

2022 Kentucky Spring Turkey Season Summary



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Highlights

- Kentucky hunters reported harvesting a statewide total of 26,862 turkeys during the 2022 spring season (Table 1, Figure 1a).
- The top 5 counties for total harvest were Logan County (537), Muhlenberg County (525), Graves County (506), Ohio County (476), and Hart County (462) (Figure 3a). These are large counties, so viewing a county's harvest per square mile shows a different picture (Figure 3b).
- This year's harvest changed -8% from last spring, -11% change from the 3-year average, and -11% change from the 5-year average (Table 1).
- Harvest decreased in 9 of the 9 Commission Districts and in 5 of the 5 Wildlife Division Regions (Table 2).
 - The average decline from last season among districts and regions was -8%.
 - The greatest percentage decreases were in the 9th Commission District (-15%) and the Southeast Region (-11%).
- The percentage of hunters that harvested the statewide bag limit of 2 turkeys was 23%. The previous 5-year average (2017-2021) was 26% (Table 1).
- Private land harvest changed by -8% compared to last year and by -11% compared to the 5-year average (Table 1).

- Public land harvest changed by -11% and by -6% compared to the 5-year average (Table 1). See the Appendix for a listing of harvest by public hunting area.
- Nonresidents accounted for 27% of total public lands harvest, a 8% change from 2019 and a 18% change from the 5-year average (Table 1).
- The percentage of jakes in the harvest was 19%, compared to 10% in 2021 and the previous 5-year average (2016-2021) of 12% (Table 1). An increase in the proportion of jakes may reflect favorable reproduction last summer (Figure 5).
- Harvest on opening weekend of the statewide season (31% of the entire season total) changed by -16% from last season and -9% from the 5-year average (Table 1, Figure 2). Easter fell on the second day of the season and probably reduced hunting participation and effort.
- Harvests on weekends changed -8% from last season and -6% from the 5-year average. Weekday harvests changed -8% and -17% from the 5-year average (Table 1, Figure 2).
- Youth season harvest was 1,436, which was a -3% change from last spring and a -11% change from the 5-year average (Table 1, Figure 2).
- License sales (140,905) changed -7% from last spring (Table 3, Figure 4a). This only includes license and permit types conferring spring turkey hunting privileges, and only those sold for the 2022-23 hunting season through the end of Spring Turkey Season (May 8, 2022, Figure 4b). Trends in overall eligible license sales provides a rough idea of how turkey hunting participation may change. Knowing exact turkey hunter numbers is not possible because licensed customers with the privilege to spring turkey hunt may not actually hunt, and landowners are exempt from buying a license. Based on a survey conducted after the 2021 season, we estimated that about about 60% of eligible license holders turkey hunted, which would translate to about 75,000 to 85,000 hunters.
- Youth permits and licenses changed 7% from last season and 7% from the 5-year average.
- Resident Sportsman's licenses changed -8% from last season and 3% from the 5-year average.
- Resident Spring Turkey Permits changed -4% from last season and -35% from the 5-year average, but these make up a small proportion of all sales due to the popularity of Sportsman's licenses.
- Nonresident Spring Turkey Permits changed 5% from last season and 25% from the 5-year average.
- Spring turkey harvest totals can be viewed relative to the number of licenses sold (a proxy for the number of hunters) or to the amount of hunting effort expended by hunters. These depictions of harvest account for factors that likely reduced hunting

participation or effort, including Easter on opening weekend, inclement weather during the season, and Mother's Day on the last day of turkey season. As a measure of take-per-unit-effort, these depictions may better represent turkey population change (or lack thereof; Figures 6a and 6b).

- The decline in harvest from last season (-8%) was essentially proportional to the decline in license sales (-7%), providing an indication that the turkey population was stable between years (Figure 6a).
- The change in average days of hunting per turkey harvested was within the margin of error of last year's estimate, meaning no difference (Figure 6b). Thus, hunters were just as efficient at harvesting turkeys for the amount they hunted this year as last year. This provides another indication of population stability between years.

Spring Turkey Harvest: Tables and Figures

The following tables, graphs, and maps summarize this year's spring turkey harvest and license sales in greater detail. With no major regulation changes since 2006, Kentucky's harvest figures are comparable over a relatively long time span, giving us more confidence in observed trends.

Note that the statewide youth season is the first weekend in April (2 days), while the statewide general season runs from the Saturday closest to April 15 for 23 consecutive days. Season dates and regulations differ on some areas, particularly federal installations such as Ft. Campbell, Ft. Knox, and Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area (consult the spring hunting guide for details).

Table 1. 2022 Spring Turkey Harvest Breakdown

Category of Interest (note totals and percentages [%])	Total This Season	Total Last Season	3-Year Avg. Total	5-Year Avg. Total	10- Year Avg. Total	% Change from Prev. Yr.	% Change from 3-Yr. Avg.	% Change from 5-Yr. Avg.	% Change from 10-Yr. Avg.
Entire Harvest (All Telechecked Turkeys)	26,862	29,222	30,148	30,154	30,822	-8%	-11%	-11%	-13%
Statewide 23-Day Season	25,257	27,554	28,231	28,368	28,923	-8%	-11%	-11%	-13%
% (number) of Jakes in the Harvest	18.7% (4,992)	10.4%	12.3%	11.7%	12.9%	81%	52%	61%	45%
% (number) of successful hunters that harvested 2 turkeys	23% (5,084)	26%	26%	26%	26%	-9%	-9%	-9%	-8%
Private Land	25,301	27,476	28,521	28,498	29,123	-8%	-11%	-11%	-13%
Public Land	1,561	1,746	1,626	1,655	1,699	-11%	-4%	-6%	-8%
Resident Hunters *	24,536	26,627	26,627	26,507	27,234	-8%	-8%	-7%	-10%
Non-Resident Hunters *	3,768	3,438	3,438	3,402	3,289	10%	10%	11%	15%
% of Public Land Harvest by Residents (number of turkeys) *	72% (1,254)	74%	74%	76%	78%	-3%	-3%	-5%	-8%

Category of Interest (note totals and percentages [%])	Total This Season	Total Last Season	3-Year Avg. Total	5-Year Avg. Total	10- Year Avg. Total	% Change from Prev. Yr.	% Change from 3-Yr. Avg.	% Change from 5-Yr. Avg.	% Change from 10-Yr. Avg.
% of Public Land Harvest by Non-Residents Residents (number of turkeys) *	27% (466)	25%	25%	23%	21%	8%	8%	18%	28%
License-Exempt Landowners/Tenants	2,159	2,401	2,870	2,953	3,092	-10%	-25%	-27%	-30%
Youth Hunters	1,436	1,483	1,734	1,604	1,725	-3%	-17%	-11%	-17%
Opening Weekend	8,430	10,037	9,566	9,256	9,377	-16%	-12%	-9%	-10%
Weekends	15,301	16,691	16,309	16,272	16,705	-8%	-6%	-6%	-8%
Weekdays	9,956	10,863	11,922	12,096	12,218	-8%	-17%	-18%	-19%

*In 2020, non-resident license sales were restricted due to COVID-19, so harvest by non-resident hunters was far less than usual. Therefore, for Non-Resident Hunters in the table above, 2020 was not included in the calculation of 3-, 5-, and 10-year harvest averages.

