

COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA BRIEFING

Meeting Date: May 28, 2026

Agenda Number: 11

Presenter: Stewart Liley

Corroborator: N/A

Agenda Title: Rule Making Hearing: Turkey Rule (19.31.16 NMAC) for the 2027 – 2031 hunting seasons.

1. Summary of Agenda Item

The Department will present proposed changes to the Turkey Rule (19.31.16 NMAC) based on recent survey information, management goals, and public comment.

Proposed amendments focus on:

- Adjust hunt dates based on calendar dates
- Increase up-to permit number for Gould's once-in-a-lifetime hunt in GMU 26 and 27 to 15
- In unit 8, increase permits from 15 to 20
- Conducted analysis of fall hen harvest, and this indicated that there are no units for which low-level harvest will negatively impact the population
- Require the purchase of a license at least one day prior to hunting

2. Background Information

The turkey rule is amended every four years as part of the turkey rule development cycle. The current 4-year rule expires April 1, 2027. Proposed changes to the rule are made based on findings in scientific literature, data collected by Department staff, and public observations and recommendations.

3. Strategic Plan References and Possible Impacts of Agenda Item

The process as presented to the Commission meets the Conservation Services Program Objectives 1, 2 and 5 of the Department's Strategic Plan: FY 2019 – FY 2023

4. Considerations Regarding Duplications and/or Conflicts with Existing Rules or Statutes

None

5. Description and Summary of Public Involvement Process and Results

The Department has posted proposed changes to the turkey rule on the Department's website. Input has been gathered from mail and email. Hybrid public meetings were held March 11st in Albuquerque and March 12th in Las Cruces, and a presentation was given at a virtual National Wild Turkey Federation meeting to gather public comments on the proposed changes to the turkey rule.

Suggested Motion

The Department respectfully suggests the following motion unless Commission discretion indicates a different course of action:

“Move to repeal and replace 19.31.16 NMAC, as presented by the Department and allow the Department to make minor corrections to comply with filing this rule with State Records and Archives.”

TITLE 19 NATURAL RESOURCES AND WILDLIFE
CHAPTER 31 HUNTING AND FISHING
PART 16 TURKEY

19.31.16.1 ISSUING AGENCY: New Mexico department of ~~game and fish-wildlife~~.
 [19.31.16.1 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.16.1 NMAC, 4/1/2023]

19.31.16.2 SCOPE: Sportspersons interested in turkey management and hunting. Additional requirements may be found in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, and Title 19 NMAC.
 [19.31.16.2 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.16.2 NMAC, 4/1/2023]

19.31.16.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Sections 17-1-14, 17-1-26, 17-3-16.4 and 17-3-16.5 NMSA 1978 provide that the New Mexico state ~~gamewildlife~~ commission has the authority to establish rules and regulations that it may deem necessary to carry out the purpose of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 and all other acts pertaining to protected mammals, birds and fish.
 [19.31.16.3 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.16.3 NMAC, 4/1/2023]

19.31.16.4 DURATION: April 1, ~~2023~~2027 through March 31, ~~2027~~2031.
 [19.31.16.4 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.16.4 NMAC, 4/1/2023]

19.31.16.5 EFFECTIVE DATE: April 1, ~~2023~~2027, unless a later date is cited at the end of a section.
 [19.31.16.5 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.16.5 NMAC, 4/1/2023]

19.31.16.6 OBJECTIVE: Establishing open hunting seasons, rules and procedures governing the distribution and issuance of turkey permits and licenses by the department.
 [19.31.16.6 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.16.6 NMAC, 4/1/2023]

19.31.16.7 DEFINITIONS:

- A. **“Bearded turkey”** shall mean a turkey with a visible beard.
 - B. **“Department”** shall mean the New Mexico department of ~~game and fish-wildlife~~.
 - C. **“Director”** shall mean the director of the New Mexico department of ~~game and fish-wildlife~~.
 - D. **“Entry permit”** shall entitle the holder of a valid turkey license to hunt areas otherwise closed to turkey hunting.
 - E. **“Game management unit” or “GMU”** shall mean those areas described 19.30.4 NMAC Boundary Descriptions for Game Management Units.
 - F. **“Wildlife management areas” or “WMAs”** shall mean those areas described in 19.34.5 NMAC Wildlife Management Areas.
- [19.31.16.7 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.16.7 NMAC, 4/1/2023]

19.31.16.8 ADJUSTMENT OF LICENSES, PERMITS AND AUTHORIZATIONS: The director, with the verbal concurrence of the chairperson or their designee, may adjust the number of licenses, permits or authorizations for turkey up or down by no more than twenty percent to address significant changes in population levels or habitat availability. This adjustment may be applied to any or all entry hunt codes for turkey.
 [19.31.16.8 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.16.8 NMAC, 4/1/2023]

