SLIDE 1: INTRO TO TURKEY 101
- Open class by asking how many have not turkey hunted.
- What makes turkey hunting so exciting? The gobble of the wild turkey.
- Discuss the importance of the turkey hunting experience and the interaction between the hunter and the gobbler. It is not always the harvest!
- Go over areas which will be covered throughout the presentation.

SLIDES 2-7: TURKEY SPECIES
- There are slides for all species of wild turkeys
- Discuss each subspecies and where they are located
- Cover the different feather characteristics (tail fan, wing feathers)

SLIDES 8-12: WILD TURKEY DECLINE
- This section will cover the decline of wild turkey populations in the 1930’s
- Turkey populations declined because of the European immigration:
  - With an influx of people, the need for food rose. Wild turkeys were harvested in large numbers, throughout the year. While some regulations were in place, they were poorly enforced.
  - As the need for building materials increased, forested turkey habitats slowly diminished as timber was removed for lumber.
  - Note that most areas on the turkey decline map were along the eastern seaboard due to European arrivals.
  - Turkeys were only found in remote areas after this time. Numbers had taken a drastic decrease due to unregulated harvest; however, in the remote areas they started to rebound. This happened during the early depression.

SLIDES 13-17: WILD TURKEY RESTORATION
- State wildlife agencies began to evolve and wild turkey restoration efforts began.
- Wild turkeys were hard to catch. Pen raised birds failed because they did not adapt to the wild.
- Disease was another problem with pen raised birds.
- The cannon net invention proved successful in capturing wild turkeys.
- The NWTF worked with state agencies to facilitate interstate transfer of wild turkeys to areas across the country to rebuild populations.
- Turkeys were transferred to areas with similar habitats.
- Turkey populations are at nearly 7 million today.
- As a hunter you play a vital role in helping fund wild turkey restoration and the preservation of habitat.

SLIDES 18-19: WILD TURKEY IN A YEAR
- Cover daily and seasonal routines
- Most of the year turkeys are segregated into groups. Hens with hens and gobblers with gobblers.
- Only in the spring do these groups split up due to mating and nesting season.

SLIDE 20: HUNTING SEASON
- Spring turkey seasons are set around mating time.
- There are different stages of the mating season.
- Groups of gobblers follow groups of hens.
- Gobblers establish dominance to see who will be the dominant gobbler for breeding.
- Satellite gobblers (gobblers that are not the dominate bird in the area) will be looking for hens that are not with a dominant gobbler.
- Hunters use various calls to imitate the sound of a hen and gobblers to attract a gobbler into gun range.
SLIDE 21-24: TURKEY ID

- Reinforce the importance of being able to identify a gobbler from a hen.
- Jake features: short beard (cigar stub), button spurs, high middle tail feathers in their tail fan when they display. Jakes can gobble and strut just like an adult gobbler. Jakes may be illegal to hunt in some states – make sure to check your state's regulations.
- Adult gobblers will have a full tail fan. All feathers will be even on the tail fan. Long beard and longer spurs.
- Note that all adult male bird species have more coloration in their feathers. This feature enables them to attract females. Gobbler feathers are dark black and give off a shine showing iridescent greens and blues in the sunlight.
- Female bird species feathers tend to be dull and natural colors. Hen feathers are brown and dull black. Their feather coloration helps them blend into their habitat while nesting to avoid predators.
- Some hens may have a beard. In some states bearded hens may be legal for harvest. Check your state regulations for more details.

SLIDE 25: HEAD CHARACTERISTICS

- The gobbler’s head will be much larger than the hen.
- The gobbler’s head will be red, white and blue. The head will change colors due to the amount of blood flow. This feature allows them to attract hens. It may also be solid white.
- The long round skin located on top of the gobbler’s head around the beak is called the snood. When the gobbler is relaxed the snood will hang down below the beak. When gobbler is alert the snood will be retracted against the head and resemble a point (party hat.) When hunting, as the gobbler is approaching, note the snood to see if it is hanging or retracted to let you know if the gobbler is alert or relaxed as he comes into your set up.
- Large red caruncles are located at the base of the neck and the beginning of the neck feathers. This should be your aiming point when taking a shot at the gobbler.
- While hunting, never wear the colors red, white or blue. These are colors that hunters will use to identify a gobbler coming through the woods. The color black is also not recommended when turkey hunting.
- The head of a hen is a dull blue/gray color and is smaller than the head of a gobbler.
- Hens will also have some of the same caruncles as the gobbler but much smaller.

