EVALUATING THE ATTITUDES AND PREFERENCES OF ONLINE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS MONITORING EASTERN WILD TURKEYS (*Meleagris Gallopavo Sylvestris*) IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Allison Keating, University of New Hampshire
Dr. Peter Pekins, University of New Hampshire
Dr. Robert Robertson, University of New Hampshire
Dr. Judy Silverberg, New Hampshire Fish and Game
Mark Ellingwood, New Hampshire Fish and Game

Photo Credit: Delaware Division of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
Background

- 1854: last wild turkey reported in Weare, NH
- 1969: initial release (attempt failed)
- 1975: 25 turkeys released in Walpole, NH
- 15 more releases over the next 2 decades

- Historic range limit in NH
- Entire state has turkeys today
Background

- 1980: Initial spring season: harvest = 31!
- 2004: youth weekend created
- 2006: fall shotgun season added
- 2011: harvest = 3672
- 2012: estimated state population ~40,000
Population Monitoring in NH

Then
• Hunter harvest
• Direct mail surveys to subset of successful hunters
• Not done in >10 years due to lack of $.

Now
• Hunter harvest
• Online surveys
• More cost efficient
• Engage broader constituent range
NHFG Online Turkey Surveys

• 2009 - 1st online winter flock survey
  • 1400 observations

• 2011 – 1st online summer brood survey
  • 800 observations

• Simple design: date, location, # turkeys
  Winter: food source at location
  Summer: flock & size of poults

• Repeatable, no ability to validate, no feedback
Research Goals

1. Who participates?
2. What motivates people to participate?
3. Have they participated in the past?
4. What can NHFG do to recruit new and retain current participants?
5. Do online surveys supplement harvest data? In particular, do survey data provide valuable information from regions with fewer people and turkeys?
Study Area

- Statewide
- 9000 sq miles
- 13 cities, 221 towns, and 25 unincorporated areas.
Methods

- We provided a link to an additional 15 questions at the end of the existing NHFG online turkey surveys.

- A brief description identified the intent of these 15 optional questions accessed through Surveymonkey.com.

- Because the additional questions were optional, a raffle drawing for a turkey print was offered as an incentive.

- Participants could choose to remain anonymous or provide contact information and receive a summary of the survey.

Mother’s Work is Never Done
By Jim Collins
Preliminary Results

- Winter Flock Survey period: 15 Feb – 30 March 2012
- Summer Brood Survey period: 15 May – 30 August 2012
- 595 Total responses
- 42% Response rate
- Response generally matches turkey density
Who Participates?

- Age range: 11-86 years but an older population (40-79)
- 51% were repeat participants (previous years)
What Outdoor Activities Do You Take Part In? (Select All That Apply)

- Wildlife watching: 60-75%
- Gardening: 70-80%
- Bird feeding: 60-75%
- Hiking: 80-90%
- Fishing: 80-90%
- Canoeing/kayaking: 60-75%
- Nature photography: 70-80%
- Riding all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) or dirt bikes: 50%
- Boating (power boat): 35%
- Biking: 35%
- Archery/Target shooting: 35%
- Hunting: 35%
- Camping: 50%
- Snowshoeing/cross-country skiing: 50%
- Geocaching or orienteering: 20%
- Snowmobiling: 0%
- Who Participates?
  - 60-75%
  - 35%
Motivation

Wild turkeys are likeable!

![Bar chart showing attitudes towards wild turkeys in NH]

- 1 Strongly Dislike: 0%
- 2 Dislike: 0%
- 3 Neither Like or Dislike: 3%
- 4 Like: 24%
- 5 Strongly Like: 72%
Why Do You Participate in Online Turkey Surveys?

- I like seeing turkeys
- I like to support NH's quality of life
- I feel good about sharing my wildlife observations
- I like volunteering for NHFG
- I think the information is important for biologists to assess the turkey population
- I like to turkey hunt
- I was asked to participate
- I participate as part of a class or school assignment or project

% Response

Reason

Motivation
Recruitment

How Did You First Hear About the NHFG Online Turkey Survey?

- A friend told me
- Heard it on the radio
- I don’t remember
- Read it in the newspaper
- Received an email from NHFG about it
- Saw it on the NHFG Facebook page
- Saw it on the NHFG website
On a Scale of 1 to 5 How Interested Would You Be in Participating in Each of the Following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>1 Not at all</th>
<th>2 slightly interested</th>
<th>3 unsure</th>
<th>4 interested</th>
<th>5 Very interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like a Facebook page specific for the NHFG Wild Turkey Surveys.</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an email address to receive NHFG Wild Turkey Survey summaries, and other turkey related information.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a username and password to be able to track your observations submitted over time, share photos and/or create maps of your wildlife observations.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a free information and training seminar on turkey biology, identification and habitat requirements.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View an online tutorial on turkey biology, identification and habitat requirements.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to participate in established turkey monitoring survey routes.</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a free one day workshop for landowners on how to manage your property for wild turkeys.</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next Steps

• **Data analysis**
  – Human attitudes and preference question set.
  – Statewide geographic comparison and GIS analysis of turkeys reported via online surveys vs. hunter harvest data.

• **Develop recommendations based on survey results to enhance/improve existing online surveys for:**
  – Data validity
  – Recruiting new participants (Target audience? Target areas?)
  – Retaining participation (Desired survey features?)

• **Compile list of names and email addresses for NHFG to continue reaching out to interested participants.**
Questions?