Table 2. 2022 Spring Turkey Harvest Breakdown by Commission District and Wildlife Region

Category of Interest	Total This Season	Total Last Season	3-Year Avg. Total	5-Year Avg. Total	10-Year Avg. Total	% Change from Prev. Yr.	% Change from 3-Yr. Avg.	% Change from 5-Yr. Avg.	% Change from 10-Yr. Avg.
Bluegrass Region	5,968	6,082	6,488	6,439	6,517	-2%	-8%	-7%	-8%
Green River Region	7,716	8,455	8,920	8,794	9,267	-9%	-14%	-12%	-17%
Northeast Region	3,608	4,052	4,169	4,263	4,148	-11%	-14%	-15%	-13%
Purchase Region	3,474	3,756	3,564	3,557	3,601	-8%	-3%	-3%	-4%
Southeast Region	6,096	6,877	7,006	7,101	7,289	-11%	-13%	-14%	-16%
1st Commission District	3,474	3,756	3,564	3,557	3,601	-8%	-3%	-2%	-4%
2nd Commission District	4,626	5,076	5,223	5,148	5,374	-9%	-11%	-11%	-14%
3rd Commission District	1,367	1,527	1,596	1,595	1,681	-11%	-14%	-14%	-19%

Category of Interest	Total This Season	Total Last Season	3-Year Avg. Total	5-Year Avg. Total	10-Year Avg. Total	% Change from Prev. Yr.	% Change from 3-Yr. Avg.	% Change from 5-Yr. Avg.	% Change from 10-Yr. Avg.
4th Commission District	4,621	5,002	5,455	5,329	5,464	-8%	-15%	-13%	-15%
5th Commission District	2,722	2,806	2,980	2,972	3,029	-3%	-9%	-8%	-11%
6th Commission District	3,075	3,121	3,271	3,239	3,300	-2%	-6%	-5%	-7%
7th Commission District	2,013	2,310	2,420	2,509	2,588	-13%	-17%	-20%	-22%
8th Commission District	2,557	2,804	2,858	2,939	2,837	-9%	-11%	-13%	-10%
9th Commission District	2,407	2,820	2,782	2,866	2,948	-15%	-14%	-16%	-18%

Figure 1a. Annual Statewide Spring Turkey Harvest Totals

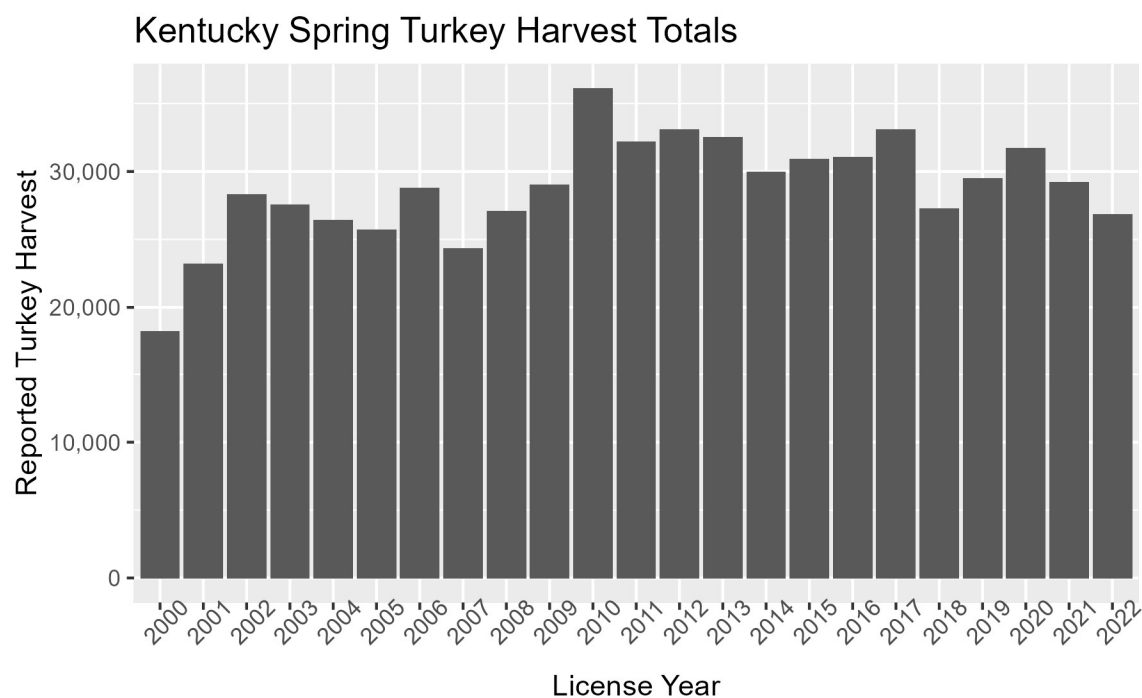


Figure 1b. Annual Statewide Spring Turkey Harvest Totals by Commission District

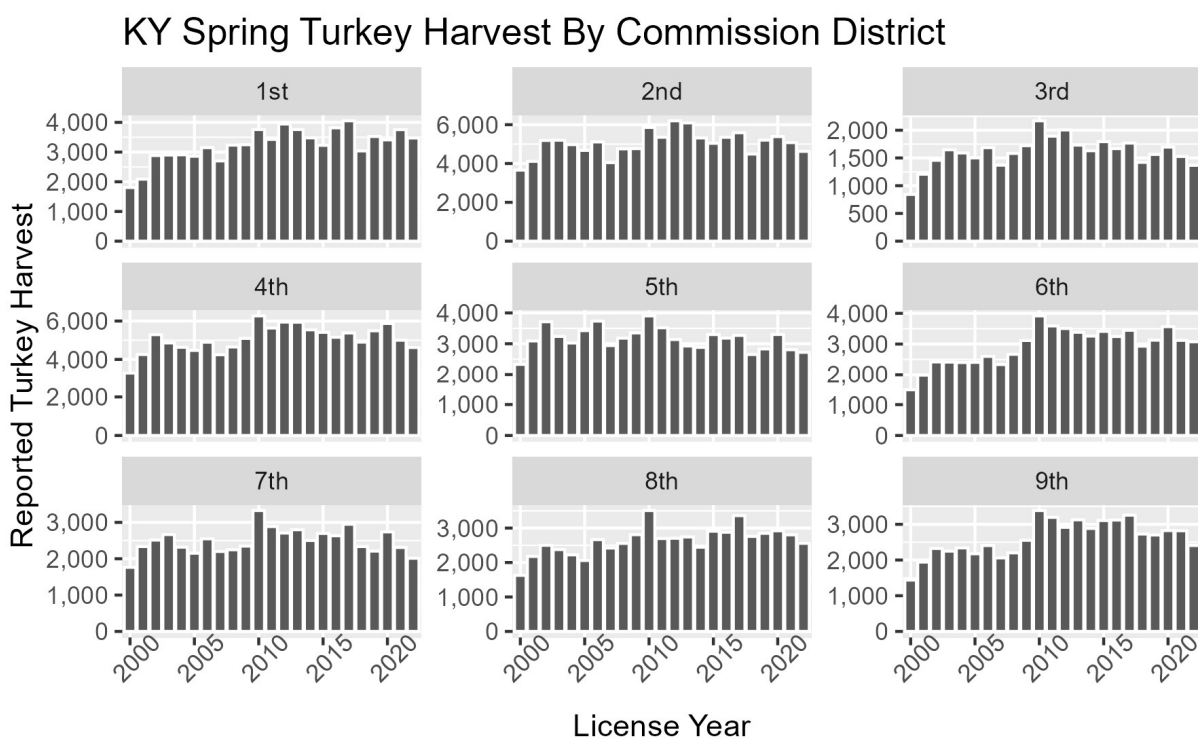


Figure 1c. Annual Statewide Spring Turkey Harvest Totals by KDFWR Wildlife Division Region

