



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

One East Main, Suite 301 • Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 266-3847 • Fax: (608) 267-6873

April 26, 2005

Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #513

Extra Turkey Tags (DNR -- Fish, Wildlife, and Recreation)

[LFB 2005-07 Budget Summary: Page 354, #2]

CURRENT LAW

The primary source of revenue to the fish and wildlife account is the fees charged for hunting, fishing and special licenses and stamps. There are a wide variety of licenses authorizing residents and nonresidents to hunt and fish. Hunting and fishing licenses vary according to the type of species that may be pursued, the method of pursuit, the number of people for whom the license is valid and the time period for which the license is valid. To hunt or fish certain species (such as turkey or trout), a stamp must be purchased in addition to the license.

GOVERNOR

Allow both resident and nonresident hunters to purchase tags permitting the harvest of additional wild turkeys if the number of tags allotted for a given wild turkey hunting zone or season time period exceeds the number of applications received for that zone or time period. Require a \$10 fee for residents and a \$15 fee for non-residents (both of which include a 15¢ issuing fee to be retained by the vendor) to be paid for each additional turkey tag.

Allow DNR to promulgate emergency administrative rules, without the finding of an emergency, to implement the extra turkey tag provisions. Specify that choosing to purchase an additional tag would not affect the hunter's standing under the cumulative preference system for subsequent tag allocations. This provision would take effect on March 1, 2006.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Under current practice, if the number of tags available for the harvest of turkeys

exceeds the number of applications received for a given hunting zone or season time, hunters may receive, at random, additional permits at no extra charge, with the distribution of tags based on the cumulative preference system (the first up to 30% of tags to resident landowners, then residents who did not receive a permit the prior year, third to all other residents, fourth to nonresident landowners, and finally to all other nonresidents).

2. Creating a fee for extra turkey tags would be expected to generate an additional \$200,000 in 2005-06 and \$290,000 in 2006-07 to the fish and wildlife account of the conservation fund. There were 2,286 extra tags available for the fall 2004 season and 34,248 extra tags during the spring 2005 turkey hunting season. Under the bill, it would not be expected that all of the available extra tags would be sold every season. For example, there may be a lower demand for certain hunting areas or specific season times. The revenue estimate assumes that slightly more than one-half of the available permits would be purchased the first year, with more sold during the second year (particularly to nonresidents, who typically have a greater difficulty receiving turkey licenses under the current preference system). However, any tags sold would provide a new source of revenue to the fish and wildlife account.

3. Allowing the extra turkey tags to be sold over the counter on a first come, first served basis would allow individuals who missed the application deadline or who may not normally receive their permit of choice due to their ranking in the preference system to acquire a turkey hunting permit (when they may not otherwise have under the current system). If a hunter applied for a permit but failed to get a preferred season/location under the allotment system, he/she could still purchase one of the "extra" tags for a less-preferred zone and then purchase a turkey hunting license. Under this scenario, the hunter would retain his/her preference point for the season under the cumulative system. The institution of an "over the counter" process for distributing extra tags would also ensure that the permits were available to the individuals most likely to use them, rather than provided simply to whomever was next in the preference system (as individuals are unlikely to pay extra for a tag that they have little or no intention of using). Individuals who apply in advance for spring and fall turkey licenses would still have first choice of locations and seasons based on the existing preference system.

4. It could be argued that turkey hunting already requires a separate license and fee for each season (spring and fall) and an annual stamp and that creating a new fee for a previously free benefit could be burdensome for some. In particular, a hunter who did not receive his or her preference would pay approximately \$30 to hunt turkey in a less-preferred time or zone (approximately \$80 for nonresidents). Alternatively, others argue the fee would be voluntary, in that only those who chose to purchase an extra tag would pay the fee (similar to bonus deer permits). Deleting the provision would reduce fish and wildlife account revenues by \$490,000 for the biennium.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Adopt the Governor's recommendation to allow both resident and nonresident

hunters to purchase tags permitting the harvest of additional wild turkeys if the number of tags allotted for a given wild turkey hunting zone or season time period exceeds the number of applications received for that zone or time period. Require a \$10 fee for residents and a \$15 fee for non-residents (both of which include a 15¢ issuing fee to be retained by the vendor) to be paid for each additional turkey tag. Further, allow DNR to promulgate emergency administrative rules, without the finding of an emergency, to implement the extra turkey tag provisions. Specify that choosing to purchase an additional tag would not affect the hunter's standing under the cumulative preference system for subsequent tag allocations. This provision would take effect on March 1, 2006.

2. Maintain current law.

<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>SEG-REV</u>
2005-07 REVENUE (Change to Bill)	- \$490,000

Prepared by: Rebecca Hotynski