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State Turkey Stamps

Standing three to four feet tall and with a wing span of four to five feet, the American wild turkey is one of the largest birds native and unique to this continent.

The delicious taste of the meat and the general availability of the bird made the turkey a favorite staple of the early American settlers.

In fact, the turkey was so popular that this bird was Benjamin Franklin's choice as the American symbol and national bird, instead of the bald eagle, and missed being selected as such by only one vote.

Meleagris gallopavo (American wild turkey) has six sub-species: The Eastern (M.g. silvestris), Florida (M.g. osceola), Riogrande (M.g. intermedia), Merriam's (M.g. merriami), Gould's (M.g. mexicana), and Mexican (M.g.gallopavo).

The Mexican sub-specie is not found in the United States and the Gould's only occasionally is found in southern Arizona and New Mexico.

When the turkey was brought to Europe by the Jesuits it was known as Indian chicken (poule d'indes) by the French and Spanish. Because the British thought the bird resembled guinea fowl from Turkey, they By Dr. John Crook



named it "the turkey."

Although probably the most wary of the American game animals, the turkey was almost extinct at the turn of the century. Active trapping and relocation efforts coupled with intensive game management have restored the bird to a large huntable population in the 49 lower states.

The adornment of the male includes a "beard" extending up to 12 inches from the middle of his chest, fighting spurs on his legs that lengthen with age, and a tail that fans to attract the female.

His head changes color from red to white to reflect his mood (love, fear, or anger). Although he is so dark he appears black, in point of fact all the colors of the rainbow are represented in this magnificent bird. These highlights tend to sparkle in the sun when the bird is in flight. There is no sight comparable to that of a large wild male turkey in full display in springtime.

In an attempt to document what is known about turkey stamps, and to catalogue and classify them in some understandable manner, I put together a six category listing, the first part of which, stamps issued by state wildlife and conservation departments that are required for hunting, is presented in this issue.

Examples of special turkey tags, licenses, and permits have not been included in this listing unless they are pictorial or are a clear continuation of a previous turkey stamp series.

I want to acknowledge the special assistance provided to me in compiling this listing.

The detailed South Dakota stamp information was provided courtesy of Barry Porter, who is producing a comprehensive catalog of all South Dakota stamps.

My thanks also to Scott Troutman for his help and to Peter Martin, whose editing and suggestions were extremely helpful.

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Introduction to State Turkey Hunting Stamps

Stamps required for hunting were begun for the dual purpose of providing revenue and documenting compliance with regulations. The first turkey stamp required for hunting was the 1959 South Dakota stamp (SDHRWT1) and the first general hunting series stamp to depict the wild turkey was Tennessee's 1958 "Big Game Stamp" (TNHBG3). The rarest turkey stamp is North Dakota's 1965 issue (NDHTS2) of which there are only two recorded examples.

The numbering system used on turkey hunting stamps works like this: the first two letters designate the state; the letter H, for hunting, is next; and the remaining letters designate the type of hunting stamp (i.e.:, TS is a turkey stamp, BG is Big Game, WTNR is Wild Turkey Nonresident), followed by the stamp number. Therefore FLHTS-3 would be: Florida (FL)--hunting (H)--turkey stamp (TS)--issue number three (3). Because many turkey stamps are part of a series that may illustrate other animals, the numbers are often not sequential.

California

California has one turkey stamp (CAHUG1) issued in 1994.



CAHUG1

Florida

Florida began requiring a multicolored pictorial stamp in 1986 and the program continues to the present (FLHTS 1-9). These stamps also come in "hunter booklet" types (FLHTS 1HB-8HB). This state also issues a management area permit that pictured a turkey on the resident and underage stamps in 1973 and 1976 (FLHWM 14, 15, 20, 21).



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FLHWM21

Georgia

Georgia Wildlife Management Area permits featured the wild turkey in 1982 and 1992 (GAHWM 4, 14).

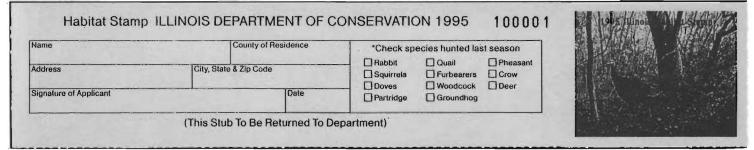


GAHWM4



Illinois

The Illinois 1995 Habitat stamp (Hunter booklet type) features the wild turkey.





