1.2%	
2020	2	246	3.6%	
2020	1	595	8.6%	
2020	0	5,921	85.7%	
2021	5	7	0.1%	43
2021	4	25	0.4%	(3.4%)

Year	Birds Harvested	# of Hunters	Percentage of Spring Hunters	Additional Birds
2021	3	73	1.3%	
2021	2	171	3.0%	
2021	1	551	9.6%	
2021	0	4,916	85.6%	
2022	5	16	0.3%	50
2022	4	18	0.4%	(4.4%)
2022	3	66	1.3%	
2022	2	183	3.6%	
2022	1	424	8.4%	
2022	0	4,345	86.0%	
2023	5	15	0.4%	60
2023	4	20	0.5%	(4.7%)
2023	3	75	1.7%	
2023	2	196	4.6%	
2023	1	507	11.8%	
2023	0	3,490	81.0%	
2024	5	13	0.3%	54
2024	4	26	0.6%	(4.4%)
2024	3	54	1.3%	
2024	2	189	4.4%	
2024	1	510	11.9%	
2024	0	3,497	81.5%	
2025	5	15	0.3%	64
2025	4	31	0.6%	(5.4%)
2025	3	56	1.1%	
2025	2	151	2.9%	
2025	1	517	10.6%	
2025	0	4,317	84.9%	

Spring Turkey Hunter Survey Results

The Spring Wild Turkey Hunter Survey is used to obtain a variety of information to better manage Connecticut's wild turkey resource. The survey provides valuable insight into population growth trends, economic expenditures, and recreational benefits.

In 2025, a total of 5,795 surveys were emailed to individuals who had purchased a Resident Game Bird Conservation Stamp (RGBCS) prior to the close of spring turkey season, and 22% of those hunters responded (1,251). Thirty-nine percent of the respondents had obtained a RGBCS by May 31 but did not participate in the 2025 spring turkey hunting season. This ratio was used to calculate total spring turkey hunter numbers. Of those that did hunt (total estimate of 3,577), most of their hunting activity occurred in Turkey Management Zones 2 and 5, which has been consistent since 2021 (Figure 3; Table 5). On average, spring turkey hunters spent an

estimated \$636 on hunting-related items (stamps and license not included), totaling \$433,777. An additional \$172,284 of revenue was generated through the sales of RGBCS (as of May 31, 2025).

Fifty-two percent of spring turkey hunters (n=700) who responded to the survey believed the turkey population was decreasing, a decrease of 1% from 2024. Of the remainder, 11% believed it was increasing, 22% believed it was stable, and 15% had no opinion. Hunters were asked to rank the change in population from 2024 to 2025 as decreasing (0), slightly decreasing (1.5), stable (3.0), slightly increasing (4.5), or increasing (6.0). From this information, a turkey population growth index of 1.7 was derived for 2025, indicating a slightly decreasing turkey population. All Turkey Management Zones had a mean index below 3.0, suggesting statewide decline in wild turkey numbers from 2020 to 2025.

To collect data on ruffed grouse distribution in Connecticut, an additional question was added to the turkey hunter survey in 2005. Hunters were asked to report whether they observed ruffed grouse or heard grouse drumming, and, if so, to provide the town in which the encounter occurred. During 2025, hunters reported 33 encounters with ruffed grouse in 28 towns. The town with the highest number of grouse encounters was Barkhamsted. A grouse population index was derived by dividing total grouse observations into the total number of surveys returned and then multiplying by 100. The 2025 index was 4.7 (Figure 4). Overall, grouse population trends indicate that Connecticut's grouse numbers continue to decline. Only 0.9% of spring turkey hunters encountered grouse during the season.

Of the 2025 spring hunters, 69% hunted turkeys on private land only, 17% on both private and state lands, and 51% on state land only. On average, 2025 spring turkey hunters reporting hunting effort spent approximately 5.8 days pursuing turkeys on private land and 5.3 days on state land (Figure 5). Hunters were asked what percentage of time they spent hunting in the morning and afternoon: "I hunted from the morning through to the afternoon" (34%), "I hunted exclusively in the afternoon" (19%), and "I did not hunt after noon" (47%). Most hunters still preferred morning hunts.

To understand the impacts of spring hunters on nesting hens, an assessment was added to the survey starting in 2024. Ninety-two percent of hunters did not encounter any nesting hens during the season, consistent with 2024. Of the hunters that did encounter nesting hens (n=55), an average of 1.5 hens were seen over the season. Encounters took place most frequently at 10:00 AM (19%), followed by 9:00 AM (15%). Thirty-six percent (n=29) of encounters with a nesting hen resulted in a flush from the nest.

State land spring turkey hunters encountered over four times more hunter interference from other hunters than private land hunters (14% versus 3%) and state land interference from non-hunters increased 7% relative to private land (10% versus 3%, Table 6). Overall, it appears that most 2025 spring hunters were satisfied (excellent, good, or fair) with the quality of the Connecticut hunt experience: excellent – 12%, good – 24%, fair – 27%, poor – 17%, and very poor – 18%. Generally, it appears that positive season satisfaction correlates to higher harvest rates (Figure 6).

Table 5. Number of survey respondents hunting in each Turkey Management Zone, 2025.

Zone	Hunters	%
1	68	9.73
2	90	12.88
3	55	7.87
4a	34	4.86
4b	34	4.86
5	81	11.59
6	42	6.01
7	56	8.01
8	43	6.15
9	66	9.44
10	51	7.30
11	42	6.01
12	37	5.29
Total	699	100

Figure 4. Ruffed grouse population growth index reported on spring turkey hunter surveys from 2005 - 2025.

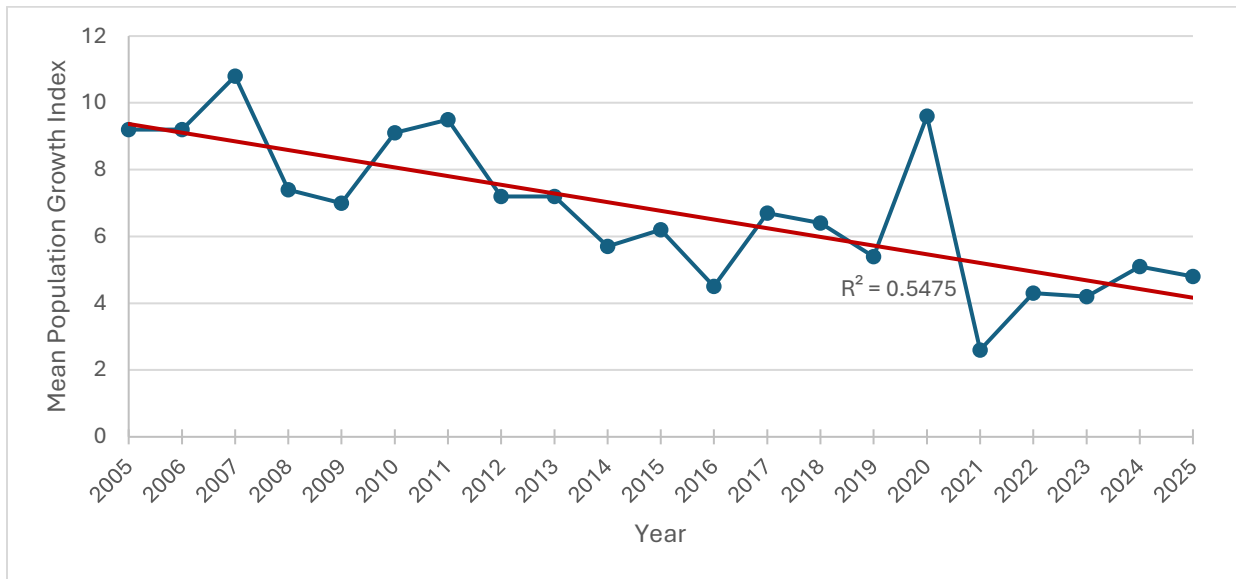


Table 6. Summary of hunter and non-hunter interference during the Spring Wild Turkey Season, 2025.