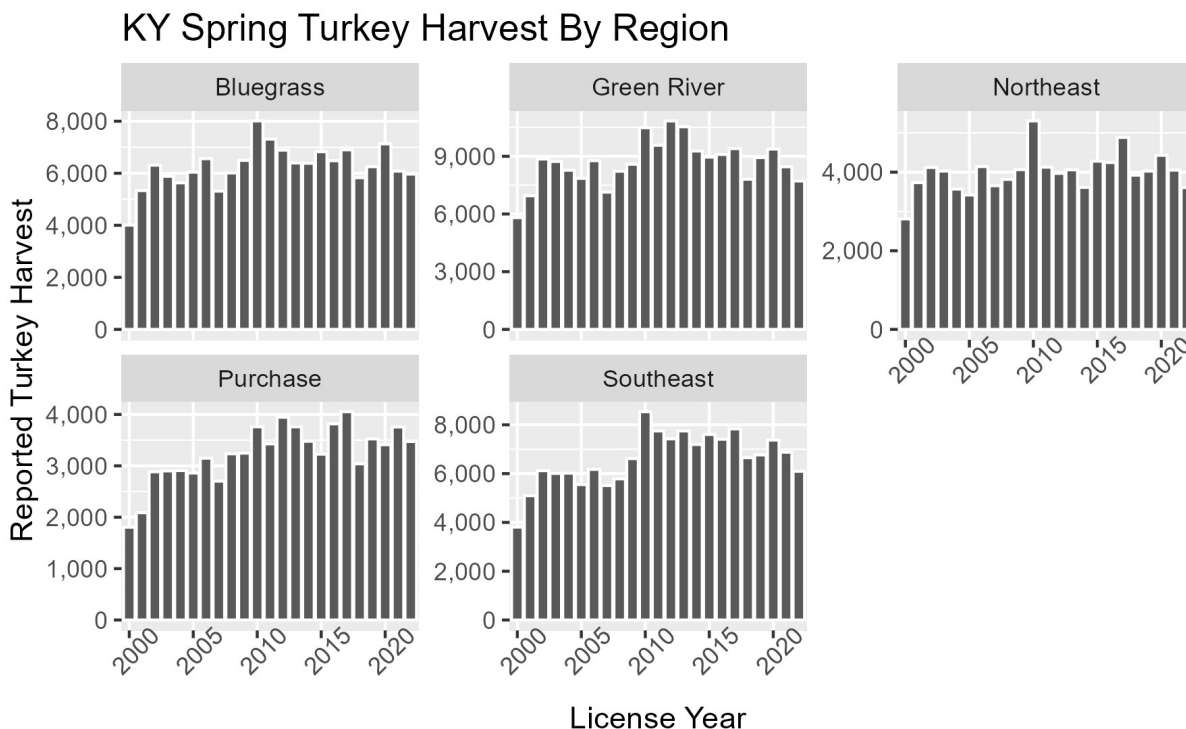


Figure 2. 2022 Spring Turkey Harvest proportionally through the hunting season.

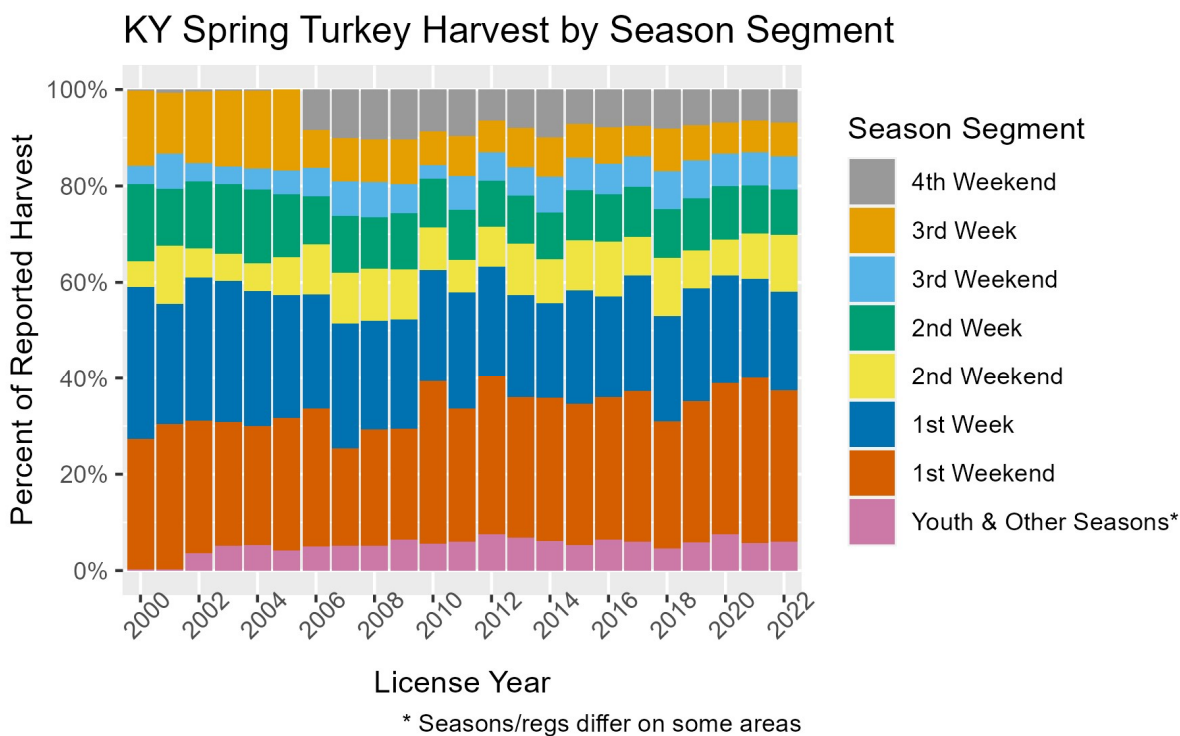


Figure 3a. 2022 Spring Turkey Harvest by County. Heavy black lines delineate the 9 Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Districts.