Indiana

Indiana Gamebird Habitat stamps pictured the wild turkey in 1983, 1985, 1988 and 1994 (INHGB 4,6,9,15).



INHGB4



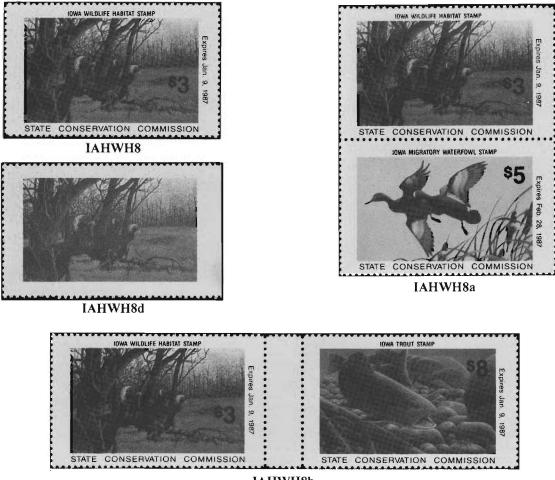
INHGB6



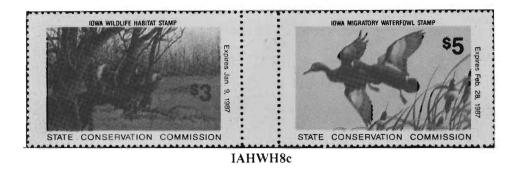
INHGB9

Iowa

Iowa Wildlife Habitat stamps, required for any type hunting in the state, focused on the wild turkey in 1986 (IAHWH8). Examples include a vertical pairing with the waterfowl stamp (IAHWH8a), and a horizontal pairing with the trout stamp (IAHWH8b), and the waterfowl stamp (IAHWH8c). A black and yellow color error, of which only 10 exist, is also known (IAHWH8d). Iowa has a "tagging" system (IAHTT).



IAHWH8b



Kansas

Kansas upland gamebird stamps show the wild turkey in 1963 and 1970 (KSHUG-3,10).



KSHUG3



KSHUG10

Maryland

Maryland issued a required deer and turkey stamp from 1968 to 1980 (MDHDT 1-12). From 1968 to 1971 the turkey was on the right; afterwards it was on the left. The series was called "Deer and Turkey Stamp" through 1978 and only "Big Game Stamp" thereafter. There was no stamp labeled 1977, although the series is complete without a stamp so labeled since the series progresses according to the expiration date. Through 1976 the stamp was to placed on a cardboard license to be worn on the outer garment. The stamp was always associated with a "Tag" that originally was part of the license and later was attached to the stamp for "hunter booklet" type stamps (MDHDT-HB).



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Michigan

Michigan initially issued a turkey "permit" (MIHTP). However, they now issue a turkey "license" (MIHTL) which also serves as a turkey tag (MIHTT). Michigan also issues a "badge" to successful hunters (MIHTB).

Nebraska

Nebraska Upland Gamebird stamps were graced by the wild turkey in 1963, 1968, 1974, 1976 and 1983 (NEHBG 9, 14, 20, 22, 29). Vertical (NEHBG 9a) and horizontal (NEHBG 9b) imperfs are known for the 1963 stamps. There is also a horizontal misperf creating a "mini-maxi" (NEHUG 9c). Examples also exist that are imperf on the right margin (NEHUG-9d). Nebraska has a separate permit and tagging system (NEHTP and NEHTT).



