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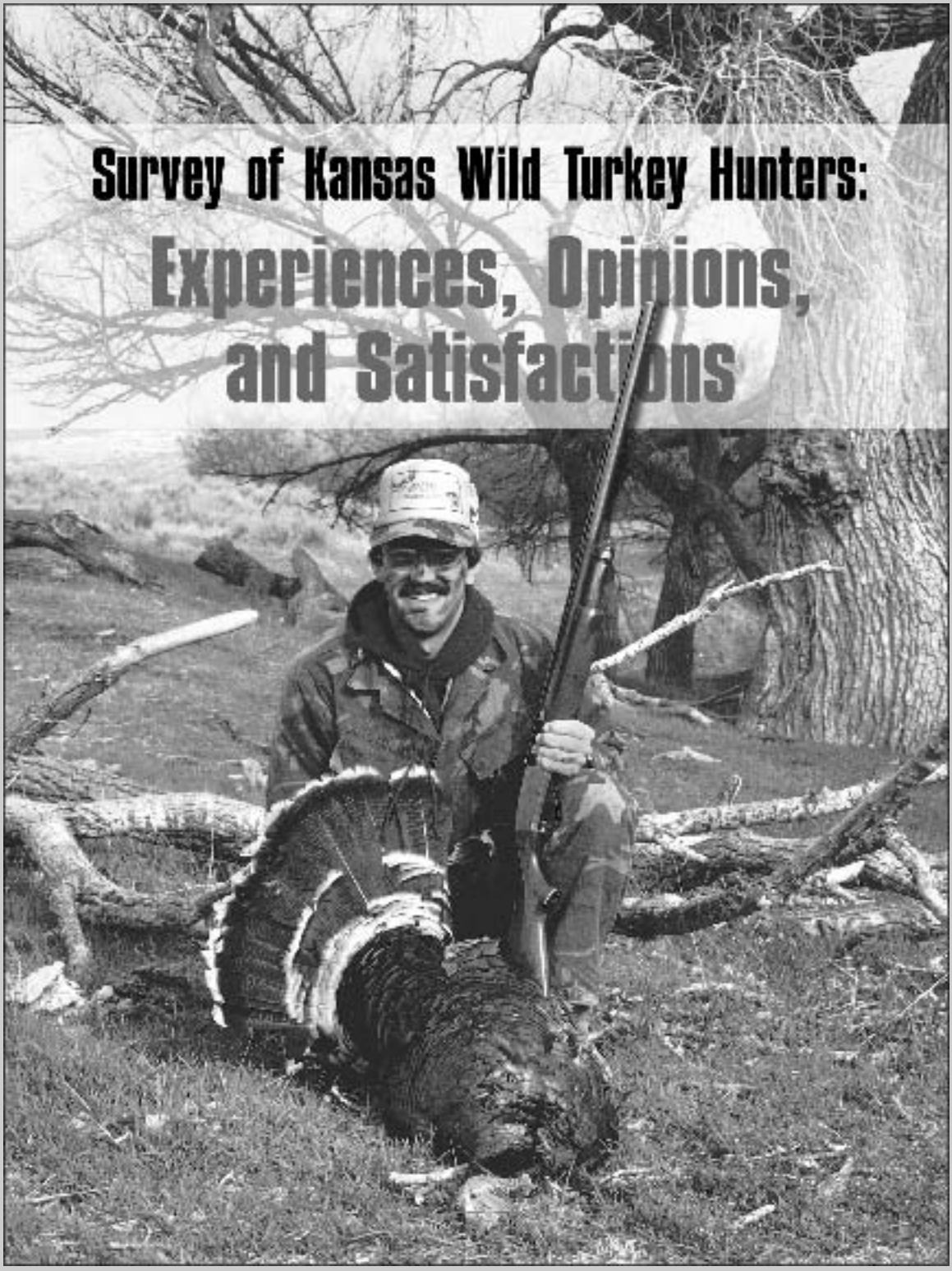
Survey of Kansas Wild Turkey Hunters: Experiences, Opinions, and Satisfactions



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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

by

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ABSTRACT

Wild turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) have become an important game species in Kansas since the first season opened in 1974. We surveyed Kansas turkey hunters to determine their demographic characteristics, hunting experiences, opinions, and satisfactions. We mailed 642 questionnaires to hunters who bought spring or fall turkey permits during the 1998-1999 seasons. Of these questionnaires, 33 were returned undeliverable and 403 (66.2%) were returned by hunters. The majority of Kansas turkey hunters were male (96.7%), average age was 41.8 years old, and nearly half had at least some postsecondary education (49%). Hunters had an average of 8.86 years of experience turkey hunting, with over half of that time hunting in Kansas (4.97 years). Respondents reported a 65% success rate during the 1999-2000 seasons with over 75% of birds harvested being gobblers. Hunters were in overall agreement with management issues, such as number of permits issued, season dates, and safety. Hunters opposed the act of flushing birds, use of rifles, blinds, baiting, electronic calls, mechanical decoys, and mandatory hunter orange. Most preseason activities were found to be important to hunters, and activities during the season were also found to be important to hunter satisfaction. The majority of Kansas turkey hunters approved of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks turkey management program, and 79.1% of hunters said they were satisfied with their Kansas turkey hunting experience.

