Wildlife Habitat Management Institute

Wild Turkey

(*Meleagris gallopavo*)

November 1999* ***Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Leaflet*** ***Number 12***

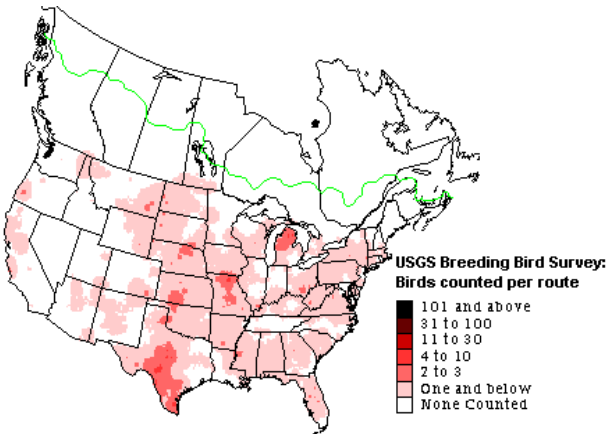
Wildlife Habitat Council

General Information

The wild turkey is a large, gallinaceous game bird represented by five subspecies throughout the United States. Its large size, iridescent body feathers and gregarious behavior has made the wild turkey a popular symbol of American wildlife for centuries. The wild turkey's reputation as a keen and wary game bird of exceptional table fare, its fascinating courting behavior, and its photogenic qualities have made it one of the most desirable species of native wildlife among hunters and other wildlife enthusiasts. The wild turkey's popularity prompted one of the most successful wildlife management recovery efforts ever conducted in the United States.

Wild turkey populations experienced heavy pressure from unregulated hunting following the arrival of Europeans in North America. Loss of habitat associated with forest clearing further impacted turkey populations, beginning in the late 1600s. By 1920, wild turkeys remained in only 21 of 39 states that historically supported healthy populations. Fortunately, regeneration of harvested forests and intensive habitat management efforts have greatly improved wild turkey populations in areas within its traditional range. Turkeys have been introduced to areas outside their historical range and, due to their adaptability, have thrived. As a result, wild turkeys are present today in all states except Alaska. Continued efforts to increase wild turkey populations on private lands may help to further secure a stable future for this valued game bird.

This leaflet is designed to serve as an introduction to the habitat requirements of the wild turkey in the United States and to assist landowners and managers in the development of a comprehensive wild turkey management plan. The success of any species management plan depends on considering the specific needs of the desired species and analyzing the designated habitat area as a whole to ensure that all required habitat elements are present. This leaflet provides a number of practical habitat management activities that can be conducted on private lands to boost local wild turkey populations and encourages involving fish and wildlife professionals in management planning to identify additional management actions needed over time.



Wild Turkey Range

Range

The wild turkey can today be found in suitable habitat in each of the lower 48 United States and Hawaii. Populations are the most numerous in Texas at more than 600,000 birds, followed in descending order by Missouri, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Wisconsin, California, Iowa, Florida, Tennessee, Ohio, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Virginia with populations between 145,000 and 600,000 birds; the remaining 32 states host smaller populations. Wild turkeys are non-migratory, year-round residents. Habitat composition and local weather patterns dictate where turkeys are found within each state.

The wild turkey in the United States

Common Name	Scientific Name	Range
Eastern wild turkey	*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*	ND to TX and east, except FL peninsula; WA
Rio Grande wild turkey	*Meleagris gallopavo intermedia*	Primarily the central plains states and drier regions of the west (SD, NE, KS, OK, TX, NM, CO, UT, NV, ID, OR, WA, CA, HI
Merriam's wild turkey	*Meleagris gallopavo merriami*	ND to west TX and west
Florida wild turkey	*Meleagris gallopavo osceola*	Florida peninsula
Gould's wild turkey	*Meleagris gallopavo mexicana*	Southwestern corner of NM and southeastern corner of AZ

*Wild turkey subspecies are listed in descending order according to population sizes.

Habitat Requirements

General

The five wild turkey subspecies occupy a variety of habitats throughout their ranges. The following table lists the primary habitats occupied by wild turkeys in their respective regions.