	Hunter Interference		Non-Hunter Interference	
	N=	%	N=	%
Experienced on all property types	18	2	8	<1
Experienced on state land	189	19	108	11
Experienced on private land	35	3	36	4
Did not experience	771	76	860	85
Total	1,013	100		100
	Interference Trend (Private)		Interference Trend (State)	
	N=	%	N=	%
Same as previous year	173	17	185	18
Did not experience any	507	50	358	36
Did not hunt property type	264	26	324	32
Less than previous year	25	3	19	2
More than previous year	40	4	124	12
Total	771	100	1,010	100

Figure 5. Average number of days spent afield between state and private land spring turkey hunters, 2018-2025.

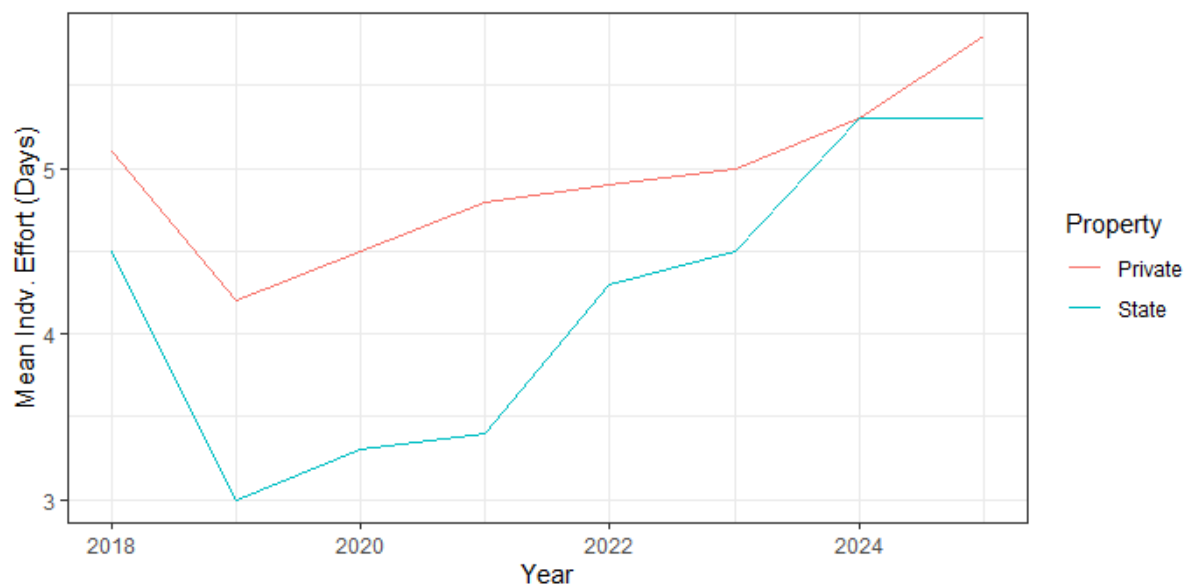
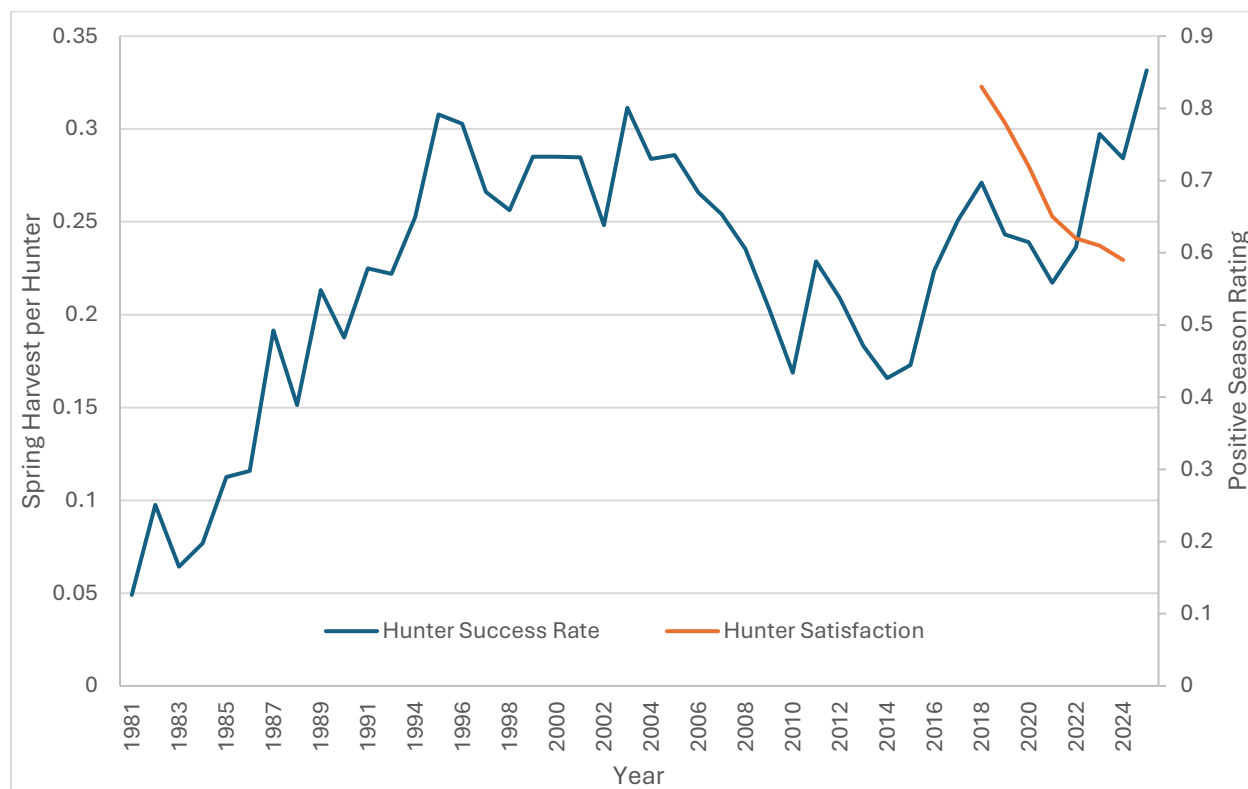


Figure 6. Trend in Spring Wild Turkey Season hunter satisfaction versus hunter success rate (harvest per hunter) from 2018 - 2025.



2025 Fall Firearms Turkey Season

The fall firearms season was open statewide in 2025 for the 30th year in Connecticut. Hunters who purchased a RGBCS were able to hunt on any state land open to turkey hunting and all private lands where hunters obtained a signed landowner consent form. An estimated 813 hunters (derived from preliminary responses from the 2025/2026 Resident Game Bird Hunter Survey) participated during the fall firearms wild turkey season, a decrease of 16.4% from the previous season. Hunters harvested 38 birds (Appendix D) during the 28-day (accounting for Sundays) 2025 fall firearms season and posted a success rate of 4.7%. Hunters harvested 30 birds on private land and 8 birds on state land (Table 7). Three hunters harvested 3 birds, 6 hunters harvested 2 birds, and 17 hunters harvested 1 bird during the season. The harvest consisted of 81% adults, 19% juveniles, 42% males, and 58% females. Overall, from 2024 to 2025, the fall firearms harvest decreased by 21%. Fall firearms hunters specified that 74% of their hunts were targeted towards turkeys during the season, i.e., they set out with the intention of harvesting a turkey when they went afield.

Fall firearms hunters reported taking at least 1 bird from 22 of Connecticut's 169 towns. The towns reporting the highest harvests were Lebanon and Pomfret (4) (Table 8). In addition, Turkey Management Zone 5 (8 birds) reported the highest zonal harvest (Table 9).