19.31.16.9 TURKEY ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME-HUNTS: It shall be unlawful for anyone to apply for or hold a once-in-a-lifetime turkey entry permit if he or she has held a once-in-a-lifetime entry permit to hunt turkey.
 [19.31.16.9 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.16.9 NMAC, 4/1/2023]

19.31.16.10 TURKEY HUNTING SEASONS: The ~~2023-24~~2027-28 through ~~2026-27~~2030-31 hunting seasons shall be as indicated below, listing the GMUs or areas open, eligibility requirements or restrictions, hunt dates, hunt codes, legal sporting arms, number of permits and bag limits. All WMAs, except as listed in Subsection A of 19.31.16.10 NMAC, are open to over-the-counter turkey hunting if the GMU where they are located is open to turkey hunting or are restricted to entry permit holders as listed in Subsection B of 19.31.16.10 NMAC.

A. **Over-the-counter hunts:** All over-the-counter turkey licenses shall be valid for any legal sporting arms, except turkey hunting in the Sandia ranger district portion of GMU 14 and Sugarite canyon state park in GMU 57 are restricted to bow and crossbow only. The number of licenses for these hunts shall be unlimited.

(1) **Spring seasons:**

Open GMUs or areas	hunt dates	bag limit
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Statewide except the following GMUs or areas are closed to over-the-counter turkey hunting: GMU: 2A areas east of US 550 and north of NM 173, 2B areas in the Carson national forest, 2C areas in the Carson national forest, 6B, 8, 19, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31 Bernardo WMA, Jackson lake WMA, La Joya WMA, Marquez/LBar WMA, Prairie Chicken WMAs, Red Rock WMA, Valle Vidal, W.S. Huey WMA	4/15-5/15	2 turkeys with visible beards
Statewide except as listed above, youth only	4/7-9/2023 4/12-14/2024 4/11-13/2025 4/10-12/2026 4/9-11/2027 4/7-9/2028 4/6-8/2029 4/12-14/2030	2 turkeys with visible beards

(2) **Fall seasons:**

Open GMUs or areas	hunt dates	bag limit
Statewide except the following GMUs or areas are closed to over the counter turkey hunting: GMU: 2A areas east of US 550 and north of NM 173, 2B areas in the Carson national forest, 2C areas in the Carson national forest, 6B, 8, 14, 18, 19, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 38, 49, 50, 53 Bernardo WMA, Bill Evans WMA, Edward Sargent WMA, Jackson lake WMA, La Joya WMA, Lake Roberts WMA, Marquez/LBar WMA, Prairie Chicken WMAs, Red Rock WMA, Rio Chama WMA, Sugarite canyon state park, Valle Vidal, W.S. Huey WMA	bow only: 9/1-30 any legal sporting arms: 11/1-30	any 1 turkey

B. Entry permit hunts: All entry permits shall be valid for any legal sporting arms except turkey hunting in the Sandia ranger district portion of GMU 8. An entry permit authorizes the holder to hunt in the area, for the bag limit, and for the season dates listed on the permit. In addition, holders of a turkey entry permit may hunt in any open over-the-counter area during the spring season for a second turkey (if applicable) or if unsuccessful in their entry hunt area. In no circumstance may any turkey hunter take or attempt to take more than two bearded turkeys during the spring season. Holders of an entry hunt permit must also purchase a turkey hunting license prior to hunting.

Open GMUs or areas	2023-2024 2027-2028 hunt dates	2024-2025 2028-2029 hunt dates	2025-2026 2029-2030 hunt dates	2026-2027 2030-2031 hunt dates	hunt code	permits	bag limit
2B (Carson national forest) 2C (Carson national forest)	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	TUR-1-100	115	1 turkey with visible beard
2B (Carson national forest) 2C (Carson national forest), youth only	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	TUR-1-101	50	1 turkey with visible beard
2A (areas east of US 550 and north of NM 173), youth only	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	TUR-1-102	5	1 turkey with visible beard
6B Valles Caldera national preserve	4/15-4/30	4/15-4/30	4/15-4/30	4/15-4/30	TUR-1-103	20	1 turkey with visible beard
8 (bow and crossbow only in Sandia ranger district)	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	TUR-1-104	1520	2 turkeys with visible beard

9 Marquez/LBar WMA	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	TUR-1-105	15	1 turkey with visible beard
26 and 27 once-in-a-lifetime	5/1-5/30	5/1-5/30	5/1-5/30	5/1-5/30	TUR-1-106	up to 515	1 turkey with visible beard
30 Washington ranch (private land) and Black river management area (BLM), youth only	4/28-4/30 4/23-4/25	4/26-4/28 4/28-4/30	4/25-4/27 4/27-4/29	4/24-4/26 4/26-4/28	TUR-1-107	up to 4	1 turkey with visible beard
30 Washington ranch (private land) and Black river management area (BLM), youth only	5/5-5/7 4/30-5/1	5/3-5/5 5/5-5/7	5/2-5/4 5/4-5/6	5/1-5/3 5/3-5/5	TUR-1-108	up to 4	1 turkey with visible beard
55 Valle Vidal (only the east side is open from 5/1-15)	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	4/15-5/15	TUR-1-109	20	1 turkey with visible beard

