

2026 Spring Wild Turkey Proclamation

Pursuant to North Dakota law and upon the recommendation of the North Dakota Game and Fish Director, I hereby declare an open season for North Dakota residents for the taking of not to exceed 8,497 bearded wild turkeys. Except as provided hereinafter or otherwise by law, no person shall hunt, kill, take, possess, transport, or so attempt to hunt, kill, take, or possess any wild turkeys.

1. SEASON DATES, TIMES, OPEN AREAS:

SEASON	OPENS	CLOSES	AREAS	RESTRICTIONS
Spring	Apr. 11	May 17	All Open Units	Restricted to spring season dates and unit described on license.

HOURS OF HUNTING: are one-half (½) hour before sunrise to sunset.

2. ELIGIBILITY:

Only North Dakota residents are eligible. Licenses are issued by a weighted lottery drawing among eligible applicants as prescribed by the Director. Individuals who are fifteen years of age or younger on opening day and have never received a spring wild turkey license, and so indicate this on the spring turkey application, will receive a spring turkey license valid for any open unit.

3. LICENSES:

Licenses are issued by a weighted lottery drawing among eligible applicants. Licenses are issued in the form of a tag.

Lottery application deadline will be determined by the Director and specified at the time of the lottery application period opening.

Applications and Fees--Only one application may be submitted for the 2026 spring season, hence a landowner may submit either a gratis or a lottery application, but not both. Applicants must submit a payment type with their online application. Spring Turkey license fees will only be collected if the applicant is successful in the lottery.

After the initial lottery, remaining licenses will be issued as prescribed by the Director, which may allow individuals to obtain one additional license in select units.

Gratis--Gratis licenses are available to North Dakota residents owning or leasing for agricultural purposes and actively farming or ranching, at least 150 acres of land located in an open hunting unit and are valid only upon land described on the application and, subsequently the license. Gratis licenses are issued only through the Department's Bismarck office and are subtracted from the maximum number of turkey licenses available for each unit.

Other Licenses Required--To hunt wild turkey, all hunters regardless of age must also possess a 2026 fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate and a 2026 general game and habitat license. In addition, hunters 16 years of age and older must possess a 2026 small game license or a combination license before hunting wild turkeys.

4. FIREARMS AND ARCHERY EQUIPMENT:

Firearms--Only shotguns, including muzzleloading shotguns, no larger than 10 gauge and capable of holding not more than three shells in the magazine and chamber are legal. Minimum barrel length is 18 inches. Fully automatic firearms are illegal. Centerfire rifles, rimfire rifles, muzzleloading rifles and handguns are illegal for hunting in the spring wild turkey season.

Bows and Arrows--A bow must be pulled, held, and released by hand. Any release aid may be used providing it is hand operated, the shooter supports the draw weight of the bow, and the release is not attached to any part of the bow other than at the bowstring. A compound bow used for hunting turkeys must have at least 35 pounds of draw at 28 inches or less draw length. Recurve and long bows used for hunting turkeys must have at least 35 pounds of draw at 28 inches. Arrows must be at least 24 inches long, tipped with a metal broadhead, with at least two sharp cutting edges, and have a cutting diameter of at least 3/4 inches (i.e., not able to pass through a 3/4 inch ring). It is illegal to hunt turkeys with barbed arrows. Broadheads with mechanical or retractable blades are legal. Telescopic sights, range finding devices or other electronic devices attached to the bow, or the arrow, are not permitted. Exceptions: battery powered or electronically lighted sights that do not project light, a lighted nock and recording devices which do not aid in range finding, sighting or shooting the bow are permitted. Handheld range finding devices are legal. Arrows capable of causing damage or injury to the animal in excess of that inflicted by the cutting edges of the broadhead, are prohibited while hunting turkeys with a bow (e.g., explosive arrow points, arrows tipped with drugs or chemicals, and pneumatic or hydraulic shafts are illegal.). Crossbows are not legal, except with a permit from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department Director. When permitted, crossbows must: a) have a minimum draw weight of at least 75 pounds, b) be equipped with a working safety to prevent accidental firing, c) use arrows or bolts at least 14 inches in length and d) be designed to be fired from the shoulder. Crossbows equipped with pistol grips and designed to be fired with one hand are illegal. Crossbow hunters must comply with all other archery equipment regulations listed above.