Table 7. Composition of the 2025 fall firearms season harvest.

	Private Land	State/Public Lands	Total
Adult Hen	13	6	19
Adult Male	11	1	12
Juvenile Hen	2	1	3
Juvenile Male	4	N/A	4
Total	30	8	38

Table 8. Wild turkey harvest by town during the 2024 and 2025 fall firearms seasons.

Town of harvest	# of birds 2024	# of birds 2025	Town of harvest	# of birds 2024	# of birds 2025
Andover	0	1	Lyme	1	0
Ashford	3	1	Mansfield	2	0
Bridgewater	2	0	Middlefield	0	1
Colchester	0	2	Middletown	2	0
Coventry	0	3	North Branford	1	0
Cornwall	4	0	North Stonington	1	0
Durham	0	2	Old Saybrook	0	1
Eastford	3	2	Orange	0	1
Easton	1	0	Plymouth	1	0
East Hampton	0	3	Pomfret	2	4
Enfield	2	0	Stafford	3	2
Fairfield	2	0	Suffield	1	0
Goshen	1	1	Thompson	3	2
Griswold	2	0	Tolland	2	0
Haddam	2	0	Voluntown	0	1
Hartford	1	0	Wallingford	1	2
Harwinton	0	1	Warren	1	1
Killingly	0	1	Washington	0	1
Lebanon	1	4	Waterford	2	0
			Total	48	38

Table 9. Wild turkey harvest during the 2024 and 2025 fall firearms seasons by Turkey Management Zone.

Harvest by Year		
Zone	2024	2025
1	5	1
2	1	2
3	6	0
4A	5	2
4B	2	4
5	8	8
6	2	1
7	3	2
8	4	4
9	1	6
10	3	1
11	5	2
12	3	5
Total	48	38

2025 Fall Archery Turkey Season

Connecticut's 42nd fall archery turkey season was open statewide and ran concurrently with the 2025 archery deer season. An estimated 890 hunters (derived from preliminary responses from the 2025/2026 Resident Game Bird Hunter Survey) participated during the fall archery wild turkey season, a decrease of 9.9% from the previous season. Archers reported a harvest of 92 birds and posted a success rate of 10%. Harvest was reported in 48 towns, with Newtown (9) reporting the highest harvest (Table 10). Turkey Management Zones 11 (24), 12 (16), and 7 (12) reported the highest zonal harvest (Table 11). Because the fall archery wild turkey season runs concurrently with the archery deer season, hunters in Zones 11 and 12 have the additional month of January to harvest wild turkeys; all other zones close at the end of December. The 2026 January season yielded 2 harvests from 2 individuals, with an estimated 61 participating hunters. Fall archery hunters overall specified that 60% of their hunting was opportunistic during the fall season, where they set out in pursuit of another species and would consider it a turkey hunt if birds were present.

Fifty-five of the 92 birds harvested by archers were males (43 adults, 12 juveniles) and 37 were females (32 adults, 5 juveniles). The fall archery turkey harvest increased by 13% from 2024 to 2025 (Appendix E).

Table 10. Wild turkey harvest by town during the 2024 and 2025 fall archery seasons.

Town of harvest	# of birds 2024	# of birds 2025	Town of harvest	# of birds 2024	# of birds 2025
Andover	2	2	New Fairfield	1	0
Ansonia	0	1	New Milford	0	3
Barkhamsted	1	0	Newtown	0	9

Berlin	2	0	North Stonington	1	0
Bolton	0	1	Orange	1	1
Brooklyn	1	0	Oxford	1	2
Brookfield	0	1	Plainville	0	1
Burlington	1	3	Plymouth	1	0
Canaan	2	0	Pomfret	0	1
Canton	1	0	Prospect	2	0
Cheshire	2	0	Redding	0	3
Clinton	1	0	Ridgefield	0	2
Columbia	0	1	Salem	0	1
Cornwall	1	0	Seymour	3	0
Danbury	2	1	Sharon	2	0
Deep River	1	0	Shelton	4	2
East Granby	0	1	Sherman	0	2
East Haddam	0	3	Simsbury	1	0
East Hampton	1	0	Somers	4	0
East Lyme	2	0	South Windsor	1	0
East Windsor	1	0	Southbury	1	2
Eastford	0	2	Stafford	0	1
Easton	0	2	Stonington	2	3
Enfield	0	2	Stratford	1	0
Fairfield	1	0	Suffield	2	1
Farmington	2	0	Thomaston	1	0
Groton	1	3	Thompson	1	3
Guilford	0	3	Tolland	0	1
Hamden	0	1	Torrington	0	1
Harwinton	2	1	Voluntown	1	0
Hebron	0	1	Wallingford	2	3
Kent	1	1	Washington	0	2
Killingworth	2	2	Waterbury	1	0
Lebanon	3	0	Waterford	1	0
Ledyard	1	0	Watertown	1	0
Litchfield	1	0	Weston	1	0
Lyme	1	3	Wilton	1	0
Mansfield	2	1	Windsor	0	1
Middlebury	1	0	Wolcott	1	3
Middlefield	0	2	Woodbury	0	2
Middletown	0	1	Woodstock	3	0
Monroe	0	2	Total	81	92
Montville	0	1			

Table 11. Wild turkey harvest during the 2024 and 2025 fall archery seasons by Turkey Management Zone.

Harvest by Year		
Zone	2024	2025
1	7	1
2	5	5
3	5	10
4A	4	2
4B	4	5
5	5	5
6	2	4
7	18	12
8	3	5
9	3	3
10	3	0
11	11	24
12	11	16
Total	81	92

Wild Turkey Brood Survey

Since 2007, turkey brood surveys have been conducted annually from June 1 through August 31 to assess annual fluctuations in statewide wild turkey recruitment. Volunteers and DEEP staff were requested to report turkey sightings, categorized by total hens, total poults, and total number of hens with poults, and, beginning in 2021, tom and jake sightings were also collected. Numbers for 2021 male sightings were excluded due to low reporting. These observations were analyzed to obtain an annual productivity index and evaluate fall recruitment. The productivity index, or ratio of young per adult hen, was historically derived by dividing the total number of poults by the total number of hens.

Modifications were made to the 2022 brood survey to improve data quality and bring data collection and analysis in line with the standards prepared by the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) Technical Committee in 2019 (within Table 13 the previous calculation method can be found in parenthesis since 2018, with the new index analysis to be the sole number reported moving forward starting in 2023). Additionally, to increase data collection among volunteers, announcements of the survey were made in invitations to the Spring Wild Turkey Hunter Survey.

The 2025 brood index was 3.5 young per adult for all hens observed and 4.37 young per adult for hens observed, with at least one poult (Table 12, Figure 7). A total of 378 cooperators reported 466 significant wild turkey observations, including 776 hens (606 with broods and 170 without broods). The brood survey indicates that wild turkeys had slightly below average productivity in 2025. The five-year average of young per hen was 3.71. The 2025 spring weather was cool and somewhat damp early on throughout Connecticut, a decline from 2024. Cool conditions were present during the nesting period (May 1 – May 31) and the initial brooding period (June 1 – June 30); the nesting period was 4 and 4/10 inches wetter on average than 2024 and 4 degrees warmer, while the brooding period in 2025 was noted to be drier (by 1.0 inches on average) and an average of 3 degrees colder than 2024.

