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Spring Turkey Outlook Good for Missouri Hunters

APRIL 01ST 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Spring Turkey Outlook Good for Missouri Hunters

*Submitted by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

Missouri - Turkey hunters have reason to be optimistic about the 2014 spring turkey season, according to the state's turkey expert.

Missouri's spring turkey season runs from April 21 through May 11. The youth season takes place April 12 and 13. This year's hunting regulations are nearly the same as last year.

One difference is in tagging requirements. Hunters no longer need to attach their voided permits to harvested turkeys, as long as they remain with the turkey. If you are away from your turkey, you must attach your voided permit to the bird's leg.

Labeling requirements also have changed. In previous years, turkeys had to be labeled with the taker's name, address, and Telecheck confirmation number before someone other than the taker could transport or possess the turkey. Beginning this year, date of harvest also must be included in the labeling information.

Before someone other than the taker can transport a turkey that has been reported through the Telecheck system, it must be labeled with the date taken, the taker's name, address, and Telecheck confirmation number.

Also new this year is the addition of crossbows and atlatls to take turkeys during the spring season. Managed turkey hunts will be held on several additional conservation areas this spring. Details about these and other turkey hunting regulations are available in the 2014 Spring Turkey Hunting Regulation and Information booklet, which is available from hunting permit vendors and Conservation Department offices statewide. The booklet also is available at mdc.mo.gov/node/4066.

SEASON FORECAST

Resource Scientist Jason Isabelle is in charge of the Missouri Department of Conservation's wild turkey-management program. When asked about prospects for this year's spring turkey season, he pointed to turkey reproduction statistics from the past three years. Observers throughout much of the state reported strong production in 2011 and 2012. That means hunters in these areas can expect to see strong numbers of 2- and 3-year-old gobblers this year.

Hunters prize 3-year-old gobblers are prized by hunters because their greater experience makes them challenging to hunt. They have longer spurs and weigh more on average than younger birds, giving them a higher status among hunters.

On the other hand, 2-year-old gobblers are more likely than younger or older birds to gobble lustily and often. Lots of gobbling makes hunting more exciting, so much so that most hunters consider gobbling activity the most important part of a good hunt.

"Hunters throughout much of the state should be in for a good spring turkey season," says Isabelle. "There should be quite a bit of gobbling and good numbers of adult birds for hunters to pursue."

Isabelle noted that wild-turkey production dipped last year, so 1-year-old gobblers – commonly called jakes – will be less abundant this spring. That won't affect the quality of hunting all that much now, but it should be a caution to hunters who want to continue hearing lots of gobbling in the future.

"Hunting is a substantial source of mortality for male turkeys," says Isabelle. "Most jakes survive to be 2-year-old gobblers. Of course, jakes are legal to harvest in Missouri and they do make excellent table fare, but for those hunters interested in having more adult gobblers in their hunting area in the future, passing up opportunities to shoot jakes is one way to achieve that."

Predicting any given year's turkey harvest is difficult, because weather exerts a strong influence on turkey behavior and hunter effort. With more-or-less-average weather, Isabelle says he expects this year's state-wide spring turkey harvest to be close to last year's combined total of about 46,000 for the youth and regular seasons.

Turkey numbers vary among regions in Missouri. Although hunter success tends to be lower in the Ozarks, where large tracts of timber make hunting more difficult, hunters in southern Missouri are likely to notice an increase in turkey numbers, particularly in eastern counties.

“We've seen some very good production for the last three years in the eastern Ozarks,” says Isabelle. “This good production should translate into some great hunting opportunities. Another region of the state where I expect to see an increase in harvest is the Ozark border, including counties like Cedar, St. Clair, Hickory, Polk, Christian, and Webster.”

He says he doesn't expect much change in turkey harvest from last year in most of the rest of the state. Exceptions include parts of northwest, west-central, and southwest Missouri, where production has not shown the improvements that it has elsewhere. Offsetting this, however, are the tactical advantages hunters enjoy in northern Missouri, where wooded tracts are smaller and more scattered. In these areas, turkeys are more visible and decoys are generally more effective in bringing turkeys within range.

</images/Dexter High School 2013-14/turnkey Hunt 2.jpg>

Isabelle says he doesn't expect this year's severe winter weather to affect turkey hunting.

“I don't think that the conditions we experienced this winter negatively affected turkey survival,” he says. “Turkeys can deal with cold weather quite well. Although we did get a few snow storms, none of the totals that we saw or the length of time that snow conditions persisted were severe enough to negatively impact turkey survival.”

