



Winter 2020

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

The Virginia Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation consists of many different local chapters and volunteers. These individuals although different in personality and geographic location, are very much alike in their hard work and dedication to the NWTF and their respective communities.

In my effort to visit all the chapters in the state, I have met many unique and interesting chapter leaders and fellow volunteers. I have come to think of them as the heart and soul of the NWTF, and without them the mission of the NWTF would grind to a halt.

These many individuals are all beautiful “threads” that make up a tapestry that is the Virginia NWTF. Like any tapestry, its nature can change by removing or adding individual’s “threads”, and it is my belief that we should strive to add new chapters, volunteers and “threads” to our tapestry.

There is much work to be done in Virginia and I believe we are poised to have another successful year. The Virginia State Chapter will receive another L.A. Dixon award in Nashville this month, our second in the last three years. That is a tribute to all our volunteers and regional directors, but is also a “call to arms” to continue our past efforts while creating a larger and stronger tapestry together.

Richard Pauley
VA State Chapter President

VA NWTF Executive Committee

- President – **Richard Pauley**
- Vice President – **Kevin Walter**
- Treasurer – **Ann Parr**
- Secretary – **Judy Vaughan**
- Women in the Outdoors
Coordinator – **Julie Abel**
- Wheelin’ Sportsman Coordinator
– **Robin Clark**
- JAKES Coordinator –
Doug Sisson
- Save the Hunt Coordinator –
Jeff McCambridge

NWTF STAFF

- Regional Directors – **Billy Hall,**
Davy Blessing
- Regional Biologist – **Cully**
McCurdy

SUPERFUND REPORT – your dollars at work in Virginia!

2019 Expenditures

OUTREACH PROGRAMS - \$36,000

- JAKES- \$10503.00
- WS- \$5125.00
- WITO- \$2350.00
- Scholarships- \$13,500.00
- Turkey Hunter’s Care- \$2700.51

HABITAT PROJECTS - \$70,503.00

NATIONAL FOREST

- Jerry’s Run - \$5000
- Vance’s Cove - \$3500

STATE FORESTS

- Prince Edward State Forest - \$3000
- Appomattox/Buckingham State Forest - \$3500
- Cumberland State Forest - \$4000

WMAs

- Little North Mt WMA - \$3250
- Highland WMA - \$12,000
- Augusta County- Mowers for use on WMAs - \$4000
- Oconeechee State Park - \$4000
- Big Survey WMA - \$13,928
- Big Woods WMA - \$14,325.00



HUNTING HERITAGE PROGRAMS



Our Virginia Wheelin' Sportsmen program continues to grow at a rapid pace, and we're excited about new partnerships and events we've created. In addition to our regular hunts, some going back 16 years, we added four new hunts to our schedule, for a grand total of 26 deer hunts last fall. With our membership at an all-time high in Virginia with 420 WS members, we have to create new opportunities to keep up with our growth.

Almost two years ago, I reached out to the US Fish & Wildlife Services in hopes of partnering for a deer hunt at their Rappahannock Wildlife Refuge. Last November my dream came to fruition as we enjoyed a great hunt on their beautiful property. We only harvested one deer during this Monday hunt, but we saw some great deer and learned a lot about the property. The Friends of the Refuge provided us with a delicious lunch of venison chili, and we're already for another hunt next fall!

On opening day of general firearms season we were invited to a beautiful dairy farm just outside of Crozet in Albemarle County for a deer hunt hosted by our new friends with Ten Point Outfitters. They promised plenty of deer and they delivered, as every hunter harvested at least one deer, while others tagged out. VAWS hunter Michael Chenail knocked down a nice 9 pointer on the morning hunt.

Also new this year, was the Piedmont Area Chapter deer hunt at Locust Dale Hunts in Culpeper. Everything about this hunt was fabulous, with great volunteers, and a gorgeous farm.... except the deer failed to show up for the party! The exception was a 6 pointer taken by Keith Depoy during the morning hunt. This hunt has great potential and we're excited to be going back earlier in the season next November. Scattered among our new hunts, we continued to carry on our tradition of good hunts all over the state.

Lastly, we enjoyed a great new deer hunt in Fluvanna County at the end of the season, courtesy of the Gold Mine Hunt Club. These ladies and gentlemen rolled out the red carpet for us, and we had a blast, and made some great friends. Listening to the beagles and hounds run was a great way to wrap up our season.