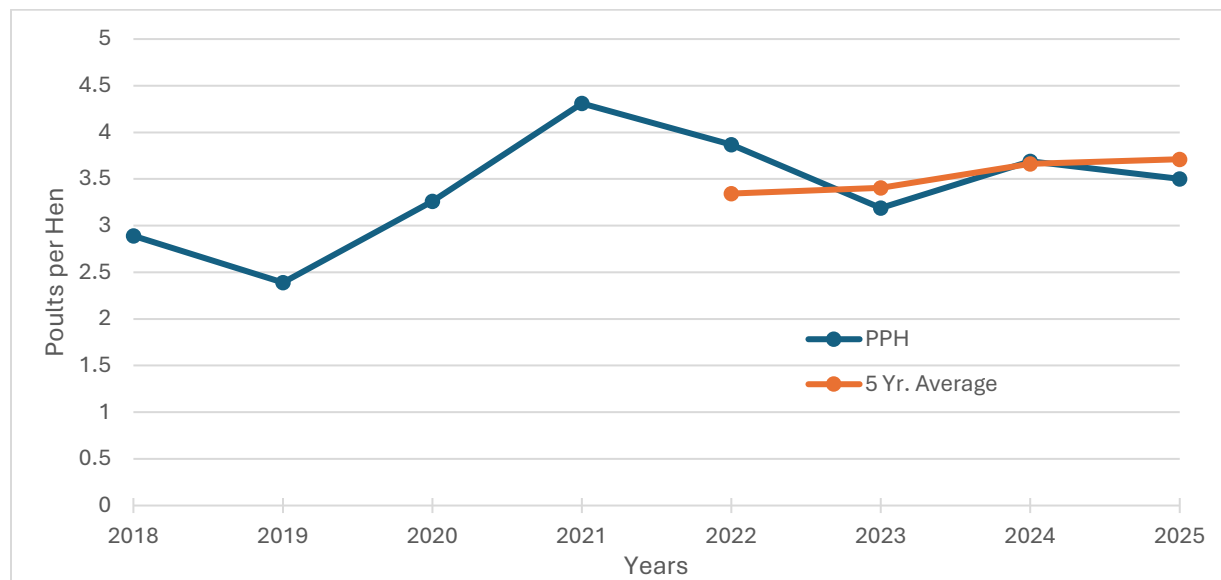
Table 12. Wild turkey brood survey data for Connecticut, 2007 – 2025.

Year	Total Hens	Total Young	Total Hens and Young	Hens without Young	Young per Hen	Young per Brood	Total Males	M:F Ratio	No. of Reports
2007	731	1,900	2,631	270	2.6	4.1	-	-	405
2008	448	988	1,436	330	2.2	4.3	-	-	224
2009	611	1,049	1,660	177	1.7	2.4	-	-	323
2010	472	1,686	2,158	105	3.6	4.6	-	-	278
2011	685	1,919	2,604	118	2.8	3.4	-	-	375
2012	435	1,089	1,524	293	2.5	3.7	-	-	244
2013	337	843	1,180	115	2.5	3.7	-	-	200
2014	579	1,561	2,140	194	2.7	4.1	-	-	313
2015	530	1,560	2,091	152	2.9	4.1	-	-	266
2016	401	1,120	1,521	123	2.8	4.0	-	-	202
2017	877	2,289	3,164	287	2.6	3.9	-	-	424
2018	1,223	2,955	4,178	378	2.89 (2.4) ^a	4.06 (3.5)	-	-	644
2019	422	691	1,113	234	2.39 (1.6)	4.30 (3.6)	-	-	203
2020	324	920	1,244	53	3.26 (2.8)	4.63 (3.4)	-	-	176
2021	579	1,920	2,499	89	4.31 (3.3)	4.84 (3.9)	-	-	328
2022*	750	2,474	3,224	109	3.9 (3.1)	4.5 (3.9)	81	0.11	429
2023	632	1,529	2,161	203	3.18	4.55	154	0.24	336
2024	722	2,236	2,958	144	3.69	4.53	156	0.22	395
2025	776	2,260	3,036	170	3.5	4.37	169	0.22	466

^a Data in parenthesis reflects a continuation of Connecticut's original Brood Survey Index (2007-2022) and is provided as a reference to contrast the NWTF analysis values in plain text from 2018 onward.

*Corrections made to previously reported data based on analytic software previously omitting two-word town names.

Figure 7. Poults per hen (PPH) from 2018-2025.



Population Dynamics

In Connecticut, to obtain insight into long-term wild turkey population trends, biologists collect data on spring wild turkey harvest, hunter participation, and a hunter perception population growth index (PPGI). The spring season information was used to represent a population index because this was the most popular season with the highest number of hunters and harvest.

The turkey population growth index is derived from a question on the annual Spring Turkey Hunter Survey (see Spring Hunter Survey Results, Figure 8). When these parameters were reviewed from 2000 to 2024, both indices showed a short-term increase after a 6-year decline (Figures 8 and 9), though a longer perspective and PPGI dataset might be desired to assess the overall trend of the population.

To consider hunter independent trends in the turkey population, an analysis of all available harvest, participant, and survey derived effort was conducted. Referred to as catch per unit of effort (CPUE), an index of harvest divided by the number of hunters multiplied by the average days afield was plotted for multiple time frames (Figure 10). The CPUE indicates the theoretical harvest of 1 hunter hunting 1 day, implying how numerous turkeys are on the landscape. Figure 10 demonstrates a decline in the number of turkeys on the landscape from the early 2000s, correlating somewhat with the PPGI, though the past 10 years show an increase in bird numbers. The trend from the start of effort data keeping (1991) shows positive as the population has grown significantly from the early 1990s.

The ratio of juveniles to adults in the spring harvest, along with brood survey information, can also provide insight into wild turkey population dynamics. For example, in 2010 and 2019, data showed that a lower number of juvenile birds were harvested, indicating lower poult production the previous year (juvenile birds are approximately 1 year old). Therefore, it was expected that in 2009 and 2018, brood indices should be lower than average. The brood index in 2009 was 1.7 and 2.4 in 2018. (Table 12, Figure 10). In 2011, the juvenile to adult ratio was the highest it had been since 1994, indicating exceptional productivity; the brood index for 2010 was the highest ever recorded (3.6).

Figure 8. Perception of hunters regarding wild turkey population growth from 1999 – 2025.

