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Final Report

Opinions and Attitudes of Florida Turkey Hunters

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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UF|IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

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Executive Summary

Florida Turkey Hunters' Opinions and Attitudes
March 2016

Findings

Demographics

- The majority of hunters were male (92%) and were between the ages of 45 and 64 (51%). Twenty-nine percent of respondents had at least some college education.
- Over three-quarters (78%) of respondents had 15 or more years of general hunting experience, and 41% had 15 or more years of turkey hunting experience.
- A total of 44% of respondents indicated they had turkey hunted between one and three years within the last five years.
- Over half (56%) of respondents indicated they preferred to hunt during the spring season only, and 48% indicated they preferred to hunt on private land only, which was mostly (51%) a friend's or relative's private land.
- Respondents identified Central Florida (42%) and North Florida (37%) as being areas they hunt in the most.

Mentoring

- A total of 54% of respondents indicated that they had never or rarely mentored other turkey hunters while 43% of them indicated that they had sometimes or often mentored other hunters.
- Respondents agreed or strongly agreed the most perceived benefits of mentoring for the mentee were to gain familiarity with the sport (91%), gain confidence in their hunting ability (88%), and the enjoyment in learning from others (85%).
- Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that enjoyment (83%) and spending more time outdoors (84%) were the most beneficial aspects of mentoring for the mentor.
- Over half of respondents (57%) agreed or strongly agreed that not enough time was the most challenging obstacle to mentoring, and slightly more than half (53%) agreed or strongly agreed that a designated weekend for mentoring would encourage them to mentor.

Fall Seasons

- Almost half of respondents (46%) indicated they had not hunted any days during the fall season within the last five years where turkeys were the primary target.
- Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the opportunity to fall turkey hunt was important (81%).
- Over half of the respondents (52%) agreed or strongly agreed either-sex hunting would encourage more fall hunting.
- Over half of respondents (62%) agreed or strongly agreed that spring turkey hunting season should be extended in the event fall turkey hunting seasons were discontinued; however, 75% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the fall turkey hunting seasons should be discontinued.

Spring Season

- Thirty-eight percent of respondents hunted between one and six days during the spring season within the last five years.

- Over half (61%) of respondents attributed work commitments as a primary barrier to spring turkey hunting.

Opportunity versus Quality

- A total of 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that quota hunts help control the number of hunters in an area, and 68% agreed or strongly agreed that quota hunts improve hunting quality on public lands.
- More than half of respondents (61%) agreed or strongly agreed that FWC works to manage the turkey population appropriately, and 50% agreed or strongly agreed that the current turkey hunting population is better managed today than 10 years ago

Hunting Regulations

- A total of 68% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with current regulations.
- The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that turkey hunting regulations are easy to locate (83%) and easy to understand (83%).
- An attitude index resulted in an overall mean of 4.10 on a 5-point bipolar semantic scale, indicating that respondents had a positive attitude toward turkey hunting regulations. The bipolar semantic scale measures a respondents' attitude toward turkey hunting regulations based on their position between a series of bipolar adjectives, one negative and one positive.
- A total of 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that regional regulations would be a good idea and 71% agreed or strongly agreed that they would benefit the turkey population.

Communication

- A total of 74% agreed or strongly agreed that FWC provides information that allows hunters to make more informed decisions, and 61% agreed or strongly agreed that FWC wants to understand how its decisions affect hunters.
- Over two thirds of respondents (67%) preferred to receive turkey hunting information from websites.
- The majority of respondents (63%) preferred the FWC website and 61% preferred email when receiving turkey hunting information updates or regulation changes.

Trust

- When asked about the trustworthiness of FWC, most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that FWC could be trusted (66%) and provides trustworthy information (78%).
- Respondents' overall attitude toward FWC was positive, with a total mean of 3.95 on a 5-point bipolar semantic scale, for all adjectives presented to respondents.

Recommendations

- Mentoring appears to be positively received by most hunters and has several perceived benefits. Organizing a designated weekend for mentoring might help increase the number of mentors. This weekend could not only serve to mentor novice hunters, but it could also allow current hunters to be trained on how to mentor others. A regularly organized mentoring weekend/event could serve to aid FWC with turkey hunting land and population management.
- In helping further promote mentoring or a mentoring program, informational/promotional materials should be created to increase awareness about mentoring opportunities and

disseminated via the FWC website, emails, and possibly with turkey hunting licenses.

- The fall turkey hunting seasons may attract smaller numbers of hunters, but it is important to provide the opportunity to fall turkey hunt as the majority of hunters believed it was important and disagreed with discontinuing the fall turkey hunting seasons.
- Either-sex turkey hunting can serve as a regulation shift to help promote more fall turkey hunting but should be pursued with caution as increasing the number of fall hunters may contribute to a decline in the turkey population.
- Quota hunts should continue to serve as a method to control the number of hunters in an area and to help improve the hunting quality on public lands. The current number of quota hunts being issued seem to be meeting current turkey hunter needs.
- Quota hunts may serve as an effective method in reducing the number of turkeys harvested if FWC deems it necessary to increase/maintain the current turkey hunting population.
- Current methods being implemented to manage the turkey hunting population should continue. FWC appears to have positive support with its current efforts and the resulting turkey population.
- Changes to current hunting regulations should only be done as needed but no significant changes are required based on the survey results. The clarity and accessibility of hunting regulations should also remain unchanged unless a situation warrants it.
- Regional regulations should be considered as turkey hunting needs will vary around Florida. A plan should be developed on how to best implement those regulations and an additional study could serve to inform regulations for each region.
- Websites, particularly FWC's website, and emails should serve as primary methods of communication to provide hunters with turkey hunting information and changes. The mailing method in this study also resulted in a higher than normal response rate seen with turkey hunters. While there are higher costs associated with mailing information, mailing methods should not be completely abandoned for reaching out to hunters.
- Open communication and input from hunters should serve as a regular process to maintain the current trust that hunters have in FWC and to ensure the changes being made are meeting hunters' needs.

Background

Much of the late 20th century has been focused on the state initiative to recover from the decline in the Florida turkey population. The 21st century is expected to bring additional challenges as the turkey habitat is expected to lose 2.1 million acres of land by 2060. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has dedicated itself to addressing these challenges to preserve the turkey population. In efforts to better understand the current turkey population and land management issues facing Florida, FWC was interested in understanding turkey hunter's opinions and attitudes regarding turkey hunting in Florida. This information is expected to guide the new 10-year strategic plan for wild turkey management.

Methods

A random sample of 2,817 Florida hunters eligible to hunt turkey was taken from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission hunting license registry. The sample size was determined to be representative of the Florida Turkey Hunting population at a 95% confidence interval and 5% precision, while taking into account estimated numbers of non-respondents. A mailed survey was distributed using a modified Dillman's tailored design method. Pre-notice postcards were sent on November 6, 2015, and the initial survey package with a $5 incentive was sent on November 12, 2015. The first reminder postcard was mailed on November 19, 2015, and the second survey package was sent on December 4, 2015. The final reminder postcard was sent on December 11, 2015. Researchers accepted return surveys for inclusion in the report until January 15, 2016. Of the 2,817 surveys initially sent 233 were returned uncompleted due to incorrect addresses, deceased recipients, or recipients asked to be removed from the sample. A total of 1,046 hunters responded to the mail survey, resulting in a 40% response rate, based on the accessible population of 2,584. Researchers identified 299 respondents as non-turkey hunters. Non-turkey hunters indicated they did not hunt for turkey because they preferred to hunt other wildlife (38%) and they had no place to hunt turkey (17%). The objective of this study was to assess the opinions and attitudes of turkey hunters and for this reason, only demographic information was collected on those 299 respondents and they were excluded from any additional analysis. A total of 710 hunters (68%) were identified as Florida hunters and 37 hunters (4%) were identified as non-Florida turkey hunters. Using SPSS 22, a descriptive examination was used to analyze the data. The summary analysis in this report only includes the respondents identified as residents of Florida who hunt turkeys in Florida.

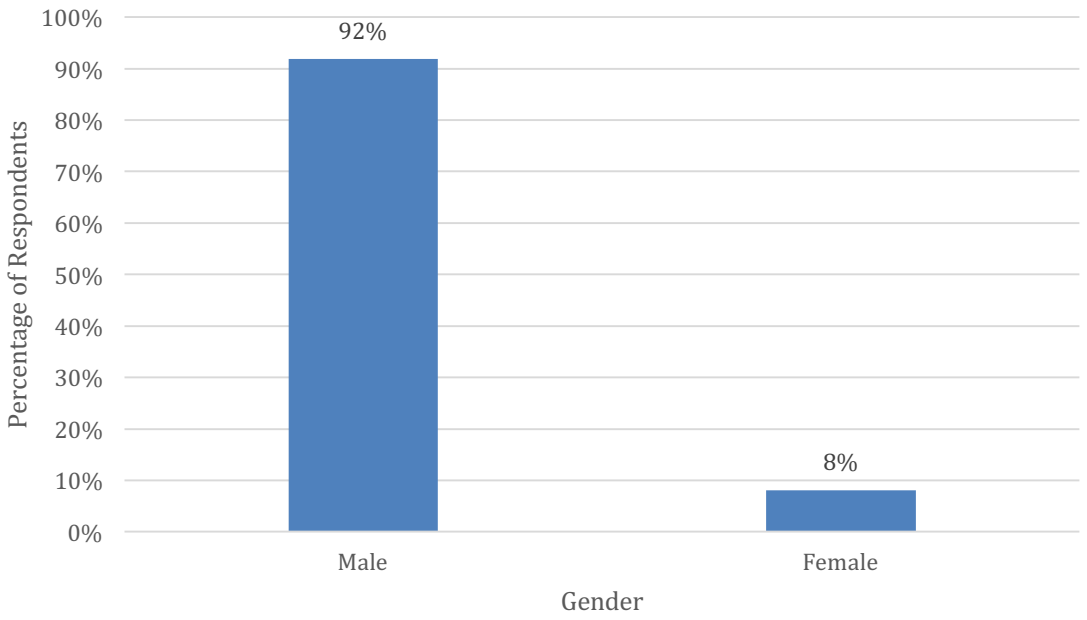
Results

Description of Turkey Hunter Respondents

Gender

Of the 669 respondents that hunt in Florida and reported their gender, 92% (n = 615) were male and 8% (n = 54) were female (Figure 1).

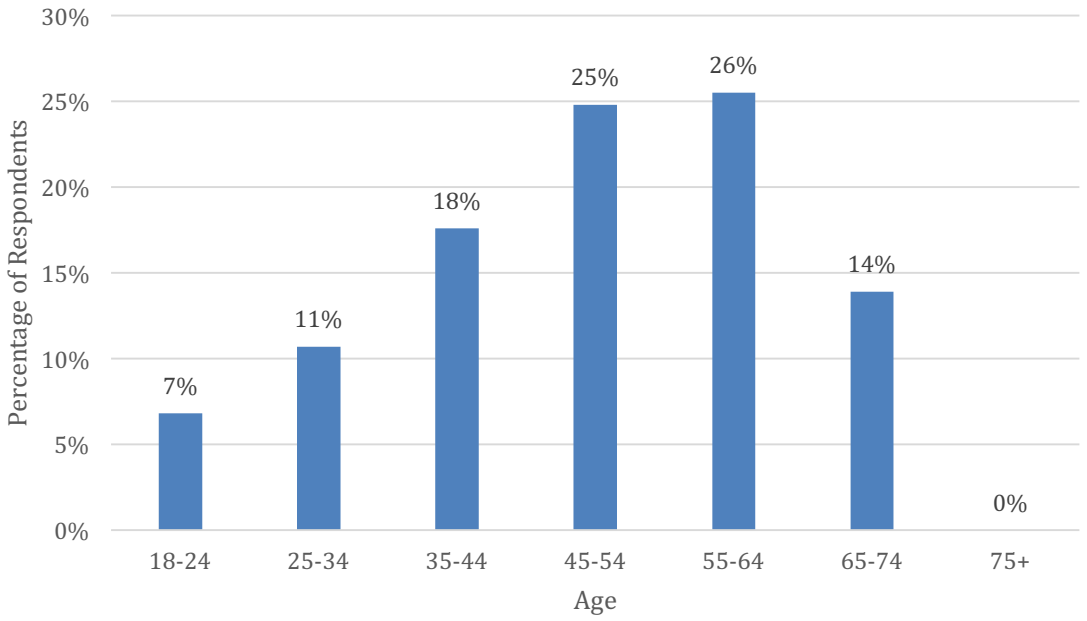
Figure 1. Gender of Respondents (n = 669)



Age

Slightly more than half of the respondents (51%) were between the ages of 45 and 64, and 29% of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 44 (Figure 2).

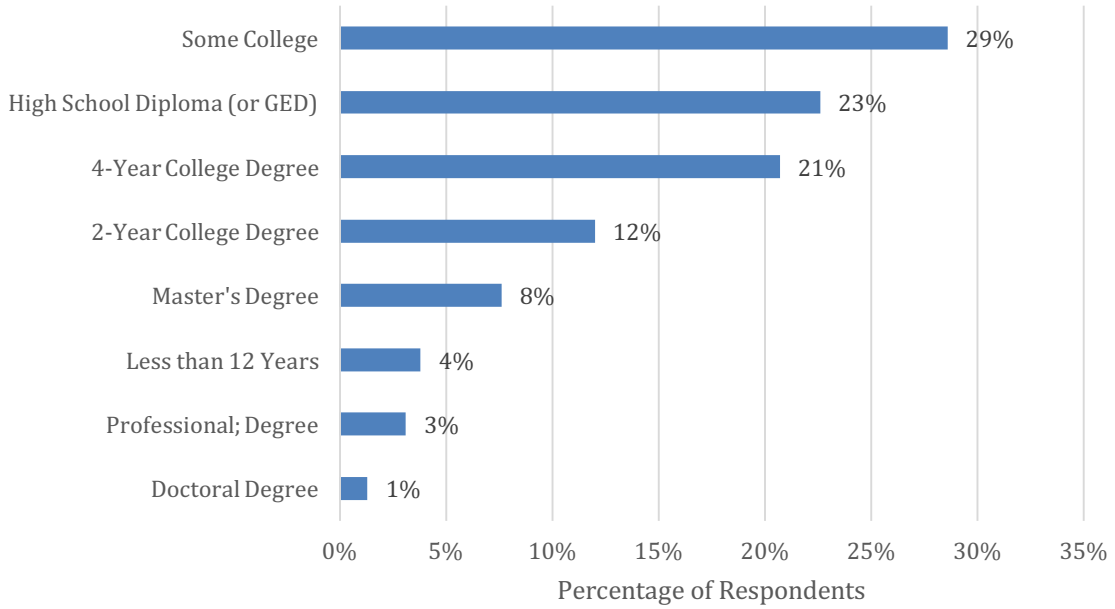
Figure 2. Age of Respondents (n = 706)



Education

Over a quarter of respondents (29%) reported having some college education, and 23% indicated they had a high school diploma (or GED), while 33% of respondents specified having either a 4 or 2-year college degree (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Respondents' Educational Level (n = 702)

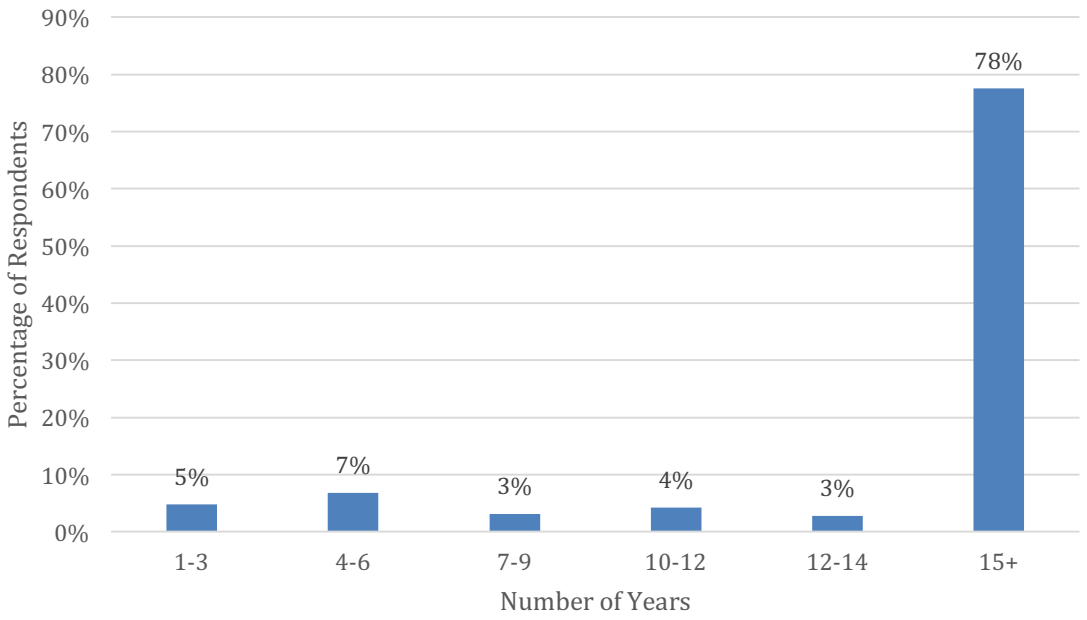


Hunting Experience and Preferences

General Hunting Experience

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of years of general hunting experience they had (Figure 4). Over three-quarters (78%) of respondents indicated they had 15 or more years of general hunting experience.

