

Table 1. Estimated statewide turkey harvest in South Carolina in 2023.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Gobbler Harvest	Jake Harvest	Total Harvest	Percent Jakes	Harvest Rates	
							Ac/Turkey	Turkey/Mi. ²
Abbeville	223,113	349	142	50	192	26.0	1,162	0.6
Aiken	500,546	782	157	12	169	7.1	2,962	0.2
Allendale	216,455	338	164	37	201	18.4	1,077	0.6
Anderson	219,068	342	228	50	278	18.0	788	0.8
Bamberg	196,573	307	271	25	296	8.4	664	1.0
Barnwell	281,764	440	142	12	154	7.8	1,830	0.3
Beaufort	147,441	230	50	12	62	19.4	2,378	0.3
Berkeley	567,530	887	586	37	623	5.9	911	0.7
Calhoun	190,584	298	214	19	233	8.2	818	0.8
Charleston	288,732	451	343	34	377	9.0	766	0.8
Cherokee	156,664	245	92	12	104	11.5	1,506	0.4
Chester	300,589	470	242	37	279	13.3	1,077	0.6
Chesterfield	372,478	582	142	50	192	26.0	1,940	0.3
Clarendon	298,087	466	250	12	262	4.6	1,138	0.6
Colleton	502,666	785	493	12	505	2.4	995	0.6
Darlington	286,228	447	157	25	182	13.7	1,573	0.4
Dillon	214,069	334	150	10	160	6.3	1,338	0.5
Dorchester	302,717	473	228	12	240	5.0	1,261	0.5
Edgefield	246,543	385	178	25	203	12.3	1,214	0.5
Fairfield	384,607	601	464	50	514	9.7	748	0.9
Florence	397,888	622	364	12	376	3.2	1,058	0.6
Georgetown	399,638	624	385	37	422	8.8	947	0.7
Greenville	294,257	460	407	125	532	23.5	553	1.2
Greenwood	204,400	319	164	37	201	18.4	1,017	0.6
Hampton	324,840	508	321	12	333	3.6	975	0.7
Horry	533,336	833	378	37	415	8.9	1,285	0.5
Jasper	309,889	484	193	20	213	9.4	1,455	0.4
Kershaw	360,485	563	264	12	276	4.3	1,306	0.5
Lancaster	266,382	416	264	62	326	19.0	817	0.8
Laurens	317,916	497	328	100	428	23.4	743	0.9
Lee	220,106	344	142	12	154	7.8	1,429	0.4
Lexington	280,742	439	21	12	33	36.4	8,507	0.1
McCormick	212,021	331	171	37	208	17.8	1,019	0.6
Marion	216,907	339	214	12	226	5.3	960	0.7
Marlboro	281,271	439	178	50	228	21.9	1,234	0.5
Newberry	317,761	497	250	25	275	9.1	1,155	0.6
Oconee	284,348	444	128	37	165	22.4	1,723	0.4
Orangeburg	504,516	788	457	75	532	14.1	948	0.7
Pickens	219,926	344	200	37	237	15.6	928	0.7
Richland	340,121	531	228	25	253	9.9	1,344	0.5
Saluda	192,173	300	114	37	151	24.5	1,273	0.5
Spartanburg	265,939	416	385	62	447	13.9	595	1.1
Sumter	338,968	530	257	12	269	4.5	1,260	0.5
Union	258,111	403	285	37	322	11.5	802	0.8
Williamsburg	513,851	803	650	12	662	1.8	776	0.8
York	276,650	432	142	22	164	13.4	1,687	0.4
Total	14,028,896	21,920	11,583	1,491	13,074	11.4	1,073	0.6

95% Conf. Interval for harvest

(+/-) 1,066 (+/-) 368 (+/-) 1,133

* Acreage shown represents the acreage of forested land and acreage of row crops considered to be significant turkey habitat within each county.