INTRODUCTION

Kansas has a long and proud heritage of hunting, both for subsistence and sport. Like many Midwestern states, wild turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) were historically found in Kansas, and no doubt hunted by American Indians and early settlers. Wild turkeys probably existed in the eastern portions of Kansas and other regions where riparian areas provided adequate woody cover (Hlavachick and Blair 1997). Wild turkeys were almost extirpated from the state by the mid-20th Century as a result of market hunting, lenient game laws, and loss of habitat. Reduced numbers of turkeys was a common occurrence in many areas of the United States where turkeys historically roamed. Reintroduction efforts began in a number of states in the Midwest in the mid-1900s (Anonymous 1966).

In 1958, Rio Grande wild turkeys (*M. g. intermedia*), one of the two sub-species believed to have occurred in Kansas (Figure 1), were observed near the Oklahoma/Kansas border. Soon after this discovery Kansas Forestry, Fish, and Game Commission (now Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks) personnel trapped birds from these flocks and dispersed them to other portions of the state. Better documented reintroductions of turkeys from Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Iowa started in 1966 and lasted until the mid-1970s (Hlavachick and Blair 1997). Rio Grande wild turkeys were brought from Texas and Oklahoma to bolster numbers in the southwest and south-central portions of the state. Eastern wild turkeys (*M. g. silvestris*) did well in the central, northeastern and southeastern counties. Eastern wild turkeys were obtained from Iowa and Missouri.

Wild turkeys are now thriving in most of Kansas and efforts continue to redistribute birds. Most management now focuses on optimizing turkey hunting opportunity and reduction of regionally high turkey numbers in eastern Kansas.

In 1974, the first wild turkey hunting season took place in Kansas with 400 permits issued for the spring hunt. During the first season, 123 birds were harvested for a 40% hunting success rate. Hunter success in Kansas during the spring season has fluctuated from a low of 36% in 1977 to a high of 60% 20 years later in 1997. The average success rate for the spring season from 1974-2000 was 46.9%. The number of permits issued in the spring has risen from 400 in 1974 to a high of 27,353 permits (+9,698 game tags) issued in the spring of 1999.

The fall season is split into an archery and a firearms season. The fall archery season started in 1979, followed by a fall firearms season in 1981. The success rate for fall firearms hunters (1981-1999) was higher on average than that of the fall archery hunters (1979-1999), with average success rates of 49.7% and 21.4%, respectively. The fall wild turkey season in Kansas has historically had fewer hunters than the spring season. In 1999, the spring season had 21,000 active hunters while the fall firearms and archery seasons combined had only 4,900 active hunters.

PURPOSE

A survey was developed to examine the experiences, opinions, and attitudes of Kansas turkey hunters. This information is important because wild turkeys have gained favor as a game species in Kansas over the last 20 years. The information gathered from this survey will assist managers in designing practical management strategies to address concerns of Kansas turkey hunters and to benefit wild turkey populations.

METHODS

A 16-page questionnaire was developed and peer reviewed by Kansas State University faculty and Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks biologists. The names and addresses of a random sample (n = 642) of hunters who bought fall (1998) or spring (1999) turkey permits (1998-1999 season) were selected to receive a survey. Each hunter was sent a packet containing a questionnaire, cover letter, comments sheet, and a postage-paid return envelope. Three weeks after the initial mailing a reminder postcard was sent to all nonrespondents. After a period of 9 weeks, a second packet was sent to all hunters who had not responded to the first mailing.

Each questionnaire was given an identification number, which corresponded with a hunter's name. This number was used to assist with data entry and confidentiality. The questionnaire asked hunters to respond to a variety of topics relating to their hunting experience, methods, and attitudes on topics relating to turkey hunting. Hunters were also asked about their opinions on Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks programs and management strategies, and basic demographic information was also obtained.

RESULTS

Demographics

Of the 642 surveys mailed, 33 (5.1%) were returned as undeliverable, resulting in a total sample of 609 hunters able to respond. Surveys were returned by 403 hunters, giving an overall response rate of 66.2%. We received surveys from hunters in 73 of the 105 Kansas counties (69.5%), 87 (21.5%) surveys were from out-of-state hunters, and 45 (11.2%) respondents did not include county or location of residence. An overwhelming number of Kansas turkey hunters were male (96.7%), and the average age of all respondents was 41.8 years. Slightly more than 10% of hunters surveyed were under the age of 20. About 25% of hunters had some college/postsecondary education (25.6%), and 23.4% had completed a bachelors degree (Table 1).