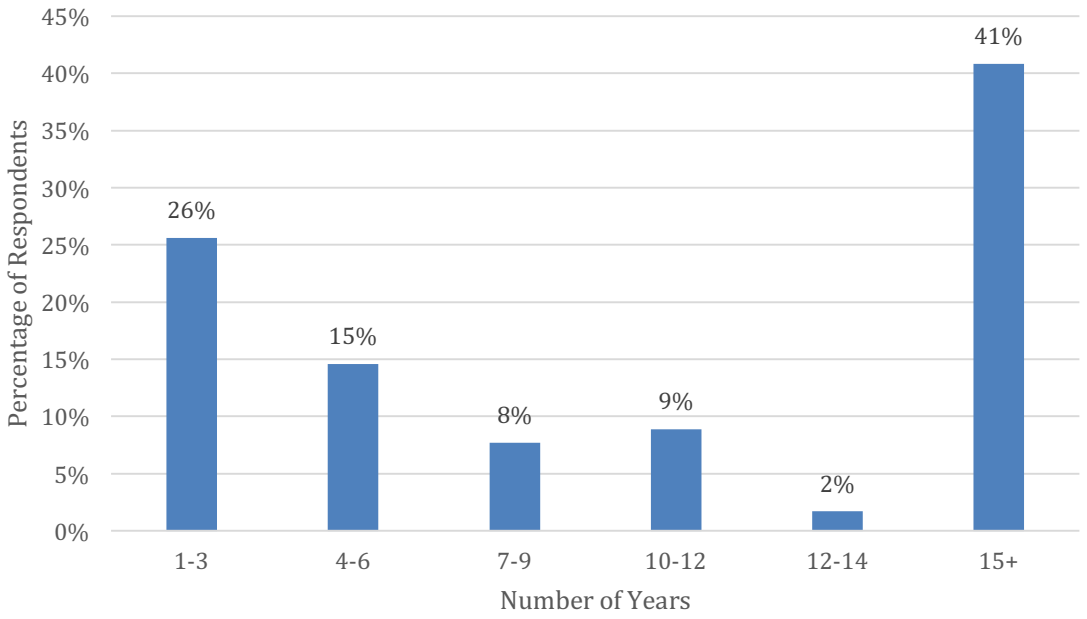
Figure 4. Respondents' Number of Years Hunting (n = 704)



Turkey Hunting Experience

When asked about the number of years of turkey hunting experience, 41% of respondents indicated they had 15 or more years of turkey hunting experience (Figure 5). Twenty-five percent of respondents indicated they had between one and three years of turkey hunting experience and 15% indicated they had between four and six years of turkey hunting experience.

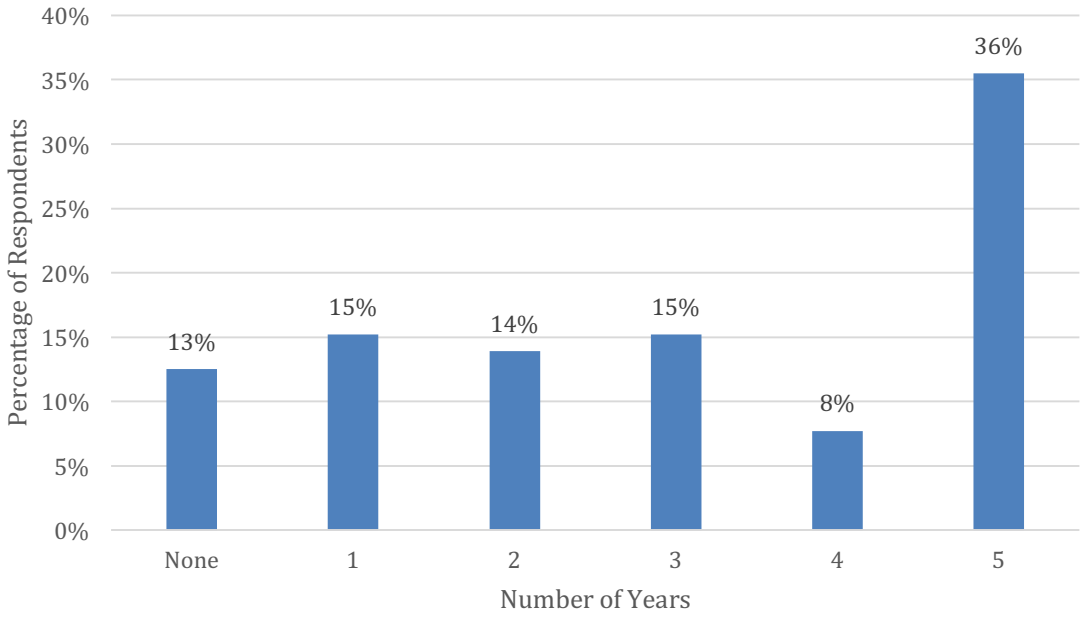
Figure 5. Respondents' Number of Years Hunting Turkeys (n = 704)



Turkey Hunting Frequency

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of years they had turkey hunted within the last five years (Figure 6). Almost half of the respondents (44%) indicated they had hunted between one and three years within the last five years, while 36% indicated they had hunted every year for the last five years. Only 13% indicated they had not hunted in the last five years.

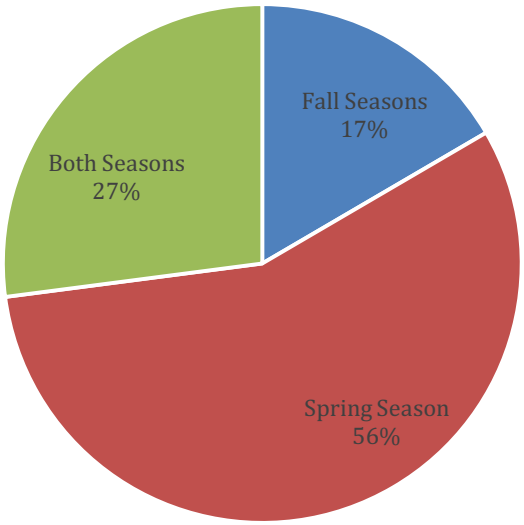
Figure 6. Respondents' Frequency of Turkey Hunting in the Last Five Years (n = 698)



Turkey Hunting Preferences

When asked their preferred hunting season (Figure 7), over half (56%) of respondents indicated they hunted during the spring season only, and 27% of respondents indicated they hunted during both fall and spring seasons. Only 17% of respondents indicated they hunt during the fall seasons only.

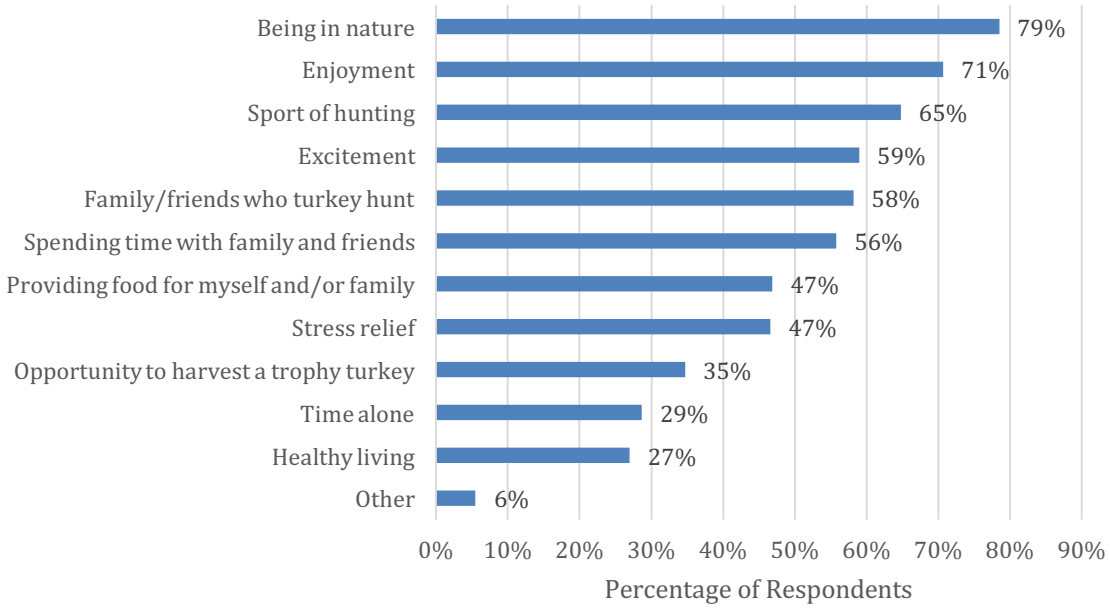
Figure 7. Respondents' Preferred Turkey Hunting Season (n = 698)



Factors Encouraging Turkey Hunting

Respondents were also asked what factors encouraged them to turkey hunt each season (Figure 8). Respondents indicated the most encouraging factors were being in nature (79%), enjoyment (71%), the sport of hunting (65%), family/friends who turkey hunt (59%), excitement (58%), and spending time with family and friends (56%). Respondents indicated that providing food for myself and/or family (47%) and stress relief (47%) were also factors that encouraged them to turkey hunt each year.

Figure 8. Factors that Encourage Respondents to Turkey Hunt (n = 704)



Of those respondents who reported other factors that encourage them to turkey hunt each season (n=39), 21% indicated they found turkey hunting challenging and/or rewarding and 10% indicated the enjoyment they get from turkey hunting was an encouraging factor (Table 1).

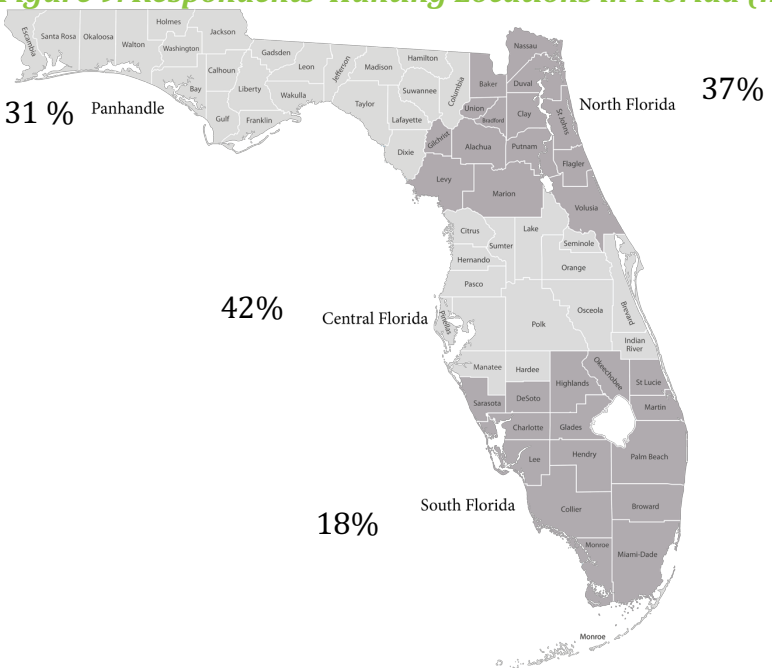
Table 1. Factors Encouraging Respondents to Turkey Hunt (n=39)

Coded Responses	%
Challenging/rewarding	20.5
Enjoyment	10.3
Family tradition	7.7
Like listening to turkeys communicate	7.7
Sport of hunting	5.1
Fall turkey season coincides with archery season	5.1
Addicted to hunting	5.1
Helps WMAs know where to hunt	5.1
Learning about hunting and/or turkeys	5.1
Being able to observe/scout other animals	5.1
Obtain a better/improved understanding of creation/religious	5.1
Being in nature	2.6
Spending time with family and friends	2.6
Providing food for myself and/or family	2.6
Hunting is a right	2.6
Time away from spouse	2.6
Being able to make use of all parts of the turkey	2.6
Good turkey population for hunting	2.6

Turkey Hunting Locations

Respondents were asked to identify all the areas in Florida they hunt in (Figure 9). Respondents indicated they hunted in Central Florida (42%) and North Florida (37%) the most. The Panhandle (31%) was the next location that respondents identified they went turkey hunting in.

Figure 9. Respondents' Hunting Locations in Florida (n = 702)



Turkey Hunting Land Type

Forty-eight percent of respondents indicated they typically hunt on private land, with 28% indicating they typically hunt on both private and public land, and 24% of respondents indicating they typically hunt on public land (Figure 10).

Only those respondents who specified private land as land type they typically hunt were asked to indicate the ownership of the private land (Figure 11). A large portion of these respondents indicated the private land was a friend or relatives land (51%). Respondents indicated that the ownership of the private land was also leased (31%) and owned (25%) by the respondent themselves. Sixty-seven (12%) respondents who indicated that they hunted on private land did not indicate the ownership of the private land that they hunted on.