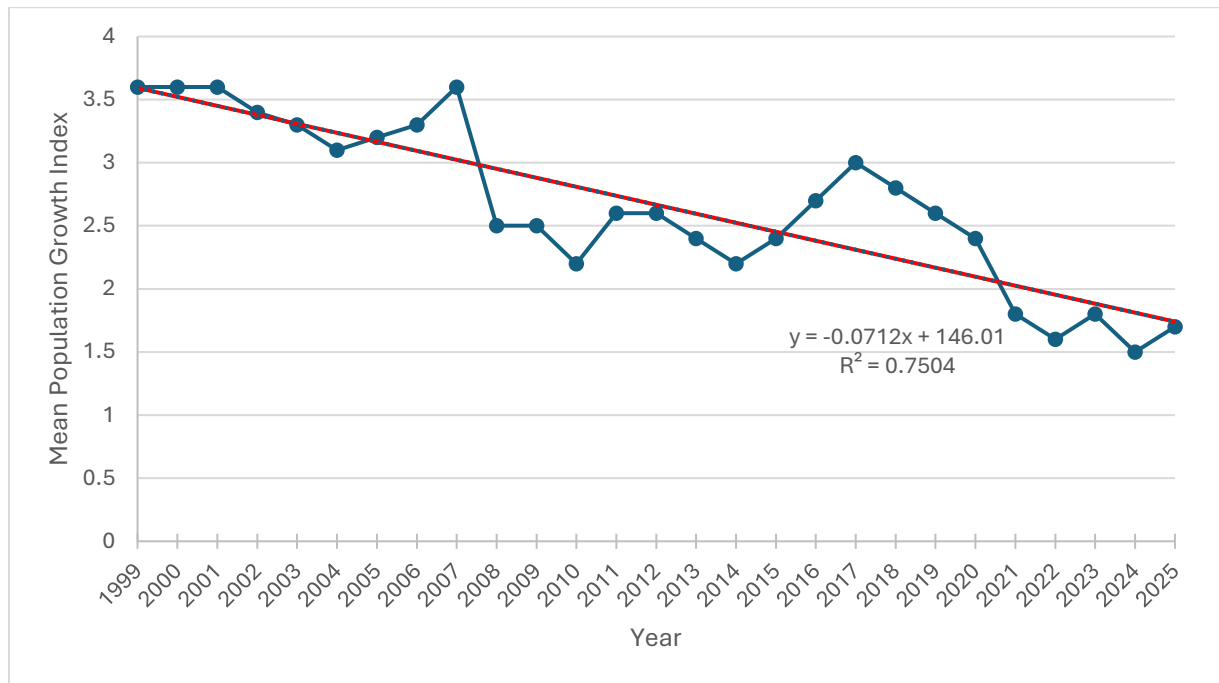
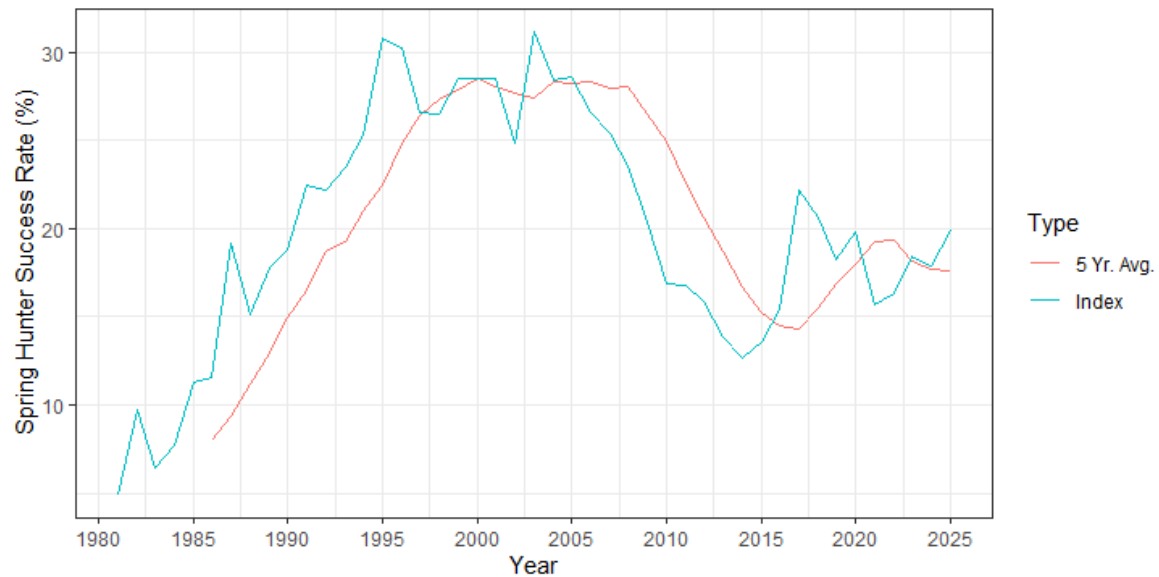
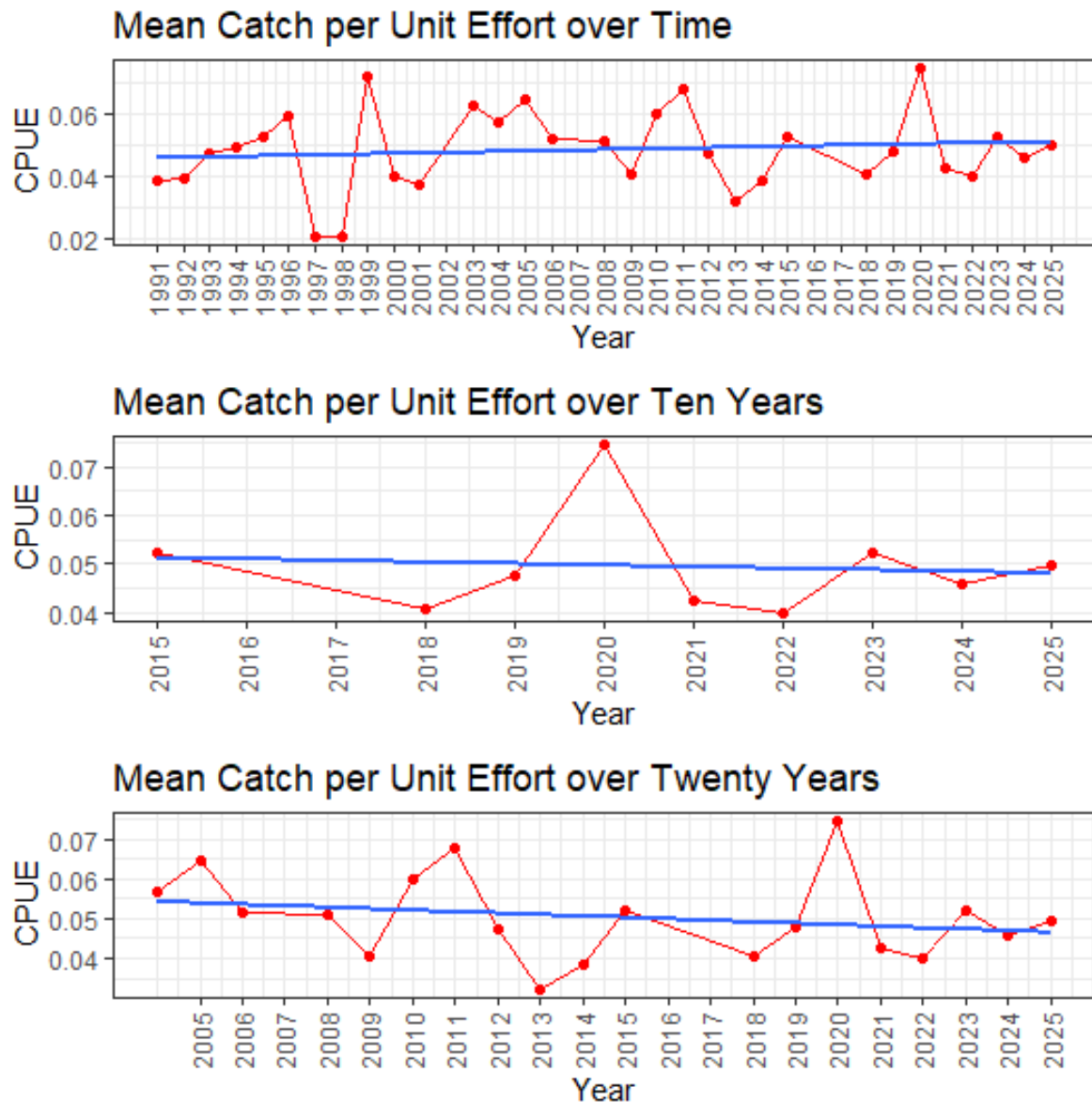


Figure 9. Trend in spring turkey harvest success from 1981 - 2025.



Note: Data from 2022 onward reflects the change from RGBCS issued to RGB hunters used to calculate success rate.

Figure 10. Catch per unit of effort (CPUE) for Connecticut's spring wild turkey seasons, 1991 – 2025.



Research

To address questions regarding the decline in turkey populations, research was initiated in the beginning of January 2025 at two study areas in eastern Connecticut (Zones 4A, 4B, and 5 being the north study area, and Zones 9, 10, and 12 east of the river being the southern area). Several bait sites were monitored from January through mid-March allowing for the capture of 48 turkeys. All captured birds were fitted with leg bands, and a reporting website was configured and launched prior to the initial capture. Select hens (n=21) were fitted with GPS backpacks, and biological samples (blood, tracheal, and cloacal swabs; skin scrapes in the event of lesions) were taken. All males (n=26) were banded, and measurements were taken; a select subset was also subject to further

biological sampling. Turkeys involved in wildlife-human conflicts were also marked with leg bands. During the nesting season, hens initiating nests were identified by position and accelerometer data recorded by their backpack transmitters. Cellular-enabled game cameras were deployed as practicable to monitor nests for predation.