[19.31.16.10 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.16.9 NMAC, 4/1/2023]

19.31.16.11 TURKEY POPULATION MANAGEMENT HUNTS:

- A. The director or their designee may authorize population management hunts for turkey when justified in writing by department personnel.
 - B. The director or their designee shall designate the sporting arms, season dates, season lengths, bag limits, hunt boundaries, specific requirements or restrictions and number of licenses to be issued.
 - C. In the event that an applicant is not able to hunt on the dates specified, the applicant’s name shall be moved to the bottom of the list and another applicant may be contacted for the hunt.
 - D. In those instances where a population management hunt is warranted on deeded private lands, the landowner may suggest eligible hunters of their choice by submitting a list of prospective hunters’ names to the department for licensing consideration. No more than one-half of the total number of licenses authorized shall be available to landowner-identified hunters. The balance of prospective hunters shall be identified by the department.
- [19.31.16.11 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.16.10 NMAC, 4/1/2023]

19.31.16.12 GOULD’S TURKEY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM:

- A. The director shall collect all proceeds generated through the auction or lottery or both, of not more than two special Gould’s turkey enhancement entry permits annually, and such monies shall be deposited into the game protection fund. These monies shall be available for expenditure by the department to be used exclusively for activities, projects and programs aimed at benefitting Gould’s turkeys and Gould’s turkey habitat, and for costs incurred in carrying out these programs.
- B. Requirements for issuance, sale and use of Gould’s turkey enhancement permits:
 - (1) **Issuance:** The director may issue up to two Gould’s turkey enhancement entry permits annually.
 - (2) **Sale:** The auction or lottery or both shall be conducted by an incorporated non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of wildlife, in cooperation with and overseen by the department.
 - (3) **Use:**
 - (a) The successful recipient(s) shall be allotted an authorization for a Gould’s turkey enhancement entry permit, which may be transferred through sale, barter, donation or gift to other individuals qualified to obtain a license and hunt. Once an authorization is converted to a permit, the permit will be non-transferable.
 - (b) Individuals hunting pursuant to a Gould’s turkey enhancement entry permit must obtain and have in their possession a valid turkey hunting license and any other stamps, tags or permits required by rule.

(c) Unless their hunting privileges have been revoked pursuant to law, any person is eligible to bid on and purchase a Gould's turkey enhancement entry permit.

(d) Individuals holding a Gould's turkey enhancement entry permit shall not be prohibited from hunting other subspecies of turkeys in New Mexico as allowed in 19.31.16 NMAC.

(e) The entry permit shall be valid for any legal sporting arms, and the bag limit shall be one bearded Gould's turkey.

(f) The season dates for each entry permit shall be no more than 30 consecutive days between April 1 and May 31 as specified by the entry permit each license year.

(g) The harvest of one bearded Gould's turkey shall count against the license holder's spring turkey bag limit.

(h) The hunt area for each entry permit shall be any legally accessible public lands in GMUs 26 and 27 where hunting is allowed, and private land with written permission.

(i) Gould's turkey enhancement entry permits granted through auction or lottery, as described above, shall not be considered 'once-in-a-lifetime' permits.

[19.31.16.12 NMAC -Rp , 19.31.16.11 NMAC, 4/1/2023]

HISTORY OF 19.31.16 NMAC:

Pre-NMAC History: The material in this part was derived from that previously filed with the State Records Center and Archives under:

Regulation No. 482, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, Elk, Antelope, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, And Barbary Sheep, filed 5/31/1967;

Regulation No. 487, Establishing 1967 Seasons On Javelina And Barbary Sheep, filed 12/15/1967;

Regulation No. 489, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring of 1968, filed 3/1/1968;

Regulation No. 491, Establishing Big Game Seasons For 1968 For Jicarilla Reservation, filed 3/1/1968;

Regulation No. 492, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, Elk, Antelope, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, And Barbary Sheep, filed 6/6/1968;

Regulation No. 495, Establishing A Season On Bighorn Sheep, filed 10/2/1968;

Regulation No. 496, Establishing An Elk Season In The Tres Piedras Area, Elk Area P-6, filed 12/11/1968;

Regulation No. 502, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1969, filed 3/5/1969;

Regulation No. 503, Establishing 1969 Deer Seasons For Bowhunting Only And Big Game Seasons For The Jicarilla Indian Reservation, filed 3/5/1969;