Table 2. County rankings based on harvest per unit area in South Carolina in 2023.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Gobbler Harvest	Jake Harvest	Total Harvest	Percent Jakes	Harvest Rates	
							Ac/Turkey	Turkey/Mi. ²
Greenville	294,257	460	407	125	532	23.5	553	1.2
Spartanburg	265,939	416	385	62	447	13.9	595	1.1
Bamberg	196,573	307	271	25	296	8.4	664	1.0
Laurens	317,916	497	328	100	428	23.4	743	0.9
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Anderson	219,068	342	228	50	278	18.0	788	0.8
Union	258,111	403	285	37	322	11.5	802	0.8
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Berkeley	567,530	887	586	37	623	5.9	911	0.7
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Total	14,028,896	21,920	11,583	1,491	13,074	11.4	1,073	0.6

95% Conf. Interval for harvest

(+/-) 1,112 (+/-) 330 (+/-) 1,172

* Acreage shown represents the acreage of forested land and acreage of row crops considered to be significant turkey habitat within each county.

Table 3. County rankings based on total turkeys harvested in South Carolina in 2023.

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Table 4. Estimated number of turkey hunters, average days hunted, and total hunting effort in South Carolina in 2023.

County	Total Harvest	Number Hunters	Avg. Days Hunted	Total Man/Days
Abbeville	192	1,299	6.4	7,626
Aiken	169	1,081	5.9	5,830
Allendale	201	636	5.7	3,305
Anderson	278	1,190	5.9	6,399
Bamberg	296	881	6.3	5,104
Barnwell	154	609	6.5	3,603
Beaufort	62	236	4.0	869
Berkeley	623	1,781	6.1	9,946
Calhoun	233	654	4.9	2,905
Charleston	377	1,145	5.1	5,382
Cherokee	104	609	7.3	4,075
Chester	279	1,444	5.6	7,389
Chesterfield	192	745	5.8	3,952
Clarendon	262	772	5.4	3,839
Colleton	505	1,335	5.9	7,224
Darlington	182	590	6.4	3,448
Dillon	160	336	5.4	1,660
Dorchester	240	700	6.3	4,057
Edgefield	203	990	5.8	5,260
Fairfield	514	1,935	6.8	11,991
Florence	376	1,017	6.5	6,007
Georgetown	422	999	5.3	4,884
Greenville	532	1,444	4.9	6,441
Greenwood	201	836	6.1	4,642
Hampton	333	1,154	5.6	5,854
Horry	415	1,208	6.7	7,447
Jasper	213	690	5.8	3,682
Kershaw	276	1,245	5.8	6,562
Lancaster	326	881	5.8	4,635
Laurens	428	1,899	6.0	10,432
Lee	154	618	6.9	3,895
Lexington	33	427	4.9	1,908
McCormick	208	890	6.6	5,393
Marion	226	718	6.2	4,063
Marlboro	228	400	5.3	1,947
Newberry	275	1,717	5.6	8,808
Oconee	165	890	6.8	5,540
Orangeburg	532	1,617	5.6	8,237
Pickens	237	990	6.2	5,611
Richland	253	990	4.7	4,294
Saluda	151	890	7.3	5,932
Spartanburg	447	1,526	5.8	8,061
Sumter	269	863	7.1	5,582
Union	322	1,517	7.0	9,654
Williamsburg	662	1,390	5.7	7,248
York	164	736	6.7	4,515
Total	13,074	46,522	5.1*	255,140

*Note - Since individuals hunt multiple counties the average number of days hunted per county varies from the average number of days individuals hunt (6.8 days).

Figure 1. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources 2023 Turkey Hunter Survey.

2023 South Carolina Turkey Hunter Survey

1. Did you turkey hunt in SC this past season (2023)? 1. Yes 2. No
If you answered **No** to this question please **go to question # 11.**
2. Did you harvest any turkeys in SC this past season? 1. Yes 2. No
3. Even if you did not harvest a turkey, please record the SC counties you turkey hunted and the number of days hunted in each county this past season (2023). If you harvested turkeys please record the number of adult gobblers and jakes taken in each county. A day of hunting is defined as any portion of the day spent afield. Please do not give ranges (i.e. 5-10), rather provide absolute numbers (i.e. 5). **Provide information only for yourself** - not friends, relatives, or other people you may have called or guided for or hunted with. *(Jakes typically have beards less than 6", spurs less than 1/2" and longer feathers in the center of their tail fan.)*

SC Counties You Turkey Hunted	# Days Hunted	Number Turkeys Harvested
1		Adult gobblers _____ Jakes _____
2		Adult gobblers _____ Jakes _____
3		Adult gobblers _____ Jakes _____
4		Adult gobblers _____ Jakes _____

If you did not harvest any turkeys in SC this past season please go to question 8.

