



2024 Southeast Wild Turkey Working Group Meeting – Future Research Priorities

The following are future research priorities (FRP) as identified at the 2018 Southeast Wild Turkey Working Group Meeting, as a response to the retrospective analysis of productivity data from across the Southeast and updated at the 2024 Meeting. All these FRPs are in response to trying to better understand the dynamics and drivers of “post-restoration era” wild turkey populations in light of relatively recent widespread declining productivity and falling population numbers. Topics are grouped into priority tiers based on voting by member states, wherein each representative was asked to rank topics.

Highest Priority:

- Methods of estimating wild turkey population size and population changes across varying spatial scales and across time
- Impact of various diseases, pathogens, and toxicants (e.g., LPDV, WNV, Blackhead/Histomoniasis related to poultry operations, parasite loads, and toxicants such as Neonicotinoids) on wild turkey population dynamics (e.g., female productivity, poult survival/recruitment, adult survival/health)
- Identifying how changes in predator numbers/communities, both with and without habitat manipulation, affect wild turkey survival and productivity
- Impact of habitat availability/changing landscapes on wild turkey demographics, movements, and space use

Medium Priority:

- Effects of supplemental feeding on turkey movement, predator communities, and disease transmission
- Male wild turkey survival and harvest mortality across various regulatory frameworks and turkey densities, including in relation to hunter satisfaction
- Estimates of female wild turkey productivity in relation to hunting pressure (or lack thereof)
- Estimates of female wild turkey survival and productivity at varying levels of turkey abundance/density

Lower Priority:

- Regional scale human dimensions research to determine public perception of various aspects of turkey management (e.g., hunter satisfaction, agency trust, season timing/length opinions, perspectives on population trends, attitudes towards management practices such as Rx fire, etc.)
- Defining what landscape attributes, vegetation conditions, or other characteristics constitute “quality” nesting habitat in terms of selection/use and survival/success, and how these characteristics have changed over time