SLIDE 26: ADULT MALE BEARD

- The beard is a modified feather.
- Adult male beards are long, measuring anywhere from 8 to 12 inches.

SLIDE 27: PRE-SEASON SCOUTING

- Pre-season scouting is much like doing your homework.
- Knowing where birds are and their daily routines will help you be more successful.
- Knowing the land and the terrain will also help you get into position.
- Learn to identify turkey signs.

SLIDE 28: TURKEY DROPPINGS

- Gobbler droppings are shaped like the letter j
- Hen droppings are shaped like a corkscrew.
- Droppings can be found on roads, fields, and under trees where birds roost.

SLIDE 29: SCRATCHING

- Turkey scratching will look like a leaf rake with leaves or pine needles pulled back.
- Look in areas such as hardwood trees, road sides, food plots or chufa fields.

SLIDE 30: TRACKS

- Both hens and gobblers can be identified by their tracks.
- With the gobbler track, the middle toe will be longer than the two outside toes. Gobbler tracks will be larger in size than that of a hen.
- With the hen track, the toes will be even. Tracks will be smaller in size than that of the gobbler.
SLIDE 31: MAPS
• Topography maps are great for learning the terrain that you will be hunting.
• They help identify hills, creeks, draws/valleys and may help you make moves on gobblers without being seen.
• It will show areas to avoid due to a creek or valley that a gobbler may not cross.

SLIDE 32: MAPS AND MAP APPS
• Know the area before you hunt.
• State wildlife agencies have maps of public land areas for hunting.
• The USDA Forest Service has access to maps for public land hunting areas.
• Google Earth is a good resource to show areas.
• There are apps available to help locate and navigate while on the ground hunting, including OnX and Hunt Stand.

SLIDE 33: HEARING AND SEEING TURKEYS
• Locating turkeys at different times of day can be helpful.
• Listen to birds at daylight in roost areas.
• Use binoculars to check fields or other open areas.
• Make sure to observe and listen from a distance so not to make turkeys aware of your presence.
• Trail cameras are a great way to scout areas and obtain useful information on times of day when birds may use areas. It also gives you an idea of how many gobblers you may have in the area.

SLIDE 34: LOCATING GOBBLERS
• A common mistake when scouting is using a turkey call to locate birds. Avoid using turkey calls before the season.
• Locator calls, including crow, owl or coyote calls can be a great way to find birds. Locator calls are used to make a gobbler shock gobble which gives away his location.

SLIDE 35: PREPARE FOR THE HUNT
• Before the hunt make sure you have made a list of what you need to prepare for the season.

SLIDE 36: THE TURKEY GUN
• Find a gun that is right for you. Popular turkey hunting shotguns include 12 gauge, 20 gauge and 410 gauge.
• Your gun should be camo or flat black to ensure nothing shiny will cause a reflection off the gun which may alert a gobbler to your presence.
• Pump or automatic.
• A sling helps to transport a gun safely.
• Guns come in 2¾”, 3” or 3.5” magnum. These are chamber sizes on the shotgun.
• Fiber optic sights or scopes are important.

SLIDE 37: TURKEY CHOKEs
• Chokes are important in order to make a clean and ethical shot at the turkey. The aiming point of a turkey is the head and neck area. This is a small area and requires a tight choke constriction.
• Chokes should be extra full. Most shotguns come with an extra full choke.
• There are several specific turkey chokes on the market for turkey hunting.
• Your turkey choke should match your shotgun and the turkey load that works best.

SLIDE 38: PATTERNING YOUR GUN
• You owe it to the gobbler you are hunting to make sure that you make a clean and ethical shot. Pattern your shotgun is very important.
• Practice with a light shot shell load to get comfortable shooting your gun.
• Start by shooting at a turkey target 20 yards away.
• Find the correct turkey load that will work with your choke. Shot sizes come in 5, 6 and 9. There are some shells that have a combination of shot sizes (7 and 9) These are called blends.
• Practice shooting from a seated position, as if you are hunting.
SLIDE 39: CAMOUFLAGE
• The number one defense that a turkey has is eyesight.
• Camouflage is important from head to toe. You want to blend in with the surroundings.
• Gloves, masks, vests. Total concealment.
> Show video https://tv.nwtf.org/2020/06/05/whats-in-your-vest/
• NEVER WEAR RED, WHITE, BLUE OR BLACK. These are the colors of the gobbler’s head. This is a major safety issue.