Primary habitats occupied by wild turkey subspecies

Species	Primary Habitats Occupied
Eastern wild turkey	open, mature hardwood and mixed forests; open fields
Rio Grande wild turkey	brushy areas near streams and rivers; mesquite, pine and scrub oak forests
Merriam's wild turkey	ponderosa pine forests; pinyon-juniper woodlands; foothills and other mountain forest habitats
Florida wild turkey	pine flatwoods, oak and palmetto hammocks; wooded swamp habitats; prairies adjacent to roosting trees
Gould's wild turkey	mountainous regions characterized by steep, rocky canyons and brushy chaparral; pinyon pine and juniper forest; oak savanna

Careful planning to maintain adequate roosting trees and mid-to late-successional forest communities is necessary to provide suitable habitat for woodland wild turkeys. Development, overgrazing by livestock, lack of mature forest or roost trees, and a lack of brood habitat (open areas with herbaceous cover) can all limit wild turkey populations. Properly managing woodlands, grazed pasturelands, and

open areas can help landowners boost local wild turkey populations as well as populations of other species that rely on similar habitat.

Food

Wild turkeys forage throughout the day, but most feeding activity occurs during the first two to three hours after leaving the roost at daybreak and two to three hours before sunset. Wild turkey diets are composed mostly of plant foods. Ten to 20 percent of the diet consists of animal matter, primarily in the form of insects. Insects are of critical importance to young wild turkeys (poults), and poult survival will be low in habitats that do not support insects. Food items consumed are diverse as a result of the wild turkey's extensive range, and availability of food items is dependent on season and geographic region. Being opportunistic feeders, wild turkey diets are largely a function of the acceptable food items available.

Wild turkey food items

Important wild turkey food items. The following items are important foods in the diet of the wild turkey.

Eastern wild turkey:
- acorns of red, white, chestnut, and black oaks; American beech nuts
- fruits of black cherry, wild grape, spicebush
- seeds of white ash, ironwood, water beech, hawthorne, witch hazel, flowering dogwood
- seeds of native grasses and sedges; leaves of Carex spp., Lycopodium spp., evergreen ferns; winter buds of hemlock and hardwoods; fronds of sensitive fern, burdock; chufa
- beetles, other insects, salamanders, snails

Rio Grande wild turkey:
- acorns; skunkberry, doveweed, hackberry, cedar elm, pecan, prickly pear cactus
- paspalum and other grasses
- insects and other invertebrates

Merriam's wild turkey:
- grasses, forbs, alfalfa, sweetclover, sunflowers, vetch
- fruits and seeds of Ponderosa pine, oaks, manzanita, skunkbush, sedges; oats
- insects and other invertebrates

Florida wild turkey:
- live oak acorns, black gum fruits, berries of cabbage palm, pine seeds
- panic grasses, carpet grass, chufa
- dragonflies, grasshoppers, caterpillars, snails

Gould's wild turkey:
- acorns, pinon nuts, juniper berries, fruits of manzanita, onion, skunkbush, wild grape
- mustard forbs; grasses
- insects and other invertebrates

*Grit (course seeds and small pebbles) from spring seeps and ground foraging is a critical digestive component of the diet.
*Frogs, salamanders, toads, lizards, snakes, fiddler crabs and other small vertebrates and invertebrates are occasionally consumed.

Nesting Cover

General nesting requirements of each wild turkey subspecies are listed in the following table. Shallow nest depressions in the soil surface are either scratched by the female or formed through egg laying activity at the nest site. Forest-nesting turkeys commonly nest in close proximity to openings and edges

where poults have access to insect foods shortly after hatching. Each subspecies generally prefers dense ground vegetation (14 to 16 inches in height) next to nesting cover. Because topography and vegetation structure vary greatly throughout the wild turkey's range, habitat not typically associated with a subspecies' nesting activities may occasionally be used. Therefore, the table below only lists preferred habitat and cover types commonly used by each subspecies for nesting; other site conditions may also provide suitable nesting habitat.

Nesting cover for wild turkeys

Species	Nesting cover
Eastern wild turkey	Nests on ground in hardwood or mixed-forested stand, at base of sizable trees within dense understory, under a brush or slash pile, in thickets of greenbrier or downed trees and branches
Rio Grande wild turkey	Nests on ground amidst mesquite, prickly pear, lantana, native bluestems and muhly grasses.
Merriam's wild turkey	Nests on ground in mixed conifer stands (usually containing Ponderosa pine), blue spruce/bluegrass communities, and on moderately steep east or northeast slopes.
Florida wild turkey	Nests on ground in prairies, cypress, palmetto, and wire grass stands and under brushy cover.
Gould's wild turkey	Nests on ground in forests at base of trees (oaks) and yucca plants. Tends to nest on steep slopes with a northeastern exposure.