Figure 10. Respondents' Turkey Hunting Land Type (n = 702)

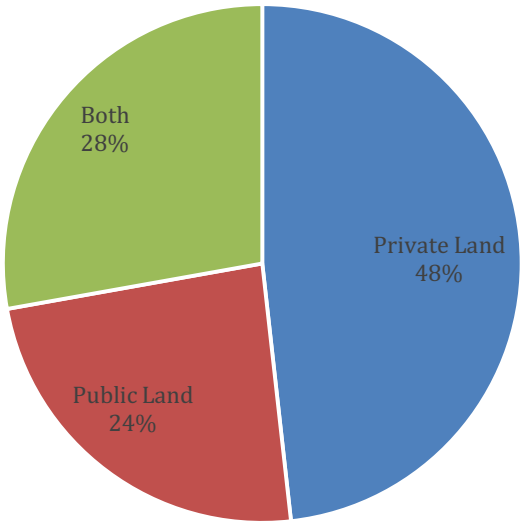
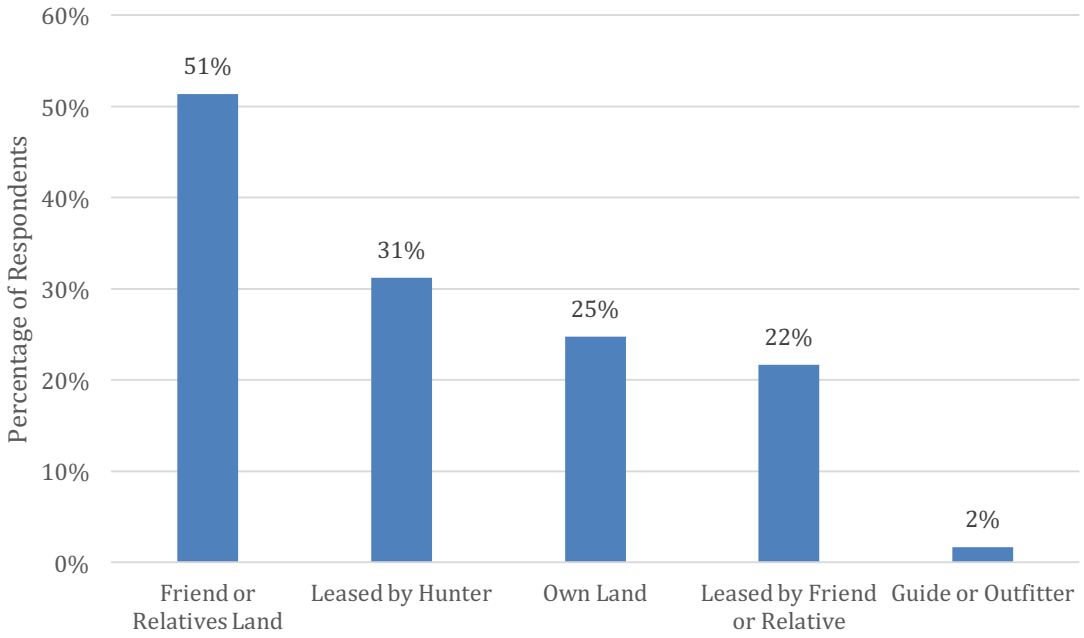


Figure 11. Private Land Ownership (n = 475)



Overharvesting

Respondents were asked to specify how many other turkey hunters they had observed over harvesting during the 2014-2015 turkey hunting seasons (Figure 12). The majority of respondents (90%) indicated they had not seen any turkey hunters over harvesting.

Respondents who had witnessed other hunters overharvesting were then, in a check all that apply question, asked why they believed other turkey hunters over harvested (Figure 13). Respondents believed that disregard for rules and regulations (42%) and the competition of harvesting (40%) were the two primary reasons for over harvesting. Lack of enforcement (16%) and accidently killing more than one bird at a time (15%) were also specified as alternative reasons by respondents for over harvesting. Fourteen (2%) respondents who indicated that they had witnessed overharvesting did not provide a perceived reasoning for the overharvest. Of those respondents who reported other reasons for over harvesting (n=6), common reasons given were "bag limits being too low", "hunters having no respect for wildlife", "no tagging system", and "hunters feeling like harvesting mature gobblers will allow younger more fertile gobblers to mate more hens".

Figure 12. Observed Over Harvesting During 2014-2015 Turkey Hunting Seasons (n = 701)

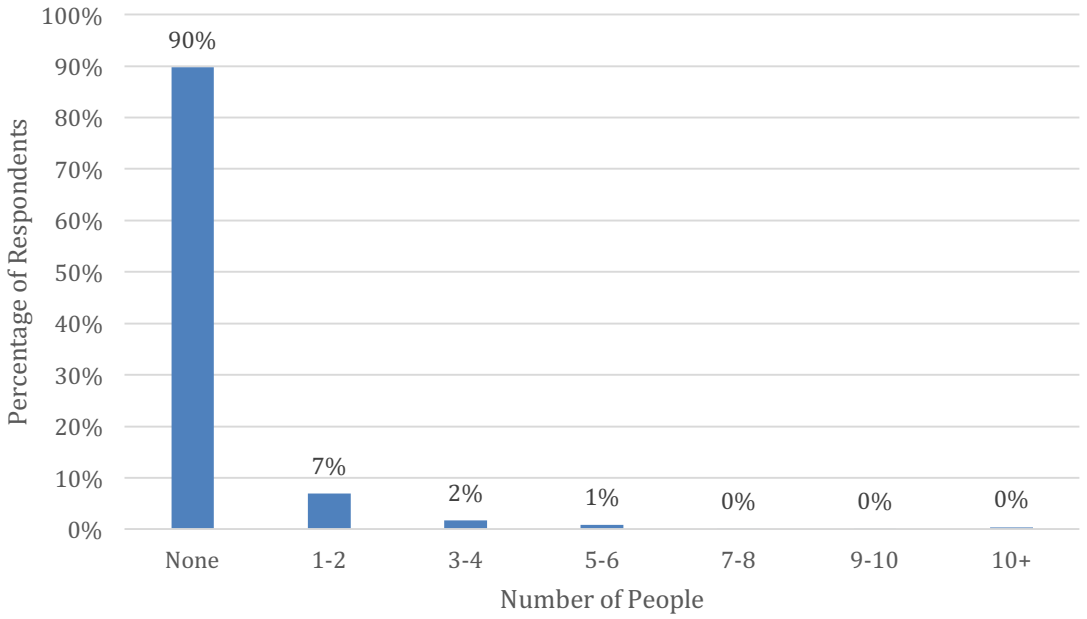
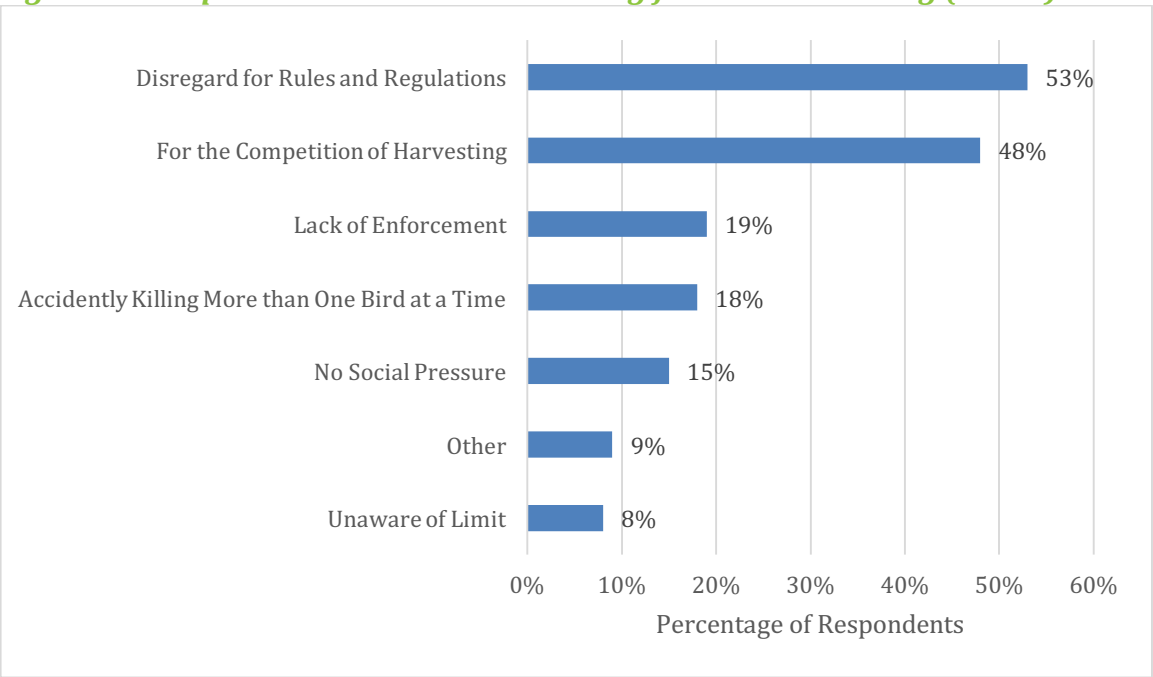


Figure 13. Respondents' Perceived Reasoning for Over Harvesting (n = 67)

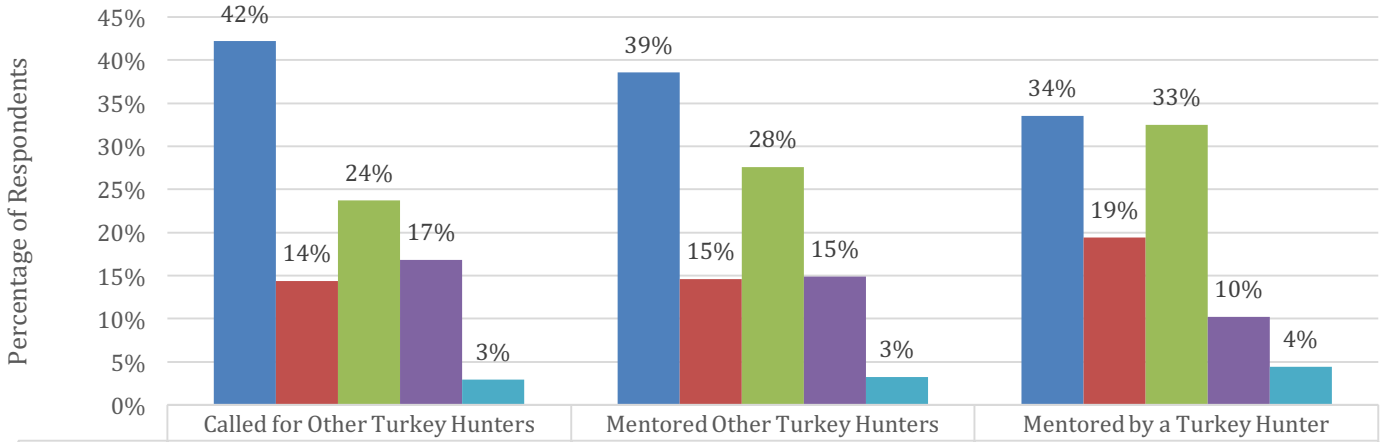


Mentoring

Mentoring Behaviors

Respondents were asked whether or not they had mentored other hunters and whether or not they had been mentored themselves (Figure 14). They were also asked to specify if they had called for other hunters. Fifty-four percent of respondents had never or rarely mentored other turkey hunters while 43% of them indicated that they had sometimes or often mentored other hunters. Similar percentages were seen in those respondents who had never or rarely been mentored (53%) versus those that had sometimes or often been mentored by other hunters (43%). Forty-four percent of respondents indicated they had sometimes, often, or always called for other turkey hunters.

Figure 14. Respondents' Mentoring Behaviors (n = 695; n = 694; n = 686)

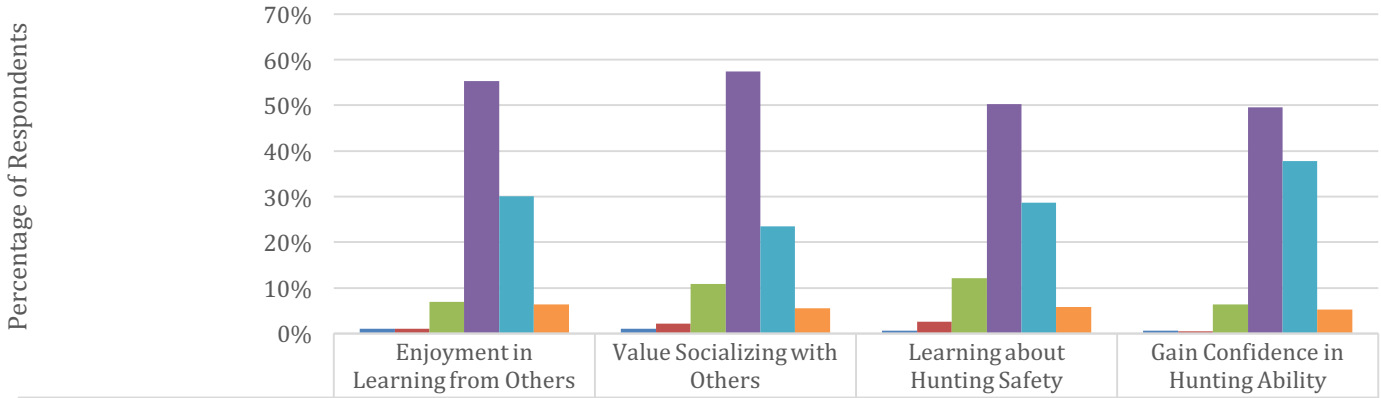


	Called for Other Turkey Hunters	Mentored Other Turkey Hunters	Mentored by a Turkey Hunter
Never	42%	39%	34%
Rarely	14%	15%	19%
Sometimes	24%	28%	33%
Often	17%	15%	10%
Always	3%	3%	4%

Benefits of Mentoring to the Mentees

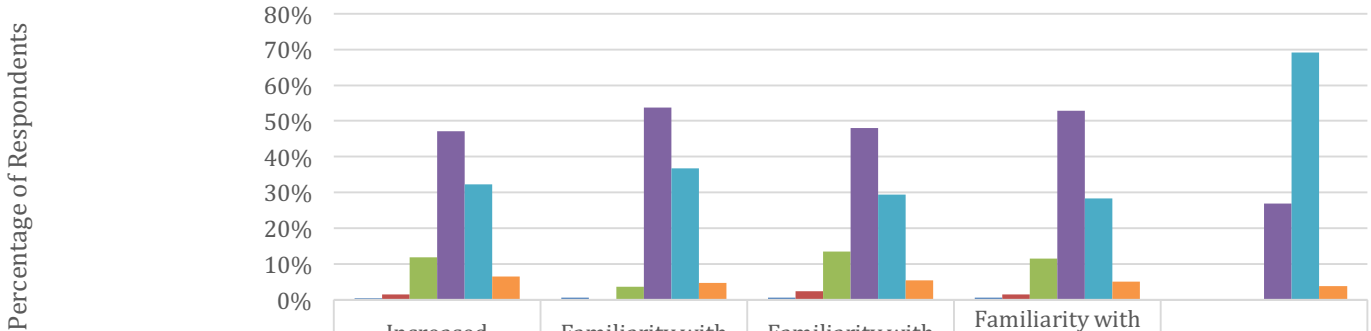
Respondents were asked to specify the benefits of mentoring from the perspective of the mentee (Figure 15a and 15b). Respondents agreed or strongly agreed the most perceived benefits of mentoring were to gain familiarity with the sport (91%), gain confidence in their hunting ability (88%), and the enjoyment in learning from others (85%).

Figure 15a. Respondents' Perceived Benefits of Mentoring to the Mentees (n = 687; n = 685, n = 679; n = 685)



	Enjoyment in Learning from Others	Value Socializing with Others	Learning about Hunting Safety	Gain Confidence in Hunting Ability
Strongly Disagree	1%	1%	1%	1%
Disagree	1%	2%	3%	0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	7%	11%	12%	6%
Agree	55%	57%	50%	50%
Strongly Agree	30%	24%	29%	38%
Don't Know	6%	6%	6%	5%

Figure 15b. Respondents' Perceived Benefits of Mentoring to the Mentees (n = 687; n = 684; n = 682; n = 687; n = 26)



	Increased Hunting Success	Familiarity with Sport	Familiarity with Regulations	Familiarity with Hunting Opportunities	Other
Strongly Disagree	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Disagree	2%	0%	2%	2%	0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12%	4%	14%	12%	0%
Agree	47%	54%	48%	53%	27%
Strongly Agree	32%	37%	30%	28%	69%
Don't Know	7%	5%	6%	5%	4%

Of the respondents who reported other perceived benefits of mentoring to mentees (n=24), 33% agreed or strongly agreed that learning how to be better hunters was a perceived benefit of mentoring to the mentees (Table 2). Seventeen percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that family bonding and/or tradition was a perceived benefit of mentoring to the mentees.