We are currently scheduling our spring gobbler hunts and fishing events. The applications should be out by late February, and will be available on our website, www.vanwtf.org. We want to thank these NWTF chapters, landowners, hunt clubs and organizations for providing these great hunting opportunities for our disabled sportsmen. Because of you, we continue to have the best program in the country. And now's your chance to get involved! If you would like to host an event; deer, turkey, small game, waterfowl, dove, or a fishing event, please contact me at my contact info below. Thanks, and we'll see you in the turkey woods this spring!

Robin Clark
434-249-6154
huntvaws@gmail.com

<https://www.vanwtf.org/wheelin-sportsmen-news>

**VIRGINIA STATE CHAPTER**
NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION



Mike Chenail, Columbia



Dayton Webber, Lake Anna



David Williams, Apple Valley



Paul Kirk, Roanoke

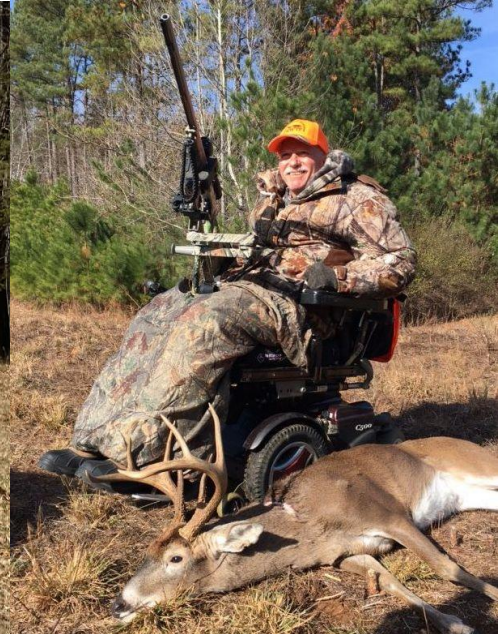


VIRGINIA STATE CHAPTER
NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION

Conserve. Hunt. Share.



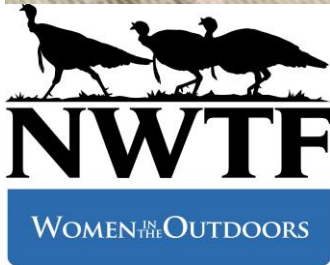
Gold Mine Hunt Club



Robin Clark, Nelson Co



Piedmont



~ JULIE ABEL, WITO COORDINATOR

Women still remain the fastest growing group of hunters nationwide. The Virginia State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation is always looking for ways to provide more events and mentoring opportunities to draw even more women into hunting and shooting sports. Chapters state wide hosted events that focused specifically on women. Some offered opportunities to learn hunting and shooting skills and others were actual mentored hunts for hands on experience in the field including turkey, deer and waterfowl hunts. This year, the Virginia State Chapter has changed the format of the “Take a Woman Hunting Week”, which has taken place during the second week of Spring Gobbler each year, to expand throughout the 2020 Spring Gobbler Season. This will remove the requirement for the mentored hunt to take place within an 8 day period and create a flexible schedule that will allow our valuable mentors to take more than one woman out during the season.

Throughout the state, this mentored hunt will be a registered event where women hunters, mentors, and local chapters can work together to organize a hunt anywhere in the state on any day in the Spring Gobbler Season. The registration will be available starting in March 2020 through the vanwtf.com website. At the close of the event, surveys will be sent out to all participants, and a drawing will be held where one participant will win a 12 gauge shotgun!

Local Chapters are encouraged to organize your Spring Gobbler Hunts around this Virginia NWTF State Event, but individuals not attending chapter WITO events are also welcome to participate. For more information, contact your Virginia State Women in the Outdoors Coordinator, Julie Abel, at JD71H@aol.com.

Please follow us on our Facebook page at [www.fb.com/VirginiaWITO](https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaWITO) to keep up to date on events all over the state and consider getting involved with your local chapter’s Women in the Outdoors program to help create even more opportunities to hunt, shoot, fish and enjoy the outdoors.





GET YOURS TODAY!



The Virginia State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation would like to introduce their new license plate, applications are being accepted right now! VA NWTF will cover the upfront cost of \$25, if you want to personalize or transfer your current tags you only pay \$10!

Be one of the first 450 paid applications received and have a chance on a Henry Lever Action Silver Boy .22 caliber!



When 450 applications are received, the plate is then approved by the State Legislature. The current plate is pre-approved by the VA DMV and the printing company, changes may occur but will be

minor in detail.

After approval by the State Legislature, the plate is then available for public purchase through the DMV. When 1000 plates have been purchased, the VA NWTF will begin to receive **\$15 for every \$25 plate purchased thereafter!** This is a milestone and first of its kind for the VA NWTF. This money will then be used in the state of Virginia for wildlife habitat projects, habitat improvements, land purchase/access, and many more!