Roosting Cover

Wild turkeys roost on the ground and in trees. Tom and hen turkeys without broods roost overnight in trees to avoid predators. Tree roost habitat is found within continuous stands of timber. It is ideally comprised of mature, open-crowned trees with branches spaced at least 18 inches apart that run parallel to the ground, having trunk diameters of 14 inches or greater, and located within one-half mile of a food source. Mature pine, cypress, cottonwood and oak trees can provide good roosting cover. Ground roosting is most critical to hen turkeys during the first three to four weeks of brood-rearing, after which time poults are able to roost in trees with the hen. Hens with young roost under large trees within forests containing a dense understory of young trees and shrubs, downed trees, rock outcrops, and brushy vegetation. Various types of dense vegetation that adequately conceal the birds are commonly used as ground roosting cover.

John Mueller photo

Forests with mature mast-producing trees and a diversity of understory vegetation provide nesting, roosting, and foraging opportunities for wild turkeys.

Brood-rearing cover

A lack of suitable brood habitat can severely affect wild turkey population recruitment, as brood habitat plays a key role in the survival of poults during the first eight weeks of life. Open riparian woodlands, savannas, and forest openings of one-half to three acres in size provide good brood habitat. These habitats best suit wild turkeys when they contain a multitude of nutritive, herbaceous forage that supports insects (especially legumes), permits efficient poult foraging throughout the day, and provides cover that enables poults and hens to see and hide from oncoming predators.

Forest Cover

Common to each of the subspecies is their use of trees and forest habitat to fulfill various food and cover needs. The table below lists the preferred tree species and other habitat types and vegetation communities used by each subspecies of wild turkey. However, because wild turkeys are very adaptable and will use a wide variety of available habitats and tree species, the table does not provide a complete list of all habitat types used by each subspecies.

Tree species and habitat communities used by wild turkeys

Subspecies	Tree species	Habitat communities
Eastern wild turkey	Hardwood species: oak, hickory, beech, black cherry, white ash, southern magnolia, blackgum, sourwood, willow, water tupelo, water ash. Conifer species: pines, bald cypress.	Mature oak-hickory forests with understory species of sourwood, huckleberry, blueberry, mountain laurel, and greenbrier; clearings, farmlands, and plantations with mature riparian areas; bald cypress, tupelo, and water ash swamps with understory of rose, wisteria, buttonbush, and willow; oak, gum, and bald cypress bottomlands; oak/pine-mixed forest on south and west facing slopes
Rio Grande wild turkey	Hardwood species: cottonwood, live oak, pecan, American elm, cedar elm, sugar hackberry, netleaf hackberry.	Mesquite-grassland communities; pine-oak woodlands, riparian areas
Merriam's wild turkey	Hardwood species: cottonwood. Conifer species: junipers, pinyon pine, Ponderosa pine.	Found within Ponderosa pine and pinyon-juniper zone
Florida wild turkey	Hardwood species: oaks. Conifer species: pond cypress, slash pine, longleaf pine.	Cypress/hardwood swamps; hardwood hammocks; short grass communities with live oak; prairies
Gould's wild turkey	Hardwood species: oaks. Conifer species: pinyon pine, junipers.	Open grassy/oak savanna; mountains of brushy chaparral, pinyon pine, and juniper

Water

Wild turkeys drink water from spring seeps, streams, ponds, lakes, and livestock watering sources. A source of open water is necessary to support a wild turkey population.

Interspersion of Habitat Components

The most critical aspect of wild turkey management is creating good interspersion or mixture of different habitat types. Suitable foraging, nesting, brood-rearing, and roosting cover and a water source each located within close proximity to one another is essential to attract wild turkeys to and maintain existing populations in an area. Depending upon the area, combinations of open, mature, mast-producing hardwood forests; hardwood/conifer-mixed forests; understory tree and shrub species of varying ages and sizes; hardwood hammocks; high elevation pinyon-juniper habitat; and cypress and tupelo swamps interspersed with open clearings in the form of glades of grasslands, prairies, savanna and mature riparian bottomlands can create ideal interspersion of habitats. Lack of diversity of these habitat types within an area could reduce the area's value to wild turkeys.