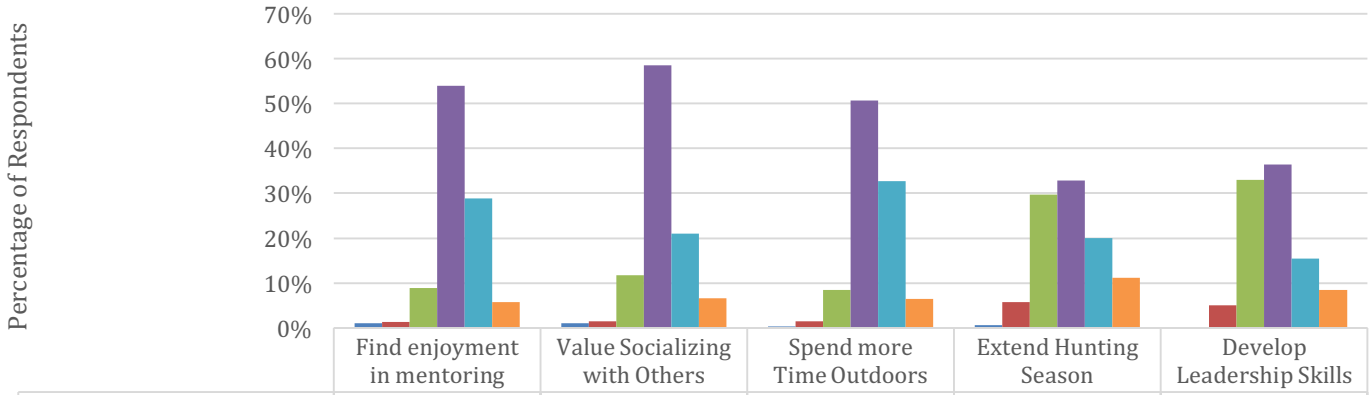
Table 2. Other Perceived Benefits of Mentoring to the Mentees (n=24)

Coded Responses	%
Learning how to be better hunters	33.3
Family bonding/tradition	16.7
Teaching inexperienced hunters/kids	12.5
Like being out in the woods/nature	8.3
Gaining knowledge of areas to hunt	8.3
Building a healthy lifestyle	4.2
Growing the sport	4.2
Enjoyable	4.2
Learning how to hunt for food not just sport	4.2
Higher success rate	4.2

Benefits of Mentoring to the Mentor

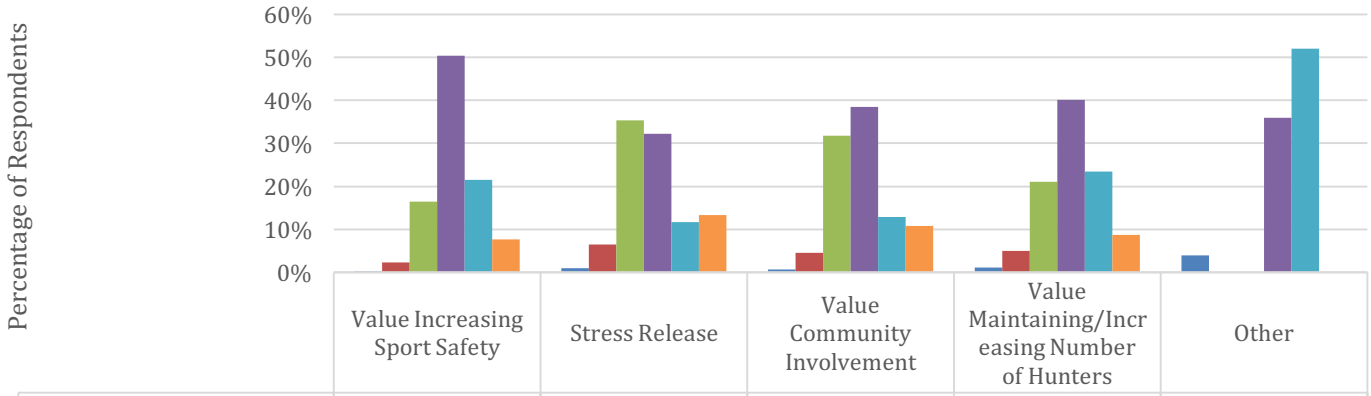
When asked about the benefits of mentoring from the perspective of the mentor (Figure 16a and 16b), respondents agreed or strongly agreed that enjoyment (83%) and spending more times outdoors (84%) were the most beneficial aspects of mentoring.

Figure 16a. Respondents' Perceived Benefits of Mentoring to the Mentors (n = 685; n = 682; n = 682; n = 681; n = 682)



	Find enjoyment in mentoring	Value Socializing with Others	Spend more Time Outdoors	Extend Hunting Season	Develop Leadership Skills
Strongly Disagree	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Disagree	1%	2%	2%	6%	5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	9%	12%	9%	30%	33%
Agree	54%	59%	51%	33%	36%
Strongly Agree	29%	21%	33%	20%	16%
Don't Know	6%	7%	7%	11%	9%

Figure 16b. Respondents' Perceived Benefits of Mentoring to the Mentors (n = 682; n = 677; n= 674; n = 681; n = 25)



	Value Increasing Sport Safety	Stress Release	Value Community Involvement	Value Maintaining/Increasing Number of Hunters	Other
Strongly Disagree	0%	1%	1%	1%	4%
Disagree	2%	7%	5%	5%	0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	17%	35%	32%	21%	0%
Agree	50%	32%	38%	40%	36%
Strongly Agree	22%	12%	13%	24%	52%
Don't Know	8%	13%	11%	9%	0%

Of the respondents who reported other perceived benefits of mentoring to the mentors (n=21), 29% agreed or strongly agreed that enjoyment of family time was a benefit of mentoring, while 24% agreed or strongly agreed that having pride in and/or getting value out of teaching youth was a benefit of mentoring (Table 3).

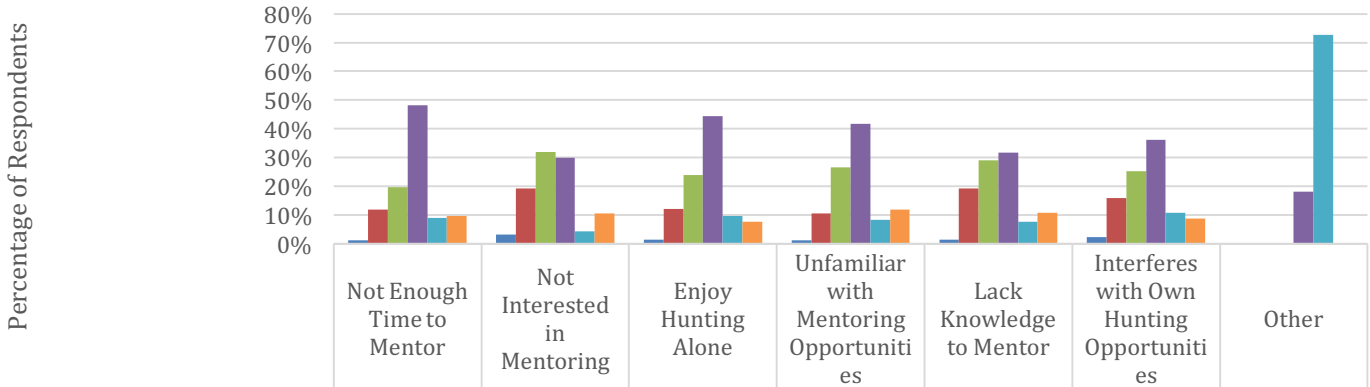
Table 3. Other Perceived Benefits of Mentoring to Mentors (n=21)

Coded Responses	%
Enjoy family time	28.6
Have pride/get value in teaching youth	23.8
Like passing on tradition	19.0
Like promoting hunting/bringing others into the sport	9.5
Having fun/the excitement	9.5
Enjoy sponsoring/working with a mentoring program	4.8
Love the outdoors	4.8

Challenges Associated with Mentoring

Respondents were asked to indicate the challenges that exist with mentoring other turkey hunters (Figure 17). Over half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that not enough time (57%) and the enjoyment of hunting alone (54%) were the most challenging obstacles to mentoring other hunters.

Figure 17. Respondents' Perceived Challenges of Mentoring (n = 679; n = 677; n = 673; n = 680; n = 675; n = 679; n = 11)



	Not Enough Time to Mentor	Not Interested in Mentoring	Enjoy Hunting Alone	Unfamiliar with Mentoring Opportunities	Lack Knowledge to Mentor	Interferes with Own Hunting Opportunities	Other
Strongly Disagree	1%	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%	0%
Disagree	12%	19%	12%	11%	19%	16%	0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20%	32%	24%	27%	29%	25%	0%
Agree	48%	30%	44%	42%	32%	36%	18%
Strongly Agree	9%	4%	10%	8%	8%	11%	73%
Don't Know	10%	11%	8%	12%	11%	9%	0%

Of the respondents who reported other perceived challenges of mentoring (n=11), 36% agreed or strongly agreed that a lack of land to hunt on and/or hunting opportunities was a challenge of mentoring (Table 4). Also, 18% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the turkey hunter being greedy was a challenge of mentoring.

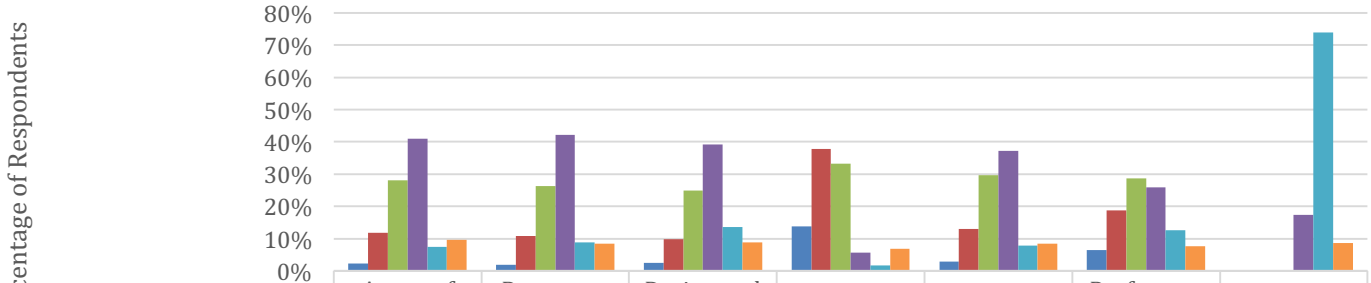
Table 4. Other challenges with regard to turkey hunters mentoring (n=11)

Coded Responses	%
Have a lack of land to hunt on/hunting opportunities	36.4
Are greedy	18.2
Are not sure how to start mentoring	9.1
Have a lack of time	9.1
Need a longer hunting season	9.1
Like to hunt by themselves	9.1
Have to ensure safety first	9.1

Incentives to Encourage Mentoring

Respondents were asked what incentives would encourage them to mentor other turkey hunters (Figure 18). Over half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a designated weekend for mentoring (53%) and access to resources available on mentoring others (51%) would encourage them to mentor. In addition, 49% of respondents reported that they would be encouraged to mentor if they were more aware of mentoring opportunities.

Figure 18. Incentives that Would Encourage Respondents to Mentor Other Turkey Hunters (n = 677; n = 676; n = 677; n = 675; n = 673; n = 675; n = 23)



	Aware of Mentoring Opportunities	Resources Available on Mentoring Others	Designated Weekenend for Mentoring	Receive Recognition	Established Mentoring Program	Preference in Hunting Opportunities	Other
Strongly Disagree	2%	2%	3%	14%	3%	7%	0%
Disagree	12%	11%	10%	38%	13%	19%	0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	28%	26%	25%	33%	30%	29%	0%
Agree	41%	42%	39%	6%	37%	26%	17%
Strongly Agree	8%	9%	14%	2%	8%	13%	74%
Don't Know	10%	9%	9%	7%	9%	8%	9%

Of the respondents who reported other incentives that would encourage respondents to mentor other turkey hunters (n=22), 27% of them agreed or strongly agreed that knowing the other turkey hunter would encourage them to mentor that person (Table 5). Also, 23% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that if they had more experience turkey hunting it would encourage them to mentor other turkey hunters.

Table 5. Other Incentives that Would Encourage Respondents to Mentor Other Turkey Hunters (n=22)

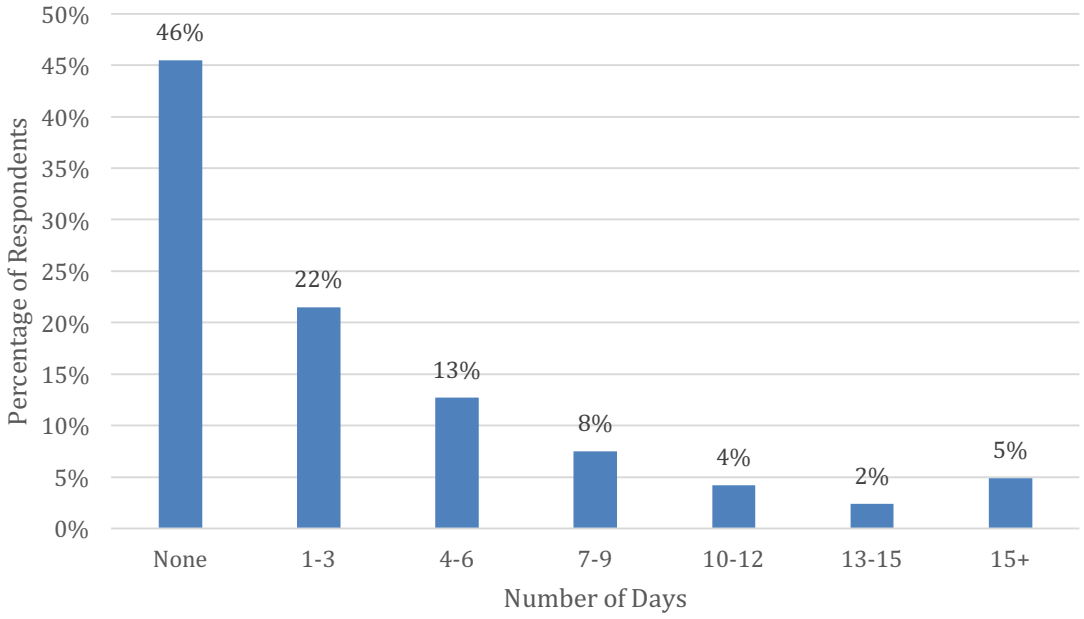
Coded Responses	%
I knew the mentee/mentor's friends & family	27.3
Had more experience turkey hunting	22.7
Better opportunities/places/costs to hunt	18.2
Helping someone to learn	13.6
There was a program for the handicapped	4.5
If it were for a program like "Big Brother"	4.5
If there was a better turkey population	4.5
If they guaranteed hunts on private land	4.5

Fall Seasons Hunting

Turkey Were Primary Target

Respondents were asked how many days on average they hunted during the fall seasons in the last five years where turkey were their primary target (Figure 19). Almost half of respondents (46%) indicated they had not hunted any days, while 35% indicated they had hunted between 1 and 6 days in the fall seasons during the last five years.