Hunter Characteristics

On average, respondents had 8.86 years turkey hunting experience, with nearly 5 years of that experience hunting in Kansas (4.97 years - Kansas, 3.89 years - other states; Table 1). Overall hunting experience in Kansas averaged 19.32 years, indicating that respondents hunted turkeys during slightly more than 25% of their hunting years. Turkey hunters also began turkey hunting later in life, with an average start age of 31.69 years. More than half (58.4%) of the hunters surveyed had attended a Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) hunter education course, but only 17.1% of respondents attended a turkey hunting seminar.

1999-2000 Turkey Seasons

On average, Kansas turkey hunters harvested 11.95 turkeys during their lifetime (7.94 gobblers, 0.99 hens, 2.54 jakes). During the 1999-2000 turkey seasons, 65% of hunters responded that they did harvest a turkey. A total of 306 gobblers, 17 hens, and 73 jakes were harvested by respondents during the 1999-2000 spring and fall seasons. Though gobblers were harvested most often, 77.3% of birds harvested in 1999-2000 and 69.2% of birds harvested lifetime by respondents, many were not aware of the KDWP trophy gobbler award (69.1%) or any other trophy award system (68.9%). Of hunters who harvested a gobbler in 1999-2000, a significant number (71.1%) felt that their bird would not have scored in a trophy system, yet 33.6% of hunters reported that they harvested birds because of the beard and spurs or because it was a quality trophy (Table 2).

Respondents observed an average of about 88 turkeys during the 1999-2000 season. The majority of hunters indicated that the number of turkeys in Kansas was about right (55.4%), but a substantial percentage indicated they would like to see more (36.5%). The majority of hunters said that they spent only a few days hunting turkeys (67.9%), with 125 respondents spending most of that time hunting on weekends; 116 hunting the first few days of the season; and 102 hunting consistently throughout the season. Several hunters surveyed bought permits in 1998-1999, but did not hunt in 1999-2000. Common reasons hunters reported for not hunting in 1999-2000 included their job, family, household duties, and other outdoor activities (Table 3).

As expected from permit sales, the majority of hunters went only during the spring season (67.7%), with 26.7% hunting both seasons, and 5.6% hunting only during the fall season. Many respondents that did not hunt in both seasons reported that they did not like the fall turkey season (20%). Other reasons for hunting in only one season included job requirements, family commitments, and hunting other game (Table 4).

Equipment, Techniques, and Management Issues

Hunters were asked about various equipment types and techniques they used during the turkey season in Kansas. Most hunters said they never use blaze orange of any kind while turkey hunting (79.3%). The majority (81.0%) of hunters said they always used a shotgun, while use of archery equipment was less common (Table 5). Decoys were used by 51.2% of hunters, while flushing of birds was rarely used (82.8% never used flushing). Helping someone call turkeys, or being helped to call birds were also techniques used by respondents (Table 5).

Hunters were asked whether they had ever hunted other game species while fall turkey hunting. The majority did not hunt species other than turkey (56.2% no, 43.8% yes), but of those who did hunt other game, 68.7% hunted turkeys as a secondary target or opportunistically. The most common species hunted while hunting turkeys was deer (*Odocoileus* sp.).

Hunters were asked their opinion regarding a number of management issues relating to turkey hunting in Kansas. Overall,Kansas hunters agreed with season dates, permit numbers, and safety (Table 6). A large number (29%) disagreed with requiring attendance at an additional hunter education course. Respondents were asked how they would distribute funds for the turkey manage-

ment program. Hunters felt that law enforcement, leasing land for hunter access, and research to improve turkey management deserved the most funds (Table 7).

Overall, respondents were satisfied with wild turkey management in Kansas, KDWP, and their Kansas turkey hunting experience (Table 8). Respondents overwhelmingly reported (88%) that the use of check stations/tagging was a better method of monitoring harvest than other methods, including the issuing of survey cards (2.7%). Hunters preferred the current system of having a few zones with the same or similar season dates and bag limits (85.3%) over having many different zones with different season lengths, dates, and bag limits (14.7%).

Hunters were asked where they hunted turkeys most and what percentage of time they spent hunting there during the season. Most hunters used private land that was not their own or leased (65.1%), followed by their own land (16.8%), and public land (10.2%). Hunters hunted KDWP Walk-in-Hunting Areas and private leased land the least (Table 9). Hunters were interested in seeing more KDWP Walk-in-Hunting Areas for both seasons, with slightly more interest in areas for spring turkey hunting over fall, 54.6% and 45.4%, respectively.