HUNTING CONDITIONS

Missouri's spring turkey season always opens on the third Monday of April. Under this formula, the earliest the season opener can occur is April 15, as it did last year. The latest it can fall is April 21, as it does this year. Isabelle says this timing is designed to put hunters in the woods when gobbling activity is near its peak, while being cautious not to interfere with turkey reproduction. It is based on studies showing that peak gobbling

typically occurs in mid-April, though weather can shift it a week or two earlier or later. “We understand that many hunters prefer an early spring season, so our goal is to balance the desires of hunters with the biology of the bird. We want hunters to have a great experience, but we also want to make sure that the bulk of our hens are bred, and a portion of them nesting, before the season starts,” says Isabelle.

According to Isabelle, the main difference hunters can expect with this year’s late season opener is more advanced green-up of vegetation.

“Assuming normal weather conditions in the next few weeks, the woods will be bit greener, especially during the last week of the season, than they would be when the season starts earlier,” says Isabelle. “This can make gobbling a bit more difficult to hear, but it also allows hunters more freedom to move through the woods unseen as they set up on a gobbler.”

HUNTING TIPS

Isabelle rates pre-season scouting as one of the most important factors in determining hunter success. This includes going out before the season to study turkeys’ behavior patterns.

“Get out early in the morning and listen for birds at your hunting location,” he says. “If you do this enough times, you’ll develop a sense of which areas are being used more than others. Get out there and look for areas in the timber where birds have scratched through the leaves in search of food. These are excellent spots to set up in later in the morning if early morning efforts did not result in success.”

For those hunting areas dominated by open land, he recommends sitting on high spots scanning the surrounding area with binoculars.

“Turkeys generally do not use all portions of a field the same. They have preferences for certain areas, and knowing where those areas are ahead of the season will increase your chances of success.”

SAFETY

Once the season starts, Isabelle urges hunters to avoid the main cause of firearms-related turkey-hunting incidents – mistaking or being mistaken by another hunter for game. He notes that the vast majority of spring turkey hunting incidents involve hunters who fail to

positively identify their targets.

“Turkey hunting is an exciting activity,” says Isabelle, “but hunters should never let that excitement cloud their judgment. Before pulling the trigger, hunters must be absolutely certain that what they are shooting at is not only a turkey, but a legal turkey, which would be a male turkey or a turkey with a visible beard during the spring season.”

Isabelle also mentioned the importance of “defensive hunting.” This means taking measures to avoid being put in a potentially dangerous situation. One way to do this is to wear hunter-orange clothing when moving through woods or fields. This alerts other hunters to your presence. Another important safety precaution is to never attempt to sneak within shotgun range of a gobbler. Use your calls to bring the bird within range.

When hunting with one or more companions, it is critical that everyone in the hunting party know the others’ locations. The safest way to accomplish this is to stay together. If you do separate, agree on a plan for where everyone will hunt and stay in those areas until meeting at a designated spot. “Many hunting incidents involve hunters from the same party,” says Isabelle. “When you’re hunting with someone else, it is critical that you always know where they will be located.”

The Conservation Department’s First Turkey Program is a great way to memorialize a hunter’s first successful hunt. The program provides a free commemorative certificate suitable for framing. You can even add a photo of the proud hunter with his or her bird. Creating a tangible reminder of a once-in-a-lifetime experience begins with visiting mdc.mo.gov/node/10469. The same site has forms for a hunter’s first deer for youths or adults.

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Lady Mules Take On Green Wave Softball

MARCH 31ST 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Lady Mules Take On Green Wave Softball

*Written by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

Malden, Missouri – The Lady Mules traveled to Malden for their second game of the season. The Malden Green Wave softball team earned six runs in the first inning defeating the Mules 8-2.

“We really struggled pitching wise and defensively. We walked 16 players and had 7 physical errors. Malden only had 1 hit on the day, so if we make plays and don't walk very many, I felt like we would have won this game. We have so many young players, but we'll get better. Our pitchers must perform much better if we are going to compete.”

Bernie won their season opener against Oak Ridge 13-3.

Bernie (1-1) will travel to Holcomb on Tuesday, April 1st. Then on Tuesday, the Lady Mules will host the Dexter Lady Bearcats.