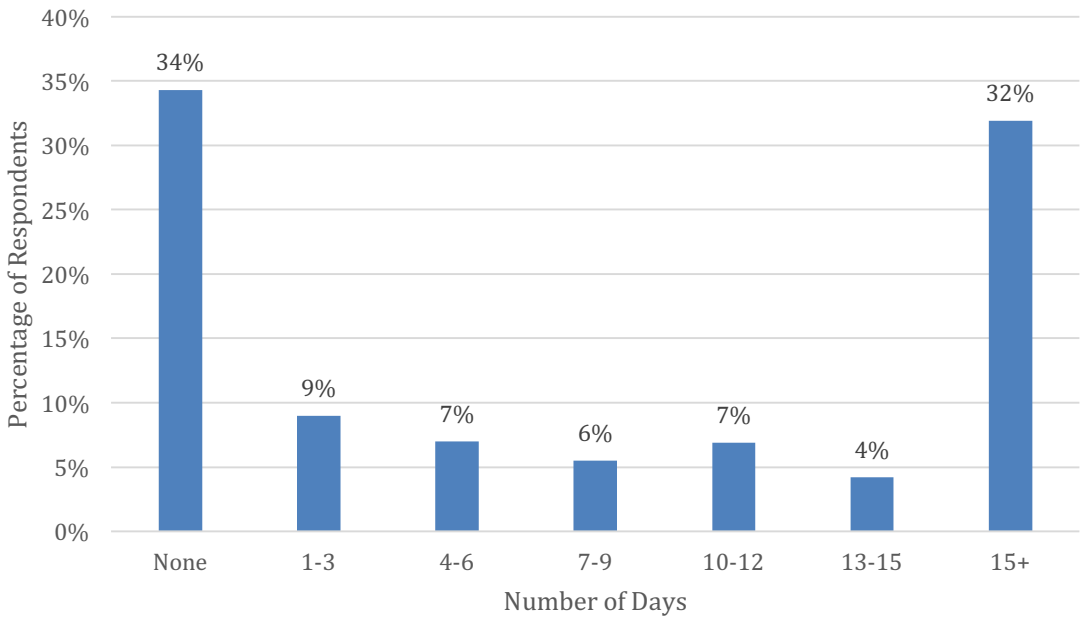
Figure 19. Respondents' Frequency of Fall Turkey Hunting in the Last Five Years—Turkey Were Primary Target (n = 701)



Other Game Were Primary Target

Respondents were then asked how many days on average they hunted during the fall seasons in the last five years where other game were their primary target and turkey were a secondary target (Figure 20). A total of 32% indicated they had hunted 15 days or more where other game was the primary target, and 34% reported not hunting any days.

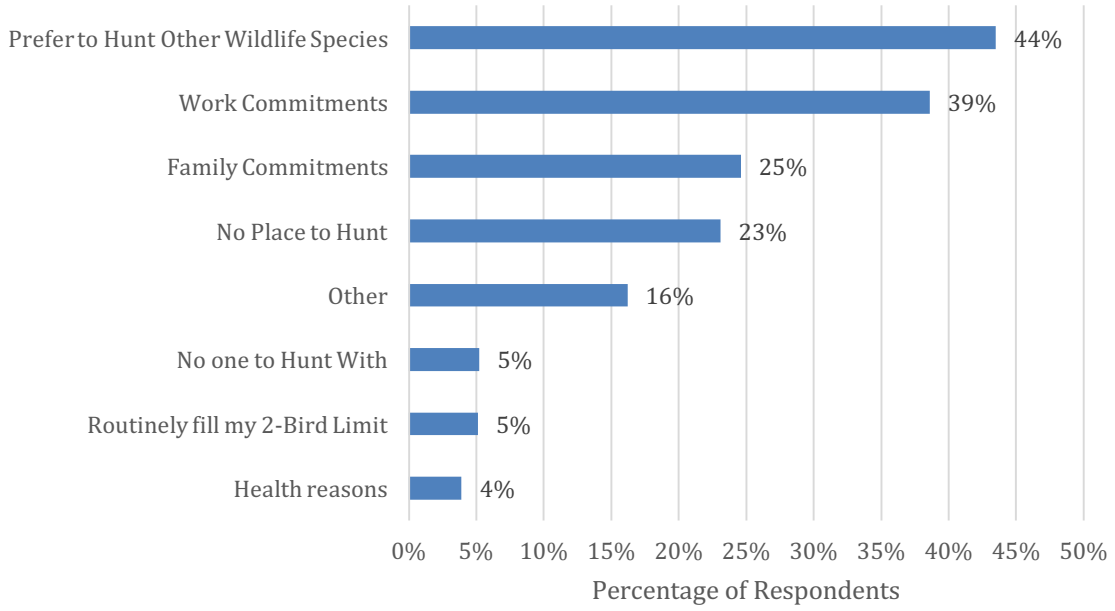
Figure 20. Respondents' Frequency of Fall Turkey Hunting in the Last Five Years—Other Game Were Primary Target (n = 686)



Fall Turkey-Hunting Limitations

When asked what factors limited respondents from spending more time turkey hunting during the fall seasons (Figure 21), 44% preferred to hunt other wildlife species. Work commitments (39%), family commitments (25%) and no place to hunt (23%) were also identified has additional barriers to turkey hunting during the fall seasons.

Figure 21. Limitations Preventing Hunters from Fall Turkey Hunting (n = 705)



Of the respondents who reported other limitations that prevent hunters from turkey hunting in the fall (n=111), 27% of them indicated that turkeys not gobbling in the fall was a limitation keeping them from turkey hunting in the fall (Table 6). Similar percentages (12%) of respondents reported the turkey population on public land was low and/or they had no access to private land and the spring hunting season was more challenging and/or enjoyable.

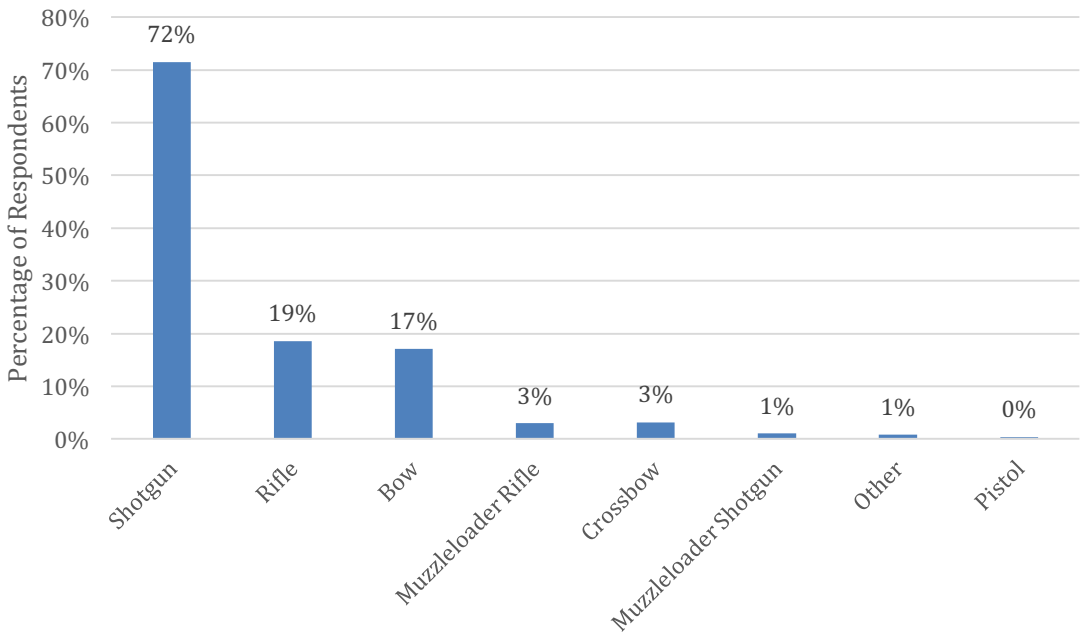
Table 6. Other Limitations Preventing Hunters from Fall Turkey Hunting (n=111)

Coded Responses	%
Turkeys don't gobble/call in the fall	27.0
Public land has low turkey population/no access to private land	11.7
More challenging/enjoyable in the spring	11.7
Don't believe in turkey hunting in the fall/no interest	9.0
Prefer to hunt other wildlife species	7.2
Financial limitations	3.6
Inexperience/lack of knowledge about how to hunt turkey successfully	3.6
Weather/environment better in the spring	3.6
Rules/regulations for fall hunting season confusing	2.7
Don't like hunting turkeys while others are hunting other game	2.7
Lease membership limitations	2.7
School commitments	1.8
Did not receive/get approved for quota permit	1.8
Work commitments	0.9
Health reasons	0.9
Routinely fill my 2-bird limit	0.9
Don't want to fill limit before spring	0.9
Personal reasons	0.9
Need more permits in CWMA area/quota	0.9
Rather watch than hunt	0.9
Only hunts during archery season	0.9
Too much effort	0.9
Too much pressure on turkeys	0.9

Fall Seasons' Legal Method of Take

Only respondents that indicated they hunted during the fall seasons were asked to rank their legal method of take for the fall seasons, and then respondents' ranked legal method of take was recorded (Figure 22). Seventy-two percent of respondents ranked a shotgun as their primary legal method of take. Rifles (19%) and bows (17%) were also identified as legal methods of take respondents use during the fall season. One other type of weapon mentioned and ranked was a spear.

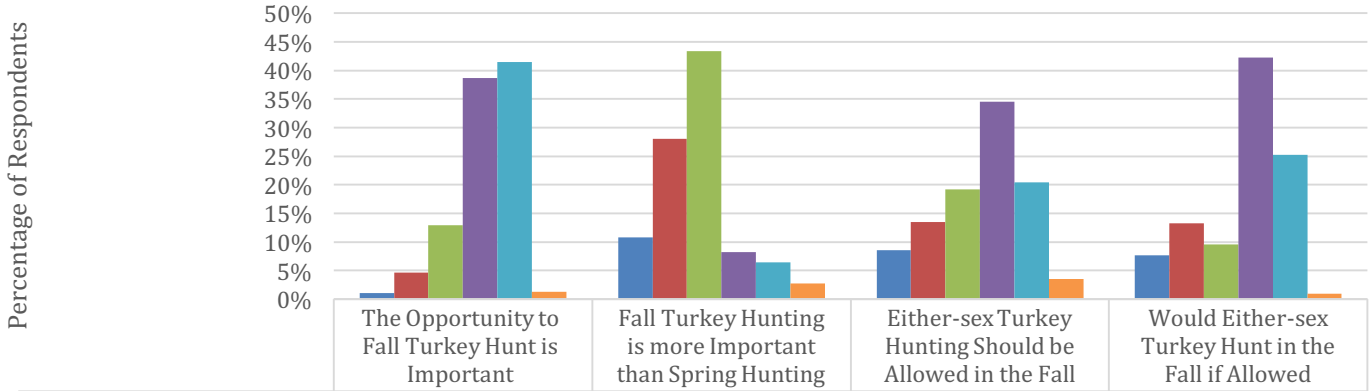
Figure 22. Respondents' Fall Seasons Legal Method of Take (n = 365)



Fall Hunting Preferences

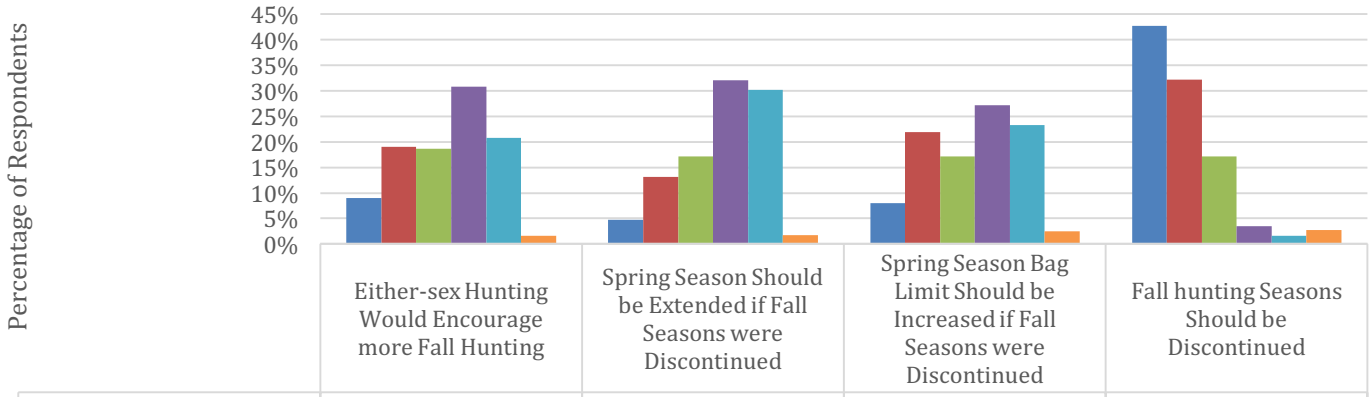
Respondents were asked several questions regarding their fall turkey hunting preferences (Figure 23a and 23b). Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the opportunity to fall turkey hunt was important (81%). Fifty-five percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that either-sex turkey hunting should be allowed in the fall, and 67% agreed or strongly agreed they would either-sex turkey hunt in the fall if allowed. Over half of respondents (62%) agreed or strongly agreed that spring turkey hunting season should be extended in the event fall turkey hunting seasons were discontinued; however, 75% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the fall turkey hunting seasons should be discontinued.

Figure 23a. Respondents' Fall Turkey Hunting Preferences (n = 485; n = 489; n = 490; n = 488)



	The Opportunity to Fall Turkey Hunt is Important	Fall Turkey Hunting is more Important than Spring Hunting	Either-sex Turkey Hunting Should be Allowed in the Fall	Would Either-sex Turkey Hunt in the Fall if Allowed
Strongly Disagree	1%	11%	9%	8%
Disagree	5%	28%	14%	13%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	13%	43%	19%	10%
Agree	39%	8%	35%	42%
Strongly Agree	42%	7%	20%	25%
Don't Know	1%	3%	4%	1%

Figure 23b. Respondents' Fall Turkey Hunting Preferences (n = 490; n = 490; n = 489; n = 485)



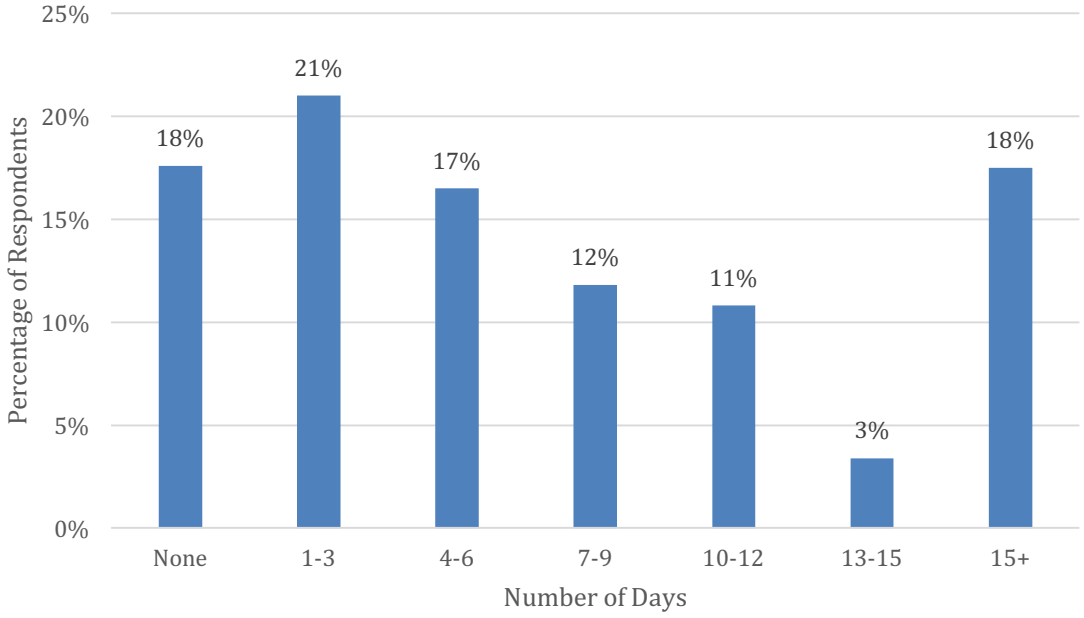
	Either-sex Hunting Would Encourage more Fall Hunting	Spring Season Should be Extended if Fall Seasons were Discontinued	Spring Season Bag Limit Should be Increased if Fall Seasons were Discontinued	Fall hunting Seasons Should be Discontinued
Strongly Disagree	9%	5%	8%	43%
Disagree	19%	13%	22%	32%
Neither Agree or Disagree	19%	17%	17%	17%
Agree	31%	32%	27%	4%
Strongly Agree	21%	30%	23%	2%
Don't Know	2%	2%	3%	3%

Spring Season Hunting

Spring Hunting Frequency

Respondents were asked how many days on average they hunted during the spring turkey hunting season in the last five years (Figure 24). Twenty-one percent of respondents indicated they hunted one to three days, 18% indicated they had hunted 15 or more days, and 17% reported hunting four to six days. An additional 18% indicated they did not hunt any days during the spring season within the last five years.