NEHUG9



NEHUG9a



NEHUG9b





NEHUG14



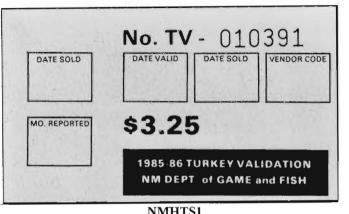
NEHUG20



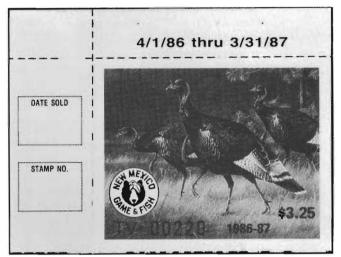
NEHUG29

New Mexico

New Mexico planned to begin a turkey stamp program in 1985. Because the artwork did not return from the printer in time, a printed stamp was used the first year and the pictorial stamp featuring the print by Daniel Smith was used thereafter until the program was discontinued after the 1988-89 season (NMHTS 1-4).



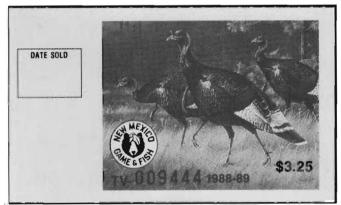
NMHTS1



NMHTS2



NMHTS3



NMHTS4

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New York

New York hunting stamps depicting the wild turkey are the 1984 "Free," (NYHFR-3); 1985-6 nonresident three-day small game (NYHNR3DSG-4); 1986-87 nonresident season hunting small game (NYHNRSSG-5); 1988-89 nonresident hunting season small game (NYHNRSSG-7); the 1990-91 resident hunting stamp (NYHRS-9) and the 1992 resident free license stamp (NYHFR11).



North Carolina

North Carolina's Sportsman stamp for 1987, both resident and nonresident, shows the wild turkey in full display (NCHRS-4, NCHNRS-4). The state also uses turkey tags as part of the "Big Game" reporting (NCHTT).



NCHRS4



NCHNRS4

North Dakota

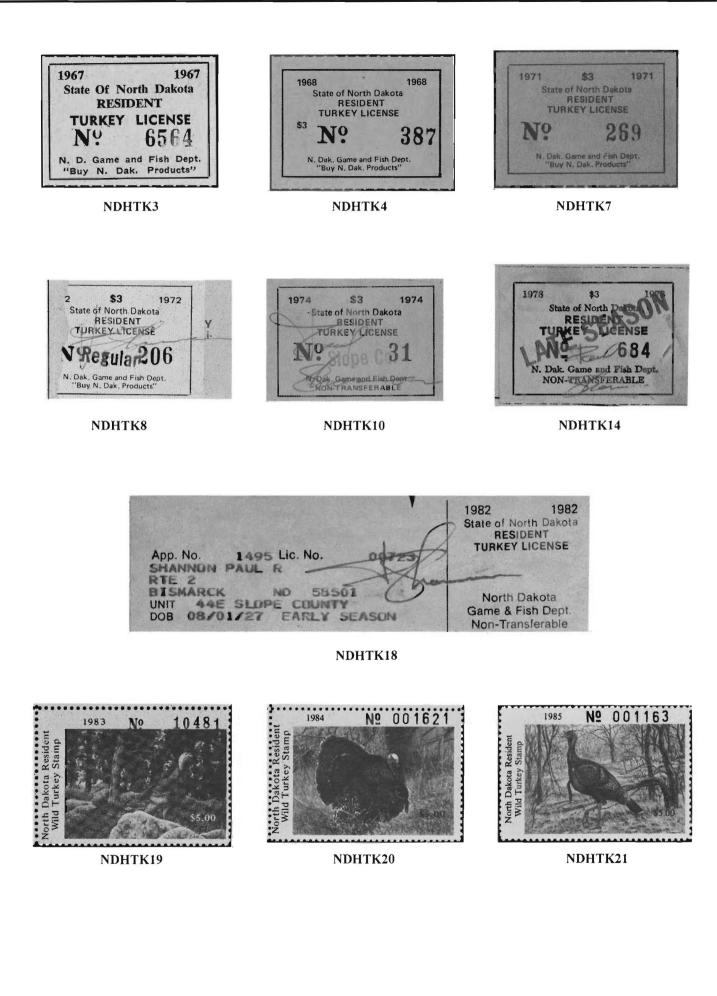
North Dakota began a turkey stamp program in 1964 and it is still in place (NDHTS 1-30). The 1965 stamp has only two recorded examples. No stamp was printed in 1966 and the stamps from 1967 to 1982 were printed text only and were called a turkey "license." In 1983, the series switched to a pictorial stamp, based on artist prints, that were to be pasted on the hunting license. Turkey tags are also now used (NDHTT). Barry Porter believes that the 1967 stamp with serif type serial numbers are printers' proofs because the other 1967 North Dakota hunting stamps are imprinted with Gothic type serial numbers. However, the 1968 turkey stamp has a serif type serial number (signed example on license). Therefore, this point is unclear.