4. If you harvested turkeys in SC this past season, please indicate as best you can the number of turkeys killed by County and 10-day period of the season.

County of Harvest	Number of Turkeys Harvested by Time Period				
	March 22-31	April 1-10	April 11-20	April 21-30	May 1-10
1.					
2.					
3.					

5. How many turkeys did you kill in the morning _____ after 12:00 noon _____?
6. How many turkeys did you kill on **Private Land** _____ and **Public (WMA) Land** _____?
7. Did you report your harvest to SC Game Check? 1. Yes 2. No
8. How many turkeys did you shoot but not kill or recover in SC this past season? _____
9. Compared to past years, how would you describe the number of turkeys in the area that you hunted most often this spring?
Circle one 1. **Increasing** 2. **About the same** 3. **Decreasing**
10. When turkey hunting, do you use shotgun shells with "heavier than lead" pellets (ex. TSS, Tungsten, Bismuth, Hevi-Shot)? 1. Yes 2. No
11. Are you a resident of SC? 1. Yes 2. No
12. If yes, which county _____

Separate and return this portion of the survey. Postage is prepaid. Please do not staple this form.



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Figure 1. Continued.

May, 2023

Dear SC Turkey Hunter:

Eastern wild turkeys are one of the most important game species in South Carolina. Therefore, it is important that this species be monitored for population status and harvesting activities. Wildlife resource managers require current and accurate information about wild turkey harvests to aid in successfully managing this important natural resource and to optimize future hunting potential. To obtain this needed data, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) is conducting a survey of hunters who received a set of turkey tags during spring 2023.

Although electronic reporting of harvested turkeys is now required, SCDNR will continue to survey hunters to maintain consistency, determine hunter effort, and measure other aspects of turkey hunting. You are one of a group of randomly selected hunters asked to participate in this survey. To draw accurate conclusions it is very important that you complete the survey and return it. Please take time to read each question. **Even if you did not hunt or harvest wild turkeys this spring please indicate this by answering the appropriate questions and moving on to the next set of questions.**

Please note that complete confidentiality will be given to you. Keep in mind that the purpose of the survey is to determine the wild turkey harvest in South Carolina and not to determine whether game laws are observed. By accurately answering the survey questions you will enable SCDNR biologists to better manage the Eastern wild turkey resource for you and other citizens of the state. Therefore, it is very important that you take a few minutes to complete this survey and mail it. Return postage is prepaid.

Results of this survey will be posted on the SCDNR web site once completed. The results from the 2022 survey can be found at: www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/turkey/2022TurkeyHarvest.html

Charles Ruth
Certified Wildlife Biologist
Big Game Program Coordinator

PLEASE MAIL YOUR SURVEY AFTER SEPARATING THIS HALF FROM THE SIDE ON WHICH YOUR ANSWERS HAVE BEEN ENTERED. NO POSTAGE IS NECESSARY.

If you have questions regarding this survey, please call 803-734-3886

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, disability, religion or age. Direct all inquiries to the Office of Human Resources, P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202

23-13714



**TURKEY HUNTER SURVEY
SC DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
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Figure 2. Spring wild turkey harvest in South Carolina 1982-2023. Since 2002 harvest has declined (45%) likely due to less than desirable annual recruitment (see Figure 3 below).

