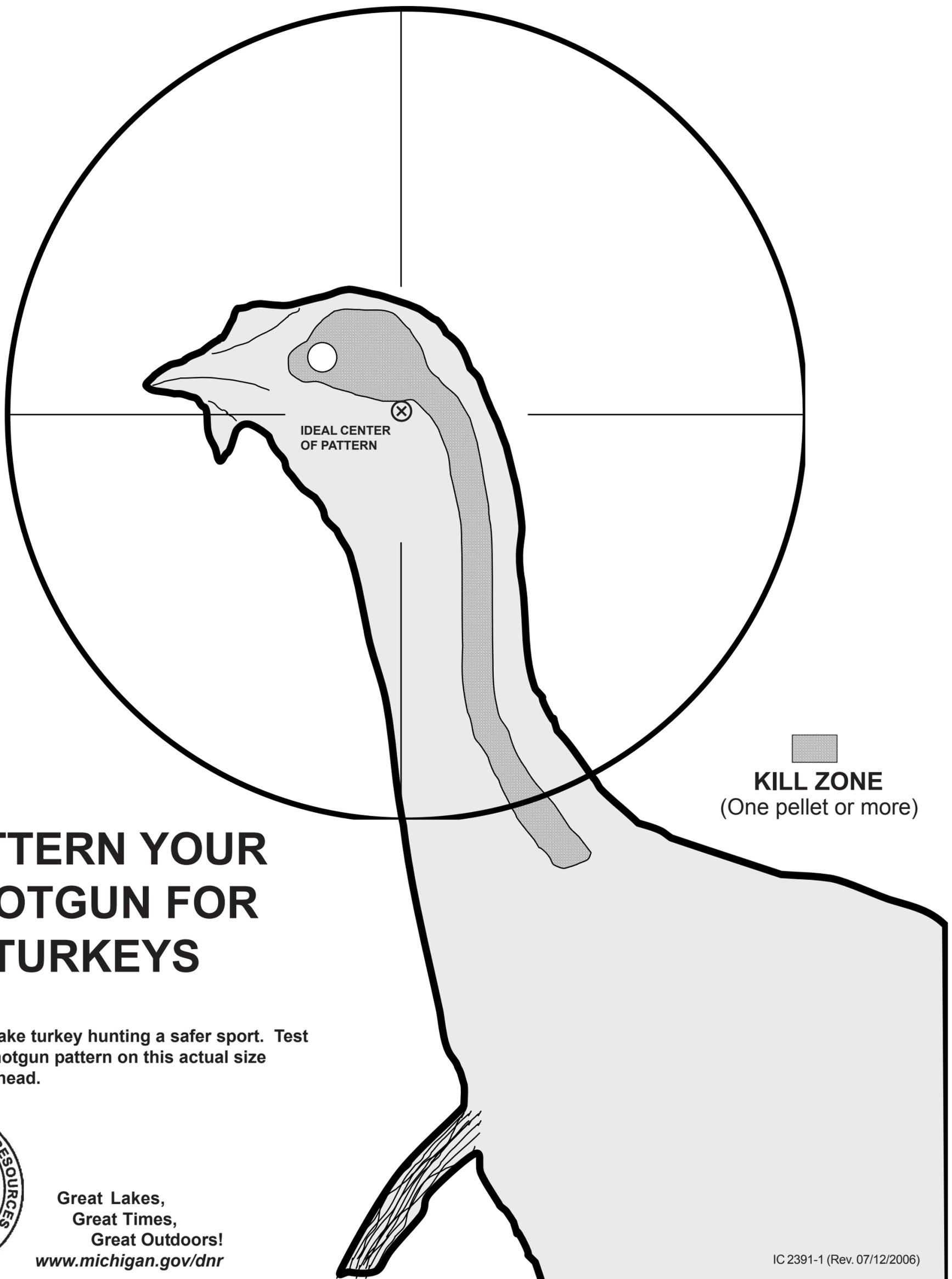


# GOBBLER PROFILE



## PATTERN YOUR SHOTGUN FOR TURKEYS

Help make turkey hunting a safer sport. Test your shotgun pattern on this actual size turkey head.



Great Lakes,  
Great Times,  
Great Outdoors!  
[www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)

## **PATTERN YOUR GUN**

Practice shooting from a sitting position at 20, 30, and 40 yards. Shooting beyond 40 yards should not be attempted, since a big turkey can weather quite a few pellets in its body. Two or three pellets in the head will bring the bird down. A 12-gauge shotgun loaded with Number 6 shot, backed by Number 4, is the choice of many. Steel shot (#4) is chambered by some top turkey hunters due to its tight patterns and greater number of pellets in each shell.