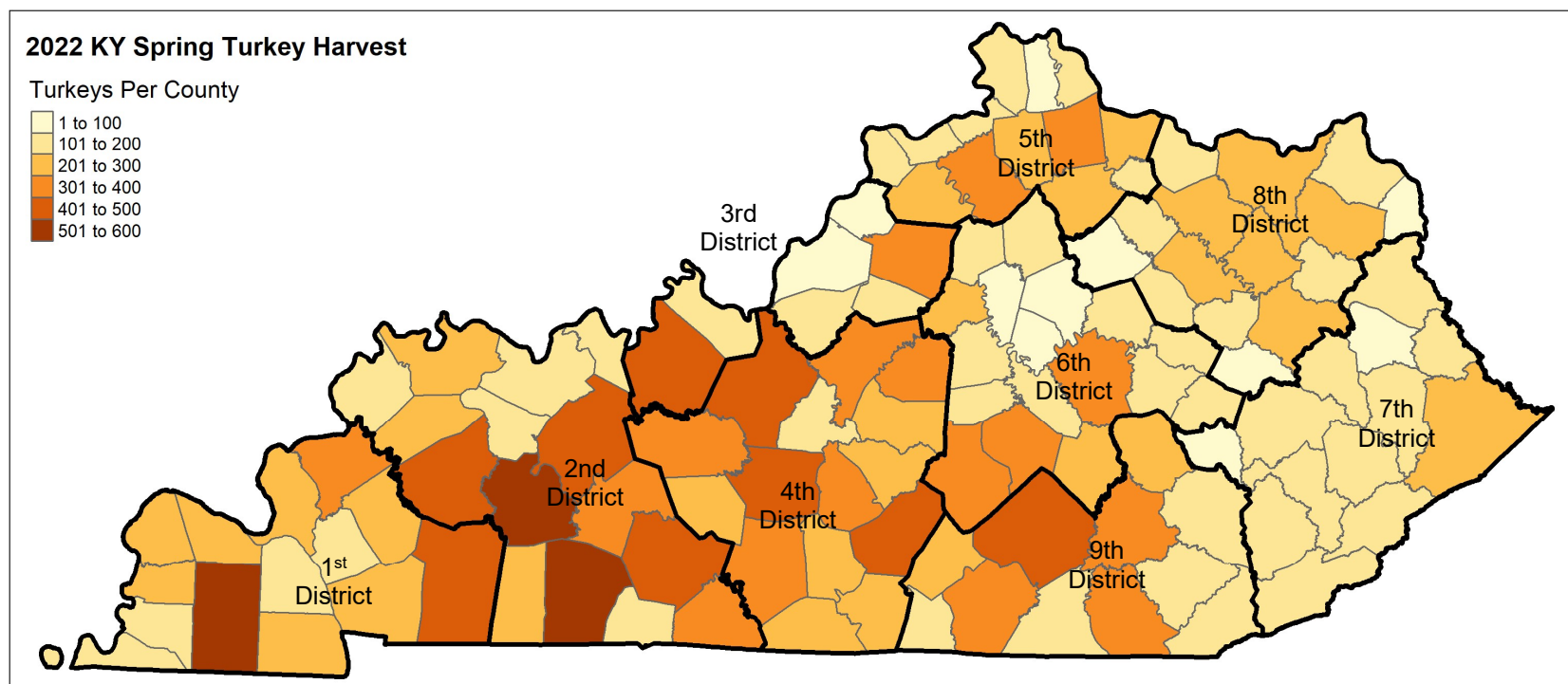


Figure 3b. 2022 Spring Turkey Harvest by County per Square Mile. Heavy black lines delineate the 9 Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Districts.

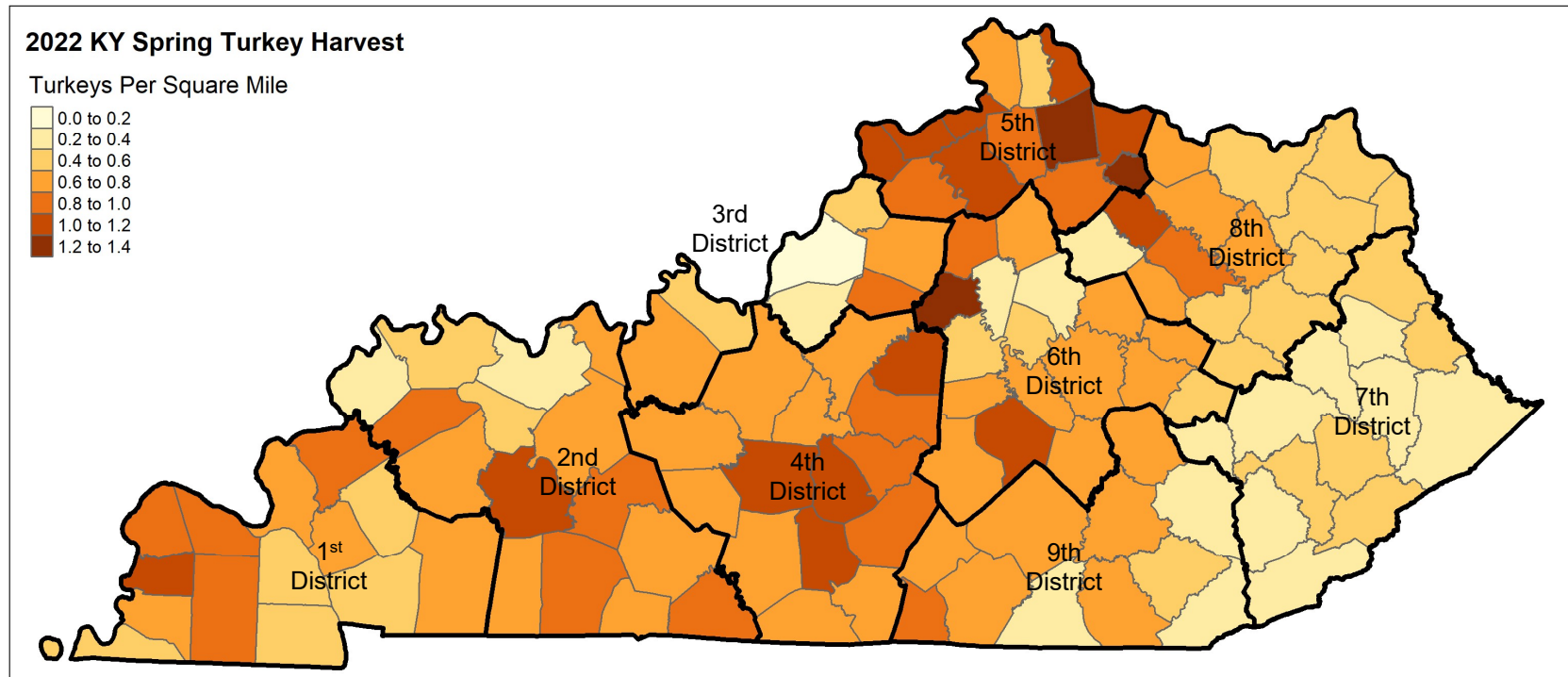


Figure 3c. Percentage change from previous 5-year average (2017-2021) in 2022 Spring Turkey Harvest by County. Heavy black lines delineate Western, Central, and Eastern regions used in the annual wild turkey summer brood survey (see Figure 5).

