

Maine Wild Turkeys

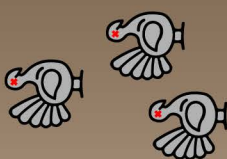
Recovery Success Story or Nuisance Wildlife Problem?



Historic Range of Maine Wild Turkeys



European Settlement



Uncontrolled hunting

Conversion of forests to farms

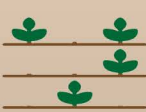


1800

No wild turkeys in Maine

1880

Abandoned farms returning to forest



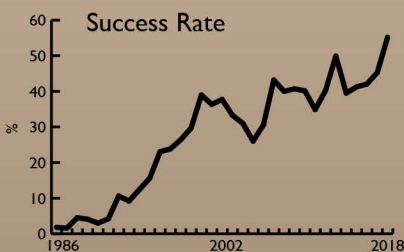
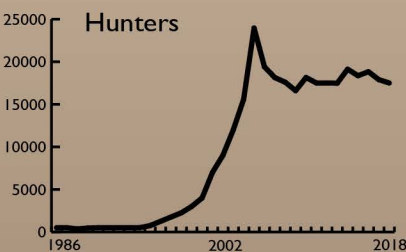
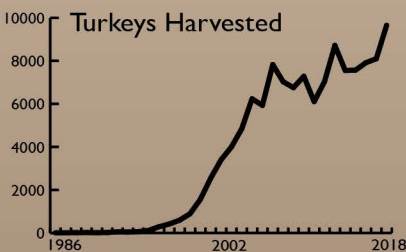
1942

Reintroduction efforts begin



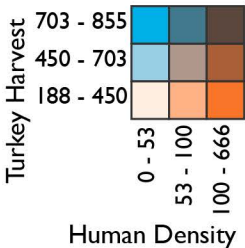
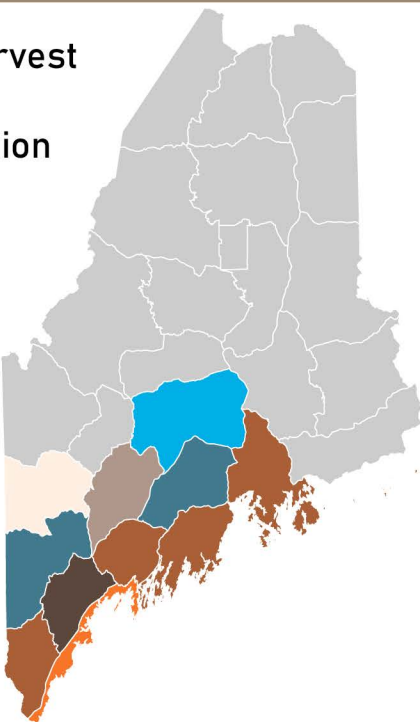
1986

Regular hunting returns



Hunting opportunities and success rates expand as the turkey population recovers rapidly. Unfortunately, this expansion is greatest in the areas of Maine with the largest human population creating conflict between humans and turkeys.

2010 Turkey Harvest Compared to Human Population Density



2019

A recent survey of Maine turkey hunters said 92% were satisfied with turkey management but 30% of Maine residents surveyed want the statewide turkey population of 50-60,000 birds reduced.

Nuisance issues - property damage, crop damage, ticks, and vehicle accidents - starting to be quantified.



129th Maine Legislature, LD 275
An Act To Increase the Bag Limits on Wild Turkey



Management of the wild turkey population in Maine is going to be an increasingly multi-faceted process. State game management officials need to study the population dynamics more closely and make sound control recommendations. Otherwise, conflicts between citizens and hunters will draw politicians into the debate which could lead to misguided legislative action.

Source Notes:
Maine Turkey statistics from Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Note: turkey population by wildlife management district correlated to harvest data in the absence of reliable sampling data.
Smith, George. "Important news if you hunt turkeys or hate turkeys." Bangor Daily News March 8, 2018: Web. February 2019.
2010 Census Data from U.S. Census Bureau
Icons from the Noun Project
Christian Halsted, GEOG572, Spring 2019