

# OUTDOORS

## Turkey Hunting Season starts Saturday

It's almost turkey time – and not the kind that leaves you stuffed after family gatherings. The statewide Georgia turkey hunting season opens on private land on Sat., March 28, 2026. On public lands, including Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and National Forest land, the season opens Sat., April 4, 2026. Turkey season ends statewide (on both public and private land) on May 15, 2026, according to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division (WRD).

"If we look back to 2024, the statewide turkey reproduction rate averaged 1.8 poults per hen, which was tied with 2021 for the highest production year in the past decade," explains Emily Rushton, WRD wild turkey project coordinator. "This means that hunters should see a bump in the number of 2-year-old birds in the woods, and we would expect to have an increase in hunter success this season."

What can hunters expect across state regions this spring? While all regions of the state were above average in 2024, the Piedmont region had the strongest production estimate of 1.9 poults per hen. Most of the state's turkey hunt-

ers are in the Piedmont and it is the region of the state where production has lagged over the past 20 years, so to see such a strong production year is very promising.

According to Rushton, "Since the season date and bag limit adjustments in 2022, hunters often ask if there has been a change in poult production. We have seen a record high reproductive year in 2024, and a slight bump in harvest rate since 2022, though it is still too soon to say how those regulation changes have affected the population. We need a few more years of data, because highly variable factors like weather, mast crop and insect availability also affect poult production, to get a better, science-driven understanding of the turkey population's trajectory."

The daily and season bag limits are one gobbler per hunter per day, and a season total of two gobblers. On WMAs and National Forest land (outside of WMAs), the bag limit is one gobbler per area.

All turkey hunters, including those under 16 years of age, landowners, honorary, lifetime, and sportsman license holders, must obtain a free harvest record each



season. Before moving a harvested turkey, hunters are required to immediately enter the date and county on the harvest record, and within 24 hours, must complete the reporting process through Georgia Game Check. More information at GeorgiaWildlife.com/HarvestRecord-GorgiaGameCheck.

Resident youth hunters under age 16 do not need a license. Hunters aged 16 years or older (including those accompanying youth or others) will need a hunting license and a big game license unless hunting on their own private land. Get your license at GoOutdoorsGeorgia.com, at a retail license vendor or by phone at 1-800-366-2661.

Hunters, did you know that each time you purchase a recreational license or equipment used to turkey hunt, such as shotguns, ammunition and others, you are part of the greater conservation effort for wildlife in Georgia? Through the Wildlife Restoration Program, a portion of the money spent comes back to states and is put back into on-the-ground efforts such as habitat management and species research and management. So, thank you hunters!

Find more hunting information, including the Hunting and Fishing Regulations Guide, at GeorgiaWildlife.com/hunting/hunter-resources.

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## AUTISM T-SHIRT Order Form

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TOTAL AMOUNT PAID	

Youth	Qty
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<input type="radio"/> YM	
<input type="radio"/> YL	
<input type="radio"/> YXL	
Adult	
<input type="radio"/> S	
<input type="radio"/> M	
<input type="radio"/> L	
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NOTES: Shirts plan to be delivered Tuesday March 31<sup>st</sup>.  
Please wear shirts on April 2<sup>nd</sup> for World Autism Day!

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