Minimum Habitat Area

The home range of a wild turkey flock ranges between 350 acres to over 60,000 acres. However, a smaller tract of land that contains a mixture of the necessary habitat components may support wild turkeys better than a larger area that lacks one or more of the needed habitat components. Landowners owning as few as 10 acres can manage for wild turkeys if one or more of the habitat requirements (e.g., nesting cover, brood range, roosting cover) is present on the property and adjacent lands provide other habitat components needed to sustain turkeys. Therefore, lands outside the immediate planning area

should be considered in determining whether minimum habitat requirements for wild turkeys can be met for the planning area.

Avian Diseases - Disease is a natural occurrence in many species of wildlife. Although not common, wild turkeys can suffer from diseases including avian pox and blackhead. Avian pox can affect nearly any bird species and mostly affects the unfeathered parts of the wild turkey. Physical characteristics of avian pox in wild turkeys include wart-like lesions on the head, feet, and legs. Emaciated turkeys, or individuals displaying weakness, respiratory distress, or blindness may be suffering from avian pox. Although unsightly, avian pox does not pose a threat to humans and animals infected can be safely cleaned and consumed if harvested. Blackhead disease causes similar characteristics in wild turkeys along with lethargy, drooping wings, and head held close to the body. Yellowish-colored droppings and necrosis of the liver are other characteristics of blackhead disease. Blackhead disease is transmitted through roundworms that host *Histomonas* protozoa. Chickens and wild pheasants act as hosts for *Histomonas* protozoa. Wild turkeys should be kept from contact with domestic chickens, and chicken manure from poultry operations should not be used as fertilizer in fields frequented by wild turkeys. Pen-raised pheasants may spread *Histomonas* if introduced into wild turkey range. As a precaution, lethargic wild turkeys should be avoided.

Limiting Factors

For planning purposes, assess the site to subjectively rate the availability and quality of wild turkey habitat within a planning area, based on descriptions of the above habitat requirements. Habitat communities and components that are absent or rated low are likely limiting wild turkey habitat quality. Small landowners are more likely to have limiting factors on their property. However, this should not discourage them from managing for wild turkeys. Land uses on adjacent properties should be considered to accurately rate the quality of one's property as wild turkey habitat, and management goals should focus on improving habitat components not found nearby.

Habitat Component	Availability/Quality			
	High	**Medium**	**Low**	**Absent**
Food				
Nesting cover				
Brood-rearing cover				
Forest cover				
Roosting cover				
Water				
Interspersion of habitat components				

Wild Turkey Habitat Management

Management practices to create, enhance, or maintain wild turkey habitat are listed below. More than one practice may be beneficial in an area depending on the primary land use. The area's size, management goals, vegetation composition, and geographic region may dictate which management practices are most appropriate. Consultation with and assistance from federal, state or local fish and wildlife and land management agencies can be helpful in identifying appropriate management actions.

Plantings - When planted in open fields and along field borders, within woodlands and corridors connecting existing habitat patches, and in streamside riparian areas and utility line rights-of-way, the following plant species may improve wild turkey food and cover habitat components. However, care should be taken when selecting species to plant to ensure that plantings are compatible with native ecosystems. For example, establishing trees in historically grassland areas may decrease habitat quality for grassland-nesting birds and other wildlife associated with native grassland communities. Topography and climate also influence which species are appropriate for planting; the assistance of local

land management personnel can be helpful in determining where plantings would be most beneficial. Various agencies may be able to provide seed, planting equipment, and technical advice on planting.