The Director may make reasonable accommodations to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

5. AIRCRAFT AND MOTOR-DRIVEN VEHICLES:

Aircraft may not be used to drive, concentrate, rally, raise, stir up, spot, or disturb game.

It is illegal to shoot with bow and arrow or firearm while in or on a motor-driven vehicle. Unless otherwise authorized under N.D.C.C., it is illegal to carry a firearm in or on a motor-driven vehicle with a shell in the chamber. The entire cylinder of a revolver is considered the chamber, requiring the revolver to be completely unloaded. It is illegal to carry any muzzleloading long gun or muzzleloading pistol in or on a motor-driven vehicle with a percussion cap or primer on the nipple or powder in the flash pan.

A landowner or lessee who actively farms or ranches land and persons having written permission from a landowner or lessee who actively farms or ranches that land may use a motor-driven vehicle on that land other than on an established road or trail to hunt turkeys.

The use of all motor-driven vehicles on wildlife management areas is restricted to those constructed roads, well worn trails, and parking areas normally used by passenger cars.

No person may use motor-driven vehicles on North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Conservation PLOTS (Private Land Open To Sportsmen) property without permission from the landowner. These areas have been entrusted to the public for walking access through written agreements by private landowners. The boundaries of these properties are described in the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's annual Conservation PLOTS Guide and on-site by large yellow triangular signs.

6. BAG LIMIT:

Each license holder may take and possess one bearded or male wild turkey per license.

7. TAGGING REQUIREMENTS:

Immediately after the turkey has been killed, the hunter must indicate the date of kill by cutting out the appropriate month and day from the tag provided with the license and attach it around the leg of the turkey in an exact manner as illustrated on the license document, to prevent its removal. Hunters are required to have their turkey tags in possession while afield hunting and be able to present a valid turkey tag immediately upon request. In no case is it legal to possess or transport a turkey unless it is properly tagged. No person may reuse or attempt to reuse any tag issued. The carcass tag must remain with the edible flesh during any transportation and until it is processed and packaged as food.

8. TRANSPORTATION:

License holders must accompany their wild turkey during transportation, except that it may be shipped by licensed public carrier in receipt of proper bill of lading.

9. AREAS CLOSED TO HUNTING:

Unless specifically authorized, federal or state properties such as refuges, sanctuaries, military installations, parks, or historic sites posted no trespassing, or no hunting are closed to the hunting of turkey.

Exception: Certain National Wildlife Refuges may be open to turkey hunting during the Spring Turkey season. Contact refuge headquarters for details.

It is illegal to hunt in unharvested crops without the owner's consent. Crops also include alfalfa, clover, and other grasses grown for seed.

10. LICENSES AVAILABLE BY UNIT:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>AVAILABLE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>AVAILABLE</u>
02	350	40	100
03	50	44	150
04	175	45	150
06	150	47	40
13	750	50	475
17	450	51	500
19	400	53	150
25	850	98	650
27	950	99	275
30	1,025	OAF Licenses	4
31	100	NWTF Raffle	3
37	750	TOTAL	8,497

11. HUNTING UNIT DESCRIPTIONS:

Unit 02-- Barnes County, Cass County, Griggs County, Steele County and Traill County.

Unit 03--Benson County, Pierce County east of ND Highway 3 and south of ND Highway 17, and Ramsey County. **NOTE!** In addition to a Unit 03 spring wild turkey license, a special permit is required to hunt in Graham's Island State Park. Special restrictions will be required when hunting in Graham's Island State Park. Contact the park office for additional information and for obtaining these free permits (701) 766-4015.