Trapping efforts began in December 2025 for the 2026 season. Forty-eight backpacks were deployed on hens with 2 capture-related mortalities whose backpacks were recovered and redeployed. An additional nuisance turkey was captured and fitted with a backpack transmitter for a total of 51 deployments for the 2026 season. Additionally, 8 males were banded. While some residual 2025 GPS backpacks were deployed, 40 of the units fielded in 2026 included solar charging capability and data uploads through cellular and satellite networks.

Seven hens from the 2025 trapping season survived into the 2026 nesting season; 4 remained alive as of May 2026 and 2 of the transmitters in this group are reaching end-of-life power and no longer transmit reliable position data. Their status will be listed as unknown-transmitter-failure when this occurs. Two 2025 marked males were harvested during the 2025 spring season and 7 were harvested in the spring 2026 season. One hen in 2025 produced a brood that lived to the 4-week mark, where poults can roost and chances of survival are known to increase. This brood was lost somewhere between week 5 and week 6. In May 2026, 2 of the 4 living hens have attempted a nest and abandoned; an additional hen attempted a nest but was predated.

Of the 51 hens captured in 2026, 16 are deceased as of May 2026. One hen has been missing since late March due to a solar power failure (and assumed lost); others in this cohort have lost power but returned to transmitting status at a later date. Two further hens have lost power as of mid-May 2026, though their fates are still undetermined. Of the total 2026 cohort, their nesting status is found in Table 13.

Study goals include informing biologists as to the number of successfully bred hens, along with their survival, nest success, and poult survival. Additionally, band data may inform harvest rates and biological data will inform on disease prevalence and effects on poult production.

Field efforts on this project are planned through the breeding season in 2027.

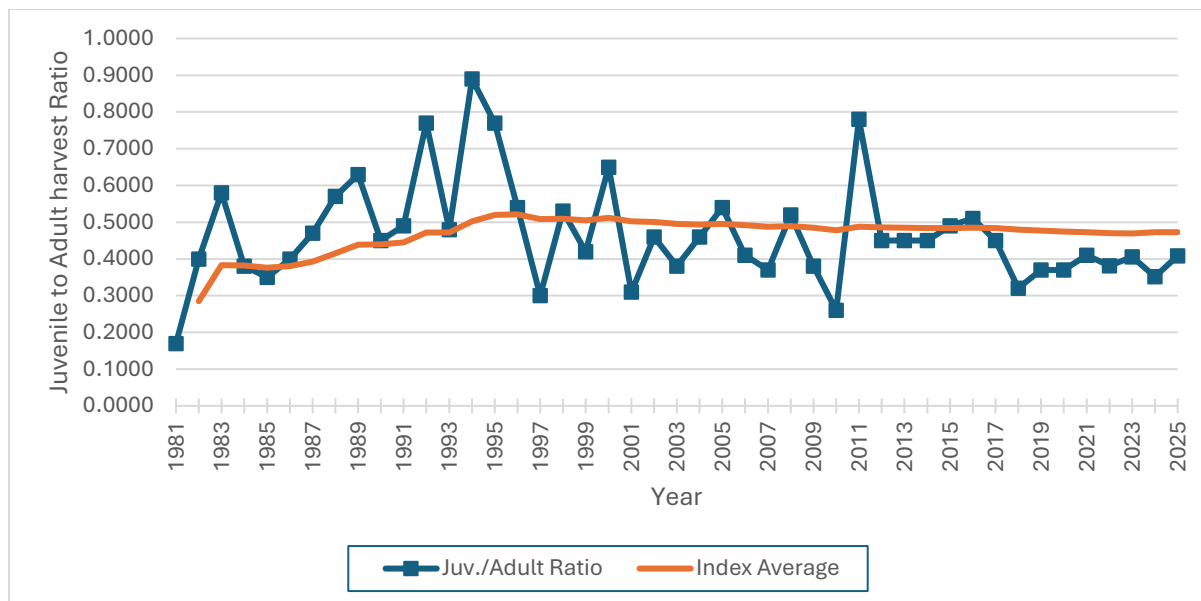
Table 13. Capture year nesting status, May 2026.

Status	Count	%
Abandoned – predation/unknown	11	28
Abandoned – staff flushed	3	8
Hatched	2	5
Killed on nest	9	23
Incubating	14	36
Total	39	100

Summary

- The state's wild turkey population appeared to be stable from 2022 to 2023, while taking a small downturn in 2024. The population resumed incremental growth for 2025.
- Spring harvest success rates increased slightly from the 2024 season (Figure 9 and 10) to levels last seen in 2020.
- The increase in the ratio of juveniles to adults harvested in the spring (Figure 11) supports stabilization, the past 5 years oscillating.
- Nesting season conditions were marginally wetter and the poult per hen index indicated a decrease in kind. Poult per brood numbers remain consistent since 2022, implying the conditions poult were presented with were similar.
- Fall harvest remained stable, its scale (a total of 130 birds harvested statewide, 45% female) was unlikely to cause significant impact on the breeding population for the spring of 2026.
- The harsher winter than the previous season may show some impact. However, the fitness of birds trapped for research work did not indicate any malnourishment, with some younger birds still exhibiting a good level of fitness.

Figure 11. Ratio of juvenile to adult turkeys taken during Connecticut's spring wild turkey seasons, 1981 – 2025.



Appendices

Appendix A. Connecticut spring turkey harvest by town, 2015-2025.

Town	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Andover	7	4	14	12	10	11	10	8	9	5	2
Ansonia	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ashford	20	31	35	34	24	14	16	23	22	30	12
Avon	3	3	1	4	3	5	1	1	4	2	1
Barkhamsted	12	4	12	10	9	25	8	12	15	6	8
Beacon Falls	9	6	6	8	4	6	3	2	2	3	0
Berlin	7	6	8	18	9	17	10	9	17	5	5
Bethany	5	1	9	1	2	2	3	1	0	1	0
Bethel	0	5	3	6	4	3	1	2	0	1	5
Bethlehem	7	4	6	8	8	10	4	5	6	7	6
Bloomfield	1	3	0	2	4	5	0	6	3	3	2
Bolton	2	4	5	4	2	3	3	1	4	6	8
Bozrah	4	5	8	13	5	7	5	7	6	10	8
Branford	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	2
Bridgeport	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bridgewater	6	8	2	9	10	12	10	8	2	7	4
Bristol	1	3	2	1	5	5	4	3	2	4	3
Brookfield	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	0	2	3
Brooklyn	3	12	11	12	11	12	10	10	11	22	10
Burlington	7	6	11	4	4	0	5	3	3	8	9
Canaan	8	11	19	8	18	22	14	19	15	18	7
Canterbury	9	5	14	15	13	16	9	18	10	8	23
Canton	7	14	7	11	5	8	5	5	3	18	14
Chaplin	8	8	11	11	13	14	15	12	17	9	15
Cheshire	4	1	7	6	2	4	4	2	3	4	1
Chester	4	3	4	9	4	7	2	1	6	4	3
Clinton	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	0
Colchester	13	26	7	17	14	20	21	18	25	15	10
Colebrook	9	4	11	5	15	6	6	8	8	3	5
Columbia	3	4	10	8	3	13	5	9	7	7	6
Cornwall	10	16	16	16	20	31	20	33	15	16	17
Coventry	20	18	27	32	22	30	21	19	22	8	24
Cromwell	5	5	6	5	3	5	0	0	2	2	2
Danbury	3	2	2	10	5	4	2	4	4	4	1
Darien	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0
Deep River	0	2	3	3	5	5	1	1	0	2	3