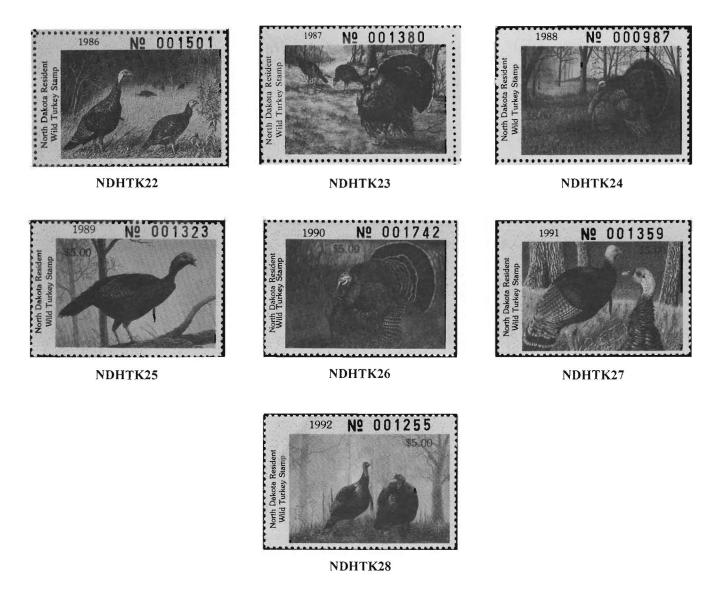


NDHTK1



NDHTK2





Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania has a turkey tag associated with its general hunting license that is worn as a "back tag" (PAHTT).

South Carolina

South Carolina has a tagging system (SCHTT).

South Dakota

South Dakota has eight different turkey stamp series and each is listed separately.

1. South Dakota Resident Wild Turkey stamps were produced from 1959 to 1979 (SDHRWT 1-21). The 1959 and the 1975 stamps have no picture. Errors recorded are: 1969 imperf with missing serial no. (SDHRWTS-11a); 1971 pair double perfed horizontally between stamps (SDHRWTS-13a); 1971 misperf single missing serial number (SDHRWTS-13b); and 1972 imperf single missing serial number (SDHRWTS-14a). Barry Porter believes the 1969, 1971 and 1972 imperforate issues are "bogus." The 1959-1967 stamps were issued in booklet panes of 10. Later years stamps were issued in booklet panes of five. The first year was printed by State Publishing, Pierre, S.D. SDHRWT-2a has the serial number shifted upward on the body of the turkey. SDHRWT-6a has an incomplete "1964" at the left and SDHRWT-6b has an incomplete year at the right. SDHRWT-7a has two millimeter high 1965s while SDHRWT-7b has four millimeter serial numbers. SDHRWT-13a has an extra set of perforations on top of the year dates; SDHRWT-13b has an extra set of perforations below "Game, Fish and Parks Division"; SDHRWT-13c is a pair with a double set of perforations between stamps (3½ millimeter spacing); SDHRWT-13d has four millimeters; SDHRWT-13e has a double set of perforations between stamps 7 top selvage; SDHRWT-13f is an attached pair of SDHRWT-13 and SDHRWT-13d; and SDHRWT-13g is SDHRWT-13f with a double set of perforations. SDHRWT-13d; and SDHRWT-13f is an attached pair of SDHRWT-13 and SDHRWT-13d; SDHRWT-15 has both light and dark blue color variants, as does SDHRWT-16.

2. South Dakota nonresident wild turkey stamps were produced from 1967 to 1979 (SDHNRWTS 1-9). No stamps were issued in 1973, 1975, 1976 or 1977. A 1972 vertically imperf pair with missing serial numbers exists (SDHNRWTS-6a). Barry Porter believes this 1972 imperf is "bogus." SDHNRWT-4a has smaller four millimeter serial numbers. SDHNRWT-5a has smaller four millimeter serial numbers and SDHNRWT-5b is an attached pair of SDHNRWT-5 and SDHNRWT-5a.