SLIDE 40: CALLING
https://tv.nwtf.org/2020/06/05/turkey-calling-tips/
• You are reversing the nature of the turkey. When a gobbler gobbles, the hen will usually go to him. You are trying to make the gobbler come to you.
• Pitch, rhythm and cadence are things to know about calling.
• No one hen sounds the same.
• Turkeys are the best teachers.
• Practice the basic calls. Yelps and clucks. Other turkey calls start with these two calls. Gobblers and hens make these same basic calls.
• Other calls include, purrs, fly down cackle, cutting of an excited hen, fighting purr, and gobble. (Demonstrate these calls)
• Resources are available to hear live turkey sounds.

SLIDE 41: HUNTING STRATEGY
• Roost turkeys the night before the hunt by using a locator call.
• Get into your listening point early, before daylight.
• When your bird gobbles, try to get as close as you can without spooking him on the roost, around 150 to 200 yards.
• Close is good but not too close. You are trying to eliminate hens getting to the gobbler before he gets to you.
• Discuss different roost hunt scenarios.

SLIDE 42: SET UP
• Set up with a good line of sight in which to see an approaching gobbler.
• Find a tree that is as wide as your shoulders. This will help break up your outline.
• Stay in the open.
• Decoys can be used in your set up.
> Show video https://tv.nwtf.org/2020/06/05/turkey-decoy-tips/
• Discuss use of blinds for turkey hunting.

SLIDE 43: GET COMFORTABLE
• Reinforce that patience helps harvest more birds. You are on the turkey’s time, not yours. Not all turkeys come running in.
• Having a good seat cushion or low style chair will allow you to sit and stay longer to wait out a gobbler. Drop down seats on your vest are also an option.
• Bring things that will help you be comfortable. Use examples of things you may use to help you stay longer (Ex- Thermacell).

SLIDE 44: BE READY
• Not all gobblers will gobble the entire way into the set up you have. Some gobblers may come in silent.
• Gun should be in the ready position.
• Demonstrate seated position.

SLIDE 45: CALLING STRATEGY
• Start out soft and sparingly. Then add a little more excitement to your calling. Taking the turkey’s temperature is referred to as calling to see how excited or how soft you should call.
• Reinforce that the hunter is reversing the normal turkey routine. Hens go to the gobbler. You are making the gobbler come to you.
• Continuous calling may hang the gobbler up meaning that the gobbler will not come any closer. He wants the hen to come to him. Make the gobbler hunt for the hen. Silence can also be deadly.
SLIDE 46: WHAT IF HE DOESN’T COME?
• You need to be where the gobbler wants to come in. This may require you to move from your first set up.
• Wait at least 30 minutes when you think you want to move before moving. You may stand up ready to go and hear the putting of the gobbler as he runs off.
• Change your calls. Much like fishing, you change lures when the fish are not biting. Same with changing the call you use.

SLIDE 47: WHAT IF YOU DON’T HEAR ONE?
• Reinforce being where the gobbler wants to come. Moving may get him to finish and come in to the next setup.
• Using a locator call may get him to shock gobble and give away his location allowing you to know whether to move or stay put. Use your own hunt experience as examples.
• Reinforce walking and calling as an unsafe act. This act may cause another hunter to confuse you as a turkey.

SLIDE 48: CLOSING THE DEAL
• Remain calm. No quick movements.
• Reinforce firearm safety. Do not take the safety off until you are ready to shoot. Keep finger out of trigger guard until time to shoot. Remember to put safety on after the shot.
• Never jump and run to the gobbler with your firearm.

SLIDE 49: REMEMBER
• Reinforce positive identification of a gobbler.
• Don’t take a shot that would wound a gobbler.
• Know your target and beyond.

TURKEY HUNTING SAFETY VIDEO THAT MAY BE USED:
> https://tv.nwtf.org/2020/06/05/shoot-or-dont-shoot/

ADDITIONAL TURKEY HUNTING RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON
> https://www.nwtf.org/resource-library
• Turkey Hunting Safety Test
• Decoy Safety
• Public Hunting Safety Tips
• First Turkey Certificate
• How to Shoot a Turkey article
• NWTF Hunter’s Code of Conduct
• Know Your Wild Turkey
• Turkey Nutritional Guide
• Turkey Hunter Checklist
• Turkey Hunting 101 article