The majority of respondents strongly disagreed with mandatory use of orange while moving during the turkey season. Hunters also tended to oppose the use of bait, electronic calls, mechanical decoys, and rifles during the turkey season. Hunters were in overall agreement that they felt safe turkey hunting in both the spring and fall seasons (Table 10).

Hunter Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

Respondents were asked how important specific preseason activities were to their enjoyment of the wild turkey season in Kansas. The preseason was important to most turkey hunters (Table 11). We also asked hunters how important activities or events related to the turkey season were to their satisfaction during the turkey season. Most in-season activities were also important to turkey hunters, with “making a clean kill” and “having a good spot to hunt” reported as very important (77.2% and 69.2%, respectively). Other activities that were very important included “the feeling of relaxation”, “seeing other wildlife”, “hunting with friends and family”, and “hearing lots of turkeys” (Table 12).

Respondents were also asked how important activities were to their dissatisfaction during the Kansas wild turkey season. The two most important activities that contributed to hunter dissatisfaction were "seeing unethical hunters" and "missed shots or crippled birds" (47.1% and 45.8%, respectively; Table 13).

Hunters were asked whether they were a member of the National Wild Turkey Federation and 76.6% responded that they were not. About 40% of hunters were members of other conservation organizations. Ducks Unlimited (40.6%), Quail Unlimited (16.8%), and Pheasants Forever (8.4%) were the most frequently named organizations, and some respondents were members of multiple organizations.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Turkey hunting has grown in Kansas over the last 25 years from a nonexistent sport to one that attracts nearly 30,000 hunters every year. It is important to understand why Kansas hunters are interested in this sport and how management of wild turkeys in Kansas can be improved for those hunters.

Kansas turkey hunter demographics were similar to those reported in studies in New York, Missouri, and Mississippi. An extremely high percentage of respondents were male, with an average age 35-49, and with some college education (Donnelly and Vaske 1981, Vangilder et al. 1990, Siemer et al. 1995, Thackston and Holbrook 1995, Godwin et al. 1997, Peterson 1998). Turkey-hunting experience was greater in Kansas than in some other states. Siemer et al. (1995) found that most (57%) of New York turkey hunters had 1 to 5 years of experience at hunting turkeys. There were fewer (46.2%) Kansas hunters at this same experience level. Similarly, more Kansas hunters had 11 or more years experience (28.0%) compared to New York hunters (20.0%).

Kansas turkey hunters are more experienced than their New York counterparts and they may be more deeply committed to the sport. More Kansas hunters were members of the National Wild Turkey Federation than New York hunters, and 39.2% of Kansas hunters were part of another conservation organization compared to 36% from New York (Siemer et al. 1995).

Most respondents were successful during the 1999-2000 hunting season with 65% harvesting at least one bird. Experience level was important when harvesting a turkey. Hunters with more ex-

perience harvested a higher percentage of gobblers over hens and jakes. The exception to this was hunters who were successful in their first year of hunting (experience level 0); they had a success rate of harvesting a gobbler of 80.0% over harvesting a hen or jake. First-year hunters may have had more interest in harvesting a trophy, or perhaps they hunted with an experienced partner.

Few hunters were concerned with scoring a trophy bird, or having a trophy made, but seeing a big gobbler was very important. Many respondents who harvested gobblers felt that their birds would not have scored high in a trophy system. The desire and interest of harvesting a turkey in Kansas is probably one of personal achievement. The goal of Kansas turkey hunters did not seem to be harvesting an award-winning trophy gobbler, but instead was to be challenged while hunting and to harvest a personal trophy.

Most respondents hunted only during the spring turkey season. The most common reason given was that hunters simply did not like fall turkey hunting. Hunter comments about this were numerous and similar. Most hunters said that gobblers did not respond, turkeys were more difficult to call, they wanted to harvest a mature gobbler, and they did not like to shoot hens. Programs designed to educate and interest hunters in fall turkey hunting may be worth while if an increase in fall participation is a desired objective.

The majority of hunters agreed that the spring turkey season is safe, with slightly fewer agreeing that the fall season is safe. Most respondents felt safe hunting in camouflage and opposed requirements to wear blaze orange. Like many states, Kansas does not require hunters to use orange while turkey hunting, the only season for which orange is required is the firearms deer season. Studies from Virginia, Arkansas, and Missouri also found that a high percentage of turkey hunters were opposed to the use of hunter orange for the spring gobbler season (Cartwright and Smith 1990, Vangilder et al. 1990, Bittner and Hite 1991).

Kansas hunters rarely use public lands, therefore, safety concerns by hunters on public lands may not be a major issue at this time. Studies by Vangilder et al. (1990) and Peterson (1998) found a low percentage of hunters who use public land. In Wisconsin, hunters that hunted on private land felt very safe, with less than 5% of hunters feeling that they were in danger of being shot (Kubisiak

et al. 1995). Bittner and Hite (1991) found that hunters who utilized public lands felt more crowded and that 45% of all hunters from Virginia felt in danger of being shot.