Regulation 504, Establishing Seasons on Deer, Bear, Turkey, Dusky Grouse, Chickaree And Tassel-Eared Squirrel, And Barbary Sheep, filed 6/4/1969;

Regulation No. 507, Establishing A Season On Bighorn Sheep, filed 8/26/1969;

Regulation No. 512, Establishing Turkey Season For The Spring Of 1970, filed 2/20/1970;

Regulation No. 513, Establishing Deer Season For Bowhunting Only In Sandia State Game Refuge, filed 2/20/1970;

Regulation No. 514, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, Elk, Antelope, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, Barbary Sheep And Bighorn Sheep, filed 6/9/1970;

Regulation No 520, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1971, filed 3/9/1971;

Regulation No. 522, Establishing 1971 Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, And Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 3/9/1971;

Regulation No. 523, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep And Bighorn Sheep, filed 6/9/1971;

Regulation No. 531, Establishing A Season On Javelina, filed 12/17/1971;

Regulation No. 532, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1972, filed 3/20/1972;

Regulation No. 534, Establishing 1972 Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, And Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 3/20/1972;

Regulation No. 536, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Chickaree And Tassel-Eared Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep And Bighorn Sheep, filed 6/26/1972;

Regulation No. 542, Establishing A Season On Javelina, filed 12/1/1972;

Regulation No. 545, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1973, filed 2/26/1973;

Regulation No. 546, Establishing 1973 Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, And Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 2/26/1973;

Regulation No. 547, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Chickaree And Tassel-Eared Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep And Bighorn Sheep, And Javelina, filed 5/31/1973;
Regulation No. 554, Establishing Special Turkey Seasons For The Spring of 1974, filed 3/4/1974;
Regulation No. 556, Establishing 1974 Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, And Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 3/14/1974;
Regulation No. 558, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx, And Ibex, filed 5/29/1974;
Regulation No. 565, Establishing Special Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1975, filed 3/24/75;
Regulation No. 567, Establishing 1975 Seasons On Deer, Bear, And Turkey On The Jicarilla Apache And Navajo Indian Reservations And On Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 3/24/1975;
Regulation No. 568, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Chickaree And Tassel-Eared Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 6/25/1975;
Regulation No. 573, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 2/23/1976;
Regulation No. 583, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 2/11/1977;
Regulation No. 590, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 2/15/1978;
Regulation No. 596, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 2/23/1979;
Regulation No. 603, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1980 through March 31, 1981, filed 2/22/1980;
Regulation No. 609, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1981 through March 31, 1982, filed 3/17/1981;
Regulation No. 614, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1982 through March 31, 1983, filed 3/10/1982;
Regulation No. 622, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1983 through March 31, 1984, filed 3/9/1983;
Regulation No. 628, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1984 through March 31, 1985, filed 4/2/1984;
Regulation No. 634, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1985 Through March 31, 1986, filed 4/18/1985;
Regulation No. 640, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1986 through March 31, 1987, filed 3/25/1986;
Regulation No. 645, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1987 through March 31, 1988, filed 2/12/1987;
Regulation No. 653, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1988 through March 31, 1989, filed 12/18/1987;
Regulation No. 663, Establishing Opening Spring Turkey For The Period April 1, 1989 through March 31, 1990, filed 3/28/1989;
Regulation No. 664, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1989 through March 31, 1990, filed 3/20/1989;
Regulation No. 674, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1990 through March 31, 1991, filed 11/21/1989;
Regulation No. 683, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx, And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1991 through March 31, 1992, filed 2/8/1991;
Regulation No. 689, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx, And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1992 through March 31, 1993, filed 3/4/1992;
Regulation No. 700, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx, And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1993 through March 31, 1995, filed 3/11/1993.

History of Repealed Material:

- 19.31.8 NMAC, Big Game, filed 3/1/2001 - duration expired 3/31/2003.
- 19.31.8 NMAC, Big Game and Turkey, filed 3/3/2003 - duration expired 3/31/2005.
- 19.31.8 NMAC, Big Game and Turkey, filed 12/15/2004 - duration expired 3/31/2007.
- 19.31.16 NMAC, Turkey, filed 12/1/2006 - duration expired 3/31/2009.
- 19.31.16 NMAC, Turkey, filed 2/26/2009 - duration expired 3/31/2011.
- 19.31.16 NMAC, Turkey, filed 9/15/2010 - duration expired 3/31/2015.
- 19.31.16 NMAC, Turkey, filed 3/17/2015, repealed 3/31/2016.
- 19.31.16 NMAC, Turkey, filed 2/29/2016, duration expired 3/31/2019.
- 19.31.16 NMAC, Turkey, filed 7/2/2018, duration expired 3/31/2023.