

Nesting Success of Turkey in the Edwards Plateau

The following summary was taken from two turkey nesting studies conducted by TPWD. The studies were conducted by Bob Cook and Max Traweek.

- Turkey hens show a clear preference for nest sites with tall cover. 87% of successful nests were located in cover over 18 inches tall.
- Live brush and trees, dead brush (from dozing), and vines were used as cover for 50% of nests. In this study turkey nested in cedar, mesquite, persimmon, algerita, live oak and shin oak.
- Taller grasses were used as cover for 25% of nests.
- Tall or rank weeds such as buffalogourd, ragweed, and thistle were used as cover for 22% of nests.
- 84% of all nests were within ¼ mile of water (creek, pond or trough).
- Only 3% of nests were further than ½ mile of water.
- Egg laying began in late February and peaked in March.
- Hatching began in mid April and most successful nests hatched between May 15 and June 15.
- If the first nest was destroyed, second and even third nests were attempted up until August. These nests were seldom successful.
- Average clutch size was 10.4 eggs.
- 39 % of nests were successful and produced an average of 8.8 poults each.
- 61% of nests were unsuccessful.
- Of the unsuccessful nests, 72% were destroyed by predators including raccoons, skunks, fox, bobcats, rock squirrels, snakes and crows.
- 28% of the unsuccessful nests were abandoned due to human disturbance and other unknown reasons.
- 7% of nesting hens were killed by predators in the immediate vicinity of the nest.
- 86% of adult hens nested, while 31% of yearling hens nested.
- 29% of adult hens nested successfully, while 13% of yearling hens nested successfully.

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