Unit 04--Those portions of Billings and Golden Valley counties south of Interstate 94.

Unit 06--Adams County and Bowman County.

Unit 13--Dunn County.

Unit 17--Those portions of Billings and Golden Valley counties north of Interstate 94.

Unit 19--Grant County, Sioux County, and that part of Morton County south of Interstate 94 that lies west of Morton County Road No. 86 (the Almont to Carson road) and that part of Morton County north of Interstate 94 that lies west of ND Highway 31.

Unit 25--McHenry County and that part of Pierce County west of ND Highway 3 and that part of Ward County that lies east of U.S. Highway 83.

Unit 27--McKenzie County.

Unit 30--Morton County except for that part of Morton County south of Interstate 94 that lies west of Morton County Road No. 86 (the Almont to Carson Road) and except that part of Morton County north of Interstate 94 that lies west of ND Highway 31.

Unit 31-- Mountrail County.

Unit 37--Dickey County, LaMoure County, Logan County, McIntosh County, Ransom County, Richland County and Sargent County.

Unit 40--Rolette County, and those portions of Bottineau and Renville counties east of U.S. Highway 83 and that portion of Pierce County north of ND Highway 17.

Unit 44--Hettinger County and Slope County.

Unit 45--Stark County.

Unit 47--Eddy County, Foster County, Kidder County, Sheridan County, Stutsman County and Wells County.

Unit 50--Cavalier County, Grand Forks County, Nelson County, Pembina County, Towner County and Walsh County.

Unit 51--Burke County, all of Renville County (except that portion east of U.S. Highway 83), that part of Bottineau County west of U.S. Highway 83, and that part of Ward County that lies west of U.S. Highway 83.

Unit 53--Williams County and Divide County.

Unit 98--Burleigh County, Emmons County and McLean County.

Unit 99--Mercer County and Oliver County.

12. NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION:

The 2026 Spring Wild Turkey Proclamation provides the National Wild Turkey Federation with three turkey licenses, valid in any open unit, for the 2026 spring season. These licenses are to be raffled or auctioned as per legislation (N.D.C.C. 20.1-05.1-01 and 20.1-04-07.1). The raffle or auction license proceeds are to be used for wild turkey conservation in North Dakota.

13. OUTDOOR ADVENTURE FOUNDATION:

The 2026 Spring Wild Turkey Proclamation provides the Outdoor Adventure Foundation with four turkey licenses, valid in any open unit, for the 2026 spring season. In accordance with N.D.C.C. 20.1-05.1-01 and 20.1-04-07.1, these four licenses shall be issued to a qualifying youth who has cancer or a life-threatening illness.

14. WANTON WASTE OF A WILD TURKEY:

No person shall kill, cripple, waste, destroy, spoil, or abandon the edible flesh of any wild turkey without making a reasonable effort to retrieve the bird, and retain it in his/her actual custody, at the place where taken and between that place and either (a) his/her personal permanent residence, (b) taxidermist or (c) a common carrier. Edible flesh means the breast meat of any wild turkey.

15. VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES:

The following violations are noncriminal and have the listed penalties:


- * Hunting before or after legal hours (Section 1) up to 30 minutes--penalty--\$100.
In excess of 30 minutes--Class B Misdemeanor.
- * A person afield legally hunting with a firearm in or on a vehicle with a cartridge in the chamber (Section 5)--penalty--\$25.
- * Hunting turkeys with a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells. (Section 4) --penalty--noncriminal--\$25.
- * Use of motor-driven vehicle in a restricted area (Section 5)--penalty--\$50.
- * Failure to possess turkey tag while hunting (Section 7)--penalty--\$50.
- * Failure to accompany one's own game during transportation or transporting another's game (Section 8)--penalty--\$50.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND and the Great Seal of the State of North Dakota this 28th
day of January, 2026.



Kelly Armstrong
Governor

Attest



Secretary of State

Deputy

16. Spring Wild Turkey Hunting Units.