For more information, contact your local NWTF chapter, or visit www.vanwtf.org. Applications can be **found online** at www.vanwtf.org, and **mailed** to:

Kevin Walter
9411 Katelyn Ct
Manassas, VA 20111

DON'T DELAY! GET YOURS TODAY AND HELP THE VIRGINIA NWTF PROTECT OUR HUNTING HERITAGE! ALSO MAKES A GREAT CHRISTMAS PRESENT!



IN MEMORIAL



MATTHEW CHAPPELL, HILLSVILLE

VIRGINIA STATE LEADERSHIP WEEKEND AND AWARDS BANQUET



Conserve. Share.



VOLUNTEERS ATTEND BREAKOUT SESSIONS AND LEARN ABOUT NWTf PROGRAMS

**VIRGINIA STATE CHAPTER**
NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION



BEST CHAPTER – TRI-CO LONGBEARDS



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR – MARK JENKINS



VETERAN RECOGNITION



**Andrew Huffman Award (Wildlife Manager of the Year)
Bill Bassinger**



**Conservation Police Officer of the Year
Beth McGuire**



VIRGINIA STATE CHAPTER

NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION



**2019 State Scholarship Winner
Bailey Marshall**

VA NWTF STATE CALL MAKERS CONTEST

Slate and Striker

1. Mark Cornelius
2. Paul Hicks Jr.
3. Stephen Craig

Glass/Crystal and Striker

1. Mark Cornelius (Overall Winner)
2. Mark Cornelius
3. Paul Hicks Jr.

Other Friction Call and Striker

1. Mark Cornelius
2. Chad Remenaric
3. Jake Naessen

Through Call

1. Jake Naessen
2. Nathan Wolfe
3. Nathan Wolfe

Turned Trumpet Call

1. Kevin Rouse
2. Kevin Poeschel

Wing Bone

1. Kevin Rouse (Class Winner)
2. Kevin Rouse
3. Steve Sandidge

Scratch Box Design

1. Mike Graham
2. Mike Graham
3. Mike Graham

Push Pin Call

1. Nathan Wolfe
2. Nathan Wolfe
3. Brad Frazier

Tube Call

1. Jake Naessen
2. Tom Osmer
3. Nathan Wolfe

Locator

1. Darrel Hall
2. Nathan Wolfe
3. Nathan Wolfe

All Other Calls

1. Tim Fralick
2. Nathan Wolfe
3. Nathan Wolfe



VIRGINIA STATE CHAPTER

NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION





2019 Acorn Report

Gary Norman and Katie Martin

Over 200,000 hunters will take to the woods this fall in search of deer, turkeys, and bears as well as a host of smaller game species. One thing all of these hunters should know is the importance of acorns for the game they hunt. Acorns are a nutritious food providing protein, fat, and energy in the diets of 90 species of game and non-game animals in Virginia. As such, they are a staple food for Virginia's wildlife, providing important resources to meet the physical challenges of winter weather and reproduction in the following spring. Wildlife will concentrate in areas where acorns are available, making game hard to find and leaving some hunters to wonder if game populations are low. Under these conditions hunter success rates decline. Conversely, when acorn crops fail, wildlife search forests and fields for other food sources which makes game easier for hunters to find and increasing hunter odds of success.

Given the importance of acorns to wildlife and their relevance to hunter success and satisfactions, the Department annually monitors acorn crops across the state. In addition to Department staff, personnel from the Department of Forestry, Department of Conservation and Recreation-State Parks, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, Natural Resources Conservation Service, several military bases, and US Army Corps of Engineers participate in the surveys.

The white oak acorn crop was a bust in 2019 (Fig. 1). At best, white oak was very spotty in the Piedmont Region. Some white oak acorns were found in the northern and southern reaches of the Piedmont (Fort Belvoir and Briery Creek WMA, respectively).

As far as acorns go, the only game in town for most wildlife this year are red oaks (Fig 2.). Statewide, red oak acorn production was near the long-term survey median value. In the mountain regions, red oak production ranged from good in the northern mountains to spotty in the central and southern mountain counties. In the Piedmont, red oak acorns production was fair to good throughout the region with 20-25% of most tree crowns showing acorns. The southern reaches of the Tidewater Region also had good red oak acorn abundance.

Unfortunately, red oak acorns are high in tannins, a chemical that tastes bitter to most mammals. Birds don't have a sense of taste, so they are not deterred by tannins in acorns. But, size does matter as the larger red oak acorns often limits their use by some smaller birds. Red oak acorns are high in energy and fat and most mammals will eventually feed on red oak acorns when other foods disappear. Having some acorns, even red oak acorns, is a benefit for most wildlife.