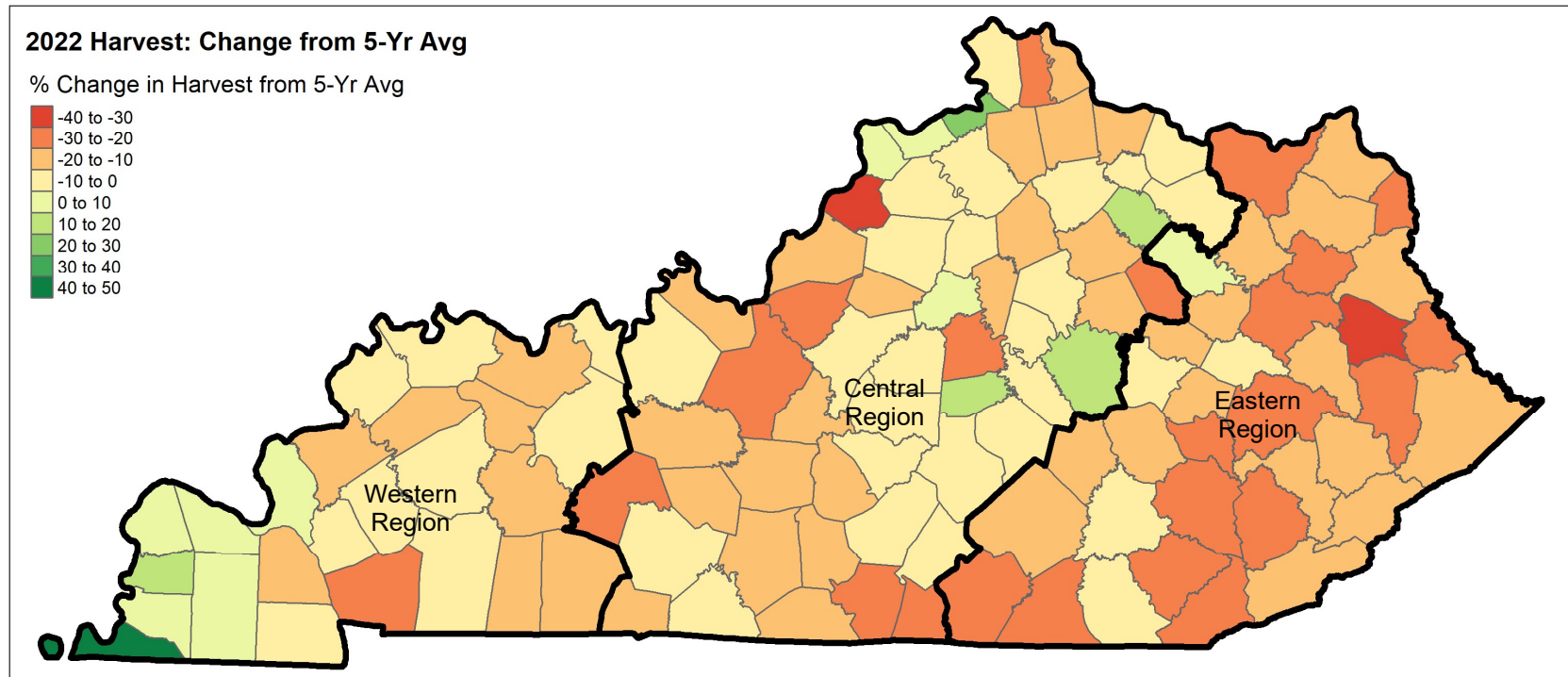


Table 3. 2022 License Sales Breakdown (through end of spring turkey season)

Category	2022	2021	3-Year Avg.	5-Year Avg.	10-Year Avg.	% Change from 2021	% Change from 3-Yr. Avg.	% Change from 5-Yr. Avg.	% Change from 10-Yr. Avg.
Resident, Senior License	54,940	58,490	54,090.33	55,688.4	54,846.4	-6.1	1.6	-1.3	0.2
Resident, Sportsman's License	55,923	61,033	57,656.67	54,135.2	50,687.6	-8.4	-3.0	3.3	10.3
Resident, Disabled License	12,586	14,462	15,248	17,462.4	21,636	-13.0	-17.5	-27.9	-41.8
Resident, Spring Turkey Permit	4,064	4,211	5,374.667	6,255.8	8,850.5	-3.5	-24.4	-35.0	-54.1
Non-Resident, Spring Turkey Permit	8,345	7,946	7,076.667	6,673.6	6,281.111	5.0	17.9	25.0	32.9
Youth (Turkey Permit or Sportsman's License)	5,047	4,713	4,780	4,730.6	5,650.1	7.1	5.6	6.7	-10.7
All License Types	140,905	150,855	142,130.3	143,819.2	147,365.8	-6.6	-0.9	-2.0	-4.4

Figure 4a. Total license sales through the end of spring turkey season. This represents all eligible licensed turkey hunters. The number of license-exempt landowners is unknown.

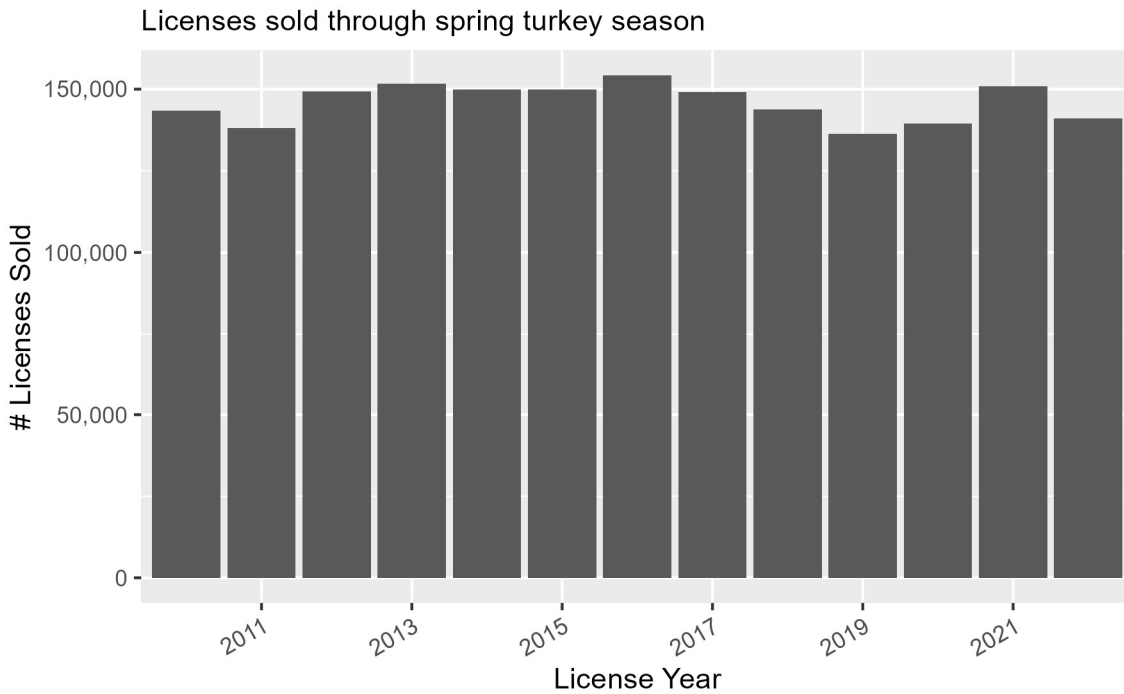


Figure 4b. License sales shown proportionally by type through end of spring turkey season.