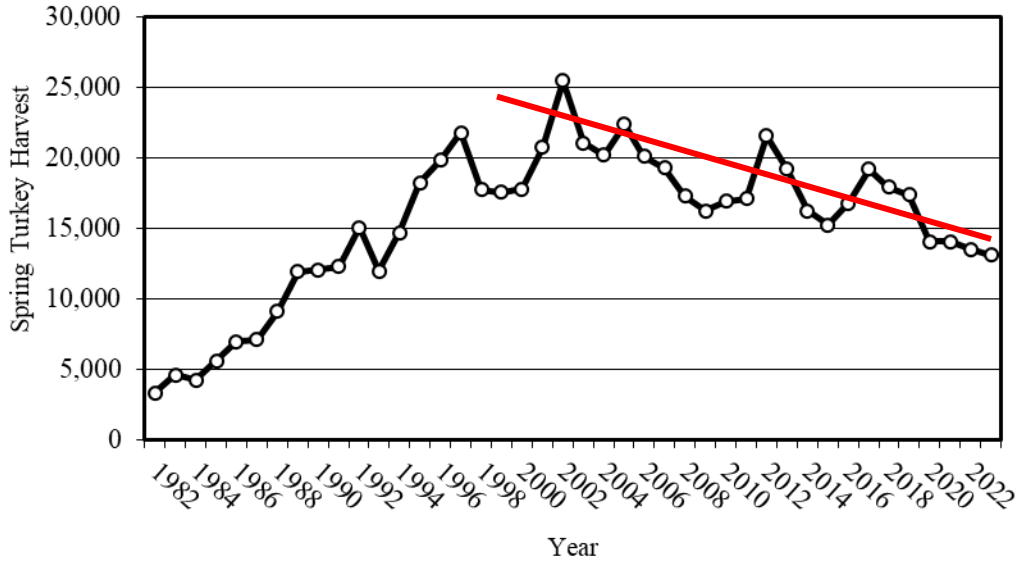


Figure 3. Summer wild turkey recruitment ratio in South Carolina 1982-2022. Note declining trend since 1988. Average recruitment prior to 1988 = 3.5. Average recruitment since 1988 = 2.1. This represents a 40 percent decrease in average recruitment.

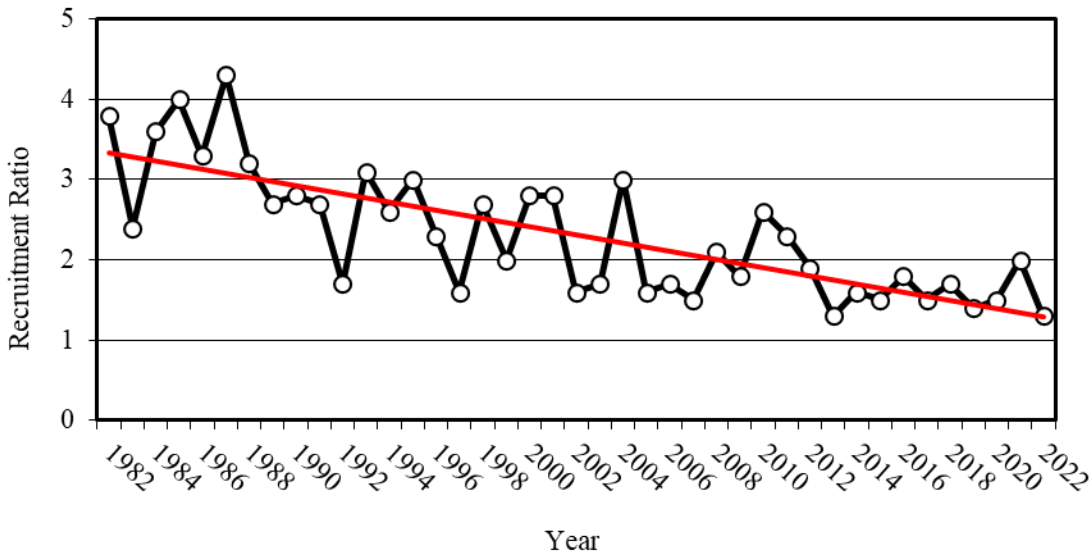


Figure 4. Percentage of gobblers harvested by period of season in South Carolina in 2023.