Readers should know that mast abundance ratings are intended to reflect the regional averages; however, mast crops are not uniform across a region. Acorn abundance can vary among local areas that are 10-15 miles apart. White oak acorns, the "sweet acorns," are the first to be selected and the first to disappear. Scouting will once again prove useful to Virginians going outdoors this fall with or without a weapon, to enjoy our wildlife and perhaps harvest a deer, bear, or wild turkey.

Turkey Populations Rebound

Gary Norman and Katie Martin

Department surveys suggest that more young turkeys survived into the fall this year than in recent years, meaning higher populations and possibly better opportunities for hunters. The numbers of turkeys staff have observed in the summer has declined steadily since 2013, presumably due to poor reproduction. Wild turkey success in hatching and raising broods plays an important role in wild turkey populations and fall harvests. To monitor



reproduction, the Department annually asks staff to report all turkeys they see during July and August. Observations of the number of birds they see is an important index to overall population size. Further, the ratio of young birds (poults) to the number of females (hens) is a critical index to reproduction (P/H).

In 2019, the Department received 263 reports by staff observers driving nearly 370,000 miles during July and August. Seventy-one percent reported seeing at least one turkey. For the first time, citizens could also report turkeys and broods through GoOutdoors (<https://www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com/>), yielding 429 additional observations. Data from citizen reports are preliminary and were not included in this report; however, the Department appreciates the interest and effort of these observers and plans to incorporate their data into future analyses when baselines for these data are established.

On a statewide basis, staff observed 9 turkeys per 1,000 miles driven in 2019. This ratio peaked recently in 2014 and 2015 and has been declining since (Fig. 1). Low reproduction is believed to be the primary cause of this decline. The Tidewater Region had the highest ratio (17/1,000 mi.) and likely has the highest turkey population of any region. In the middle were the South Piedmont (10) and Southwest Mountain (9) regions. The lowest were the North Piedmont (6) and North Mountain (4) regions.

The Poults/Hen ratio is our best measure of reproduction as it considers the number of poults produced by all hens. Complete brood loss is not uncommon and those situations need to be incorporated when evaluating reproduction. Statewide, the 2019 P/H ratio was close (2.5) to the long-term survey average (2.6). This is a significant rebound over 2018 (1.6, Fig. 1). However, Gary Norman, Wild Turkey Project Leader, remarked that “The 2019 brood success will help slow the turkey population decline, but we’ll need several years of good reproduction to return to record populations of 2014 and 2015.”

The region with the best P/H ratio was the North Mountain, where 3.6 poults per hen were reported. This number is encouraging since this region appears to have the lowest turkey population. Good reproduction was also seen in the Tidewater (2.9), South Piedmont (2.6), and Southwest Mountain (2.5) regions where P/H ratios met or exceeded the state average (2.5). Low recruitment was observed in the North Piedmont Region where only 1.6 poults per hen were observed.

This information is intended to monitor turkey population trends and densities but does not infer high hunter success or satisfaction while hunting.

