

Illinois Wild Turkey Survey Annual Report

2025 Results

Forest Wildlife Program, Illinois Department of Natural Resources

The Illinois Wild Turkey Survey is a summer observation survey used to monitor wild turkey reproduction and population trends across Illinois. Each year, IDNR asks participants to report wild turkey sightings during the summer months. These observations are one of the few statewide sources of information on wild turkey productivity outside of the spring hunting season.

This report summarizes 2025 survey results using the standardized analysis developed by the National Wild Turkey Federation Technical Committee (TC). The standardized analysis focuses on July and August observations, applies consistent data-screening procedures, and summarizes reproductive indices in a way that can be compared across years. A separate long-term Illinois trend is also included for historical context (The older index includes June, July, and August observations and is calculated differently than the standardized TC analysis).

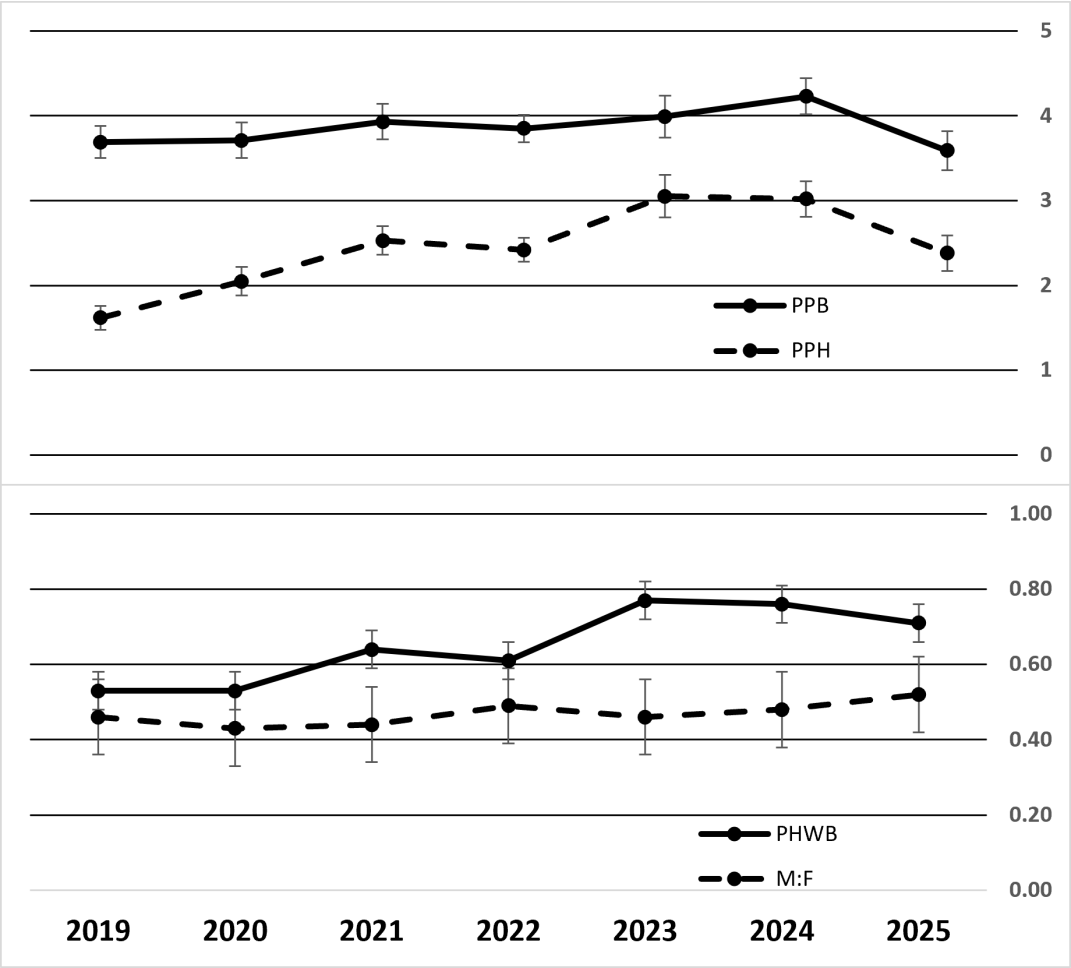
Metric	2025 statewide value	Sample size (n)
Poults per hen (PPH)	2.38	527
Poults per brood (PPB)	3.59	348
Proportion of hens with broods (PHWB)	71%	527
Male-to-female ratio (M:F)	0.52 males per female	656
Total wild turkeys observed	4,823	--

Survey Metrics and What They Can Indicate

The standardized analysis summarizes several reproductive and demographic indices. Poults per hen (**PPH**) is the primary index of annual productivity and reflects the number of poults observed per adult female in observations that include hens. Poults per brood (**PPB**) summarizes brood size among hens observed with poults and is related to poult survival after hatch. Proportion of hens with broods (**PHWB**) reflects the proportion of hen observations in which at least one poult was present and is related to nesting success and brood occurrence. Male-to-female ratio (**M:F**) provides a rough index of male carryover following the spring hunting season. Because these values are indices, they should be interpreted as relative measures for comparing patterns through time rather than direct estimates of true demographic rates.

