

ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date: 08/12/2019

ISSUE:	Should CPW adopt regulations extending the spring turkey season through May 31 annually?
DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):	
<p>Currently, the statewide general spring turkey season begins annually on the second Saturday of April, and closes 44 days later. 2019 season dates were April 13 – May 26. Limited permit units follow similar guidelines in opening and closing dates, although several have two seasons lying within that range of dates. This change to extend the season was requested by a turkey hunter as an option to allow hunting through the Memorial Day weekend. TERP staff proposes that CPW establish a fixed closing date of May 31 for the spring turkey season. This would simplify the annual regulation setting and review process, would provide more opportunity, allow hunting over Memorial Day, and would help hunters plan for a fixed annual closing date.</p> <p>In general, turkey populations are doing very well in Colorado. Over the last 20 years, we have seen hunting participation nearly quadruple, while harvest has increased (tripled from the 1999 harvest estimate). Current recommendations for season timing are to close the season before large numbers of turkey poults are on the landscape, and this goal would still be met by a May 31 closing date. There would be a slight increase in hunter opportunity by adding a few days at the end of the season at presumably little or no cost elsewhere, although it is possible that extending the season could result in some conflict with other recreationists. The argument also exists that continued disturbance by hunters later in May can force late brooding hens off nests and impact nest survival. There is not data specific to Colorado to support or deny this; however, hunters are already hunting turkeys fairly late into May, so it is difficult to believe that adding a few days at the end of the season would create a significant issue. Potential conflicts are simply unknown at this time. Terrestrial staff proposes that keeping a single set of opening (2nd Saturday of April) and closing season dates will help minimize confusion for hunters and agency staff alike, so the preference is that limited permit hunts and the OTC season would adopt a May 31 closing date.</p> <p>Three neighboring states close spring turkey season on May 31 annually, while two (Wyoming and New Mexico) close earlier.</p> <p>This proposed change is not intended to affect the Ranching for Wildlife spring turkey season dates.</p>	
<p>STATE LAW REQUIRES CPW TO SOLICIT INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDERS THAT MAY BE AFFECTED POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY BY THE PROPOSED RULES. THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF AND INVITED TO PROVIDE INPUT ON THE REGULATORY CHANGES PROPOSED IN THIS ISSUE PAPER:</p>	
<p>*IT IS ASSUMED THAT ALL NECESSARY INTERNAL PARTIES HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED*.</p>	
<p>No external public input process has occurred, although the request was brought forth by a member of the public. Turkey hunters, potentially private landowners, NWTF, public land management agencies.</p>	
ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Preferred Alternative*: Adopt a spring turkey season closing date of May 31 annually for both limited and OTC hunts. 2. Status Quo, do not make any changes to the spring turkey season dates. 	

Issue Raised by:	TERP
Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):	Ed Gorman
CC:	
APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:	Reid DeWalt
REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION	
RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date: 04/15/2019

08/12/2019

ISSUE:	Should Spring Turkey hunting licenses in GMU-030 be changed from Limited to Unlimited?
DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):	
<p>The wild turkey population in GMU-030 has expanded its range from the Colorado River riparian zone into adjacent habitats. While they have not proliferated wildly, turkeys exist in huntable numbers in many parts of the GMU. Turkey have become overabundant on at least one farm and are causing agricultural damage. Under the current draw system there is no guarantee that the hunters drawing tags will be able to access private property. Changing our licensing strategy from Limited to Unlimited Spring hunting will enable private landowners to more effectively utilize hunting to increase harvest and reduce crop damage. Maintaining the Spring-Only (harvest restricted to males) hunt designation in GMU-030 will decrease the chance that turkey populations utilizing more accessible public land habitats will be negatively impacted by the change.</p>	
<p>STATE LAW REQUIRES CPW TO SOLICIT INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDERS THAT MAY BE AFFECTED POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY BY THE PROPOSED RULES. THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF AND INVITED TO PROVIDE INPUT ON THE REGULATORY CHANGES PROPOSED IN THIS ISSUE PAPER:</p> <p>*IT IS ASSUMED THAT ALL NECESSARTY INTERNAL PARTIES HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED*.</p> <p>[List stakeholder groups and briefly summarize comments received]</p> <p>Impacted landowner's; Local hunters; Grand Junction NWTf Chapter;</p>	
ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Preferred Alternative*: Include GMU-030 in the list of units open to unlimited (OTC) Spring Turkey hunting, and remove hunt codes T-M-030-O1-R and T-M-030-K1-R. 2. Establish a Private Land Only hunt code for Spring Turkey in GMU-030. 3. Maintain the Status Quo. 	
Issue Raised by:	Paul Creeden, Wildlife Manager, Fruita District
Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):	
CC:	Kirk Oldham; Brad Petch
APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:	Romatzke
REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION	Terrestrial
RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date: 08/12/2019

ISSUE:	Should a new private land only limited spring turkey hunt code be created in GMU 23 to allow for additional harvest opportunity on private lands where the turkeys congregate?
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DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):

Currently turkey hunting in unit 23 is limited to only 15 spring bearded turkey hunting licenses which are valid on both public and private lands in unit 23. These limited spring turkey hunting licenses are heavily sought after (require multiple preference points to draw) and are available only through the limited spring turkey drawing (Hunt code T-M-023-O1-R).