Town	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Derby	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
Durham	9	14	11	17	12	12	9	8	9	10	4
East Granby	2	8	4	4	5	4	9	5	3	5	6
East Haddam	22	16	25	25	7	19	12	12	14	8	10
East Hampton	4	7	11	2	10	12	9	5	4	13	9
East Hartford	1	1	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
East Haven	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
East Lyme	15	13	14	15	13	12	8	7	4	7	6
East Windsor	20	1	11	15	17	21	15	13	8	3	5
Eastford	13	22	27	19	12	19	14	9	16	12	10
Easton	3	3	11	13	5	15	10	4	12	9	10
Ellington	15	9	11	18	5	10	7	10	15	6	6
Enfield	5	6	17	8	13	11	9	5	4	4	4
Essex	2	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Fairfield	1	4	1	3	2	3	1	1	1	3	2
Farmington	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	0	3	0	1
Franklin	10	16	16	10	11	13	12	4	11	10	9
Glastonbury	12	13	11	11	15	21	12	10	9	4	11
Goshen	14	13	18	17	14	13	10	7	9	12	14
Granby	13	15	15	8	10	17	10	5	9	10	13
Greenwich	1	0	3	4	3	4	1	1	0	0	3
Griswold	14	19	10	17	21	19	15	17	27	12	12
Groton	5	4	2	4	2	7	3	4	0	2	0
Guilford	8	10	8	12	6	9	7	7	7	6	7
Haddam	23	31	27	21	14	17	13	15	17	15	14
Hamden	5	4	5	10	10	12	1	4	7	7	6
Hampton	8	8	18	12	12	18	10	12	10	12	15
Hartford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Hartland	10	13	17	15	13	18	8	16	27	13	12
Harwinton	16	25	22	16	12	13	13	16	6	11	5
Hebron	5	8	10	21	17	15	12	12	4	8	7
Kent	14	12	16	11	8	25	7	9	14	16	8
Killingly	5	9	10	10	11	14	20	10	11	1	19
Killingworth	13	13	8	9	12	10	6	11	6	8	6
Lebanon	31	24	27	31	36	38	28	22	33	34	26
Ledyard	7	12	7	14	16	15	15	15	17	12	13
Lisbon	2	4	10	10	4	10	4	8	7	4	7
Litchfield	14	12	20	15	9	18	23	23	17	19	20
Lyme	11	20	29	18	13	10	6	3	15	5	10
Madison	3	0	7	1	0	3	5	0	2	3	1

Town	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Manchester	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Mansfield	18	15	16	17	14	15	12	9	11	12	19
Marlborough	6	7	13	2	9	10	5	10	11	2	4
Meriden	0	3	0	1	3	2	2	1	1	0	0
Middlebury	1	3	7	0	2	2	1	2	1	2	2
Middlefield	12	12	15	3	10	10	4	13	6	8	11
Middletown	21	18	12	12	15	21	13	12	10	16	16
Milford	3	3	4	3	2	4	3	4	4	2	5
Monroe	2	5	4	5	3	4	1	3	3	2	5
Montville	12	9	15	16	7	13	7	1	5	14	7
Morris	7	3	7	5	6	8	8	6	8	4	8
Naugatuck	5	6	3	2	3	6	6	5	3	2	1
New Canaan	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
New Fairfield	3	5	2	7	4	7	6	5	9	8	8
New Hartford	14	15	23	18	18	24	14	16	22	19	23
New Haven	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
New London	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
New Milford	24	18	15	8	14	15	15	19	16	1	20
Newington	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	13	0
Newtown	9	17	18	12	15	15	15	10	12	0	14
Norfolk	12	13	9	17	6	10	17	12	15	17	7
North Branford	6	5	7	3	2	4	3	4	1	1	2
North Canaan	4	3	3	6	2	8	3	1	6	2	2
North Haven	5	5	8	6	2	6	3	0	3	0	3
N. Stonington	15	18	26	27	23	28	23	22	28	23	19
Norwalk	0	0	1	1	0	3	1	3	1	1	1
Norwich	5	3	4	0	2	6	6	4	6	1	7
Old Lyme	7	9	9	7	10	8	5	3	4	1	8
Old Saybrook	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
Orange	12	7	7	1	3	3	2	5	2	1	0
Oxford	7	10	7	7	10	13	4	7	6	4	5
Plainfield	12	20	18	17	12	16	16	7	12	12	18
Plainville	1	1	5	5	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Plymouth	8	5	7	10	7	17	4	9	9	5	4
Pomfret	18	20	19	22	18	21	20	20	15	17	13
Portland	4	11	11	5	10	10	7	4	7	4	8
Preston	16	9	8	13	8	11	13	6	15	24	14
Prospect	2	4	1	3	0	2	2	7	3	1	2
Putnam	5	6	7	7	3	8	1	5	0	0	6
Redding	12	5	10	8	11	6	12	5	8	13	4

Town	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Ridgefield	2	6	4	5	4	7	8	1	1	5	2
Rocky Hill	1	3	4	4	3	1	1	1	0	1	1
Roxbury	10	3	12	9	0	2	2	3	3	2	4
Salem	8	7	11	10	6	8	2	6	6	8	4
Salisbury	11	14	19	11	14	17	8	11	16	19	9
Scotland	18	14	26	28	24	14	12	16	12	16	24
Seymour	4	6	5	3	0	4	3	1	1	6	3
Sharon	19	18	17	11	22	22	33	24	24	17	19
Shelton	0	5	9	3	6	9	2	2	2	0	3
Sherman	3	3	5	3	4	4	0	0	2	1	5
Simsbury	1	1	6	4	5	4	6	3	5	3	2
Somers	8	13	11	21	4	9	15	8	6	4	6
Southbury	10	10	18	10	10	15	4	7	12	7	12
Southington	3	6	1	7	1	3	3	2	8	0	0
South Windsor	9	6	14	5	8	15	13	6	1	11	0
Sprague	3	7	2	6	4	6	1	3	0	1	14
Stafford	16	33	21	29	19	21	14	22	32	29	22
Stamford	5	4	2	2	1	0	0	1	1	2	2
Sterling	15	10	14	19	14	29	13	13	13	17	16
Stonington	19	12	15	9	16	15	8	8	16	10	5
Stratford	2	0	3	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	0
Suffield	9	25	28	20	20	26	24	12	15	18	20
Thomaston	1	3	1	0	1	2	4	6	3	1	0
Thompson	15	22	26	33	35	32	32	19	21	26	28
Tolland	5	4	5	6	8	6	7	7	5	11	6
Torrington	7	16	13	17	16	17	19	9	11	11	13
Trumbull	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Union	9	12	15	18	8	17	14	12	10	15	12
Vernon	2	4	3	2	5	2	3	3	4	3	3
Voluntown	14	19	16	20	28	22	27	23	36	27	22
Wallingford	8	5	11	12	9	4	7	7	9	5	6
Warren	7	8	15	15	17	10	13	7	14	10	24
Washington	18	13	18	13	10	17	14	12	12	8	10
Waterbury	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Waterford	15	10	16	10	4	10	3	3	6	10	8
Watertown	4	2	6	10	6	11	11	10	8	10	9
Westbrook	1	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	4
West Haven	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
West Hartford	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Weston	0	1	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	2

Town	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Westport	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wethersfield	0	0	0	1	0	3	2	0	0	0	0
Willington	20	10	15	20	25	13	11	3	6	6	5
Wilton	0	2	1	1	1	3	3	3	5	4	1
Winchester	7	8	14	10	15	17	13	7	10	11	4
Windham	12	5	19	14	9	9	17	15	24	21	13
Windsor	1	2	8	0	0	3	5	2	1	1	0
Windsor Locks	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Wolcott	4	0	3	3	4	4	2	0	0	0	1
Woodbridge	4	0	0	3	1	4	0	2	4	7	8
Woodbury	7	5	12	8	15	15	16	8	6	7	9
Woodstock	42	49	46	48	31	44	25	24	35	32	25
Total	1232	1335	1584	1504	1324	1652	1247	1139	1279	1219	1186

Appendix B. Spring turkey harvest from state-owned and managed lands, 2024 and 2025.