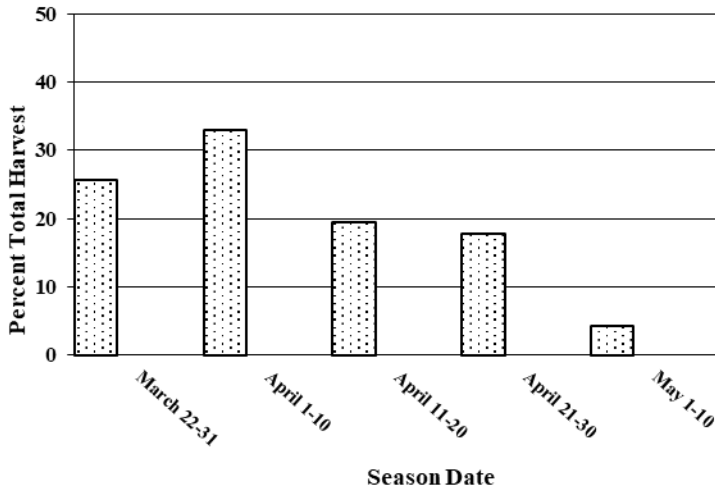


Figure 5. Percentage of gobblers harvested by period of season with March 22-April 30 framework in Game Zones 3 & 4 (coastal plain) in South Carolina in 2023.

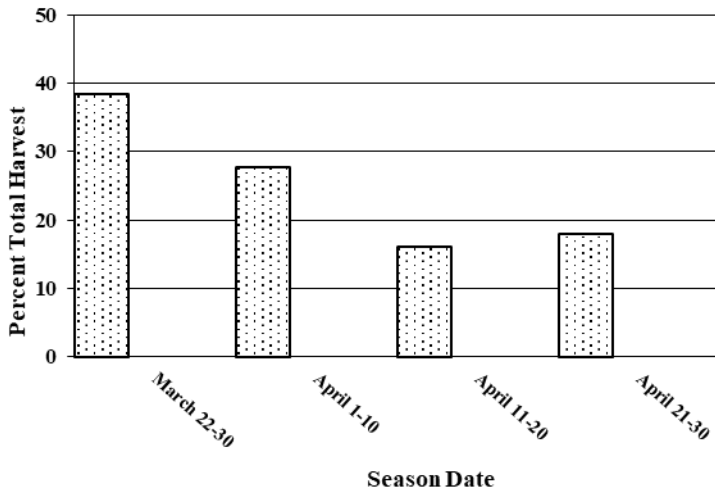


Figure 6. Percentage of gobblers harvested by period of season with April 1-May 10 framework in Game Zones 1 & 2 (piedmont and mountains) in South Carolina in 2023.

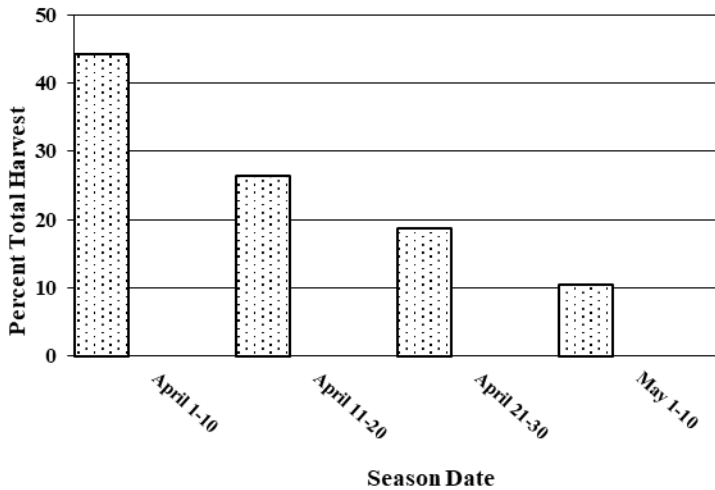


Figure 7. Hunter success during the spring turkey season in South Carolina in 2023. Overall success was 32 percent at harvesting at least one gobbler.

