How Calendar Shifts Affect Spring Gobbler Seasons

Mary Jo Casalena, Wild Turkey Biologist, May 2019

The regular spring gobbler season is set in accordance with the Pennsylvania Wild Turkey Management Plan (2018-2027): 1) The season opens the Saturday closest to May 1 to coincide with the median peak of turkey nest incubation initiation to minimize hen turkey nest disturbance, and accidental hen mortality, 2) The season includes 5 Saturdays to maximize hunting opportunity while guarding against overharvesting adult gobblers, and 3) The season closes May 31 (if May 31 is a Sunday, the season closes May 30).

To meet these guidelines, opening date and season length change annually according to calendar shifts – sometimes by several days. If in doubt, simply calculate which Saturday on either side of May 1 will provide 5 Saturdays of hunting by May 31. For more information on the biological considerations of setting the spring turkey season see “How We Set Spring Turkey Seasons”.