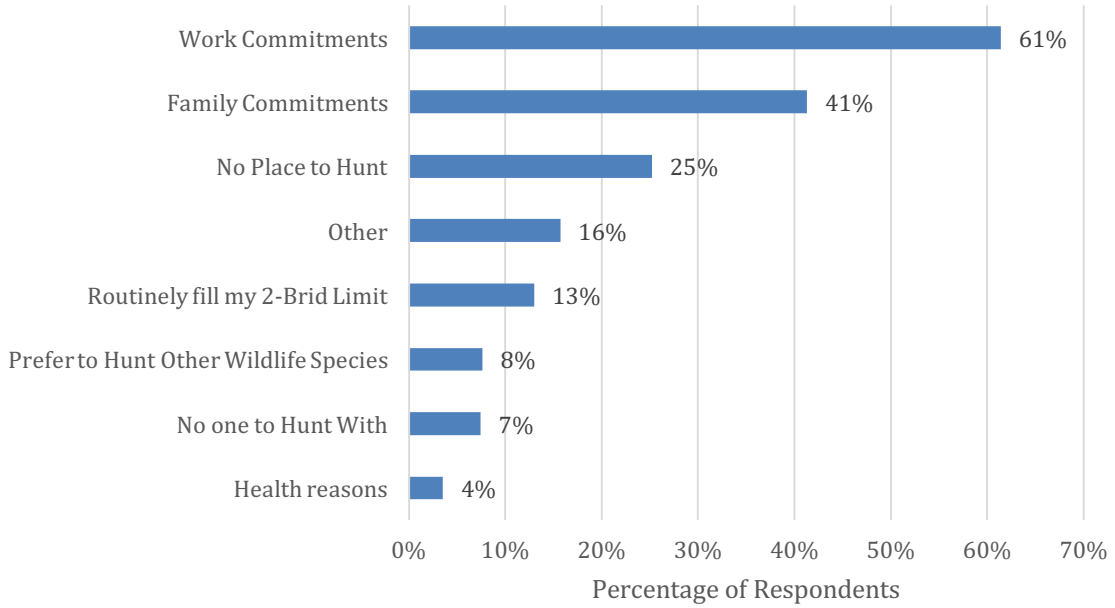
Figure 24. Respondents' Frequency of Spring Turkey Hunting in the Last Five Years (n = 700)



Spring Turkey-Hunting Limitations

When asked what factors limited respondents from spending more time turkey hunting during the spring season (Figure 25), over half (61%) attributed work commitments as a primary barrier to spring turkey hunting. Family commitments (41%) and no place to hunt (25%) emerged as additional factors limiting respondents from turkey hunting more during the spring season.

Figure 25. Limitations Preventing Hunters from Spring Turkey Hunting (n = 606)



Of the respondents who reported other limitations preventing them from spring turkey hunting (n=84), 20% of them indicated the weather/environment was a limitation (Table 7). Also, 16% of the respondents reported that over hunted areas and/or low turkey population were a limitation preventing them from hunting turkey in the spring.

Table 7. Other Limitations Preventing Hunters from Spring Turkey Hunting (n=84)

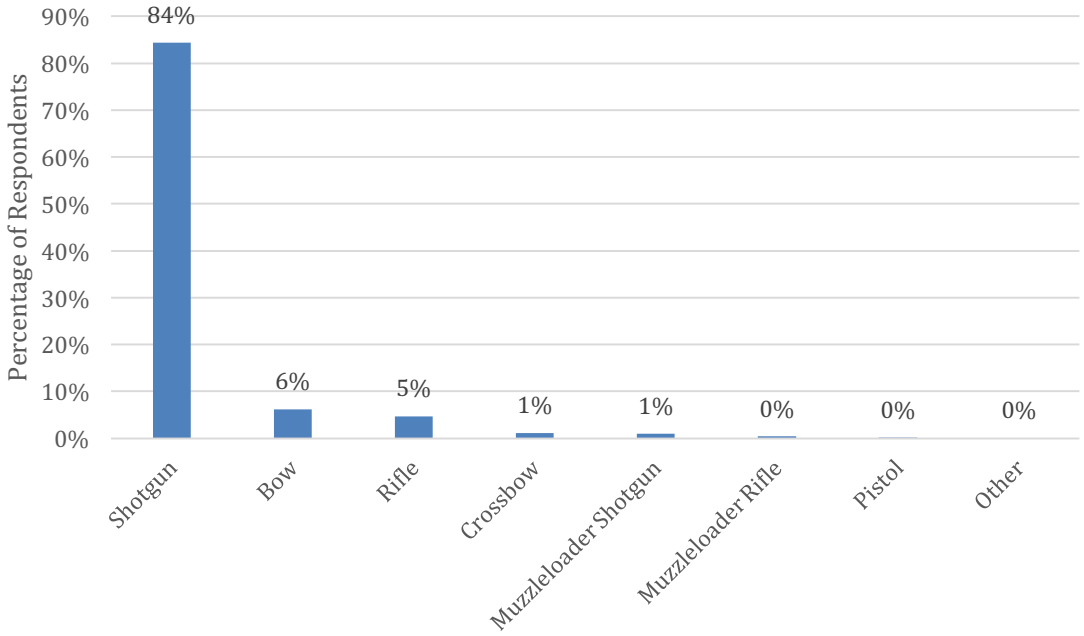
Coded Responses	%
Weather/environment/bugs	20.2
Area over hunted/low turkey population	15.5
Prefer to hunt other wildlife species	10.7
Area over hunted	6.0
Financial limitations	6.0
Length of season	4.8
Personal reasons	4.8
Prefer fall season	3.6
No place to hunt	3.6
Inexperience/lack of knowledge	3.6
Non-ethical hunters	2.4
No one to hunt with	2.4
Time limitation on length of time can hunt each day	2.4

No quota/permit availability	2.4
Don't shoot turkeys/just call	2.4
Lack of time	2.4
Birds are not gobbling/calling	1.2
Dangerous	1.2
Distance to WMAs	1.2
Prefer not to hunt in spring	1.2
Rather do other activities during spring	1.2
Coyotes pressure turkey population	1.2
Lease restrictions/limitations	1.2
No one to mentor	1.2
School commitment	1.2

Legal Method of Take for Spring Season

Only respondents that indicated they turkey hunt during the spring season were asked to rank their legal method of take for the spring season, and then respondents' ranking of the legal method of take was recorded (Figure 26). Over three-quarters of respondents(84%) ranked a shotgun as their primary method of take, and bows (6%) and rifles (5%) were also identified as legal methods of take used during the spring season. One other type of weapon mentioned and ranked was a pellet rifle.

Figure 26. Respondents' Spring Season Legal Method of Take (n = 536)



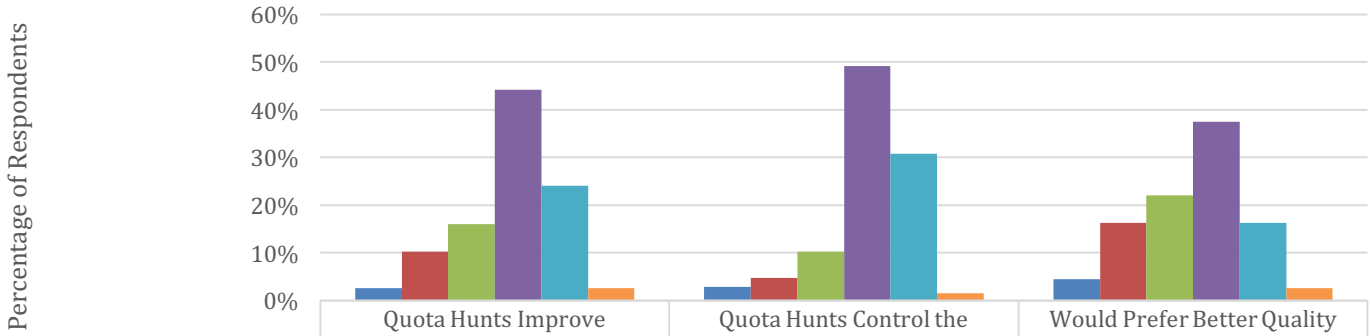
Opportunity versus Quality

Hunting Opportunities and Preferences on Public Land

When respondents were asked about hunting opportunities and preferences on public land (Figure 27a and 27b), 80% agreed or strongly agreed that quota hunts help control the number of hunters in an area, and 68% agreed or strongly agreed that quota hunts improve hunting quality on public lands. Fifty-four

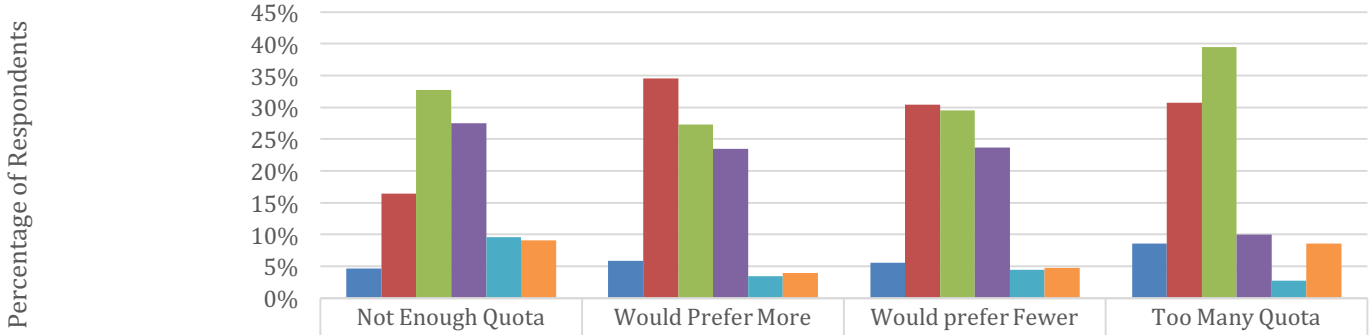
percent of respondents preferred better quality hunting, even at the expense of having limited access some years.

Figure 27a. Respondents' Opinions Regarding Hunting Opportunities and Preferences on Public Land (n = 344; n = 344; n = 344)



	Quota Hunts Improve Hunting Quality on Public Lands	Quota Hunts Control the Number of Hunters in an Area	Would Prefer Better Quality hunting, Even at the Expense of Limited Hunting Access
Strongly Disagree	3%	3%	5%
Disagree	10%	5%	16%
Neither Agree or Disagree	16%	10%	22%
Agree	44%	49%	38%
Strongly Agree	24%	31%	16%
Don't Know	3%	2%	3%

Figure 27b. Respondents' Opinions Regarding Hunting Opportunities and Preferences on Public Land (n = 342; n = 344; n = 342; n = 339)

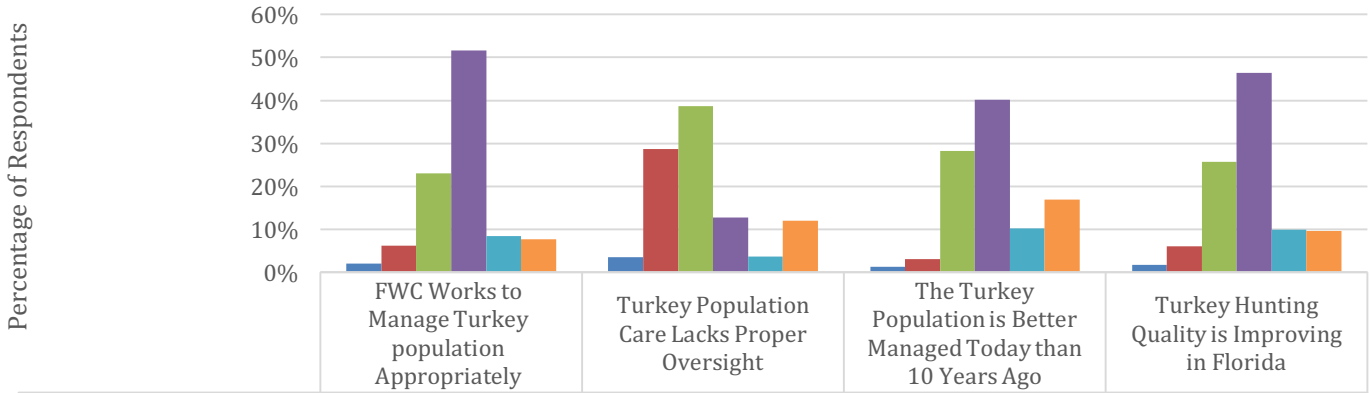


	Not Enough Quota Permits Issues Per Quota Hunt	Would Prefer More Quota Permits with Shorter Hunts	Would prefer Fewer Quota Permits with Longer Hunts	Too Many Quota Permits are Issues Per Quota Hunt
Strongly Disagree	5%	6%	6%	9%
Disagree	16%	35%	30%	31%
Neither Agree or Disagree	33%	27%	30%	40%
Agree	28%	24%	24%	10%
Strongly Agree	10%	4%	5%	3%
Don't Know	9%	4%	5%	9%

Turkey Hunting Quality

Respondents were asked questions regarding the hunting quality on public lands (Figure 28). More than half of respondents (61%) agreed or strongly agreed that FWC works to manage the turkey population appropriately, and 50% agreed or strongly agreed that the current turkey hunting population is better managed today than 10 years ago. Additionally, 56% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the quality of turkey hunting has improved in Florida.