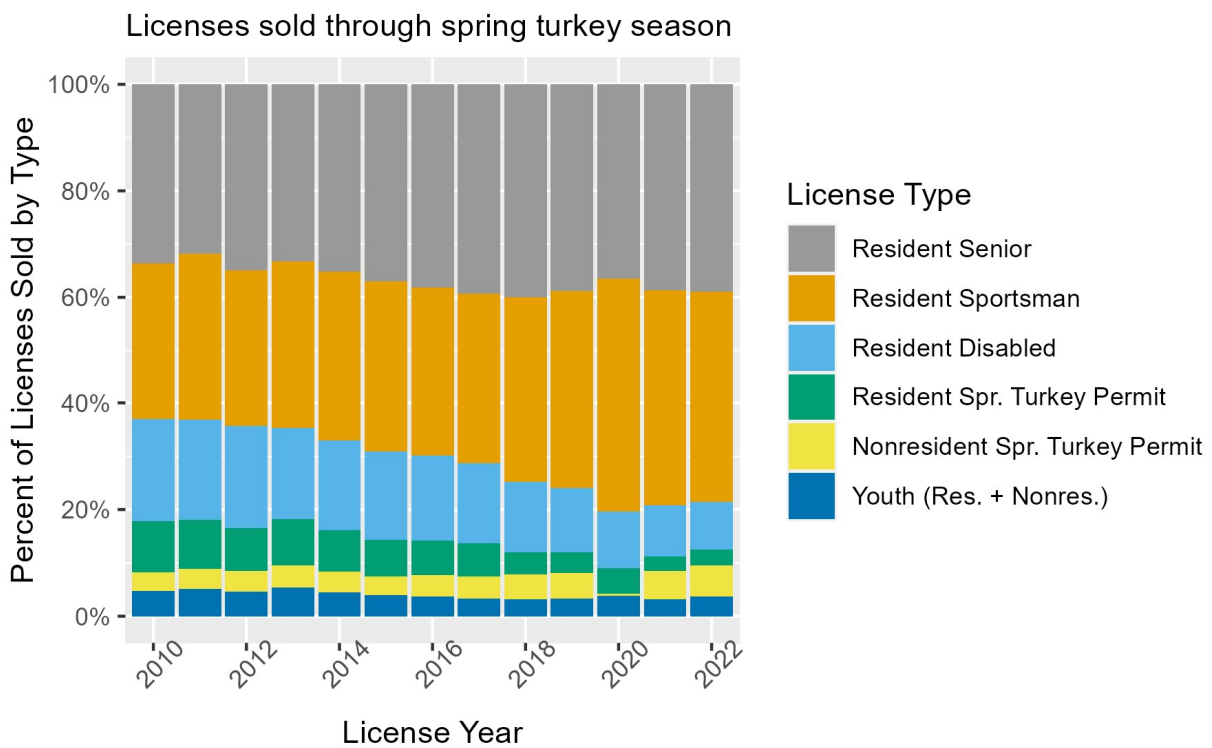
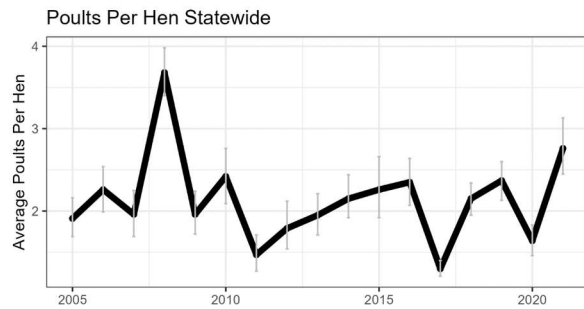
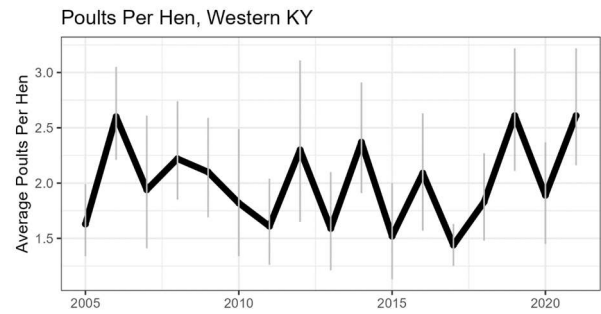


Figure 5. Annual trends in the poult-per-hen (PPH) index of wild turkey reproductive success from KDFWR's annual summer turkey brood survey. Results are reported at an overall statewide level (a) and regionally for Western, Central, and Eastern Kentucky (b-d).

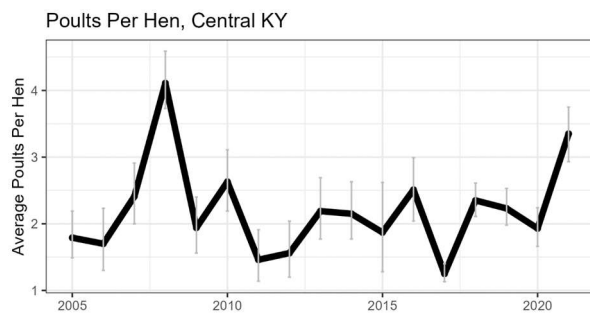
(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

