

March 2, 2021

Megan Haywood

### The Wild Turkeys of Kansas

Did you know that the wild turkey was reintroduced to the state of Kansas?

Historically, like most mid-western states, wild turkeys were found in Kansas. Wild turkeys probably existed in the eastern portions of Kansas and other regions where areas provided adequate woody cover (Hlavachick and Blair 1997). By the mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century the wild turkeys were almost eradicated. Early settlers and Native Americans hunted them, loss of habitat, lenient game laws, and market hunting were the result of extirpation. Reintroduction efforts began in the Midwest states in the mid-1900s (Anonymous 1966).

In 1958 the Rio Grande wild turkey was observed by the Kansas/Oklahoma border. Kansas Forestry, Fish, and Game Commission, today known as (Kansas Department and Wildlife) personnel started trapping birds from flocks and relocating them to different locations in the state. The Rio Grande wild turkeys were also acquired from the Texas and Oklahoma states to help increase numbers in the southwest and south-central portions of Kansas. The Eastern wild turkey, obtained from the Iowa and Missouri states seemed to do well in the central, northeast and southeast parts of the state (Hlavachick and Blair 1997). Because of the successful reintroduction practices of the wild-turkey, in the spring of 1974, 400 permits were issued to partake in the first wild turkey season in Kansas.

Today the turkey population is huntable in almost every county in Kansas. The Rio Grande subspecies dominates the western two-thirds of the state. Limited hunting is available due to the low number population in the southwest. Hybrid Rio Grande/Eastern wild turkeys are found in the northcentral region and the Eastern wild turkey is most commonly found in the northeast and far southeast regions (KDWPT).

Efforts still continue to redistribute the wild turkey population but most management practice now focuses on optimizing turkey hunting opportunities.

The 2021 Spring Turkey Season is available for any resident or non-resident hunter. Hunters may purchase a turkey permit that is valid for units 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6. The permit is valid for one bearded turkey only.

Spring turkey permits and game tags may be purchased online, at any vendor location or by phone from March 2 thru May 31, 2021.

In addition to your turkey permit and tag, you MUST have a Kansas hunting license, unless exempt by Kansas Law.

Kansas youth (15 and under) may purchase a youth spring turkey permit valid statewide for \$7.50

Nonresident youth (15 and under) may purchase a youth spring turkey permit valid statewide for \$12.50

2021 Spring Turkey Season Dates:

Youth/Disables Season: April 1-13, 2021

Archery Season: April 5-13, 2021

Regular Season: April 14-May 31, 2021

Source:

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Tourism

<https://ksoutdoors.com/>

Survey of Kansas Wild Turkey Hunters: Experiences, Opinions, and Satisfaction

[https://www.coffey.k-state.edu/wildlife\\_forestry/Survey%20of%20Kansas%20Wild%20Turkey%20Hunters.pdf](https://www.coffey.k-state.edu/wildlife_forestry/Survey%20of%20Kansas%20Wild%20Turkey%20Hunters.pdf)