

TURKEY: Good hunting expected after water recedes

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River WMA of eastern Baldwin County. The Perdido River WMA doesn't usually receive as much hunting pressure as the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. It contains more piney uplands with open canopies.

"Perdido River WMA has a low-density turkey population, but it doesn't get as much pressure as the delta and some other areas," Barnett explained.

Turkey hunters willing to travel might also visit Blue Spring WMA in the Conecuh National Forest near Andalusia. Other good turkey WMAs include Black Warrior, which covers 91,263 acres near Moulton, Barbour near Clayton, Choccolocco by Heflin, James D. Martin-Skyline near Scottsboro, Oakmulgee in Bibb, Hale, Perry and Tuscaloosa counties or Sam R. Murphy by Guin.

"In the spring of 2018, we saw a good number of hens with broods in the delta and throughout the state," Barnett said. "We saw some improvement in the number of poults per hen in our annual brood surveys, but still not as high as we would like. Hunters must remember to report their



Photo courtesy of Doug Max

Doug Max of Uriah, Ala., displays an impressive turkey that he killed last year. Turkey season opens on March 16 and runs through April 30.

turkey harvests through Game Check. It's vitally important that we get data from Game Check and it's also the law."

About 30,000 hunters bagged an estimated 27,500 turkeys in 2018, Barnett said. Anyone killing a gobbler must report it to the state through Game Check. Data obtained by biologists help them monitor population trends and the overall health of the flock. To report their turkey harvests, people can download a free app to a smart phone, the same app they can use to report deer kills.

In much of the state including most of southern Alabama, turkey season opens on March 16 and runs through April 30. The state also offers special days for youth hunting and for people with physical handicaps. Turkey hunters can also sign up to participate in the Avid Turkey Hunters Survey by reporting what they see to the state. One participant could win a new shotgun.

For information on the Avid Turkey Hunters Survey, call Barnett at 251-625-5474 in Spanish Fort. For specific hunting zone boundaries and additional information, see www.outdooralabama.com.



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