</images/Bernie Schools/Bernie Mules Softball Schedule.jpg>

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Shawnee's Potts Slows Down Logan Nine

MARCH 28TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Shawnee's Potts Slows Down Logan Nine

***Submitted Article to
news@showmetimes.com***

Ullin, Illinois - Freshman righthander Brad Potts had the John A. Logan College hitters off stride all day as the host Shawnee College Saints upended the Volunteers Wednesday afternoon, 4-2, in Region 24 play.

Potts allowed only two runs on eight hits. The Dexter, Mo. native struck out four and walked three. He induced 14 flyball outs. The Volunteers took a 1-0 lead in the top of the fourth inning when Walker Owens singled in Tanner Scott, who had doubled and advanced to third on a passed ball.

Logan extended its lead to 2-0 in the fifth on a sacrifice fly off the bat of John Tolliver, driving in Zach Ditto, who had reached on an error and advanced on two bunts. That would be the last time JALC would dent the scoring column.

Vols' sophomore pitcher John Schram tossed two scoreless innings to start the game Wednesday against Shawnee. Schram is back from Tommy John surgery. (Logan Media Services photo by Jon LeBlond)

The Saints scored all four of their runs in the bottom of the fifth off reliever Kyle Schneider in his third inning of work. Sophomore Pete Plesko of Anna walked. Brent Taylor, also of Anna, bunted him to second. Another walk, this one to Alex McRaven of Anna, left runners on first and second with one out.

Schneider managed to strike out Cody Gilbert for the second out, but Carterville native Daniel Allen followed with an RBI single. Logan centerfielder Joba Ferrell's ill-advised throw home allowed both McRaven and Allen to move up to second and third on the play. Ethan Browning then singled home both runners to give Shawnee the lead at 3-2. An error by rightfielder Jamal Fletcher led to the Saints' fourth and final run.

The Vols loaded the bases in the top of the ninth off Potts, but failed to score as Jacob Carpenter flied out to deep left to end the game.

Logan freshman Zach Ditto slides back safely and head first into first base on a pickoff move Wednesday at Shawnee College. (Logan Media Services photo by Jon LeBlond)

"Give Shawnee (5-0 at home, 10-3 overall) credit. They've beaten everyone they've played here at home," said a disappointed Logan head coach Jerry Halstead. "Coach (Greg) Shepard's done a great job. They were the better team today. They made all the plays. We played some bad baseball. We made errors in the field. We didn't hit with runners in scoring position. And we couldn't throw strikes in the fifth inning. When you walk batters, that's a recipe for disaster."

On the positive side for Logan, sophomore John Schram, tossed two scoreless innings to start the game as he continues his trek back from Tommy John surgery and freshman Ryan Dunne retired all nine batters he faced in the sixth through eighth innings.

Offensively, Tanner Scott and Carpenter each collected two hits. Defensively, Ditto made two sparkling plays at second base ranging far to his left.

The Vols are now 13-10 overall and are scheduled to play a single game at 3 p.m. today at Olney. It's the start of a three-game series between the top two teams in the Great Rivers Athletic Conference. Logan also hosts Olney for two on Saturday beginning at noon.

Article by John A Logan College News - BY JOHN D. HOMAN, Logan Media Services

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Come From Behind Win for the Softball Lady 'Cats

MARCH 28TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Come From Behind Win for the Softball Lady 'Cats](#)

*Written by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

Dexter, Missouri – The Lady ‘Cats won their home opener despite the wind, rain and cold temperatures. It felt more like football weather than spring softball weather. Dexter overcame a 5-1 deficit to win 6-5 in the seventh inning. The girls owned the 6th inning when they scored four runs.

Dexter jumped out with a 1-0 lead, but the Hornets fought back and scored 5 runs.

“We were down 5-1 going into the bottom of the 6th,” commented head softball coach Chris Bolin. “The girls put together a great comeback and had some really good at bats in that inning to tie the game up.”

Kendra Stevenson was credited with her second win of the season. The Lady ‘Cats defeated Bloomfield on Tuesday by a score of 20-6 in Bloomfield.

“Kendra did a great job,” continued Bolin. “She had a really good command and as the game went on she seemed to get stronger. She was able to work out of some of the situations which helped keeping us in the game early on.”

The final inning had Ashley Brown hitting a single putting her in the perfect spot to bring home the winning run. Kendra Stevenson hit a single, advancing Brown to second base. Amber Spence grounded out, but advancing the girls to second and third. With the first out of the inning Dakota Silliman hit a ground ball just shy of the outfield allowing Brown to score getting their second win of the season.

