

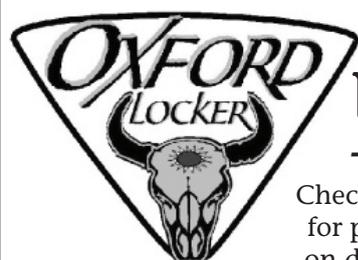
Good Luck to all Hunters



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Turkeys plentiful for hunting here with bow or gun

By Karen Krien

The Saint Francis Herald
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There are just too many turkeys, said Drew Kaup, a Cheyenne County farmer and hunter.

He should know. Kaup has been hunting turkeys for at least 10 years and says he likes the challenge, almost always hunting the birds with bow and arrow. The percentage of hunters bagging a turkey, whether it be with a gun or bow and arrow, is 15 to 30 percent, he said.

He has counted between 200 and 300 turkeys on some of the land he leases north of St. Francis and, he said, that's too many. His father-in-law, he said, has about the same number.

The coyotes in this area, he said, suffered from mange this year, and that is another reason there are more turkeys. Kaup said there are more and more bobcats, and he thinks that the turkeys are drawing them. Bobcats are the main predator of turkeys, he said.

Hunting is a good way of keeping the turkey numbers down, Kaup added, but the state will only let a hunter take one in the fall and one in the spring. In the fall, a hunter can get a tag for a second turkey in the eastern part of the state, but not here.

Each year, a hen has 10 chicks and the population seems to be growing rapidly, he said.

Turkeys are hard on crops, he said, especially corn after the grasshoppers are gone. They knock down ears, sometimes eating only part of them, but that is one less ear to harvest.

In the winter, they move to town near the grain elevators or close to a feed yard. Again, the turkeys are hurting the farmer and rancher by eating the grain meant for the cattle.

Today, he said, because of the damage they do, almost any farmer will let people hunt turkey on his land.

Kaup said he prefers to hunt in the fall because the toms are in "bachelor bunches" and there are no hens with them. There are many young birds that have never been hunted. In the spring when they are mating, turkeys don't respond to a call, he said. No matter what season, he added, turkeys don't always respond well to calls.

He prefers to "spot and stalk" the birds. He hunts with a bow and arrow, noting that it is more difficult to bag the bird that way. Anyone has a better chance of getting their turkey at 400 yards with a gun, he said, but with archery, the hunter needs to be within 30 to 40 yards and there's no room for error.

The biggest turkey he has bagged weighed 28 pounds and had a 13-inch beard.

The fall season allows the hunter to take home either a tom or a hen, he said, but toms are the best for cooking. Hens aren't as big and don't have as much meat. Toms have more meat and fat on them.

Cooking a wild turkey is different than a

domestic turkey, he said. They need less time because they have less fat and will dry out quicker.

He and his wife cook wild turkey several ways, including deep-fat frying, oven baking and cutting it up to be used in different dishes.

Kaup said he loves to hunt. It doesn't make any difference if it is turkey, deer, coyote, bobcat, elk, bear or antelope - he has hunted them all. The most excitement of any hunt was the day he shot his first deer when he was 15. Today, he takes his boys, Brody, 7, and Brayden, 5, hunting whenever he can. The boys go to a land blind to watch for deer and they have one of Drew's old bows they practice with. In fact, they have a full set of camouflage gear so they are ready for the hunt, whatever it be.

All of Kansas except Unit 4 (westcentral and southwestern Kansas) is open to fall turkey hunting. Long seasons this fall and winter run Oct. 1-Nov. 30, Dec. 13-31, and Jan. 10-31. One turkey permit per hunter is allowed, valid in Unit 1 (northwestern Kansas), Unit 2 (the eastern one-half of the state), and Unit 3 (central Kansas). In addition, hunters may purchase as many as three additional turkey tags valid in Unit 2 only. One turkey of either sex may be taken with each permit or tag. Hunters may use legal shotguns or archery equipment.

Hunters should report all harvested birds that are banded or fitted with transmitters, the state Department of Wildlife and Parks says. Contact the nearest office to arrange for someone to pick up a transmitter.

After killing a turkey, the hunter must sign, date and affix a carcass tag to a leg before moving the bird.

Permits purchased through the Internet include a carcass tag that is printed with the permit. To protect the tag, it should be placed in a clear plastic bag and attached to the leg of the animal where it can be seen.

Carcass tags must remain attached until the animal is processed for consumption, and the hunter must retain the tag until the animal is consumed, given to another or taken to a commercial processor.

The beard (if taken in spring season) of the wild turkey must remain naturally attached to the bird while in transit from the site of the kill to the home or processing firm.

Any legally acquired meat may be given away with a dated written notice that includes the donor's name, signature, address and permit number or license transaction number. The person receiving the meat must retain the notice until the meat is consumed or given away.

Nonresidents must meet the requirements of states along their route while transporting or possessing turkey carcasses.



Turkeys roam on the side of U.S. 36 in St. Francis, the county seat of Cheyenne County.

— Photo by Karen Krien/Saint Francis Herald



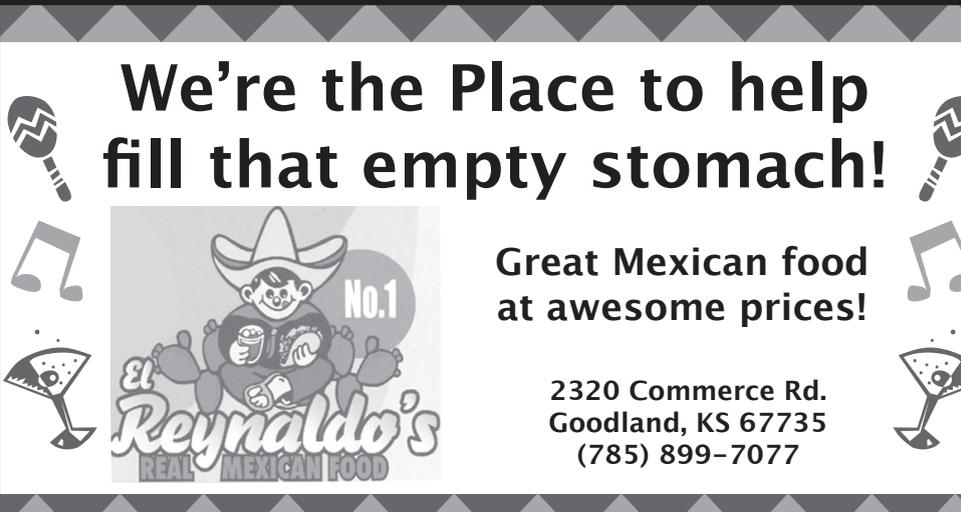
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