Kansas had few hunters use public land or open access land like Walk-In-Hunting-Areas (WIHA). However, because of an increase in turkey hunting over the past 20 years, hunters are interested in new areas to hunt. WIHA lands open to fall turkey hunting have been limited. Approximately 16,985 ha in 107 tracts have been leased for the spring 2001 season. Over 50% of respondents were interested in leasing more WIHA land for spring hunting, with only slightly fewer interested in more fall WIHA lands. Hunters felt that KDWP should spend approximately 14% of the annual yearly turkey management budget for this purpose. Surveys from other states also indicate strong support for increasing availability of public land for hunting. However, with more turkey hunters in the field, coupled with the lack of voluntary hunter orange being used, safety issues on public hunting areas may arise in the future.

Another safety issue addressed in the survey was attendance of safety courses. Most states require a hunter education course. We found that almost 60% of Kansas hunters had attended a KDWP hunter education course, which was lower than reported for some states (Siemer et al. 1995). There are two reasons why this may be true. First, the course is not required for hunters born before July 1, 1957. The second reason is that out of state education courses are acceptable. Few hunters attended additional turkey hunting seminars and few agreed that it should be mandatory to attend an additional turkey hunting course. This may reflect the fact that most hunters already feel safe in the field.

Other controversial issues were also addressed in the survey. Kansas turkey hunters tended to oppose baiting, use of electronic calls, and use of rifles. Almost 50% of hunters disagreed with the use of bait while turkey hunting in Kansas. This technique is used in Texas and some other states. Almost 20% of Texas hunters reported that they used bait while hunting turkeys (Peterson 1998). Hunters from Mississippi had similar opinions regarding baiting as did Kansas hunters, with most strongly opposed to this technique (Forbes et al. 1996). Decoys and blinds can be used by turkey hunters in many regions, and were frequently used by Kansas hunters. Only 14.2% of Kansas hunters never used decoys, compared to more than 60% of Missouri hunters (Vangilder et al. 1990).

The majority of Kansas hunters disagreed with the use of electronic calls or mechanical decoys and a high percentage of hunters strongly disagreed with the use of a rifle during the turkey season.

The use of a rifle during the turkey season is a very controversial issue. In Texas, where the use of a rifle is legal, more than 60% of hunters used this technique. Over 90% of respondents from Texas indicated that turkeys were harvested opportunistically while hunting for deer (Peterson 1998). In Missouri, turkey hunters were divided in their support for using a rifle, 51% against, 48% in support (Bittner and Hite 1991). Mississippi hunters responded similarly to Kansas hunters, strongly opposing use of rifles during the turkey season (Godwin et al. 1997).

Kansas hunters valued preseason activities that lead up to the hunt. In fact, survey results showed that seeing turkeys during the preseason was almost as important as seeing them during the regular season. Similarly, making plans to hunt with family and friends was almost as important as actually hunting with family and friends. Topics such as seeing a lot of turkeys, hearing a lot of turkeys, seeing other wildlife, helping keep the turkey population healthy, and the feeling of relaxation while hunting were all important values (mean = 4.31 - 4.40; minimum value = 1 and maximum value = 5). Actually harvesting a turkey scored comparatively low (mean = 2.80).

Because encountering friendly sportsmen was a relatively important factor to hunter satisfaction in Kansas, it is understandable that unsafe hunters, unethical hunters, negative comments about hunting, and inexperienced hunters added to the dissatisfaction of hunters. Insect pests were an important factor contributing to hunter dissatisfaction. The spring season begins in mid-April and lasts into late May, while the fall season begins in October and lasts until late December. During the early fall and late spring, insect pests such as chiggers (Trombiculidae), ticks (Ixodidae), and mosquitoes (Culicidae) are very active.

In summary, Kansas hunters were similar to hunters from other regions in demographic characteristics, opinions about controversial hunting techniques, and their satisfactions and dissatisfactions. Kansas hunters were generally in agreement with how KDWP manages the wild turkey population and with existing KDWP regulations, with over 70% approval for the program. Kansas turkey hunters were also extremely satisfied with their hunting experience. Kansas hunters generally opposed or did not use methods designed to enhance the ability to bag a turkey, such as baiting, me-

chanical decoys, or electronic calls. Lack of support for these techniques reflects what Kansas turkey hunters find most enjoyable about the experience. Seeing a big gobbler and enjoying preseason activities were more important to Kansas turkey hunters than bagging a trophy gobbler. Understanding how Kansas hunters feel about issues relating to the turkey season will allow managers to develop regulations to further increase hunter satisfaction, enjoyment, and safety, while maintaining a healthy population of wild turkeys for Kansans to enjoy.

