

Wild Turkey Management



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

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Steps to Successful Management

1. Identify the habitat needs
2. Inventory current habitat conditions
3. Establish a management objective / develop a plan
- biologically sound & economically feasible
4. Implement management practices
5. Monitor results





Desirable Forest Habitat

Mature forest , mixed stands

Well-developed mid-stories

-Trees and shrubs

Patchy ground vegetation

Relatively open

Management Goal

**Maintain at least 20 % of
property in hardwoods**

50 % oaks





Mature Forest Habitat

Benefits

Mast- acorns, beechnuts, pine seeds, black gum,

Green vegetation / insects

Roosting sites / brood rearing





Hardwood Corridors

Streamside Management Zones

- mature trees / shaded understory

Link habitat components

Provide travel corridors

- around undesirable habitat,
young forest, large fields

Minimum 300 feet wide

Spring seeps, wetlands



Grassy Openings





Landscapes w/ mature forest interspersed w/ openings
create ideal wild turkey habitat



Openings

Low growing grasses

Herbaceous vegetation

Scattered trees and shrubs

Vegetation height @ 20 inches

Benefits

**Important foraging & brood
habitat**

- insects, seeds, green veg.

Nesting cover

Concealment for poults

Gobbling Areas

Field edges

Small clearing

Mature woods w/ open understory





Nesting Cover

Tall grass / old fields

Dense brush / fallen trees

Open woodlands

Uncut hayfields

Nesting Behavior

1 egg per day / 8 – 20 days

10 – 15 eggs average

Incubation period- 28 days



Brood Cover

Pastures, powerline ROWs, cut hayfields

Important for poult survival

First two weeks after hatching

Insect availability- critical

Seed, berries, green veg.





Habitat Management Considerations

What are the limiting factors?

Forest Management

1. Challenge to maintain a balance of regeneration and mature stands
2. Guidelines -keep regeneration size 50 acres or less
-no more than 1/3 of forest area less than 20 years old
3. Turkey use decreases as plant succession progresses
4. Hens will nest around edges of young forest areas
5. Dense young forest stands are barriers to turkey movement until trees mature, shade out understory



Thinning for Mast Production

Thinning enhances mast production with maximum benefits during poor mast years

Leave a variety of hard and soft mast producing trees

Encourage grape arbors

Maintain 60 - 80% of stocking





Pine Thinning

Thin loblolly pine when crowns begin to overlap

Stand Age – 15 to 20 years

Thin to maintain 20 – 30% of ground in direct sunlight at noon

Prescribe burn 2 years after thinning

Conduct second thinning after 5 – 10 years

Leave a variety of hard and soft mast producing trees







Opening Management

Comprise 10 – 50 % of property

Ideal size- 1 – 5 acres

**Maintain a combination of warm
& cool season vegetation**

Manage native vegetation

**Techniques- mowing, disking,
prescribed burning**

What to Plant ? to plant ?

Cool Season Plantings

Clover- white, red, crimson

Wheat / Rye / Oats

Birdsfoot Trefoil

Warm Season Plantings

Browntop millet

Grain sorghum / corn

Chufa





Prescribed Burning

Develop a Burn Plan

Burn on a rotation- 2 – 4 years

Avoid burning April - June

Ideal time February – March

Use backing fire technique

Patchy burns ideal



Burn Year 2

Burn Year 1

Burn Year 3

Prescribed Burning Benefits

Removes dense vegetation / litter

Stimulates plant growth

Attracts insects