Regional plantings for wild turkeys

Region	Herbaceous plants	Shrubs	Trees
Northeast --ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NJ, NY, PA	big and little bluestems, Indiangrass, Kentucky bluegrass, switchgrass perennial ryegrass, clovers, corn, oats buckwheat, sorghum, millet, wheat, winter rye	dogwoods, hawthorn, Viburnums, bittersweet, blackberry, elderberry, honeysuckle, hophornbeam, juniper, spicebush, wild grape, winterberry, witch hazel, crabapple	oaks, beech, black cherry, white ash, basswood, black gum, black locust, hemlock, hickory, Norway spruce, white pine, white spruce, wild apple
Midwest --MI, OH, IN, WI, IL, MN, IA, MO	big and little bluestems, Indiangrass, switchgrass, alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil, buckwheat, clovers, corn, oats, sorghum, timothy, browntop millet, lespedeza, perennial ryegrass, sunflower, black-eyed susan	crabapple, dogwood, hawthorn, mountain ash, sumac, Viburnum, wild grape, wild plum, chokeberry, serviceberry, wild rose, bittersweet, elderberry, greenbrier, ninebark, spicebush, winterberry	beech, black cherry, hickory, oaks, black walnut, white pine, black gum, black locust, cottonwood, hackberry, sugar maple, white ash, white cedar, wild apple
Southeast --DE, MD, WV, DC, VA, KY, NC, TN, SC, GA, FL, AL, MS, AR, LA, TX	switchgrass, ryegrass, orchardgrass, chufa, millets, buckwheat, corn cowpeas, lespedeza sorghum, alfalfa, deer tongue, wheat, rye, clovers	dogwoods, hawthorns, huckleberry, deerberry, sparkleberry, blackberry, crabapple, sumacs, Viburnums, wild grape, wild plum, American holly, chokecherry, dwarf live oak, greenbrier, mountain ash, mulberry, myrtle oak, running oak, redbud	blackgum, oaks, sawtooth oak, beech, black cherry, persimmon, American elm, ash, bald cypress, black locust, hackberry, hickory, longleaf pine, magnolia, red maple, sweet pecan, tupelo
West --ND, SD, NE, KS, OK, MT, WY, CO, NM, ID, UT, AZ, WA, OR, NV, CA	big bluestem, smooth bromes, orchardgrass, vetch, wheatgrass, watercress, wildrye, clovers, dropseed, geranium, Mexican hat, mountain mahogany clovers, Lewis flax, panic grass, timothy, wheat, chufa	buffaloberry, chokecherry, hawthorn, serviceberry, wild rose, currant, elderberry, kinnikinnik, mountain ash, snowberry, sumac, wild plum, California buckwheat, dogwood, gooseberry, Indian squawbush, Oregon grape, quail bush, Rubus, thimbleberry, toyon	oaks, Ponderosa pine, blue spruce cottonwood, junipers, pinyon pine, douglas fir, green ash, wild apple, willow

Timber Management – Properties managed for timber can be enhanced for wild turkeys by managing tracts to contain trees of various ages (uneven-aged management) and creating travel corridors between wooded tracts. Even-aged management can also provide a variety of food and cover resources where timber stands are divided into smaller stands and a variety of age classes occur in close proximity to one another. Clearcutting small blocks, selective tree harvesting, stand thinning, and prescribed burning can be used within a forested tract to create a mosaic of habitats. Areas in which clearcutting is the most feasible harvesting technique can be made more conducive to wild turkeys by dividing a harvest tract into separate stands and conducting rotational clearcuts (5-7 years for pines and 10-15 years for hardwoods) among stands. Where possible, selective harvesting of trees can open the forest canopy enough to stimulate growth of understory forbs and shrubs. Mast-producing trees such as oaks and black cherry should be left during selective harvesting. Prescribed burning can clear slash and downed trees from the understory of coniferous forests and open the forest floor to promote new growth of valuable shrub and forb species. Burning should be conducted with assistance from local

forest and wildlife agency personnel and licensed burners. Thinning of stands can open a forest canopy and encourage new growth of understory forbs, grasses, and mast-producing and other food plants.

Connecting forested habitat patches is essential to enable wildlife to travel from one stand to another. Timber harvest activities should leave travel corridors of standing trees at least 100 feet wide between unharvested stands. Properties not managed for timber should connect fragmented turkey habitat when possible with tree plantings.

Riparian zones - Riparian zones (streamside woody habitat) provide wild turkeys with roosting and brood-rearing cover, food, and water resources. Riparian zones within a managed forest can be maintained by leaving a buffer of undisturbed trees and vegetation at least 100 feet on either side of streams or seeps. Harvest of mature, mast-producing trees should not occur in riparian zones. Trees in riparian zones should be left undisturbed, and these areas should be protected from cattle grazing until July to allow for brood-rearing to conclude. Prescribed fire can be used cautiously in riparian zones when vegetation is dormant.