## **THE WILD TURKEY IN MICHIGAN**

1901ñ2000, The Century of Restoration

In Michigan, restoration of the wild turkey is a wildlife success story of major importance. Forty-five years ago, Michigan had no wild turkeys; today they can be found in nearly every corner of the state. Wild turkey populations have expanded through both intentional reintroduction efforts and through natural expansion. Today, over 140,000 turkeys roam the wilds of this great state and the population continues to expand. In 1969, only 14 counties were open to spring turkey hunting. Today, turkeys inhabit 79 of 83 counties and there are more areas open to spring hunting than at any time in the history of Michigan. In 1969 a hunter's chances of drawing a permit to hunt were about 25%. Today, anyone that correctly applies for a hunt is guaranteed an opportunity to buy a spring turkey hunting license in Michigan. In 1969, hunter success was below 5%. Last year, hunters experienced almost 40% hunter success regardless of whether they hunted the first period or the last period. In 1969, hunters harvested 50 turkeys. In 2000, hunters harvested over 30,000 turkeys making Michigan one of the top harvest states in the nation. These truly are exciting times for wild turkey enthusiasts.

## **SUMMARY OF WILD TURKEY HUNTING TIPS ETHICS, AND SAFETY**

1. Don't attempt an approach closer than 100 yards. A turkey's eyes, ears, and awareness are many times better than man's, enabling him to spot danger and escape before you have a chance to call to him. Also, you never know when there may be another hunter close by, who might mistake you for the turkey.
2. Select a tree that is wider than your shoulders and body to sit against. This protects you from any hunter who may come in from behind you, mistaking you for a real turkey. This also conceals you from a bird that decides to circle you and come in from the rear.
3. Don't jump and turn at a turkey approaching your back. The chance of getting a good shot is very slim. At best, you may wound the bird and it will get away, possibly dying later. Be patient, remain still and let the bird pass.
4. Don't hide so well that you can't see what is happening. Blinds are a good and productive tool for the turkey hunter. But, when constructed so well that vision is obstructed, it is no longer a blind, it is a hiding place, as beneficial to the turkey as it is to you.
5. Select a calling site that gives at least 40 yards vision in all directions. At 40 yards the bird is in shooting range. Anything over that is too far. At 40 yards you can identify your turkey and anyone who may approach you.
6. Don't attempt to stalk a turkey. First, that gobbler you're stalking may turn out to be another hunter. Second, your chances of success are slim to none. If you're lucky, you might get a glimpse of tail feathers. Give the bird the respect it is due.
7. Refrain from using a gobbler call. This call can sometimes be productive, but also very dangerous. In areas of high hunter concentrations, you will call many more hunters in to you than turkeys.
8. Remember that being fully camouflaged doesn't make you completely invisible. Movement is the greatest enemy to the turkey hunter. A turkey can detect and react to movement 10 times faster than you. Even though camouflaged, you are still an unnatural form in the woods.
9. Never wear any red, white, or blue clothes. These are the colors of the gobbler's head the primary target of the turkey hunter.
10. Never presume that what you hear is a turkey. Many turkey hunters are very good and convincing callers. Never try to get too close. If this bird turns out to be another hunter, it could be very dangerous.
11. If another hunter is working a bird, don't spoil it by trying to call the bird to you or spooking the bird. This is a very unsportsmanlike and good turkey hunters just don't do this.
12. It is illegal and unsportsmanlike to hunt turkeys over bait.
13. In the spring, turkeys with visible beards are legal targets. Some hens sport beards, however the majority of hens do not. Well-informed turkey hunters know the difference, do your homework so you can tell the difference.
14. In the fall, both hens and gobblers are legal targets. The fall hunt maintains turkey numbers at levels compatible with the available habitat.
15. Make sure that the gobbler is within range of the shotgun and shoot at only the neck and head area. If the bird is close enough to kill with a body shot, you will have ruined some of the finest eating you will ever have.
16. Don't allow the meat to spoil. Know how to take care of that bird and make plans ahead of time.
17. Do your homework before season ñ scouting, practice calling, pattern your gun, etc. The American wild turkey is the most difficult game in North America to hunt one on one. Give yourself all the advantages you can.
18. Be positive of your target. After you pull the trigger, it is too late!
19. Report all turkey poachers. Don't allow thieves to steal your wildlife resources. A toll-free Hotline number, 1-800-292-7800, is maintained by the Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement Division to handle these reports. To help protect local flocks, several conservation-oriented groups throughout the state also provide a reward for evidence leading to the conviction of anyone illegally killing a wild turkey.