



PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

BUREAU OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

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Wild Turkey Field Study

What? The PA Game Commission, in cooperation with United States Geological Survey (USGS) Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Penn State University, PennVet's Wildlife Futures Program at University of Pennsylvania (UPenn), and PA Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), is conducting the largest turkey study ever in PA. We are looking at factors that can impact turkey populations including reproduction, survival, disease, habitat use, and management strategies. We will also survey hunters to understand their preferences and values regarding turkey season regulations.



A tagged hen with her 6 poults

Why? To better understand turkey populations and improve turkey management.

Where? Wildlife Management Units 2D, 3D, 4D, and 5C. These study areas were chosen for varying landscapes, turkey population densities, and spring hunter and harvest densities.

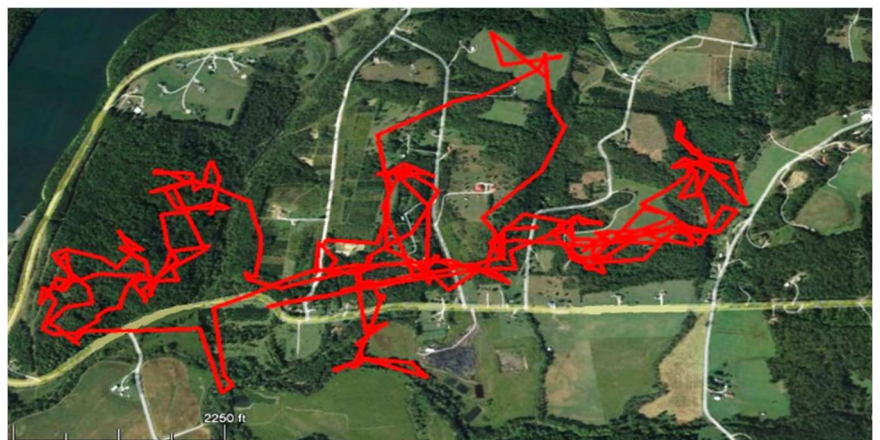
How? The PA Game Commission traps turkeys each winter using large, rocket propelled nets. We collect blood, feces, and tissue swabs from each turkey to test for common turkey diseases. Some turkeys are fitted with GPS transmitters. All turkeys receive aluminum leg bands and are released at the trap site. Transmitters allow the Game Commission to collect location, movement, and survival information. Game Commission employees regularly locate the turkeys to collect data from the transmitter. All birds are released at the same site they were captured.



GPS Transmitter on hen

After? Data will be analyzed in cooperation with Penn State and UPenn. The PA Game Commission will use the results to revise management strategies according to current population and habitat needs while also incorporating hunter opinions and values regarding hunting.

Where else? State wildlife agencies of Maryland, New Jersey, and Ohio are conducting this same study in their states for a collaborative regional analysis and improve turkey management more broadly.



Google Earth map showing movements of a hen over several weeks and across multiple properties