State Land	No. birds harvested 2024	No. birds harvested 2025	Sq. Miles*	Harv./mi² 2024	Harv./mi² 2025
Aldo Leopold WMA	3	4	0.87	3.4	4.6
Algonquin SF	0	4	1.87	0	3.8
American Legion	3	1	2.04	1.5	0.5
Barn Island WMA	3	0	1.58	1.9	0
Bear Hill WMA	2	5	0.57	3.5	8.8
Beaver Brook SP	7	0	0.63	11.1	0
Bishops Swamp WMA	2	1	1.62	1.2	0.6
Bloomfield FCA1	2	0	0.45	4.5	0
Bloomfield FCA2	1	0	0.57	1.8	0
Camp Columbia SF	0	3	0.94	0	3.2
Cockaponset SF	24	14	26.85	0.9	0.5
East Swamp WMA	0	3	0.10	0	0
Eightmile River WMA	0	2	0.48	0	0
Enders SF	5	6	0.55	9.1	10.9
Franklin Swamp WMA	1	2	1.07	0.9	1.8
Goshen WMA	5	13	2.50	2.0	5.2
Great Swamp FCA	3	3	0.53	5.0	5.0
Hancock Brook Lake	1	2	1.10	0.9	1.8
Housatonic River WMA	3	6	0.87	3.4	6.9
Housatonic SF	13	11	17.63	0.7	0.6
Kollar WMA	0	1	1.40	0	0.7
Larson Lot WMA	0	1	0.38	0	2.6
Lebanon Co-Op Mgmt. Area	0	1	0.33	0	3.0
Mansfield Hollow FTA	2	0	0.37	5.4	0
Mansfield Hollow Lake	3	2	3.14	1.0	0.6
Mattatuck SF	4	2	7.0	0.6	0.3
McKinney NWR Units	1	2	1.39	1.4	2.8
MDC Barkhamsted Reservoir – West Block	1	0	5.78	0.2	0
MDC – Colebrook Reservoir/Hogback Dam	1	2	0.46	0.2	0.3
Meadow Brook WMA	1	3	0.53	1.9	5.7
Meshomasic SF	6	3	14.22	0.4	0.2
Mohawk SF	0	1	0.51	0	2.0
Mohegan SF	1	4	1.50	1.3	2.7
Nassahegon SF	1	6	1.78	0.6	3.4

State Land	No. birds harvested 2024	No. birds harvested 2025	Sq. Miles*	Harv./mi² 2024	Harv./mi² 2025
Natchaug SF	17	24	19.68	0.9	1.2
Naugatuck SF	10	3	21.15	0.5	0.1
Nehantic SF	3	7	7.91	0.4	0.9
Nepaug SF	3	2	2.10	1.4	1.0
Newgate WMA	0	4	0.70	0	5.7
Nipmuck SF	4	3	14.40	0.3	0.2
NU-Maromas Coop WMA	5	5	2.48	2.0	2.0
NU-Skiff Mtn. Coop WMA	1	1	1.13	0.9	0.9
Nye Holman SF	0	1	1.23	0	0.8
Pachaug SF	34	19	40.84	0.8	0.5
Paugussett SF	1	3	3.04	1.6	1.0
Paugnut SF	5	2	2.7	1.6	0.7
Pease Brook WMA	0	1	0.52	0	1.9
Peoples SF	4	6	4.60	0.9	1.3
Pootatuck SF	4	7	1.72	2.3	4.1
Quaddick SF	8	3	0.90	8.9	3.3
Quinebaug River WMA	0	4	2.20	0	1.6
Quinnipac River SP	0	1	0.53	0	1.9
Robbins Swamp WMA	3	2	2.45	1.2	0.8
Roraback WMA	3	0	3.10	1.0	0
Rose Hill WMA	2	3	1.37	1.5	2.2
Salmon River SF	13	6	10.90	1.2	0.6
Selden Neck SP	0	1	0.88	0	1.1
Shenipsit SF	8	6	11.85	0.7	0.5
Simsbury WMA	4	2	0.57	7.0	3.5
Spignesi WMA	2	4	0.82	2.4	4.9
Suffield WMA	2	2	0.30	6.7	6.7
Talbot WMA	2	1	0.79	2.5	1.3
Tankerhoosen WMA	2	1	0.78	2.6	1.3
Topsmead SF	0	1	0.3	0	3.3
Trout Brook Valley SP	0	2	0.47	0	4.3
Tunxis SF	6	12	15.88	0.4	0.8
Wagnunk Meadows	1	4	1.00	1.0	4.0
West Thompson Dam	3	1	2.77	1.1	0.4
Whiting River FCA	2	0	0.29	7.0	0
Wyantenock SF	5	8	6.38	0.8	1.3
Yale Forest	6	8	12.03	0.5	0.6
Zemko Pond WMA	1	0	0.71	1.4	0

*Calculated with 2024 Public Hunting Area Acreages

Appendix C. Connecticut fall firearms turkey harvest and hunter numbers, 1990 – 2025.

Year	Hunter Numbers	Harvest
1990	579	52
1991	514	34
1992	402	40
1993	376	45
1994	599	54
1995	1,028	121
1996	2,069	124
1997	2,073	140
1998	1,783	112
1999	2,304	290
2000	2,378	190
2001	3,060	287
2002	3,981	188
2003	3,337	134
2004	3,060	234
2005	2,941	156
2006	2,926	109
2007	2,769	165

Year	Hunter Numbers	Harvest
2008	3,037	160
2009	3,313	64
2010	2,444	64
2011	2,586	69
2012	2,383	47
2013	2,440	47
2014	2,145	61
2015	2,127	51
2016*	NA	60
2017*	NA	56
2018**	3,919	66
2019	3,066	32
2020	4,244	58
2021	3,775	44
2022	3,289	69
2023^	1,018	22
2024	973	48
2025	813	38

*Data unavailable due to the initiation of the Resident Game Bird Conservation Stamp.

**Hunter participation numbers derived from intended participation indicated in the Spring Turkey Hunter Survey beginning in 2018.

^Hunter participation numbers derived from participation indicated in the Fall Resident Game Bird Hunter Survey.

Appendix D. Connecticut fall archery turkey harvest and hunter numbers, 1983 – 2025.

Year	Hunter Numbers	Harvest
1983	434	2
1984	348	1
1985	558	8
1986	596	10
1987	848	4
1988	1,071	7
1989	1,380	7
1990	1,094	13
1991	1,755	20
1992	841	11
1993	924	19
1994	1,297	25
1995	2,137	43
1996	2,275	27
1997	2,024	41
1998	1,967	36
1999	2,187	64
2000	2,145	41
2001	2,395	73
2002	2,706	64
2003	2,296	58
2004	2,173	68
2005	2,061	46
2006	2,034	26
2007	1,957	43
2008	2,297	51
2009	2,523	64
2010	1,862	50
2011	1,691	63
2012	1,260	39
2013	1,409	60
2014	1,375	66
2015	1,532	64
2016*	NA	91
2017*	NA	121

Year	Hunter Numbers	Harvest
2018	3,105	115
2019	3,999	79
2020	4,359	107
2021	3,837	67
2022	3,517	82
2023^	1,100	54
2024	988	81
2025	890	82

*Data unavailable due to the initiation of the Resident Game Bird Conservation Stamp.

**Hunter participation numbers derived from intended participation indicated in the Spring Turkey Hunter Survey beginning in 2018.

^Hunter participation numbers derived from participation indicated in the Fall Resident Game Bird Hunter Survey.