Historically, this wild turkey population was introduced and was very small; thus CPW has been extremely conservative with annual spring hunting license quotas to ensure that the turkey population was not overharvested in unit 23. However, CPW has had tremendous support from private landowners throughout the upper White River Valley over the past 15 years and as a result of cooperative artificial feeding operations during the critical winter periods, the wild turkey population has grown significantly in unit 23 and surrounding GMU's. The significant growth and survival of the wild turkey population near Meeker and within unit 23 especially has resulted in a biological surplus of wild turkeys that should be offered to hunters via additional spring turkey hunting licenses.

However, the vast majority of the turkeys have always been found on private lands along the upper White River corridor where they prefer to congregate and forage on the prime habitats for the majority of the year and especially in the spring. Therefore, increasing the number of turkey hunting licenses available to hunters within the existing hunt code (TM02301R), would most likely result in lots of complaints about the lack of turkeys available to hunters on the limited public lands in unit 23. The existing quota of 15 spring turkey licenses already results in some hunter complaints and crowding issues for the few areas on public land in unit 23 where turkeys are commonly found during the spring turkey season (i.e., Miller Creek drainage).

Therefore, to avoid additional public land complaints and hunter crowding issues on the limited public lands in unit 23 that are suitable for spring turkey hunting, CPW is recommending that a special private land only hunt code be created so that additional spring turkey hunting opportunity can be made available to hunters that do have access to private lands along the upper White River valley in unit 23. This would create a very high quality spring turkey hunting opportunity for hunters that can legally secure permission to hunt on the private lands along the upper White River in unit 23.

However, it is important to note that the new PLO spring turkey season would need to start a minimum of 2 days after the start of the regular spring limited turkey season in unit 23, in order to avoid any potential conflicts with CPW's annual spring youth outreach turkey hunt which is always scheduled for opening weekend of the spring turkey season in unit 23. For example, the limited spring turkey season in unit 23 generally opens on the second Saturday in April (which was April 13th in 2019), thus that would stay the same for the existing spring turkey hunt code and the 15 licenses that are valid on public or private lands in unit 23 (TM02301R), but the new private land only spring turkey season that would have an additional 10-15 spring turkey licenses would not open until after opening weekend (i.e., would start no sooner than the 3rd Monday in April, which would have been April 15th in 2019).

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***IT IS ASSUMED THAT ALL NECESSARTY INTERNAL PARTIES HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED*.**

[List stakeholder groups and briefly summarize comments received]

There has not been any specific public outreach conducted regarding this issue, however, CPW has received numerous complaints about the significant number of wild turkeys in unit 23 and the lack of hunting licenses and opportunity that CPW currently offers. Spring turkey hunting license demand for the 15 licenses that are currently available on public/private land in unit 23 suggests there would not be opposition to creating additional spring turkey hunting opportunities on private lands where the turkeys have increased and are available during the spring turkey hunting season. Many landowners allow CPW to access their private lands within the upper White River valley on opening weekend of the spring turkey season for implementation of the annual spring youth outreach turkey hunt, so it is important that the new PLO turkey season does not conflict with that very special youth hunt opportunity. If landowners have paying turkey hunting clients, they are sometimes reluctant to allow CPW to access their property for the annual spring youth outreach turkey hunt thus having the PLO season start after opening weekend would hopefully alleviate that potential conflict.

ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):

1. ***Preferred Alternative*:** Create an additional spring limited turkey hunt code valid on private lands in unit 23 where the majority of the turkeys are found during the spring hunting season, with a delayed opening (first Monday following the opening of the public season) to maximize landowner participation and access for CPW's annual spring youth outreach turkey hunt along the White River.
2. Increase the quota for the existing hunt code for the spring limited turkey season in unit 23 on both public and private lands to increase hunting opportunity, and hope that hunters that draw the limited spring licenses will realize that the majority of the turkeys in unit 23 are found on private lands where permission will need to be secured from landowners in order to legally hunt. This option risks major trespass issues on private lands and/or major complaints of lack of turkeys available to hunters on the public lands in unit 23.
3. Status quo with no change. Maintain the spring limited turkey season in unit 23 via existing hunt code TM02301R which is not taking advantage of the substantial increase in the wild turkey population and the biological surplus that is currently available.

Issue Raised by:	Area 6 DWM Bailey Franklin
Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):	
CC:	NW Senior Biologist Brad Petch, A6 Terrestrial Biologists Darby Finley and Brian Holmes, A6 AWM Bill deVergie, A6 AAWM Mike Swaro, and affected A6 DWM's.
APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:	Romatzke
REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?	X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION	Terrestrial
RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES X NO