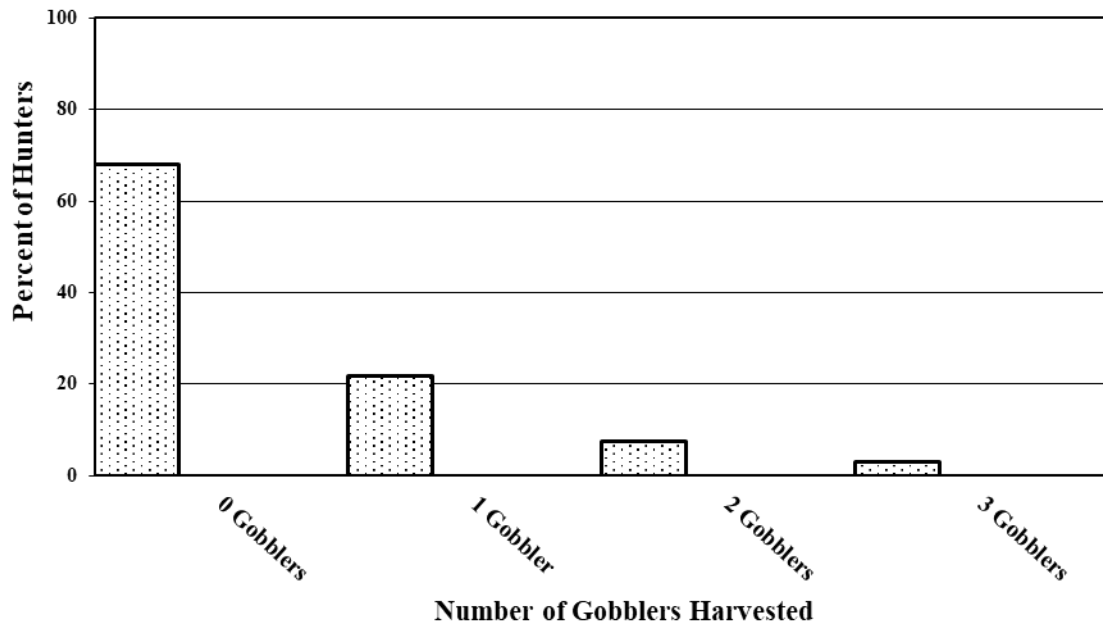


Figure 8. Relative contribution to the total turkey harvest by hunters taking between 1 and 3 gobblers in South Carolina in 2023.

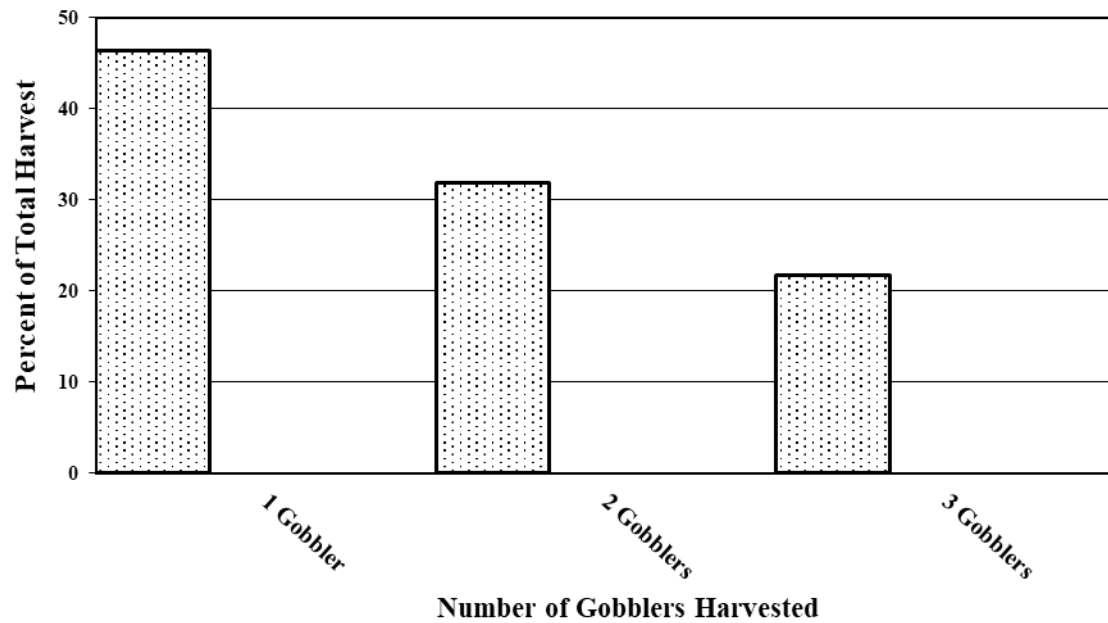


Table 5. Wildlife Management Area (WMA) turkey harvest reported through SC Game Check in 2023