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Table 1. Demographic characteristics of survey respondents

Characteristic	Percent	
Gender		
Female	3.3	
Male	96.7	
Age (years old)		
Under 24	16.9	
25-44	39.8	
45-64	35.8	
65 and over	7.6	
Mean (years old)		41.8
Education		
(1) Grade school	9.3	
(2) High school	19.8	
(3) Some college or post high school	25.6	
(4) Vocational or technical school	11.6	
(5) Bachelors degree	23.4	
(6) Graduate degree	10.3	
Mean (score)		3.51
Years experience hunting turkeys		
0 years	3.7	
1-5 years	46.2	
6-10	22.1	
11 or more years	28.0	
Mean (years)		8.86

Table 2. Primary factor for harvesting a wild turkey

Factor	Respondents (%)
First opportunity	24.2
Body size	8.6
Meat quality	2.3
Shot placement	18.7
Days left in season	2.1
Quality of beard/spurs/trophy	33.6
Other factor	3.4
Multiple factors	7.3

Table 3. Reason why hunters did not go turkey hunting during the 1999-2000 season

Reason	Frequency (%)
Job requirements	26.8
Household duties	10.6
Weather	9.3
Family commitments	15.3
Hunting other game	5.0
Sick or injured	2.4
Hunting partners not available	5.6
Other outdoor activities	10.1
Other hobbies at home	5.6
Other reason	9.4

Table 4. Reason why hunters did not go turkey hunting during both spring and fall during the 1999-2000 seasons

Reason	Frequency (%)
Job requirements	19.2
Household duties	4.8
Weather	2.2
Family commitments	8.0
Hunting other game	18.2
Sick or injured	2.2
Hunting partners not available	0.4
Other outdoor activities	10.8
Other hobbies at home	2.4
Do not like fall turkey season	20.0
Do not like spring turkey season	1.2
Other reason	10.6

Table 5. Frequency of methods used during the 1999-2000 turkey season (%)

Method or technique	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Never (4)	Mean Score
Blaze orange	7.2	2.9	10.7	79.3	3.62
Shotgun	81.0	12.2	3.9	2.9	1.29
Archery	6.5	6.5	14.9	72.1	3.53
Decoys	38.4	24.7	22.7	14.2	2.13
Flushing birds	1.2	2.2	14.8	81.8	3.77
Blinds	11.0	11.6	25.6	51.8	3.18
Helping someone call	14.0	24.9	34.4	26.6	2.74
Having someone call for you	8.6	11.5	27.5	52.4	3.24

Table 6. Agreement of turkey hunters to regulations and management

Issue	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean Score
Opening season on weekday increased safety	25.9	22.4	35.3	8.1	8.3	2.50
Number of permits sold	15.4	26.0	26.3	18.2	14.1	2.90
Weekday opening to control harvest	11.9	19.0	43.1	15.5	10.4	2.93
Feel safe hunting in camouflage	41.9	45.9	9.1	2.0	1.0	1.87
Opening season on weekend is more enjoyable	13.7	13.9	35.4	22.5	14.1	2.43
Requirement for turkey hunters to attend additional hunter education course	7.9	11.3	24.4	29.0	27.4	3.57

Table 7. Distribution of funds for the turkey management program as determined by respondents

Program	Percent
Law enforcement	15.4
Collection of biological information	12.3
Lease lands for turkey hunting	14.2
Compensate landowners for turkey damage	9.0
Educate new hunters	7.7
Educate non-hunters	4.2
Provide hunters with more information about the season	3.7
Educate turkey hunters on ethics	5.2
Educate turkey hunters on techniques	3.0
Research new approaches to improve turkey management	14.2
Stock turkeys	9.4
Other programs	1.8

Table 8. Respondents' level of satisfaction with Kansas turkey management (%)

Aspect of Kansas management	Extremely Dissatisfied (1)	Dissatisfied (2)	Neutral (3)	Satisfied (4)	Extremely Satisfied (5)	Mean Score
Season length	4.5	12.4	20.5	35.9	26.8	3.68
Open and close dates	3.0	11.6	30.1	37.1	18.2	3.56
Number of Weekends in season	3.5	9.8	32.2	35.4	19.1	3.52
Bag limit	10.4	17.4	21.2	33.3	17.7	3.31
KDWP turkey Management program	2.8	4.6	23.0	50.9	18.7	3.78
Your Kansas turkey hunting experience	3.8	6.0	11.1	40.1	39.0	4.05

Table 9. Amount of time Kansas hunters spent using different available areas

Area Type	Time used (%)
Public Land	10.2
Own Land	16.8
Private land, other than own land	65.1
Walk-In-Hunting-Areas	2.3
Private Leased Land	5.2

Table 10. Level of agreement of turkey hunters with management issues (%)