Figure 28. Respondents' Opinions Regarding Turkey Hunting Quality (n = 688; n = 684; n = 687; n = 688)

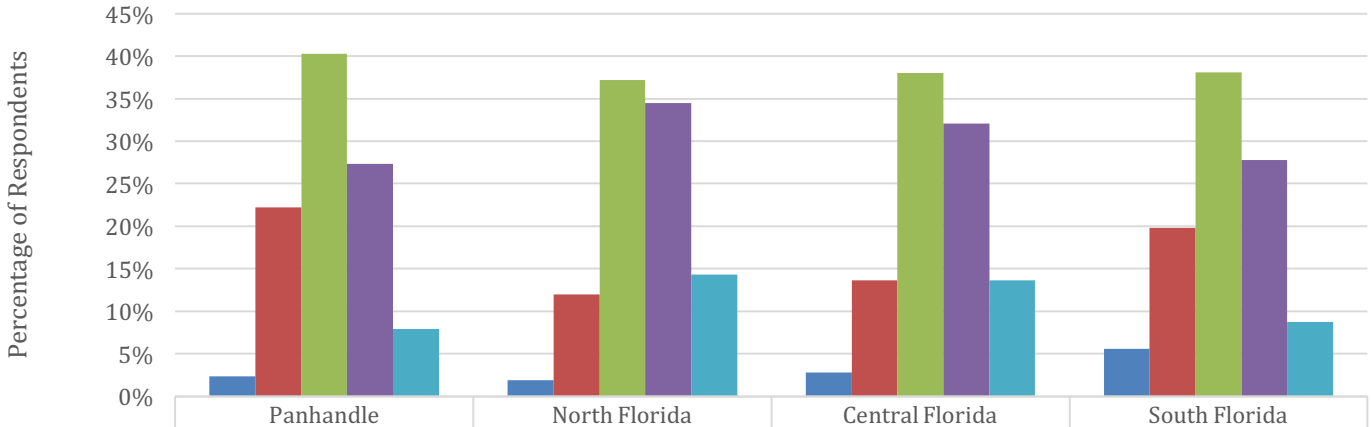


	FWC Works to Manage Turkey population Appropriately	Turkey Population Care Lacks Proper Oversight	The Turkey Population is Better Managed Today than 10 Years Ago	Turkey Hunting Quality is Improving in Florida
Strongly Disagree	2%	4%	1%	2%
Disagree	6%	29%	3%	6%
Neither Agree or Disagree	23%	39%	28%	26%
Agree	52%	13%	40%	46%
Strongly Agree	9%	4%	10%	10%
Don't Know	8%	12%	17%	10%

Florida Turkey Hunting Population

Respondents who identified the areas in Florida they hunted in were asked to report the turkey population in those four major Florida regions: Panhandle, North Florida, Central Florida, and South Florida (Figure 29). They were only asked about the turkey population if they reported hunting in that area. Over two thirds of respondents indicated the turkey population was good or very good in the Panhandle (67%), North Florida (72%), Central Florida (70%), and South Florida (66%).

Figure 29. Reported Turkey Population Status for Florida Regions (n = 216; n = 258; n = 287; n = 126)



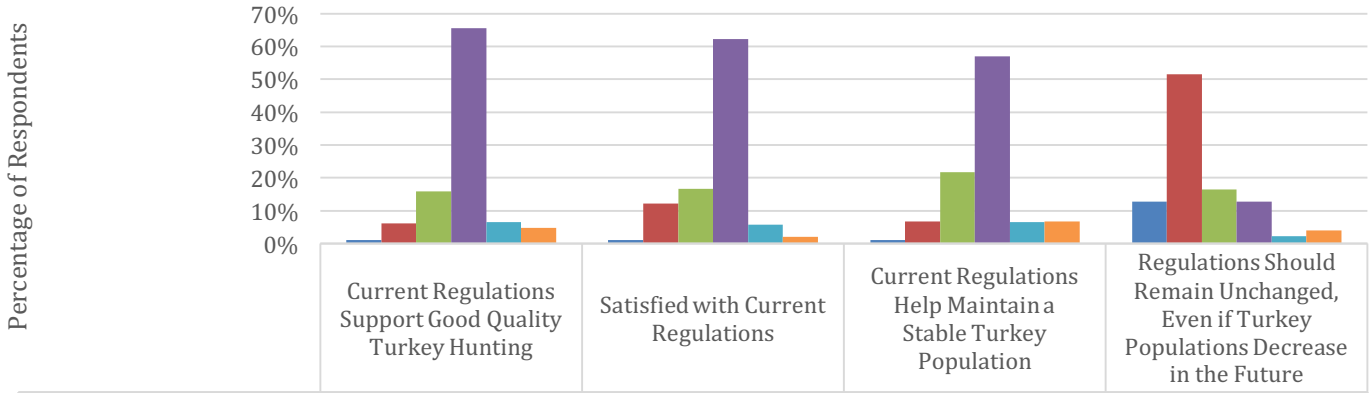
	Panhandle	North Florida	Central Florida	South Florida
Poor	2%	2%	3%	6%
Fair	22%	12%	14%	20%
Good	40%	37%	38%	38%
Very Good	27%	35%	32%	28%
Don't Know	8%	14%	14%	9%

Hunting Regulations

Turkey Hunting Regulation Satisfaction

When asked about their opinions regarding the current turkey hunting regulations, 68% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with current regulations (Figure 30). Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that current regulations support good quality turkey hunting (73%) and help maintain a stable turkey population (64%). However, 65% disagreed or strongly disagreed that regulations should remained unchanged, even if the turkey populations decrease in the future.

Figure 30. Respondents' Satisfaction with Turkey Hunting Regulations (n = 695; n = 696; n = 691; n = 695)

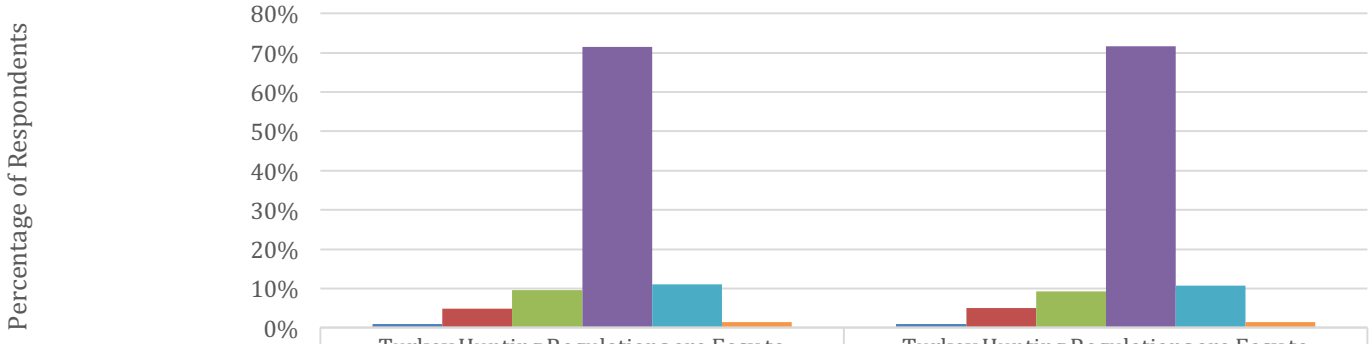


	Current Regulations Support Good Quality Turkey Hunting	Satisfied with Current Regulations	Current Regulations Help Maintain a Stable Turkey Population	Regulations Should Remain Unchanged, Even if Turkey Populations Decrease in the Future
Strongly Disagree	1%	1%	1%	13%
Disagree	6%	12%	7%	52%
Neither Agree or Disagree	16%	17%	22%	17%
Agree	66%	62%	57%	13%
Strongly Agree	7%	6%	7%	2%
Don't Know	5%	2%	7%	4%

Turkey Hunting Regulation Accessibility

Respondents were asked about the accessibility of current turkey hunting regulations (Figure 31). The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that turkey hunting regulations are easy to locate (83%) and easy to understand (83%).

Figure 31. Accessibility to Turkey Hunting Regulations (n = 692; n = 689)



	Turkey Hunting Regulations are Easy to Locate	Turkey Hunting Regulations are Easy to Understand
Strongly Disagree	1%	1%
Disagree	5%	5%
Neither Agree or Disagree	10%	9%
Agree	72%	72%
Strongly Agree	11%	11%
Don't Know	1%	2%

Attitude Toward Turkey Hunting Regulation

Respondents were asked to indicate their attitude toward turkey hunting regulations on a bi-polar semantic scale (Table 8). An attitude index resulted in an overall mean of 4.10, indicating that respondents had a positive attitude toward turkey hunting regulations.

Table 8. Respondents' Attitudes Regarding Turkey Hunting Regulations (n = 652)

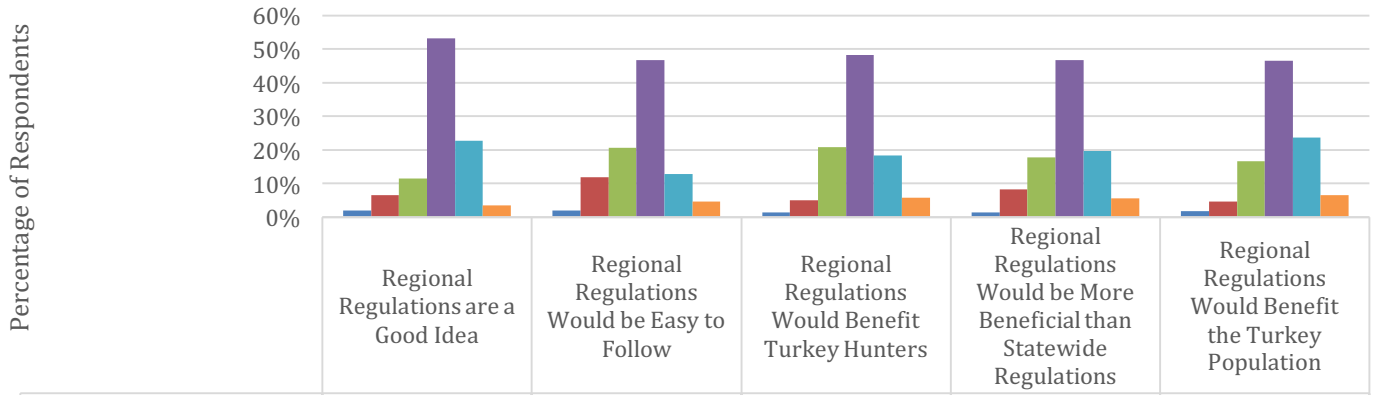
Statement	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Unethical : Ethical	652	4.29	.863
Not Helpful : Helpful	652	4.25	.835
Unfair : Fair	652	4.12	.959
Unreliable : Reliable	652	4.11	.909
Not Dependable : Dependable	652	4.07	.928
Inconsiderate : Considerate	652	4.04	.941
Complex : Simple	652	4.04	.955
Not Proficient : Proficient	652	4.01	.942
Ineffective : Effective	652	3.97	.997

Note: Real limits of the scale were 1.00 – 1.49 = Very Negative, 1.50 – 2.49 = Negative, 2.50 – 3.49 = Neither positive nor negative, 3.50 – 4.49 = positive, 4.50 – 5.00 = very positive.

Attitudes Toward Regional Regulations

Respondents were asked their opinions regarding regional turkey hunting regulations (Figure 32). Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that regional regulations would be a good idea (76%) and would benefit the turkey population (71%).

Figure 32. Respondents' Attitudes Regarding Regional Regulations (n = 697; n = 692; n = 694; n = 696; n = 695)



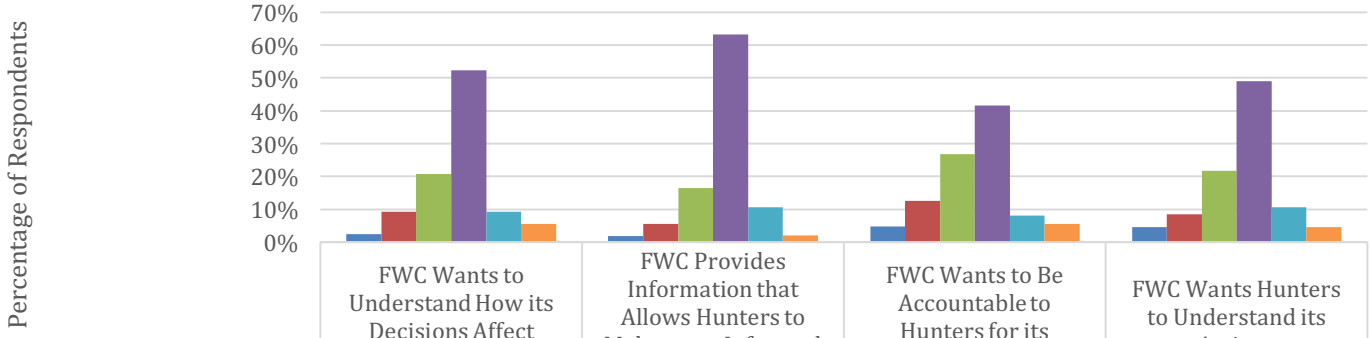
	Regional Regulations are a Good Idea	Regional Regulations Would be Easy to Follow	Regional Regulations Would Benefit Turkey Hunters	Regional Regulations Would be More Beneficial than Statewide Regulations	Regional Regulations Would Benefit the Turkey Population
Strongly Disagree	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Disagree	7%	12%	5%	8%	5%
Neither Agree or Disagree	12%	21%	21%	18%	17%
Agree	53%	47%	48%	47%	47%
Strongly Agree	23%	13%	18%	20%	24%
Don't Know	4%	5%	6%	6%	7%

Communication

FWC Communication Efforts

Respondents were asked their opinions regarding FWC's communication efforts with turkey hunters (Figure 33). A total of 74% agreed or strongly agreed that FWC provides information that allows hunters to make more informed decisions, and 61% agreed or strongly agreed that FWC wants to understand how its decisions affect hunters.

Figure 33. Respondents' Opinions Regarding FWC Communication Efforts (n = 696; n = 695; n = 695; n = 693)

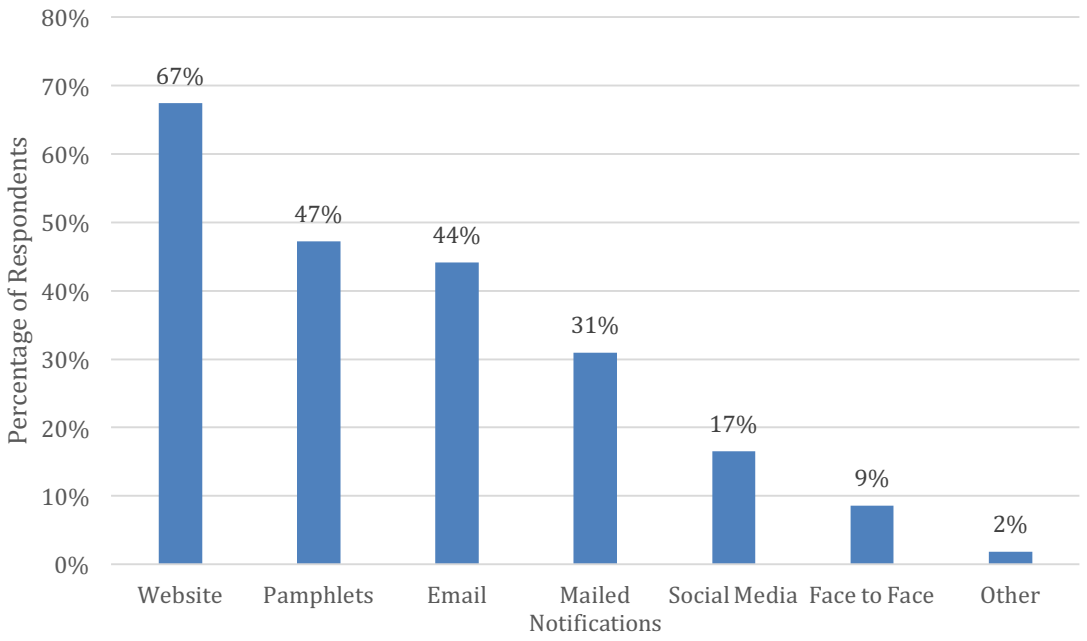


	FWC Wants to Understand How its Decisions Affect Hunters	FWC Provides Information that Allows Hunters to Make more Informed Decisions	FWC Wants to Be Accountable to Hunters for its Actions	FWC Wants Hunters to Understand its Actions
Strongly Disagree	3%	2%	5%	5%
Disagree	9%	6%	13%	9%
Neither Agree or Disagree	21%	17%	27%	22%
Agree	52%	63%	42%	49%
Strongly Agree	9%	11%	8%	11%
Don't Know	6%	2%	6%	5%

Preferred Method of Communication for Turkey Hunting Information

Using a check all that apply question, respondents were asked their preferred communication method of receiving turkey hunting information (Figure 34). Over two thirds of respondents (67%) preferred to receive turkey hunting information from websites. Respondents also preferred to receive turkey hunting information from pamphlets (47%), email (44%) and mailed notifications (31%). Other preferred methods indicated by respondents were "sports magazines" and/or "print news", "text messages", "public brick & mortar", and "receiving the information with their license".