“We executed very well in the bottom of the seventh by getting the first two girls on and then Amber Spence had a great at bat by moving the runners over to second and third,” stated Bolin. “Dakota came up with 1 out and did exactly what we had talked about as a team and she hit a hard ground ball to score Ashley, which was the game winner.”

Kendra Stevenson had 12 strike outs and gave up 5 hits. She is 2-0 on the season.

Halley Sielert has a great game at bat. She finished 3 for 3.

The Lady ‘Cats will travel to Woodland on Friday. Game time 4:30 p.m.

Final Score Dexter 6 Advance 5

Advance 0 0 2 0 0 3 0 - 5 6 5

Dexter 0 1 0 0 0 4 1 - 6 9 0

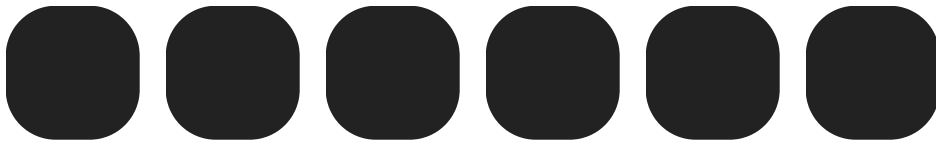
WP - Kendra Stevenson. LP - Hannah Clark. 2B - Clark (A). Multiple hits - Dexter: Ashley Brown 2-4, Halley Sielert 3-3; Advance: Clark 3-3.

[/images/DHS Baseball/Softball vs Advance stats.jpg](#)

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Waldner Finishes 1st in 100, 300 Hurdles, and High Jump

MARCH 28TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Waldner Finishes 1st in 100, 300 Hurdles, and High Jump

*Written by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

Jackson, Missouri – The Dexter High School Track Team had their season opener on Tuesday after being rescheduled due to weather on Monday. Overall the boys tied for third place with Saxony Lutheran. Jackson came in first with Notre Dame second and Cape Central game in last. The girls finished third behind Jackson and Cape Central.

"I thought our teams performed well for our first meet," commented head track coach Greg Lummukka. "It's good to get some times or distances in the books, so our athletes can set some goals as we look to improve our performances each and every time we step onto the track and field."

Individually, MaKayla Waldner and Melanie McKuin had a tremendous day. After placing second in the state with their basketball teammates over the weekend in Columbia, they came out ready to tackle running, jumping and hurdling. McKuin placed 3rd in 100 meter, 2nd in the 200 meter, and 3rd in the triple jump. Waldner earned first place in 100 hurdles, 300 hurdles, and first place in high jump with a personal best of 5'2".

Top Finishers in Boys from Dexter were:

400 Relay – Dexter placed second with a time of 51.90 Team: Carson Dean, Dalton Rickel, Austin Mitchell, and Dylan Bazarian

800 Relay – Dexter placed second with a time of 1:43.30 Team: Carson Dean, Dalton Rickel, Houston Burnett, and Dylan Bazarian

100 Meter - Dylan Bazarian - 4th place with a time of 12.26

Triple Jump – Dalton Rickle placed second 34-7 ½

Top Finishers in Girls from Dexter were:

100 Meter – Melanie McKuin 3rd place with a time of 13.60

200 Meter – Melanie McKuin 2nd place with a time of 29.76

800 Meter – Kelsi Wood 3rd place with a time of 2:47

100 Hurdles – MaKayla Waldner – 1st place 16.16,

Chandler Crowley 2nd place 17.89

300 Hurdles – MaKayla Waldner – 1st place 48.26

400 Relay – Dexter placed 2nd with a time of 56.89 Team: MaKayla Waldner, Julia Hahn, Taylor Ivy, and Melanie McKuin

3,200 Relay – Dexter placed 3rd with a time of 12:04 Team: Hailee Anderson, Shania Case, Madison McConnell, and Kelsi Wood.

Triple Jump – Melanie McKuin placed 3rd 29-11 ½

High Jump – MaKayla Waldner – 1st place 5-2

Chandler Crowley – 2nd place 4-10

"This is a good group of young people to work with so far, their effort and attitude has been very good in the early part of the year, and I am looking forward to seeing tremendous improvement with us being a young team," continued Lumukka.

Congratulations to all of the participants! The Track Team will be back on the road on Saturday when they travel to the Notre Dame Track Meet in Cape Girardeau. Go Bearcats!!!

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