Issue	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean Score
Mandatory use of blaze orange while moving	5.0	11.3	16.6	28.1	38.9	4.10
Use of bait while hunting turkeys	7.0	16.6	2.8	21.1	27.4	3.45
Use of electronic calls or mechanical decoys	4.8	12.8	29.0	24.7	28.7	3.60
Using a rifle to harvest turkeys	5.5	8.5	14.0	17.8	54.0	4.06
Feel the fall turkey season is safe	20.7	44.1	30.4	2.8	2.0	2.21
Feel the spring turkey season is safe	30.0	53.8	13.8	1.3	1.3	1.90

Table 11. Importance of preseason activities to turkey hunter enjoyment (%)

Activity	Not very Important (1)	(2)	Neutral (3)	(4)	Very Important (5)	Mean Score
Scouting	3.8	4.5	15.1	34.4	42.2	4.07
Seeing turkeys	1.5	1.8	11.4	38.3	47.0	4.28
Seeing turkey sign	2.0	5.6	15.2	40.5	36.7	4.04
Reading about turkey hunting	7.8	15.7	29.4	33.4	13.7	3.29
Watching programs about turkey hunting	7.3	13.4	26.0	37.6	15.7	3.41
Obtaining and/or practicing with new equipment	5.3	11.5	25.7	37.7	19.8	3.55
Access to new areas to hunt	4.3	7.9	22.3	35.3	30.2	3.79
Talking about turkey hunting	3.8	5.6	28.6	40.1	21.9	3.71
Improving wildlife habitat	2.5	4.8	27.7	40.7	41.5	3.79
Plans to hunt with family and friends	2.0	3.5	13.4	39.7	41.3	4.15

Table 12. Importance of in-season activities to turkey hunter satisfaction (%)

Activity	Not very Important (1)	(2)	Neutral (3)	(4)	Very Important (5)	Mean Score
Scouting	3.8	4.5	15.1	34.4	42.2	4.07
Seeing lots of turkey sign	2.3	5.4	19.2	41.4	31.7	3.95
Seeing lots of turkeys	0.5	2.0	10.2	41.0	46.3	4.31
Hearing lots of turkeys	0.8	1.5	9.4	38.8	49.5	4.35
Shots at turkeys	3.3	5.6	27.7	30.0	33.3	3.84
Seeing a big gobbler	1.0	3.6	15.8	32.6	47.1	4.21
Harvesting a turkey	3.0	6.6	23.1	29.9	35.8	2.80
Having a trophy scored	23.0	22.7	29.3	11.7	13.3	2.70
Eating turkey	2.5	6.8	26.3	42.3	22.0	3.74
Having a trophy made	21.2	24.8	31.7	15.6	6.6	2.62
Having many days to hunt	0.8	3.1	20.1	39.6	36.6	4.08
Teaching or helping others during the season	2.5	5.3	30.0	41.0	21.1	3.73
Feeling of relaxation while hunting	1.0	1.0	6.8	31.9	59.2	4.47
Encountering friendly sportsmen	2.3	6.9	19.3	41.3	30.2	3.88
Seeing other wildlife	0.0	0.3	9.4	40.5	50.0	4.40
Enjoying the weather	1.5	2.0	17.1	40.3	39.0	3.71

Table 12 Continued. Importance of in-season activities to turkey hunter satisfaction (%)

Activity	Not very Important (1)	(2)	Neutral (3)	(4)	Very Important (5)	Mean Score
Helping other hunters or landowners	1.5	3.6	25.1	39.3	30.5	3.94
Hunting with friends/family	1.8	2.3	9.2	35.1	51.7	4.33
Clean or good shot	0.0	0.5	2.8	19.8	77.2	4.73
Good spot to hunt	0.3	0.0	3.6	27.0	69.2	4.65
Helping keep population healthy	0.8	1.2	10.9	33.0	53.6	4.37
Fall turkey season overlaps small game season	7.5	18.6	41.0	14.2	8.8	2.78

Table 13. Importance of activities that contribute to turkey hunter dissatisfaction (%)

Activity	Not very Important (1)	(2)	Neutral (3)	(4)	Very Important (5)	Mean Score
Not harvesting a turkey	13.5	20.1	37.3	19.3	9.9	2.92
Unable to call in turkeys	7.4	12.0	28.2	35.1	17.3	2.91
Insect pests	15.6	21.7	32.5	20.7	9.2	4.60
Missed shots or crippled birds	7.1	7.6	14.2	25.2	45.8	3.03
Not having equipment	20.4	19.9	35.7	13.8	10.2	2.38
Cost of permits	19.6	17.6	27.0	14.0	22.1	3.02
Need for additional permits	21.1	13.0	33.3	15.8	16.8	2.94
Enforcement of game laws to severe	34.9	17.0	30.3	7.9	9.9	2.41
Confusing regulations	26.0	20.4	31.9	12.0	9.7	2.36
Unethical hunters	6.1	6.1	16.9	23.8	47.1	3.99
Too many hunters	12.5	14.6	35.3	19.2	18.4	3.16
Unsafe hunters	5.4	6.9	14.8	21.7	51.3	4.07
Inexperienced hunters	10.0	16.2	36.5	20.3	18.0	3.21
Negative comments about turkey hunting	11.0	12.5	26.8	21.7	20.1	3.43
Small game season overlaps in fall	31.4	21.9	32.5	6.7	7.5	2.37
Other hunter trying to harvest the turkey I am calling	16.5	11.5	24.9	20.6	26.5	3.39