WMA	County	Acreage	Juvenile	Adult	Total	Ac/Turkey
Aiken Gopher Tortoise HP WMA	Aiken	1,782	0	1	1	1782
Ashmore / Chandler HP WMA	Greenville	1,126	0	1	1	1126
Brasstown Creek HP WMA	Oconee	3,170	0	1	1	3170
Broad River Waterfowl Area	Fairfield	640	0	1	1	640
Cliff Pitts WMA	Laurens	1,098	1	0	1	1098
Crackerneck WMA~	Aiken	10,600	1	9	10	1060
Draper WMA*	York	806	0	2	2	403
Edisto River WMA*	Dorchester	1,394	1	4	5	279
Fants Grove WMA	Anderson, Oconee, Pickens	7,444	3	14	17	438
Forty-Acre Rock HP WMA	Lancaster	2,965	0	1	1	2965
Great Pee Dee River HP WMA	Darlington	2,725	0	4	4	681
Hamilton Ridge WMA	Hampton	13,281	0	11	11	1207
Hickory Top WMA	Clarendon	1,105	1	0	1	1105
James L. Mason WMA	McCormick	1,999	0	1	1	1999
Jocassee Gorges (JTNRA)	Oconee, Pickens	33,000	1	16	17	1941
Keowee WMA	Oconee, Pickens	4,930	1	5	6	822
Landsford Canal FLA WMA	Chester	1,049	0	2	2	525
Lewis Ocean Bay HP WMA*	Horry	10,097	1	1	2	5049
Liberty Hill WMA	Kershaw, Lancaster	7,876	1	5	6	1313
Little Pee Dee River HP WMA*	Horry, Marion	10,444	1	6	7	1492
Long Creek Tract WMA	Oconee	20	0	2	2	10
Manchester State Forest WMA	Sumter	23,135	4	15	19	1218
Marsh WMA*	Marion	8,660	0	13	13	666
McBee WMA*	Chesterfield	1,221	0	1	1	1221
McCalla WMA	Abbeville	5,667	1	2	3	1889
Moultrie Hunt Unit WMA*	Berkeley	9,773	1	8	9	1086
Oak Lea WMA	Clarendon	2,000	1	7	8	250
Palachucola WMA	Hampton, Jasper	6,757	0	11	11	614
Pee Dee Station WMA*	Florence	2,701	1	14	15	180
Sand Hills State Forest WMA	Chesterfield, Darlington	46,838	1	24	25	1874
Santee Coastal Reserve WMA^	Charleston, Georgetown	4,000	0	2	2	2000
Santee Cooper Tract WMA	Spartanburg	90	2	0	2	45
Santee Dam WMA	Clarendon	575	0	2	2	288
Steven's Creek HP WMA	Edgefield, McCormick	434	0	3	3	145
Tall Pines WMA	Greenville	1,757	0	2	2	879
Kirsh/Ross/McConnells Tracts	York	1,192	0	1	1	1192
Waccamaw River HP*	Horry	6,691	0	6	6	1115
Webb WMA	Hampton	5,866	0	10	10	587
Wee Tee State Forest WMA	Georgetown, Williamsburg	12,439	0	2	2	6220
Woodbury WMA*	Marion	25,668	0	34	34	755
Worth Mountain WMA*	York	1,643	2	3	5	329
Other / Unnamed WMA	<i>various</i>	126,000	15	98	113	1115
Belfast WMA (Lottery)	Laurens, Newberry	4,664	0	1	1	4664
Bonneau Ferry WMA (Lottery)	Berkeley	10,712	0	6	6	1785
Donnelley WMA (Lottery)	Colleton	8,066	0	5	5	1613
Wateree River HP WMA (Lottery)	Richland	3,674	0	5	5	735
USFS Francis Marion NF	Berkeley, Charleston	259,000	16	178	194	1335

USFS Sumter NF	Numerous	375,000	24	250	274	1369
TOTAL		1,060,808	80	788	868	1222

* Open for hunting Thurs. - Sat. only

~ Open for hunting Fri. & Sat. only

^ Open for hunting Saturdays only. Acreage figure is huntable upland acres, not total WMA acreage.