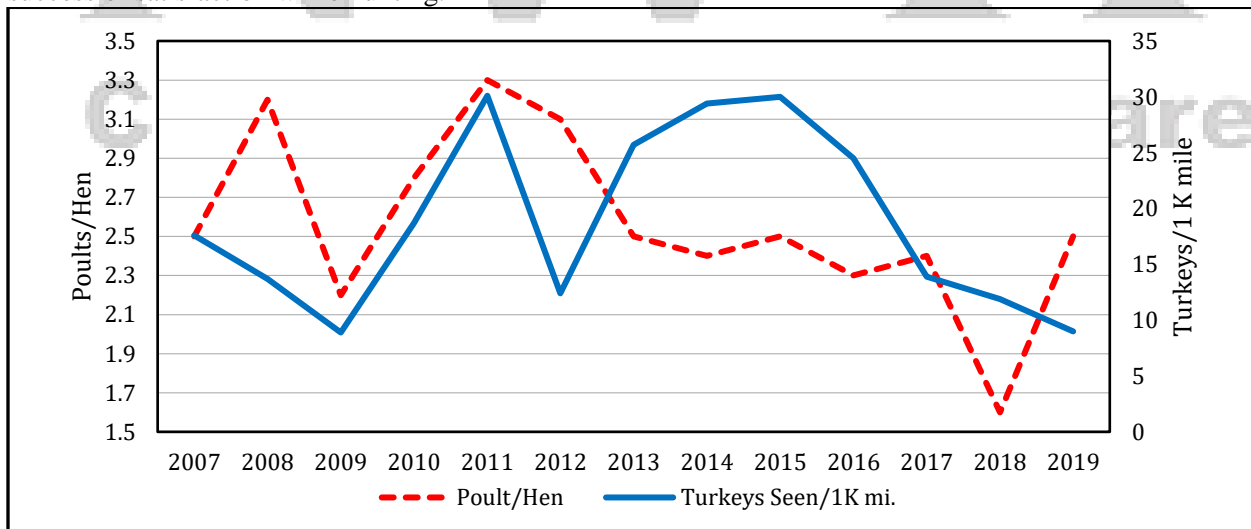


Figure 1. Wild turkeys seen by survey staff per 1,000 miles and Poults/Hen ratios during July and August in Virginia since 2007.



LOCAL CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

FAITHFUL CALL CHAPTER

Faithful Call donates 125 turkeys and meals for Thanksgiving and 175 for Christmas!



Woodstock Christmas parade



Youth Hunt



Fulks Run Lawn Party and JAKES TAKE AIM trailer

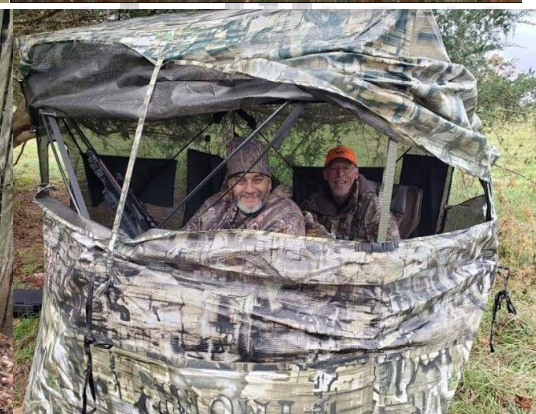


FRANKLIN COUNTY LONGBEARDS

Franklin County Longbeards ran their Women in the Outdoors hunt for a month of rifle season. The hunt was held from November 16th to December 14th. 18 women participated and 3 of those were new to hunting. There were 12 deer harvested during the season, 2 of which were a first-time harvest.



The Franklin County Longbeards hosted their 3rd annual Wheelin' Sportsmen Hunt on November 18, 2019. We had a total of 9 hunters and 11 guides along with 4 other support staff. This hunt was made extra special with the addition of a first time Wheelin' Sportsman hunter, Mac Lawson.





The Franklin County Longbeards participated in our local Christmas parade this year to help get our name in the community. We had all positive feedback from the community. This is one of the ways we continue to partner with our community to help with our mission.



STAUNTON-MEHERRIN CHAPTER

On Sept 14, 2019, Occoneechee State Park hosted a VAWS dove hunt sponsored by the Staunton-Meherrin chapter. 5 hunters and their assistants, several Park Rangers and approximately 10 chapter volunteers on transport the hunters/helpers to the dove field and back.





AUGUSTA COUNTY CHAPTER

On Saturday, December 28th, the Augusta County Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation hosted their annual deer hunt on the grounds of Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center and adjoining property near Fishersville. 11 hunters with varying disabilities participated and it was a great time had by all! A total of three deer were harvested. The Augusta County and Virginia Wheelin' Sportsmen Chapters both provided volunteers for assisting and guiding hunters, recovering game, and processing the deer.



NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA CHAPTER

THE NCAC PARTNERED WITH THE PENTAGON CHAPTER OF DUCKS UNLIMITED TO HOST A COMBINATION JAKES/GREEN WINGS EVENT WHERE KIDS HELPED PREPARE WOOD DUCK BOXES FOR THE 2019 NESTING SEASON AT MASON NECK STATE PARK AND ELIZABETH HARTWELL NWR.



THE NCAC PARTNERED WITH THE VA DGIF TO HOST AN ADULT TURKEY HUNTING WORKSHOP AND MENTORED HUNT.



**VIRGINIA STATE CHAPTER**
NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION

2019 PHOTOS





NWTF **VIRGINIA STATE CHAPTER**
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VA NWTF EVENTS CALENDAR

EVENT	DATE
NWTF National Convention- Nashville, TN	2/12-15/20
State Board Meeting- Wytheville, VA	5/17/20
State Turkey Calling Championship, Richmond, VA	8/8/20
State Board Meeting/Elections – Bass Pro Shops, Ashland	9/20/20

Take a child outdoors this spring, introduce them and others to our pastime, help create new hunters, or take your neighbor who maybe doesn't have anywhere to hunt. Good luck afield, have fun, be safe, and thank you for helping the NWTF
“SAVE THE HABITAT, SAVE THE HUNT”!