3. South Dakota Resident Spring Wild Male Turkey stamps were produced from 1963 to 1979 (SDHRSWMT 1-15). No stamps were issued for 1968 or 1978. Errors known are: 1972 imperf vertical pair missing serial number (SDHRSWMTS 9a); 1974 vertical pair misperfed horizontal between stamps (SDHRSWMTS 11a), and 1973 imperf single missing serial number (SDHRSWMTS-10a). Barry Porter believes the 1972 and 1973 imperforate examples are "bogus." Stamps were overprinted to denote the designated area that the stamp was valid for hunting. Stamps were valid from January 1 through December 31 each year. The Spring male turkey hunting season normally ran from the first Saturday in April until mid-May. Stamps were a similar text design each year, were issued in booklet panes of five, were serial numbered on the front, had dry gum adhesive and were without a back inscription. Stamps were printed by State Publishing, Pierre, S.D., SDHRSWMTS-2 and SDHRSWMTS-4 have rouletted varieties. SDHRSWMTS-5a is imperforate between the top selvage and the stamp. SDHRSWMTS-9a has smaller four millimeter serial numbers and SDHRSWMTS-9b is and attached pair of SDHRSWMTS-9 and SDHRSWMTS-9a. SDHRSWMTS-10b has smaller four millimeter serial numbers. SDHRSWMTS-11a is a pair, misperfed through the bottom of the year date. SDHRSWMTS-13a has smaller four millimeter serial numbers.

4. South Dakota nonresident Spring Wild Male Turkey stamps are test only stamps issued from 1967-1979 (SDHNRSWMTS 1-8). No stamps were issued in 1968, 1970, 1975, 1977 or 1978. There is an error known for the 1973 stamp-an imperf vertical pair with missing serial numbers (SDHNRSMWTS 5a). Barry Porter believes this imperf stamp is "bogus." SDHNRSWMTS-1a is imperforate between top selvage and stamp. SDHNRSWMTS - 3a has smaller four millimeter serial numbers. SDHNRSWMTS-4a has smaller four millimeter serial numbers and SDHNRSWMTS-4b is an attached pair of SDHNRSWMTS-4 and SDHNRSWMTS-4b. Similar variations occurred during the subsequent two years for SDHNRSWMTS-5 and SDHNRSWMTS-6.

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5. South Dakota Resident Spring and Fall Black Hills Turkey stamps are extensions of the South Dakota Resident Spring Wild Male Turkey stamps and have been continuously produced since 1980 (SDHRBHT 1-30). One error exists: a vertical pair, mis-cut horizontal in Fall 1980 (SDHRBHT 2a).

6. The nonresident Black Hills series, which follows South Dakota Nonresident Spring Wild Male Turkey stamps, was produced from 1980 to 1983 (SDHNRBHT 1-6).

7. South Dakota Custer State Park Turkey stamps were issued from 1971 to 1986 (SDHCPTS 1-17). Peculiarities of this series include a hand overprint for 1972 and 1973 (SDHCPTS-2, 3) and a machine overprint in 1974 (SDHCPTS-4). No stamp was printed in 1977 or 1985. The printer supplied 1974 stamps with 1973 dates. The "3" was changed to a "4" with a black felt pen or rubber stamping. SDHCPTS-4a has smaller four millimeter serial numbers and SDHCPTS-4b is an attached pair of SDHCPTS-4 and SDHCPTS-4a. SDHCPTS-6a is a pair with a double set of perforations between stamps. SDHCPTS-6b has smaller four millimeter serial numbers and SDHCPTS-6c is an attached pair of SDHCPTS-6b. SDHCPTS-9a has the serial number shifted to the right, touching the frame line.

8. The final South Dakota turkey stamp series is the "Prairie Turkey" set of stamps produced from 1980 to 1986 (SDHPTS 1-14).

After 1986, the Custer State Park and Prairie Turkey stamps were switched to a number coded computer generated set of stamps (identified in the following pages as SDHCPTS 18-present and SDHPTS 15-present).