Rights-of-way – Powerline and gasline rights-of-way (ROWs) provide open areas within wooded and other habitats in which wild turkeys can court, rear young, forage and travel. While most ROWs are maintained by utility companies, private landowners can work in cooperation with these companies to manage ROWs for wildlife. ROWs can be enhanced by planting grass/legume mixtures, native forbs, and other food plants such as lespedezas and sunflowers. Disking strips along ROW edges or across dense ROWs to a depth of four to six inches can promote growth of native forbs such as smartweeds, ragweeds, and milkweed when done on a two to three year rotational basis in early spring and late summer. Spot herbicide application can help open ROWs by removing individual trees and shrubs of little value to wild turkeys while preserving mast-producing species. Delaying mowing until after August 1 will minimize the number of poults killed by mowing activities. Contact the utility company to coordinate development of a ROW vegetation management plan for turkeys and other wildlife.

Spring seeps – In many forested areas, wild turkeys use spring seeps as a reliable source of surface water. Immature trees lining seeps can be thinned to open the area surrounding the seep and promote growth of grasses and increase vegetative diversity. Mature mast-producing trees along seeps should not be disturbed, and a buffer of undisturbed vegetation of at least 50 feet wide should be maintained around seeps in areas where farming practices, livestock grazing, or timber harvesting occurs. Fencing of livestock may be necessary to protect seeps and riparian zones in pasturelands. Oaks, serviceberry, and other fruit and seed-producing trees and shrubs can be planted around open or old field seeps to provide food, and immature or less-valuable tree species can be girdled to create snags and maintain the area in an early developmental stage.

John Mueller

Native grasses provide good wild turkey brood-rearing habitat.

Management Prescriptions

Management treatments should address the habitat components that are determined to be limiting wild turkey habitat potential. For planning purposes, select among the possible action items listed below to raise the quality or availability of each habitat component determined to be limiting. NRCS conserva-

tion practices and various programs that may provide financial or technical assistance to carry out specific management practices are listed where applicable.

Habitat Component	**Management options for increasing Habitat quality or availability**	**Cons. Practices and Assistance Programs**
Food	• Plant legumes, clovers, and native forbs and warm season grasses such as big bluestem, little bluestem, switchgrass, sideoats grama and Indiangrass.	327, 386, 390, 645, 647 WHIP, EQIP, PFW, CRP
	• Preserve and maintain grassland/forb communities and utility and gas-line ROWs by conducting strip disking, prescribed burning, and rotational mowing after August 1 where appropriate.	338, 645, 647 WHIP, EQIP, PFW, CRP
	• Plant oak species within forested tracts, along riparian areas and field borders and around spring seeps. • Restore hydrology and vegetation in bottomland hardwood wetlands. • Plant chufa between April and June according to region. • Plant partridge pea, trefoils, clovers, and other legumes in ROWs and open fields bordering woods. • Plant and preserve native tree, shrub, and herbaceous plant species listed in the table on page 7.	380, 391, 612, 645, 650, 657 WHIP, WRP, EQIP, PFW, CRP
	• Thin low-value, immature trees (less than 5 inches DBH) from oak and other mast-producing trees and shrubs within forested stands.	WHIP
	• Leave oaks and other mast-producing trees and shrubs undisturbed around spring seeps and within riparian zones and mixed oak-pine forests.	
Nesting and forest cover	• Selectively cut immature/pole-sized timber to create openings and encourage herbaceous, understory growth.	WHIP
	• Restore hydrology and vegetation in bottomland hardwood wetlands.	657 WRP
	• Plant a mixture of native warm season grasses consisting of big bluestem, little bluestem, switchgrass, sideoats grama, Indiangrass. Preserve mesquite, latana, and prickly pear within grasslands.	327, 386, 390, 645 WHIP, EQIP, PFW, CRP
	• Preserve and maintain grassland/forb communities by conducting strip disking, prescribed rotational burning and rotational mowing after August 1 where appropriate.	338, 645, 647 WHIP, EQIP, PFW, CRP
	• Preserve prairies, cypress, palmetto, and wire grass stands.	
	• Preserve brush heaps, thickets and brush piles adjacent to grassland brood habitat.	
Roosting cover	• Preserve mature ponderosa pine, oak, cottonwood, cypress and other large trees.	
Brood habitat	• Maintain scattered openings within mature stands of trees by selectively cutting less valuable or immature trees to create herbaceous understory growth.	WHIP
Interspersion of habitat componenets	• Combine above prescriptions to increase interspersion of habitat components and amount of suitable wild turkey habitat.	

