



Brandy Anderson displays one of the many turkeys that he has hunted in his lifetime.

— Photo by Christie Anderson/The Norton Telegram

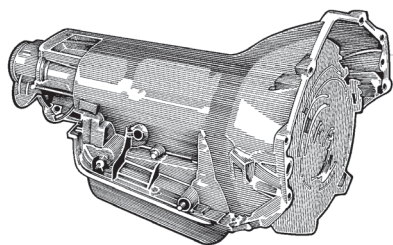


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Turkeys abundant in western Kansas

By Tom Betz

Goodland Star-News
nt.betz@nwansas.com

Wild turkey populations in most of Kansas have been growing for years, offering hunters the opportunity to pursue this large game bird in the fall, said officials of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

State wildlife conservation officers say the majority of fall turkey hunters use traditional methods. These include setting blinds near roosts, using decoys and calls to lure birds within shooting distance or using dogs to scatter turkey flocks and then calling birds into shotgun or gun range.

Some hunters buy permits and game tags in case they bag a turkey while archery hunting for deer or upland bird hunting.

"Turkey populations are fair in the northwest Kansas area," wildlife section Chief Mike Mitchener said. "The turkey population in the area is tied to drainages."

He said turkeys can be found along the Smoky Hill and Republican rivers and some of the smaller creeks.

Mitchener said a lot of the turkey population in the northwest area lives on private land. Sherman, Cheyenne, Rawlins and Decatur hold turkey populations, he said, but most live on private land.

There are a few places in the region where turkeys can be found on public land. Mitchener said hunters can hunt for turkey at the South Fork and St. Francis Wildlife Areas in Cheyenne County and around Sebelius Reservoir near Norton. There are a few Rio Grande turkeys in the Sheridan Wildlife Area.

October offers some of the best hunting wildlife experts say. Turkeys are in small groups, with many young birds that have never been hunted.

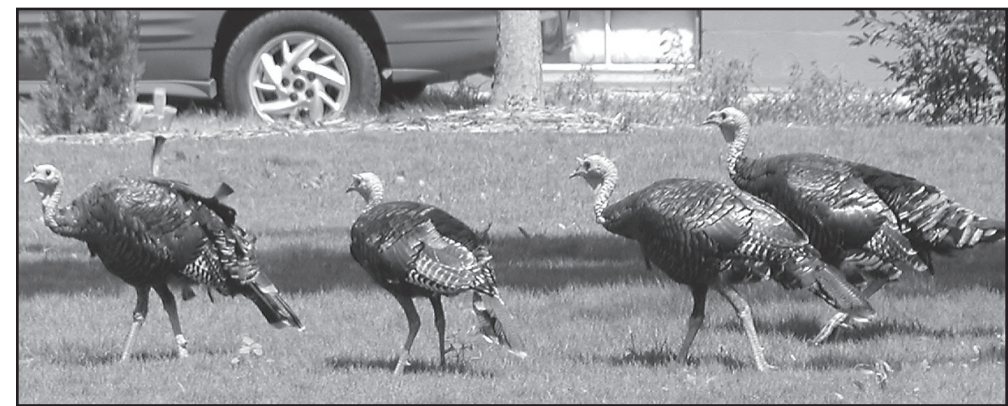
Often, a hunter can stalk the birds or break up a group, then hide and call them back. Public wildlife areas and walk-in hunting access lands often hold large numbers of turkeys in October before hunting pressure moves them to private land.

All of Kansas except Unit 4 (west central and southwestern Kansas) is open to fall hunting. Long seasons this year run Oct. 1 to Dec. 1, Dec. 14 to 31 and Jan. 11 to 31.

One turkey permit per hunter is allowed, valid in Unit 1 (northwestern Kansas), Unit 2 (the eastern one-half of the state), and Unit 3 (central Kansas). In addition, hunters may purchase as many as three additional turkey game tags valid in Unit 2 only.

One turkey of either sex may be taken with each permit or tag.

The combination of good turkey populations, uncrowded hunting and mild fall weather makes



A group of turkeys walk around a yard in Colby.

— Photo by Evan Barnum/The Colby Free Press

October an excellent time to go turkey hunting. It's a good time to prepare for Thanksgiving dinner, said Mitchener.

Unit descriptions may be found in the annual Kansas Hunting and Furharvesting Regulations Summary, available at the Wildlife and Parks website — www.kdwp.state.ks.us — Wildlife and Parks offices and license vendors.

Hunters should report all harvested birds that are banded or fitted with transmitters. Contact the nearest state Wildlife and Parks office to arrange for someone to pick up the transmitter.

After killing a turkey, the hunter must sign, date and affix a carcass tag to a leg before moving the bird.

Permits purchased through the Internet include a carcass tag that is printed with the permit. To protect the tag, it should be placed in a clear plastic bag and attached to the leg of the animal where it can be seen.

Carcass tags must remain attached until the

animal is processed for consumption, and the hunter must retain the tag until the animal is consumed, given to another or taken to a commercial processor.

The beard (if taken in spring season) of the wild turkey must remain naturally attached to the bird while in transit from the site of the kill to the home or processing firm.

Any legally acquired meat may be given to and possessed by another, if a dated, written notice that includes the donor's printed name, signature, address and permit number or license transaction number accompanies the meat. The person receiving the meat must retain the notice until the meat is consumed or given away.

Nonresidents must meet the requirements of states along their route while transporting or possessing turkey carcasses.

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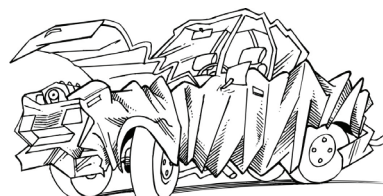


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