9. South Dakota also now has a tagging system (SDHTT).

10. The South Dakota Wildlife Habitat stamp featured the wild turkey in 1994 (SDHWHS 6).

11. South Dakota statewide Archery Turkey stamps are also issued as part of the computer generated system of stamps (SDHAT 1-8).

Starting with the 1987 hunting season, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department changed the stamps they used for their various Big Game seasons. In order to understand what the stamp numbers stand for, four things must be considered: (1) the first three numbers and letters of the serial number indicate the Big Game season (except 1987 issues that come with and without this code); (2) the last two numbers of the serial number after the dash indicate the year of issue; (3) the unit code that denotes the particular area(s) in which the stamp is valid; and (4) the species code that tells what type of game the stamp is valid for. All information about the 1987 and 1988 Game stamps was destroyed by the Game, Fish and Parks Department, so data about these issues is scarce and sketchy at best (if anyone can provide better information the author would love to get it).



South Dakota Turkey Related Big Game Season Codes

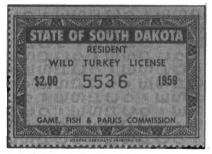
Season/Description

- 1FF Fall Prairie Turkey
- 1RF Non-Resident Small Game
- 1TF Spring Prairie Turkey
- 4FF Black Hills Turkey
- 4TF Spring Black Hills Turkey
- 5FF Custer State Park Fall Turkey
- 5TF Custer State Park Spring Turkey
- 7TA Archery Turkey
- 9DF Sand Lake Refuge (1989 only)

South Dakota Turkey Big Game Species Codes

- 18 Any Wild Turkey
- 19 Gobbler (Male) Turkey (1987-90) Male Turkey Only (1990)
- 35 Any Small Game
- 36 Any Turkey plus Any Turkey
- 40 Turkey Gobbler plus Turkey Gobbler