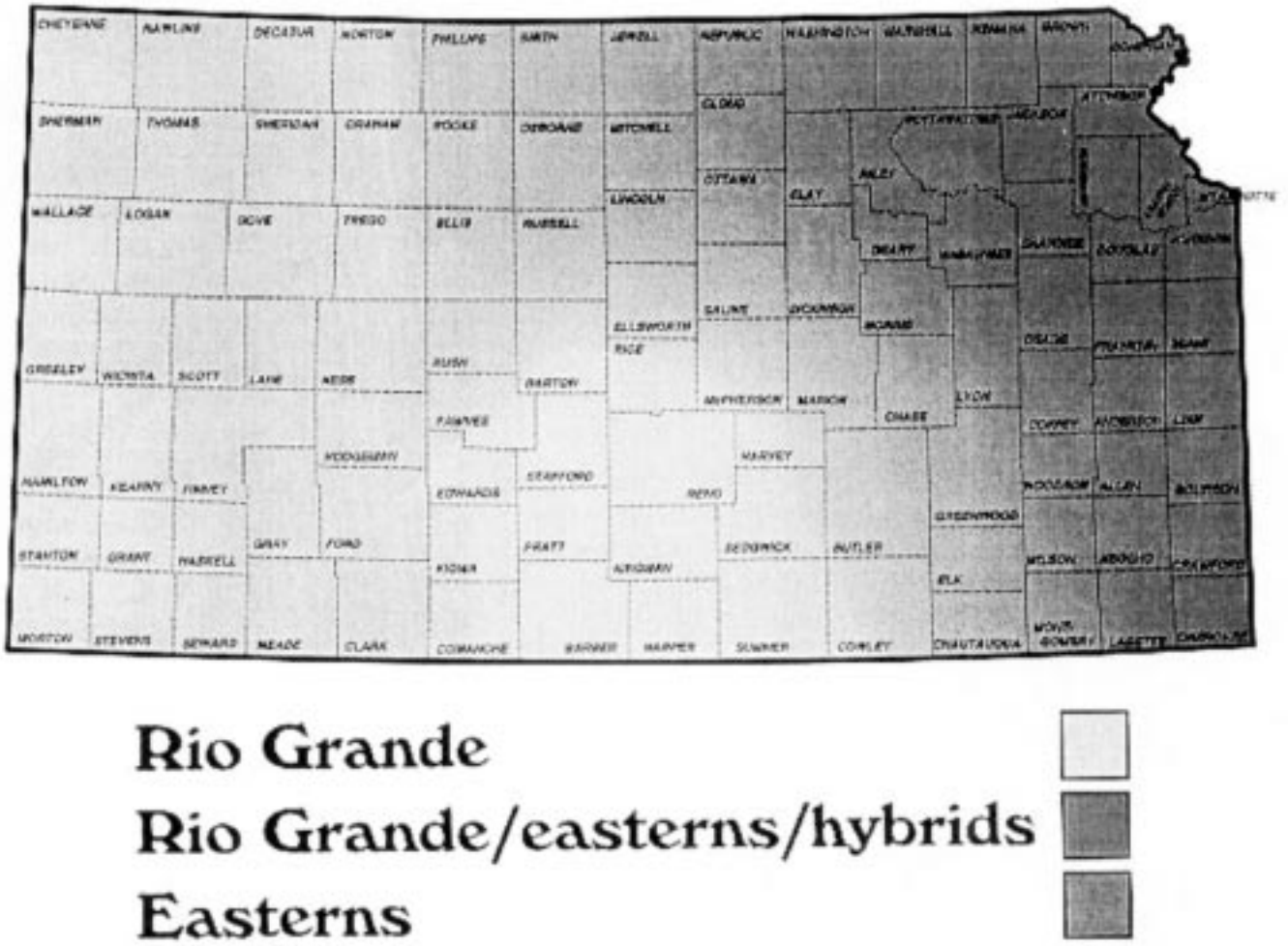

Figure 1. Current distribution of Eastern and Rio Grande wild turkey subspecies in Kansas (adapted from Hlavachick and Blair 1997).

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by

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