NRCS Conservation Practices that may be useful in undertaking the above management actions.

Code	Conservation Practice	Code	Conservation Practice
327	Conservation Cover	422	Hedgerow Planting
338	Prescribed Burning	612	Tree/Shrub Establishment
380	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	645	Upland Wildlife Management
386	Field Border	647	Early Successional Habitat Development
390	Riparian Herbaceous Cover	650	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation
391	Riparian Forest Buffer	657	Wetland Restoration

Available Assistance

Landowners interested in making their individual efforts more valuable to the community can work with the Wildlife Habitat Council and NRCS to involve school, scout, and community groups and their families, as well as state and federal fish and wildlife agency personnel, in habitat projects when possible. On-site education programs demonstrating wild turkey habitat management can greatly increase the value of an individual management project. Corporate landowners should encourage interested employees to become involved. Involving federal, state and non-profit conservation agencies and organizations in the planning and operation of a wild turkey management plan can greatly improve the project's success. Assistance programs available through various sources are listed below.

Programs that provide technical and financial assistance to develop fish and wildlife habitat on private lands.

Program	Land Eligibility	Type of Assistance	Contact
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	Highly erodible land, wetland, and certain other lands with cropping history. Stream-side areas in pasture land	50% cost-share for establishing permanent cover and conservation practices, and annual rental payments for land enrolled in 10 to 15-year contracts. Additional financial incentives are available for some practices.	NRCS or FSA State or local Office
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	Cropland, range, grazing land & other agricultural land in need of treatment	Up to 75% cost-share for conservation practices in accordance with 5 to 10-year contracts. Incentive payments for certain management practices.	NRCS State or local Office
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (PFW)	Most degraded fish and/or wildlife habitat	Up to 100% financial and technical assistance to restore wildlife habitat under minimum 10-year cooperative agreements.	Local office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Waterways for Wildlife	Private land	Technical and program development assistance to coalesce habitat efforts of corporations and private landowners to meet common watershed level goals.	Wildlife Habitat Council (301-588-8994)
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)	Previously degraded wetland and adjacent upland buffer, with limited amount of natural wetland, and existing or restorable riparian areas.	75% cost-share for wetland restoration under 10-year contracts and 30-year easements, and 100% cost share on restoration under permanent easements. Payments for purchase of 30-year or permanent conservation easements.	NRCS State or local Office
Wildlife at Work	Corporate land	Technical assistance on developing habitat projects into a program that will allow companies to involve employees and the community.	Wildlife Habitat Council (301-588-8994)
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)	High-priority fish and wildlife habitats	Up to 75% cost-share for conservation practices under 5 to 10-year contracts.	NRCS State or local Office
State fish and wildlife agencies and private groups such as the National Wild Turkey Federation may have assistance programs, publications, or other useful tools in your state.			State or local contacts. NWTF: 1-800-THE-NWTF

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In cooperation with partners, the mission of the Wildlife Habitat Management Institute is to develop and disseminate scientifically based technical materials that will assist NRCS field staffs and others to promote conservation stewardship of fish and wildlife and deliver sound habitat management principles and practices to America's land users.

www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov/whmi

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The Wildlife Habitat Council's mission is to increase the amount of quality wildlife habitat on corporate, private, and public land. WHC engages corporations, public agencies, and private, non-profit organizations on a voluntary basis as one team for the recovery, development, and preservation of wildlife habitat worldwide.

www.wildlifehc.org

This document was developed in consultation with the National Wild Turkey Federation. Founded in 1973, the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) is a national non-profit conservation and education organization dedicated to the conservation of the wild turkey and the preservation of the hunting tradition. With more than 219,000 members, the NWTF is one of the largest and fastest growing conservation organizations in the nation. Together, the NWTF's conservation partners and grassroots members have spent more than $100 million on projects benefiting wild turkeys and wildlife throughout North America. For more information on the National Wild Turkey Federation, contact NWTF, 770 Augusta Rd., P.O. Box 530, Edgefield, SC 29824; Telephone # 803-637-3106, Fax # 803-637-0034, email: nwtf@nwtf.net.

* Document revised March 2013 by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in consultation with Minnesota NRCS to delete buckthorn from the list of recommended shrubs for Midwestern states in the table "Regional plantings for wild turkey."

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