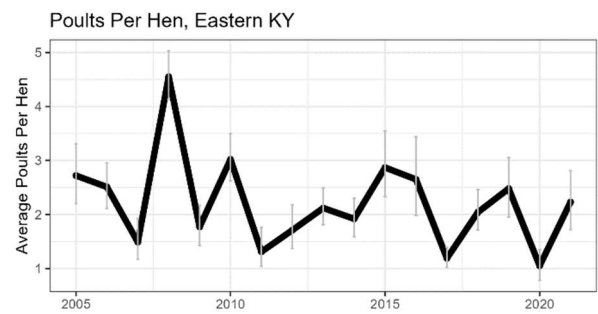


Figure 6. Annual Spring Turkey Harvest Relative to Annual License Sales

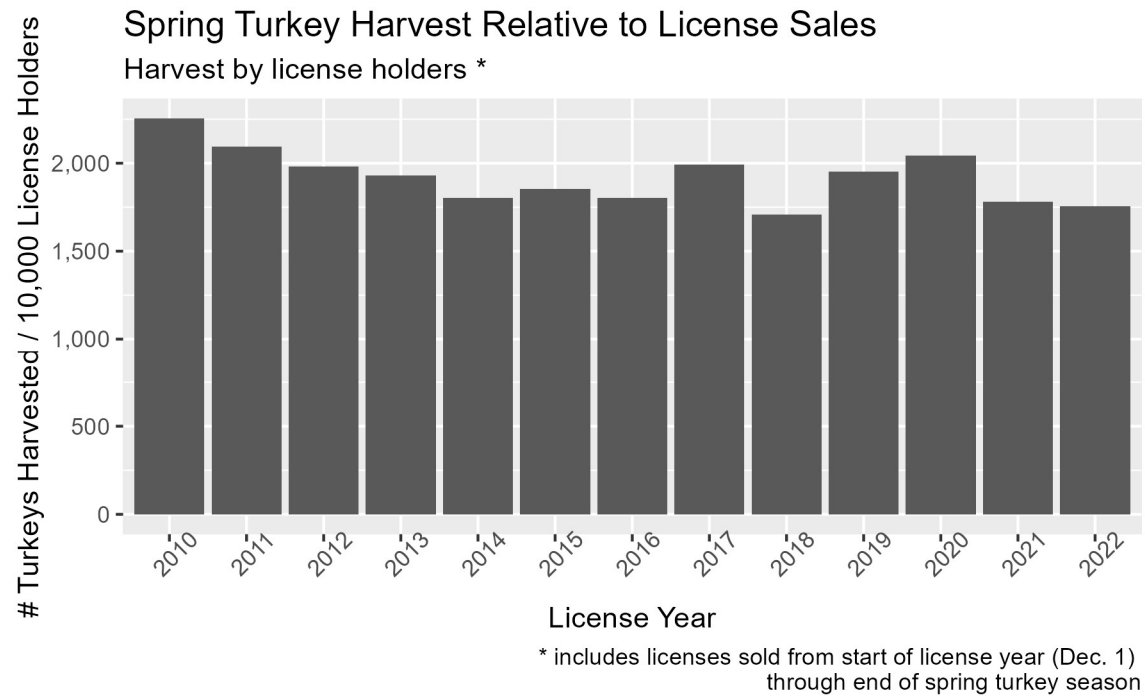
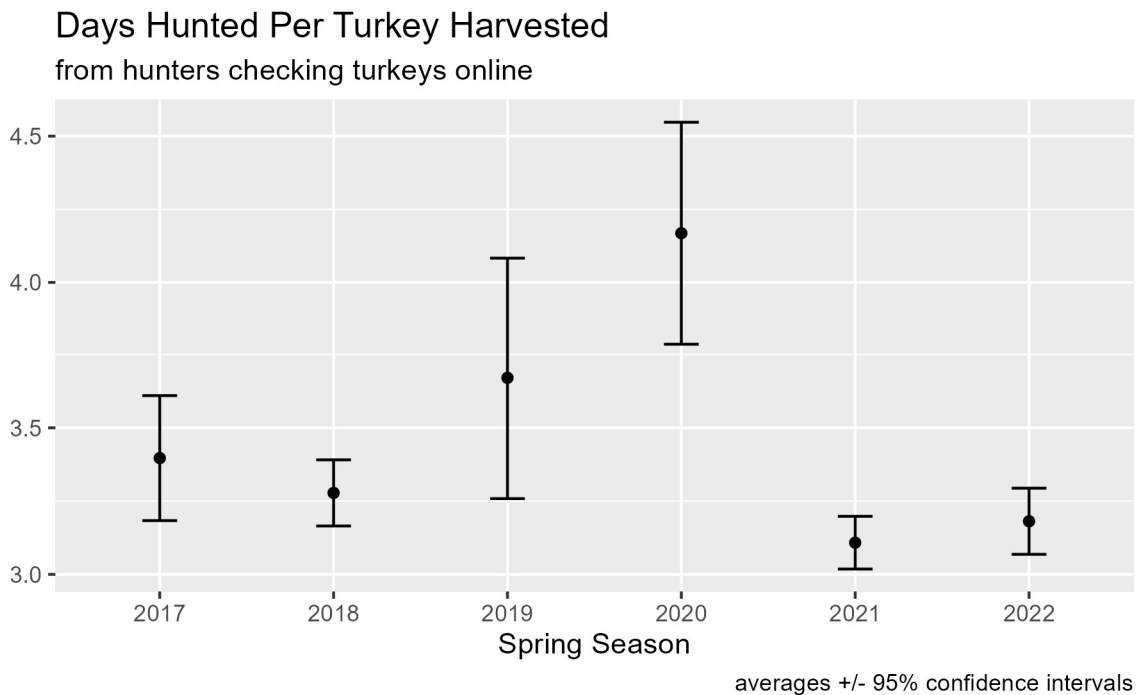


Figure 7. Hunter Effort: Days Hunted Per Turkey Harvested



Appendix. 2022 Spring Turkey Harvest on Kentucky Public Hunting Lands

Region	Public_Land_Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	5-yr avg	2022
Bluegrass	Central Kentucky WMA	8	3	6	6	5	5.6	11
Bluegrass	Dr. James R. Rich WMA	12	8	13	6	15	10.8	11
Bluegrass	Dr. Norman and Martha Adair WMA	4	3	1	1	1	2.0	3
Bluegrass	Griffith Woods WMA	6	6	7	5	6	6.0	3
Bluegrass	John A. Kleber WMA	17	11	12	12	16	13.6	21
Bluegrass	John C. Williams WMA	2	4	4	2	4	3.2	1
Bluegrass	Kentucky River WMA	17	12	14	11	15	13.8	15
Bluegrass	Knobs State Forest and WMA	1	1	2	4	3	2.2	1
Bluegrass	Lloyd WMA	3	9	7	4	5	5.6	1
Bluegrass	Marion County WMA and State Forest	2					2.0	2
Bluegrass	Mullins WMA	1	1				1.0	
Bluegrass	Rolling Fork WMA	6	1	1	1	1	2.0	5
Bluegrass	Taylorsville Lake WMA	48	27	44	43	39	40.2	22
Bluegrass	Veterans Memorial WMA	6	6	8	5	6	6.2	15
Bluegrass	Fort Knox Military Reservation		11	12	16	11	12.5	15
Bluegrass	Stephens Creek WMA		3		1	1	1.7	3
Bluegrass	T.N. Sullivan WMA					1	1.0	
Green River	Barren River Lake WMA	25	2	14	11	19	14.2	18
Green River	Big Rivers WMA & State Forest	10	7	12	9	11	9.8	15

Region	Public_Land_Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	5-yr avg	2022
Green River	Green River State Forest	5	10	9	6	6	7.2	8
Green River	Higginson-Henry WMA	10	7	8	8	8	8.2	6
Green River	L.B. Davison WMA	7	2	2	2	7	4.0	2
Green River	Marrowbone Creek State Forest and WMA	5	2	7	3	3	4.0	1
Green River	Nolin River Lake WMA	13	12	11	8	10	10.8	13
Green River	Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area	1	3	2	1	2	1.8	2
Green River	Peabody WMA	181	164	178	139	165	165.4	143
Green River	Rolling Fork WMA	3	4	1	6	1	3.0	5
Green River	Rough River Lake WMA	7	3	1	8	2	4.2	5
Green River	Sloughs WMA	14	6	10	18	21	13.8	18
Green River	Wendell H. Ford RTC	68	35	45		64	53.0	30
Green River	Yellowbank WMA	37	22	25	17	29	26.0	33
Green River	Clear Creek WMA		3	1	1	1	1.5	1
Green River	Fort Knox Military Reservation		81	113	120	74	97.0	70
Green River	Lee K. Nelson WMA				1		1.0	1

