



NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION

2003 WILD TURKEY SUMMER BROOD SURVEY REPORT

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In order to gain insight into wild turkey productivity over the various regions of the state, a wild turkey brood survey is conducted each summer. The survey was mailed to approximately 1,200 participants. Personnel from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, the North Carolina Forest Service, the US Forest Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, several military bases, and numerous key private individuals around restoration areas participated in the survey.

Observations made during the course of routine daily activities were recorded during the July 1 through August 31 period. This information was compiled and analyzed to determine a productivity index from the average poult per hen ratios.

The following tables summarize the data received for 2003.

Table 1. 2003 Wild Turkey Summer Brood Survey Data

Region	Observations	Hens W/O Poults	Hens W/ Poults	Total Hens	Total Poults	Total Gobblers	Total Unk.
Coastal	323	170	225	395	765	313	315
Piedmont	400	297	341	638	1061	302	163
Mountains	312	338	274	612	824	217	123
State	1035	805	840	1645	2650	832	601

Table 2. 2003 Wild Turkey Summer Brood Survey Results

Region*	% Hens W/ Poults	Average Poults/Brood	Average Poults/Hen
Coastal	57	3.4	1.9
Piedmont	53	3.1	1.7
Mountains	45	3.0	1.4
State**	51	3.1	1.6

**Geographical regions, not NCWRC regions.*

***The State percentages and averages in Table 2 were calculated by weighting the regional data by the percentage of the total wild turkey population in that region.*



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The percentage of hens with poults is an indication of nesting success while the average number of poults/brood is an indication of poult survival. Overall productivity is determined by the average number of poults/hen. An average of 3.0 poults/hen is considered good productivity.

A total of 5,728 wild turkeys were observed during this summer's brood survey. Statewide, the percentage of hens with poults (only 51%) indicates poor nesting success; the average number of poults/brood (3.1) indicates fair to poor poult survival; and the average number of poults/hen (1.6) indicates poor overall productivity. Wild turkey productivity was down in all three geographical regions with the Coastal and Piedmont Regions fairing only slightly better than the Mountain Region. This year's wild turkey productivity is the poorest on record since brood surveys began in 1988. Unusually rainy weather and cool temperatures throughout most of the nesting and brood rearing periods appear to be the most probable causes of the poor productivity.