Recent trends in standardized survey metrics, 2019–2025

Recent trends in standardized survey metrics, 2019–2025. Values are based on July–August observations analyzed using the NWTf Technical Committee standardized method. Poult per hen, poult per brood, and the proportion of hens with broods generally increased from 2019–2024 before declining in 2025. The 2024 peak may have been influenced by the widespread emergence of periodical cicadas across much of Illinois, which provided an abundant seasonal food source for turkeys and other wildlife. The male-to-female ratio remained comparatively stable across years. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.



Survey Background and Data Collection

Illinois has collected summer wild turkey observations since 1979. Earlier versions of the survey relied on mailed postcards from cooperating landowners, mail carriers, biologists, conservation police officers, state site staff, NWTF chapters, Soil and Water Conservation District employees, and other cooperators. The survey has since transitioned to an electronic format that allows observations to be submitted by computer, mobile browser, or the ArcGIS Survey123 app.

Participants are asked to report all wild turkey sightings during June, July, and August, including the number of adult females, young turkeys or poults, adult males, and birds of unknown age or sex. Reports also include the date and county of observation, and participants may provide location information when available. The survey is open to both conservation professionals and the general public. For this report, standardized results are based on July–August observations to align with the NWTF Technical Committee protocol, while June observations are retained as part of Illinois' long-term historical index.

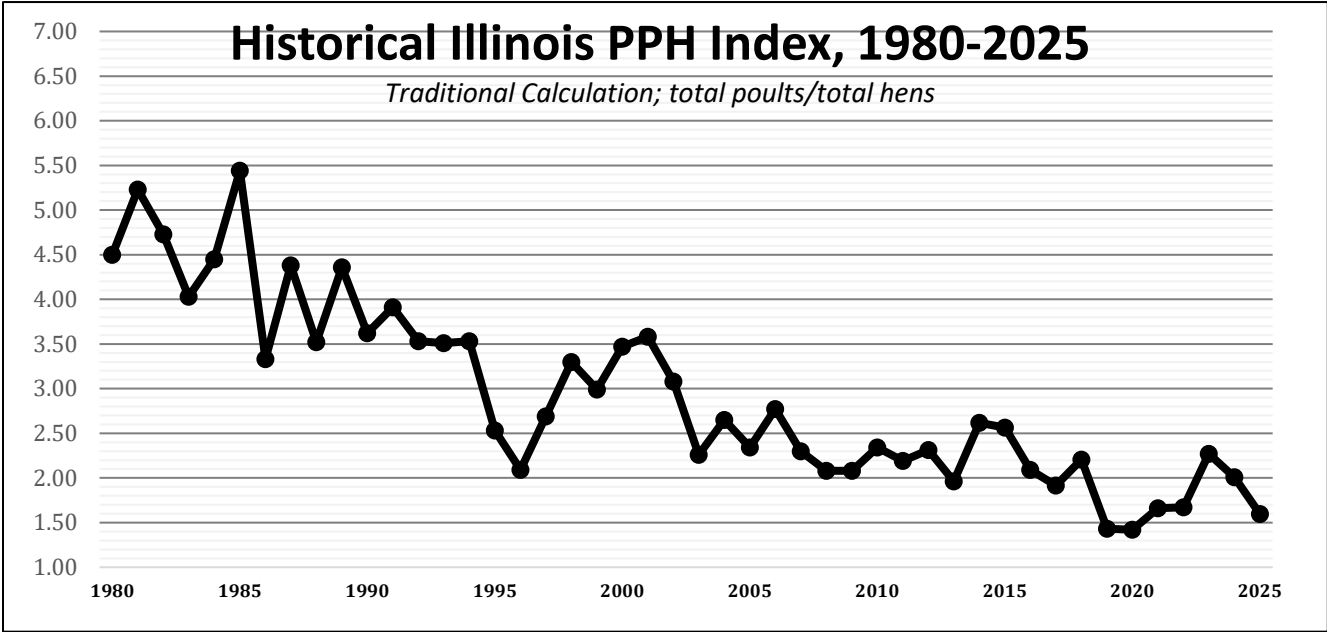
Management Use and Continued Participation

Wild Turkey Survey results help indicate annual reproduction and summer population demographics and are one component of Illinois' wild turkey monitoring program. IDNR interprets these data alongside spring harvest, permit sales, hunter success, age structure, weather, habitat conditions, and research findings when evaluating wild turkey status and management needs. The survey does not determine regulations on its own, but it provides important annual information on reproduction and recruitment that helps inform broader management decisions.

