

Turkey Tagging Regulations to Go Into Effect for Upcoming Season

The LDWF will enforce the mandatory turkey tagging regulations for the 2009 spring season. The procedure is similar to what deer hunters did when tagging and reporting their deer kills this past deer season. Prior to turkey hunting, all hunters regardless of age or license status must obtain turkey tags and carry them in the field when hunting. The tags can be obtained by a variety of methods.

- At the point of sale when purchasing a turkey license from a licensed vendor.
- For La. lifetime license holders, vendors will issue tags free of charge when shown the lifetime hunting license.
- For resident senior license holders, vendors will issue tags free of charge when shown the resident senior license.
- For hunters under age 16, vendors will issue tags free of charge when provided appropriate Social Security number and date of birth.

Immediately upon harvesting a turkey, the bird must be tagged with the appropriate carcass tag before it is moved, and documentation of the kill must be made on the harvest report card portion of the tag. The date



and parish of the kill must be recorded on the carcass tag.

Within 72 hours of the harvest, hunters must validate the kill by calling the toll-free number

866-484-4805 or via the Internet at www.wildlifelicenses.com. A validation number will be given which must be reported on the harvest report card.

Upcoming Spring Garden Forum

The Beauregard Parish Fair Association will host a Spring Garden Forum on Thursday, April 23, 2009 at the Beauregard Parish Fairgrounds in Deridder, La. The program begins with registration at 8:00 a.m. and concludes around noon. Topics of discussion include:

- Living with wildfire in forested areas
- Landscaping in areas with nuisance wildlife
- Managing ornamental ponds
- Butterfly gardening

For registration information contact Mr. Keith Hawkins, Area Forester with the LSU AgCenter at 337-463-7006

Wildlife Species Profile

Eastern Chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*)



While common throughout Mississippi and the eastern portion of the United States, the eastern chipmunk only resides in any significant numbers in the Louisiana parishes of East and West Feliciana and East Baton Rouge. It is a small squirrel with a total length of 10 to 11 inches, excluding its tail, which is about 4 inches long. Although small in stature, eastern chipmunks are extremely attractive in appearance. Their head and flanks are strongly tinged with orange-rust coloration that changes to a rich russet or mahogany red on the rump. Five distinct stripes extend along the back and sides of the animal along with four additional strips occurring in pairs on either side of the body.

The Tunica Hills region north and northwest of St. Francisville represents the type of habitat where eastern chipmunks are most numerous in Louisiana. They are not gregarious animals and, aside from their immediate families, will not tolerate other chipmunks. Females display this tendency even to their own young by chasing them off when they are no more than 8 weeks of age.

Only during the mating season when males vigorously pursue prospective females will both sexes interact with each other to any great extent. Like its close relative the tree squirrel, the eastern chipmunk has two seasonal peaks in breeding: one in early spring and the other in midsummer. The gestation period is 31 days, followed by the birth of two to seven young.

Eastern chipmunks construct elaborate burrow systems that are 7 to 8 feet in length. Nests are constructed along these passageways in enlarged chambers, 10 inches or more in diameter, usually lined with dried leaves or grasses. Additional chambers are constructed for the storage of food items such as nuts, woody plants, seeds and grains. Acorns and hickory nuts are the food items most often found in these underground food storage chambers, transported by the aid of cheek pouches located on each side of the chipmunks face. Other foods known to be consumed by eastern chipmunks include insects, bird eggs, young mice, frogs, salamanders, small snakes, fruits, berries and mushrooms. The distinct calls made by chipmunks are easy to recognize, some of which resemble the "cluck-cluck-cluck" vocabulary of the eastern wild turkey.

Critter Corner

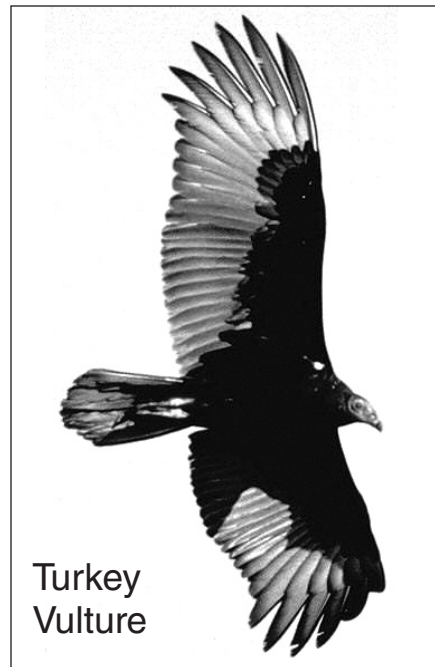
Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) and Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)