Region	Public_Land_Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	5-yr avg	2022
Green River	Tradewater WMA				3	4	3.5	3
Northeast	Camp Robert C. Webb	1	2	1	1		1.2	
Northeast	Clay WMA	53	41	40	28	37	39.8	60
Northeast	Czar Hunting Access Area	10	5	5	18	11	9.8	7
Northeast	Daniel Boone National Forest	151	107	110	59	161	117.6	96
Northeast	Dewey Lake WMA	18	11	7	16	6	11.6	8
Northeast	Ed Mabry - Laurel Gorge WMA	2	1	2	3	1	1.8	3
Northeast	Fishtrap Lake WMA	20	19	12	12	9	14.4	12
Northeast	Fleming WMA	8	3	5	6	5	5.4	7
Northeast	Grayson Lake WMA	18	3	9	20	24	14.8	20
Northeast	Jefferson National Forest	1	4	2	3	3	2.6	3
Northeast	Jenny Wiley State Resort Park	2	1		1		1.3	
Northeast	Paintsville Lake WMA	18	9	20	23	17	17.4	5
Northeast	Pioneer Weapons WMA	6	7	4	1	5	4.6	4
Northeast	Revelation Energy Hunting Access Area	11	10	6			9.0	
Northeast	South Shore WMA	2				1	1.5	
Northeast	Tygarts State Forest	5	3		3	2	3.2	7
Northeast	Yatesville Lake State Park and Lawrence County Recreation Area	4	9	3	4		5.0	1
Northeast	Yatesville Lake WMA	21	10	11	11	11	12.8	11

Region	Public_Land_Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	5-yr avg	2022
Northeast	Carter Caves State Resort Park		1				1.0	
Northeast	Old Trace Creek WMA		1		1		1.0	1
Northeast	Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park			1		2	1.5	
Northeast	Cambrian Coal Hunting Access Area			1	1		1.0	1
Northeast	Elk Horn Coal Hunting Access Area			4	5	1	3.3	
Northeast	RH Group Hunting Access Area			5	2	7	4.7	
Northeast	Simon Kenton WMA			6	5	7	6.0	6
Northeast	Greenbo Lake SRP				1		1.0	2
Northeast	Legacy LLC Hunting Access Area					2	2.0	7
Northeast	Pike Elkhorn Hunting Access Area					1	1.0	2
Purchase	Ballard WMA	24	13	12	17	14	16.0	23
Purchase	Beechy Creek WMA	7	2		2	1	3.0	1
Purchase	Big Rivers WMA & State Forest	23	19	16	19	16	18.6	8
Purchase	Boatwright WMA	8	6	2	6	8	6.0	8
Purchase	Clarks River NWR	33	16	31	27	25	26.4	18
Purchase	Coil Estate WMA	1	3		4	1	2.2	4
Purchase	Doug Travis WMA	13	5		5	2	6.2	5
Purchase	Jones-Keeney WMA	1	2	2		1	1.5	2
Purchase	Kaler Bottoms WMA	6	5	5	1	2	3.8	3

Region	Public_Land_Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	5-yr avg	2022
Purchase	Kentucky Lake WMA	3	1	4	3	7	3.6	10
Purchase	Lake Barkley WMA	5	4	10	7	3	5.8	6
Purchase	Land Between The Lakes NRA	141	46	89	51	99	85.2	66
Purchase	Livingston County WMA and SNA	5		2	4	1	3.0	1
Purchase	Obion Creek WMA	9	6	7	9	6	7.4	5
Purchase	Pennyryle State Forest	19	2	10	7	13	10.2	12
Purchase	Reelfoot NWR	1	1			1	1.0	
Purchase	Tradewater WMA	1					1.0	
Purchase	West Kentucky WMA	31	16	30	25	25	25.4	32
Purchase	Lake Barkley State Resort Park		1	2		1	1.3	1
Purchase	Kenlake State Resort Park				1		1.0	
Purchase	Winford WMA					1	1.0	
Southeast	Asher Hunting Access Area	11	4	5	3	10	6.6	4
Southeast	Ashland WMA	4	1	4	2	2	2.6	1
Southeast	Beaver Creek WMA	14	22	14	11	15	15.2	14
Southeast	Beech Creek WMA	2	1			1	1.3	
Southeast	Big South Fork NRR	11	9	15	6	8	9.8	7
Southeast	Boone Forestlands WMA	23	17	18	29	19	21.2	20
Southeast	Buck Creek WMA	1	1	1		2	1.2	3
Southeast	Buckhorn Lake WMA	7	8	7	6	4	6.4	7
Southeast	Cane Creek WMA	6	6	8	9	11	8.0	12

Region	Public_Land_Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	5-yr avg	2022
Southeast	Carr Creek Lake WMA	8	3	8	4	8	6.2	4
Southeast	Cedar Creek Lake WMA	7	7	4	4	2	4.8	8
Southeast	Corrigan WMA	9	9	8			8.7	
Southeast	Cranks Creek WMA	11	10	6	12	5	8.8	10
Southeast	Dale Hollow Lake WMA	11	6	7	6	11	8.2	1
Southeast	Daniel Boone National Forest	357	298	262	327	340	316.8	275
Southeast	Dennis-Gray WMA	7	2	7		3	4.8	1
Southeast	Dix River WMA	4	2	2	1	4	2.6	4
Southeast	Elk Forest WMA	6	6	1	7	7	5.4	2
Southeast	Green River Lake WMA	61	54	68	66	60	61.8	64
Southeast	Hensley-Pine Mountain WMA	12	12	8	6	6	8.8	5
Southeast	Jefferson National Forest	3	3	2	2	3	2.6	2
Southeast	Kentenia State Forest	1		2			1.5	
Southeast	Kentucky Ridge Forest WMA	22	11	11	16	17	15.4	5
Southeast	Kentucky Ridge State Forest	8	3	2	8	9	6.0	6
Southeast	Lake Cumberland WMA	38	34	27	38	46	36.6	32
Southeast	Marrowbone Creek State Forest and WMA	2	1				1.5	1
Southeast	Martins Fork Lake WMA	2	2		3		2.3	2
Southeast	Martins Fork WMA and State Natural Area	1	1			1	1.0	1
Southeast	Mill Creek WMA	4	6	1	5	5	4.2	6
Southeast	Paul Van Booven WMA	3	6	6	2	2	3.8	4

Region	Public_Land_Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	5-yr avg	2022
Southeast	Ping-Sinking Valley WMA	1	1	1	6	2	2.2	3
Southeast	Redbird WMA	16	17	9	18	8	13.6	7
Southeast	Revelation Energy Hunting Access Area	9	19	12			13.3	
Southeast	Robinson Forest WMA	4	4	1	6	6	4.2	
Southeast	Shillalah Creek WMA	7	4	4	4	5	4.8	7
Southeast	Wells Hunting Access Area	21	15	9	14	8	13.4	4
Southeast	Cambrian Coal Hunting Access Area		2	1	2	1	1.5	
Southeast	Hidden Valley Training Area		1	1			1.0	
Southeast	Mud Camp Creek WMA		2	1	2		1.7	
Southeast	R.F. Tarter WMA		2	2	4	3	2.8	4
Southeast	Rockcastle River WMA		6	3	3	3	3.8	1
Southeast	Elk Horn Coal Hunting Access Area			7	2	5	4.7	1
Southeast	Wolf Creek Dam			1		1	1.0	1
Southeast	C.F. Ataya WMA				4	5	4.5	7
Southeast	Fortner-Davis WMA				3		3.0	
Southeast	Ross Creek WMA					2	2.0	1