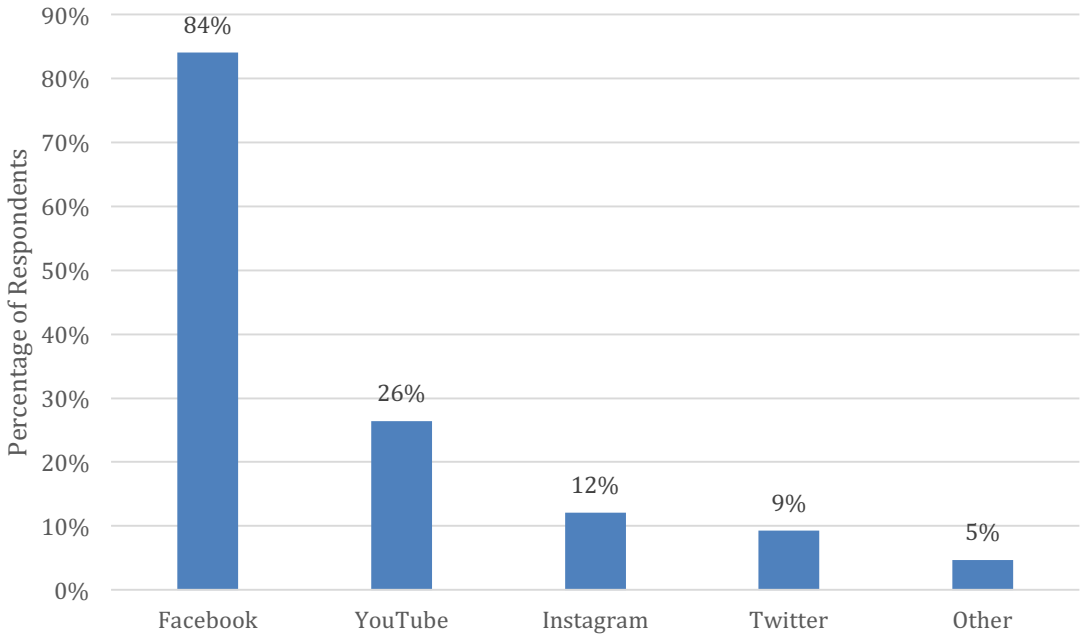
Figure 34. Preferred Communication Methods for Turkey Hunting Information (n = 690)



Social Media as a Method of Receiving Turkey Hunting Information

Those respondents who indicated they preferred to receive turkey hunting information via social media were asked to specify which medium they preferred (Figure 35). Facebook (84%) and YouTube (26%) were identified as the most preferred social media mediums for receiving turkey hunting information. Other social media mediums reported by respondents were "FWC website", "Google" and "LinkedIn".

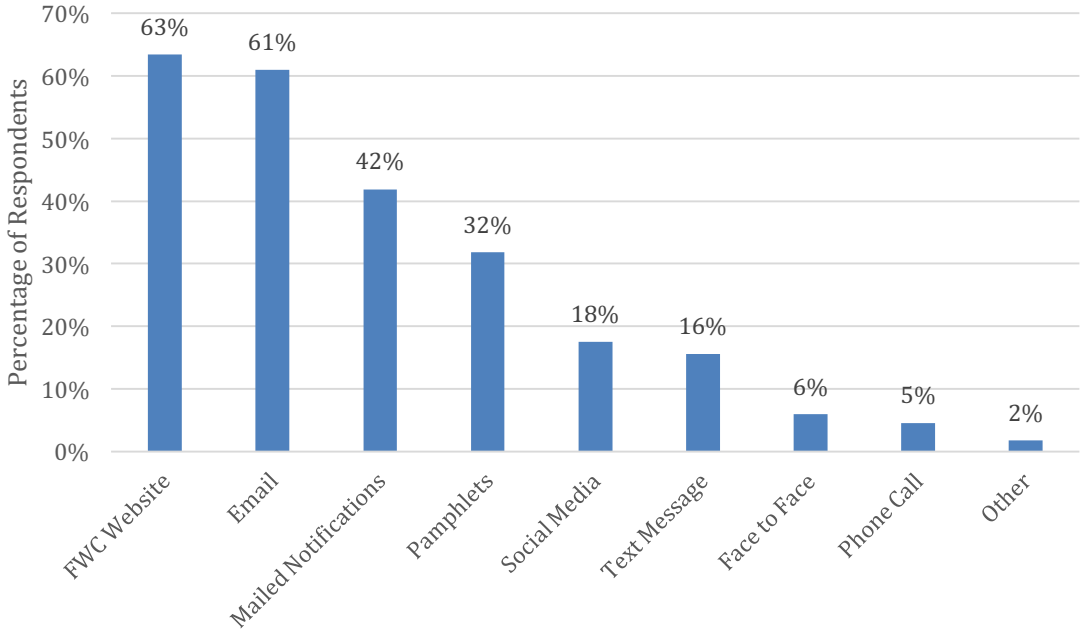
Figure 35. Preferred Social Media Method for Turkey Hunting Information (n = 107)



Preferred Method of Communication for Turkey Hunting Information Updates or Regulation Changes

Respondents were presented with another check all that apply question that asked their preferred method of communication for receiving turkey hunting information updates or regulation changes (Figure 36). The majority of respondents (63%) preferred the FWC website and 61% preferred email. Mailed notifications (42%) and pamphlets (32%) were identified as additional methods of communication respondents preferred to receive turkey hunting information updates and regulation changes. Other preferred methods of communication reported by respondents were "a smart phone app", "news media", "radio/TV", and "receiving the information with their license".

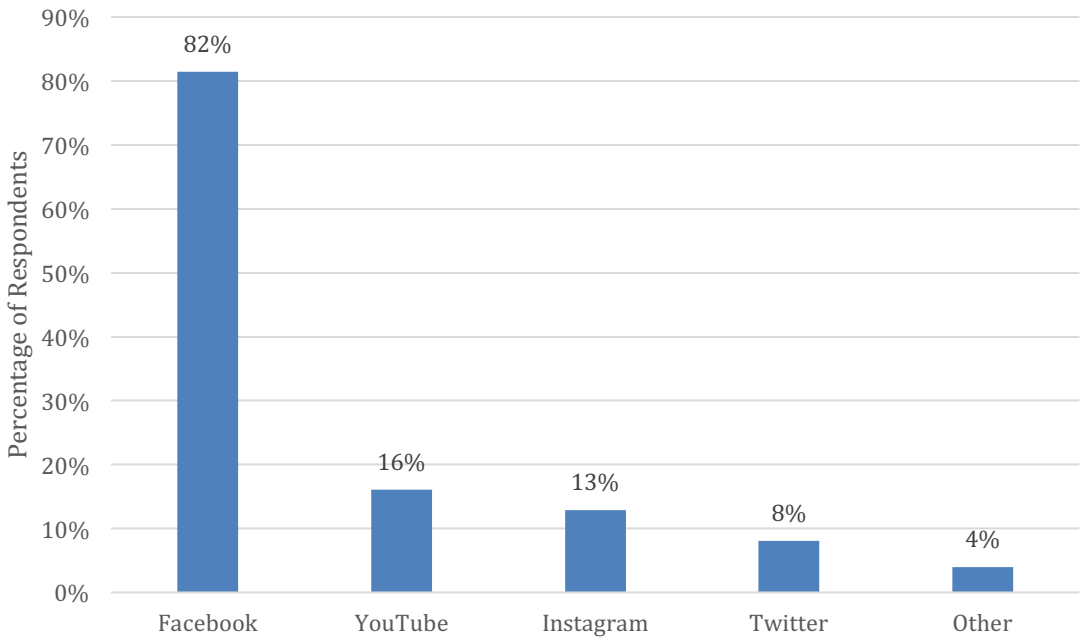
Figure 36. Preferred Communication Methods for Updates and Regulation Changes (n = 692)



Social Media as a Method of Receiving Turkey Hunting Information Updates and Regulation Changes

Those respondents who identified social media as their preferred method of communication for receiving turkey hunting information or regulation changes were then asked to specify which medium they preferred (Figure 37). The majority of respondents (82%) preferred Facebook as a medium to receive information updates or regulation changes. YouTube (16%) and Instagram (13%) were also specified as preferred social media mediums for receiving turkey hunting information updates and regulation changes. Other social media mediums reported by respondents were "Google" and "LinkedIn".

Figure 37. Preferred Social Media Method for Updates and Regulation Changes (n = 124)

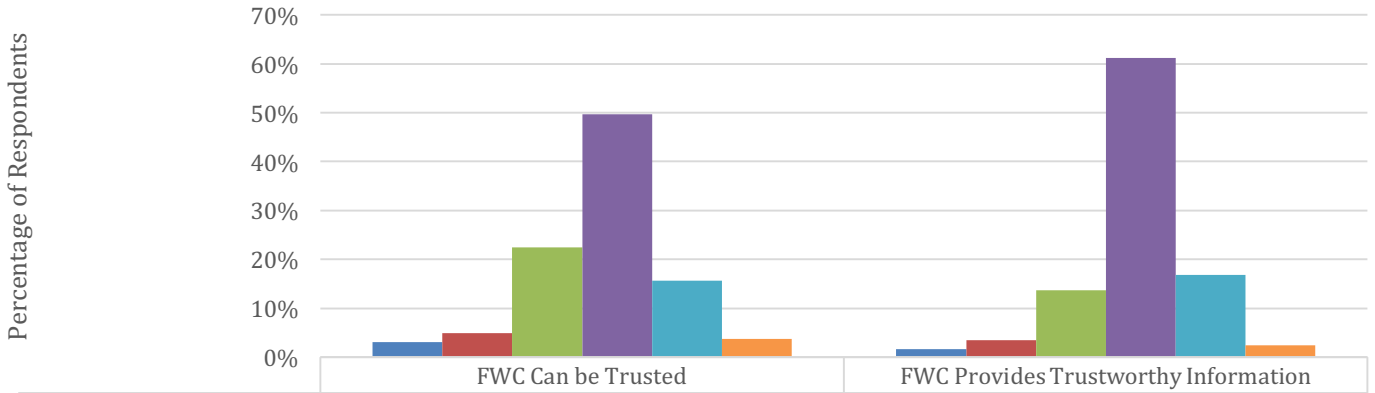


Trust

Trustworthiness of FWC

When asked about the trustworthiness of FWC (Figure 38), most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that FWC could be trusted (66%) and provides trustworthy information (78%).

Figure 38. Respondents' Perceived Trust in FWC (n = 690; n = 688)



	FWC Can be Trusted	FWC Provides Trustworthy Information
Strongly Disagree	3%	2%
Disagree	5%	4%
Neither Agree or Disagree	23%	14%
Agree	50%	61%
Strongly Agree	16%	17%
Don't Know	4%	3%

Attitudes Toward FWC

Respondents were asked about their attitudes toward FWC (Table 9). When presented with a five-item semantic scale, respondents' overall attitude toward FWC was positive, with a total mean of 3.95 for all adjectives presented to respondents.

Table 9. Respondents' Attitudes Regarding FWC

Statement	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Unethical : Ethical	662	4.14	.915
Dishonest : Honest	662	4.05	.944
Incapable : Capable	662	4.03	.940
Unreliable : Reliable	662	4.02	.952
Incompetent : Competent	662	4.00	1.002
Not Dependable : Dependable	662	3.97	.948
Unfair : Fair :	662	3.93	.978
Insincere : Sincere	662	3.89	.988
Ineffective : Effective	662	3.89	1.023
Inconsiderate : Considerate	662	3.85	.991
Not Unified : Unified	662	3.82	1.011
Closed Off : Open	662	3.76	1.068

Note: Real limits of the scale were 1.00 – 1.49 = Very Negative, 1.50 – 2.49 = Negative, 2.50 – 3.49 = Neither positive nor negative, 3.50 – 4.49 = positive, 4.50 – 5.00 = very positive.

Attitudes Toward FWC Communication

Respondents were also asked about their attitude toward FWC's communication with hunters (Table 10). Using an attitude index, an overall mean of 4.09 indicated that respondents had a positive attitude toward FWC's communication efforts.

Table 10. Respondents' Attitude Regarding FWC Communication

Statement	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Unimportant : Important	435	4.28	.837
Unreliable : Reliable	436	4.14	.861
Not Beneficial : Beneficial	434	4.14	.857
Not Credible : Credible	436	4.14	.870
Not Helpful : Helpful	442	4.10	.909
Not Dependable : Dependable	433	4.08	.895
Ineffective : Effective	436	4.00	.929
Complex : Simple	432	3.85	1.030

Additional Comments

Respondents gave additional comments throughout the survey expressing a range of concerns and information they wanted to share with the FWC. The following quotes are examples of the open-ended comments given by respondents.

- “I would like to say that I have hunted for over 15 years on Tyndall AFB, FL. When I started hunting there, there were no turkeys at all. But the base personnel and FWC brought in Turkeys from Eglin AFB, FL, managed them and now Tyndall has turkeys all over the place. "Great job", Tyndall personnel and FWC.”

- “Turkeys are being over harvested! In addition, there is a serious coyote problem in Florida and in the southeast. Coyotes kill a lot of turkeys. The combination of the two hurt turkey populations. Get rid of coyotes and limit turkey harvest. No fall season until the population comes up significantly. Thanks.”

- “We are going to have a problem with the turkeys because of our over population of hens. I'm afraid we will have the knot head to come back and wipe out over population like back in the 50's. I think a survey needs to be done. I see hundreds of hens every year, please check on this.”

- “Loss of habitat and poor management of existing habitat are the greatest risk to our turkey population. Poor Management: - control burns in the spring when turkeys nest - Overharvest of pines - clear cut - Wasteful cut and drop of scrubs for alternate species - Diking and flooding of the Kissimmee River basin- Listen to the words of the late Lovett Williams. Wild turkeys have made a comeback. We need to continue the support. And, I wouldn't be sad to have a season limit of 1.”

- “Good turkey population on private land -Quality of turkey hunting only improving on private land.”

- “Lives in Volusia County but does not know where to hunt. We need more places to hunt. We need cost to be lowered. Management Areas are difficult to understand! Certain Management Areas need to be closed off to the general public when hunts are going on.”

- “I find pretty much all hunting mentoring is done very informally. Sitting around a fire and drinking while people share their experiences is very common, in my experience. - I'm generally weary of the government and their info. I don't distrust it I just take it with a grain of salt.”

- “Changing regulations and rules during any season is WRONG. If one can't decipher and analyze data to implement fair regulation before season, then maybe attrition of positions would be a consideration. Thanks. Too much regulation across all species.”

- “Hunting opportunities and preferences on public lands: Too many quota permits are not utilized. Show rate is horrid. Turkey population status: I worked with FWC for 15 years. Approximately 9 of which was in the field with HSC or wildlife division in Central Florida. I know turkey, WMA's and its hunter. I am an area user and hunter myself. Turkey hunters are the best class of folks, especially when it comes to mentoring youth and conservation dollars. One day we'll look back and say "these are the good ole days of turkey hunting in Florida." Regulation satisfaction: data should be reviewed and concluded - Communication of regulation changes: depending on time frame when saying "before" the commission should do everything in its power to notify and then exempt those who "break laws" of the said "changes". Trusting FWC: Most folks who work with FWC are great folks and care about their jobs and are doing great work.”