Long-term Illinois Trends

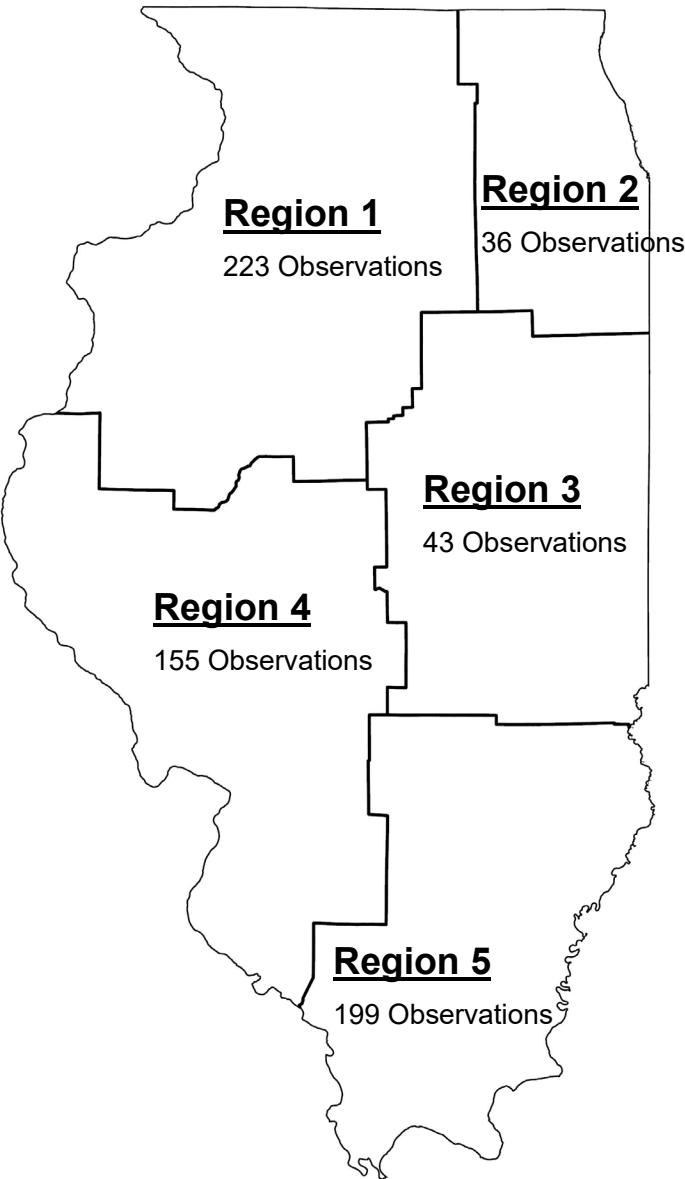
Illinois maintains a long-term PPH index that predates the standardized NWTF TC analysis. This historical index is calculated as total poults observed divided by total hens observed and includes June, July, and August reports. Because it uses a longer survey window and slightly different calculation method, values from the historical index are not directly interchangeable with the standardized NWTF TC results presented elsewhere in this report.

However, the historical index remains useful for long-term context. The long-term index suggests that wild turkey reproductive output has declined from the high values observed during the restoration period. When looking at these trends, it's important to keep in mind that early years of the Illinois survey were conducted in areas where wild turkey reintroductions were occurring. Also most early reporting efforts recorded hens with poults only and excluded solitary hens, potentially skewing the results higher. The historical and standardized methods may produce different values, but they are strongly correlated and generally follow the same broad trends in wild turkey reproduction over time. For that reason, the long-term Illinois index is best viewed as historical context, while the standardized TC calculation should be used for current annual reporting and recent year-to-year comparisons.



Participation and Geographic Coverage

The map below shows the number of survey observations submitted from each IDNR Administrative Region. Current sample sizes support reliable interpretation at the statewide level; increased participation may improve the ability to summarize results at smaller geographic scales in the future.



Survey observations by IDNR Administrative Region, 2025. Counts represent survey participation, not turkey abundance.

How to Participate

The Illinois Wild Turkey Survey is open to conservation professionals, hunters, landowners, and anyone else who observes wild turkeys in Illinois during June, July, and August. Participants are asked to report all wild turkey sightings, including the number of adult females, young turkeys, adult males, and birds of unknown age or sex. Reports can be submitted using a computer, mobile browser, or the Survey123 app.

Each observation helps IDNR monitor wild turkey reproduction and track population trends across the state. Even a single report is useful, and broader participation improves statewide coverage. IDNR thanks all participants and encourages conservation professionals, hunters, landowners, and members of the public to continue submitting summer wild turkey observations.

Submit Survey Observations

[Illinois Wild Turkey Survey submission form](#)



Survey Instructions

[Instructions for using the mobile app](#)

Real-time Survey Results

[Survey Data Dashboard](#)

More Information

For additional background on the survey, standardized analysis, and wild turkey monitoring, see the following resources:

- [A national standardized wild turkey brood survey: The first 6 years](#)
- [Changes Ahead for the 2023 IDNR Turkey Brood Surveys](#)
- [Calling Citizen Scientists for Turkey Brood Surveys](#)
- [The Wild Turkey Survey](#)