Black and turkey vultures represent the two vulture species found in Louisiana. Both are common throughout the state, although within the United States, black vultures have a much smaller range, found mainly in the southern regions of the country. Both species are scavengers that are often found feeding along our states' highways on carrion of all types. Black vultures lack the keen sense of smell possessed by turkey vultures, which are able to locate decaying animal matter even under dense forest canopies. To overcome this inability to detect scents, black vultures must rely on either their keen eyesight to detect food items or by following turkey vultures to kill sites that are less visible.

Black vultures are smaller than turkey vultures with a wingspan of about 5 feet as compared to the 6-foot wingspan of adult turkey vultures. When flying, black vultures hold their wings closer to horizontal while flapping more and soaring less. Turkey vultures, however, display a V-shaped flight pattern with a tendency to soar more and flap less. When in flight, the short tail of the black vulture is noticeably forward of the extended feet. Turkey vultures, however, display a long tail in flight that extends beyond their outstretched feet.

Turkey vultures also have a silvery lining to the undersurface of their wings that extends to the secondary feathers while black vultures have only white patches near the wing tips.

Throughout Louisiana and the southeastern United States both species will often lay their eggs inside hollow trees or thickets. On more than one occasion while in



Turkey Vulture



Black Vulture

the process of repairing enclosed deer stands in the spring and summer, I've come upon the eggs of either turkey or black vultures lying on the floor of these structures without accompanying nest material of any kind. Females will lay from one to three eggs, followed by a 40-day incubation period in which males of both species will assist. Fledglings are fed regurgitated food from both parents for around 10 weeks before leaving the nest site.

Black and turkey vultures perform a valuable ecological service to people by feeding on dead carcasses, thus reducing potentially dangerous situations for disease outbreaks. Both species are protected from diseases themselves by a sophisticated immune system. Their unfeathered bald head is easy to keep clean and is characteristic of all vultures throughout the world.

Black vultures are much more gregarious than the solitary turkey vulture and even though they

are much smaller, a flock of black vultures can easily drive off a lone turkey vulture from a feeding site that often has been discovered by the turkey vulture. Black vultures also can cause livestock losses by killing newborn calves or even cows that are rendered helpless while giving birth. Guilt by association is often the fate of turkey vultures in these cases although they are rarely responsible for the kill. Most often, they are at these sites simply to partake in the banquet that the black vultures have prepared. Black vultures also will cause damage to buildings, electrical substations and other plant facilities when hundreds take to roosting on these structures.

Control Measures. All vultures are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Lethal control measures of any kind are prohibited. Keeping livestock in protected areas during birthing periods and using protective netting around sensitive areas are the best means to legally deal with problems derived from these birds.

Plant Species Profile

Sawtooth Oak (*Quercus acutissima*)

The sawtooth oak, although not native to Louisiana, is widely planted throughout the southeastern United States for wildlife and ornamental purposes. The tree is native to eastern Asia, China, Korea and Japan. Since it is not native to North America, it does not possess all the distinguishing characteristics for clear placement into either the red oak or white oak group.

Many of its physical characteristics favor those of our native red oaks. The leaves are alternate, simple, oblong and spine-tipped on the margins. The fruit is an acorn with a large distinguishing cap, fringed with long bristles along the margins. Sawtooth oaks are deciduous and will reach heights of 60 feet. The bark is dark gray and deeply furrowed.

Sawtooth oaks gained prominence from a wildlife standpoint because of the short period of time in which it begins to produce acorns. It is often said that a sawtooth oak will go from an acorn itself to producing acorns in as few as eight years. This is only possible on high-quality sites where competition is controlled during its early growth stages. Although able to grow and produce fruit in these situations, the tree is often termed a "captive" species because of the care that it must be afforded. When mass production begins, the tree is a dependable producer with high yields every year or every other year on average.

Unlike many of our native oak species, the wood is of little commercial value. Its resistance to most disease and insect damage, along with its distinct leaves and well-formed crown, has made it a widely planted ornamental throughout Louisiana. One has only to observe the landscaping around many of our city parks, courthouses and other public buildings to become aware of the widespread ornamental use of the sawtooth oak.



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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.