South Dakota Resident Wild Turkey



SDHRWT1



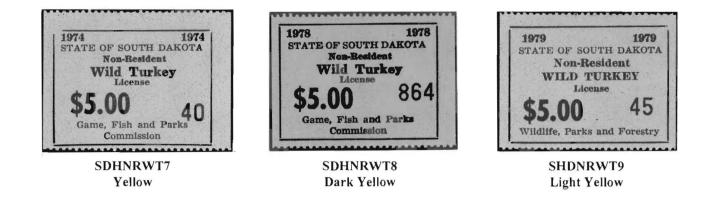
SDHRWT2 Blue on White



SDHRWT3 Brown on White





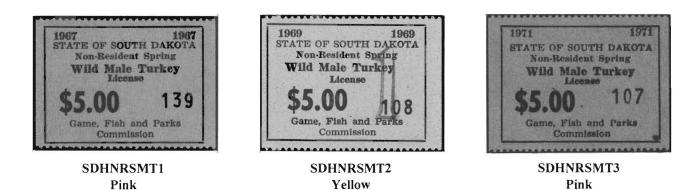


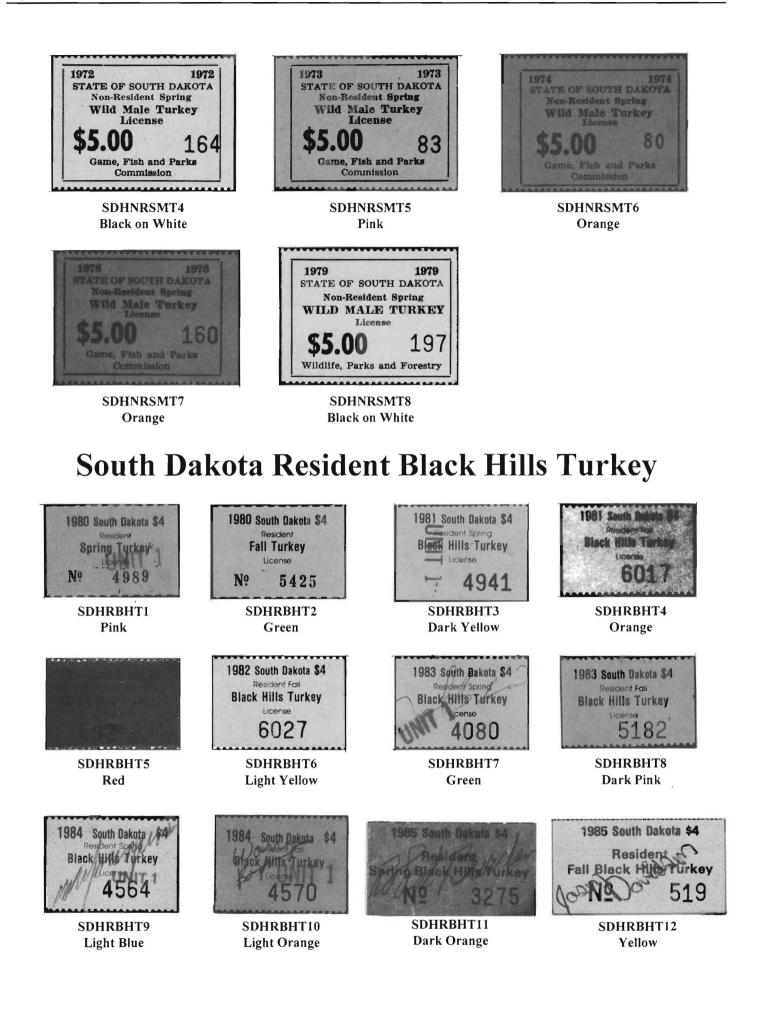
South Dakota Resident Spring Wild Male Turkey





S. Dakota Non-Resident Spring Wild Male Turkey



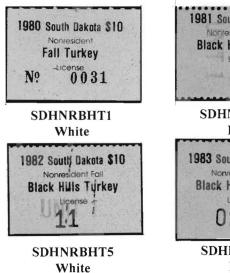




SDHRBHT25

SDHRBHT26

South Dakota Non-Resident Black Hills Turkey





SDHNRBHT6 Blue

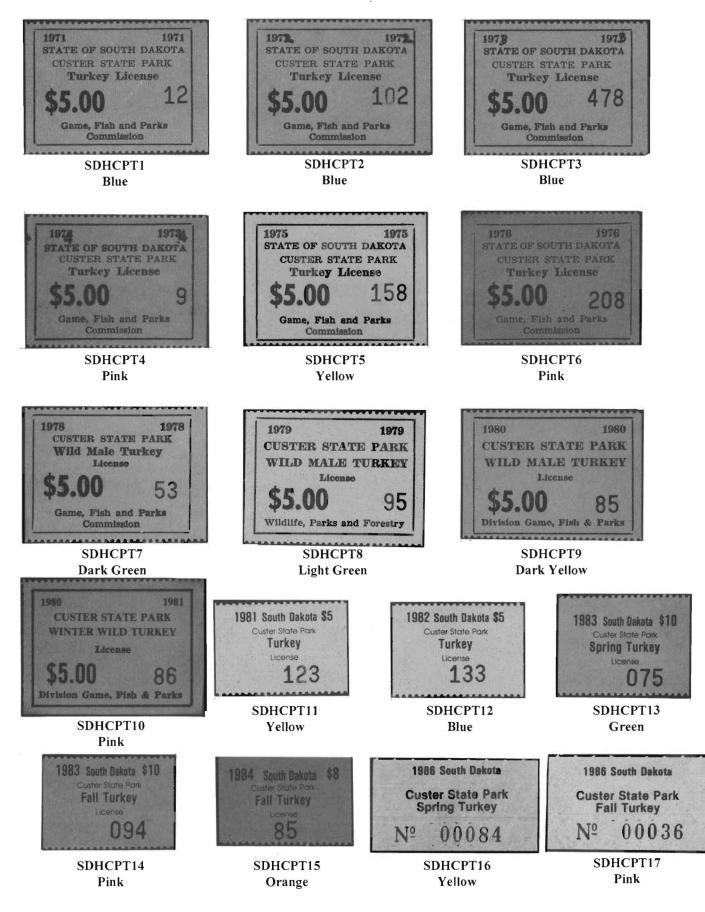


SDHNRBHT3 Green

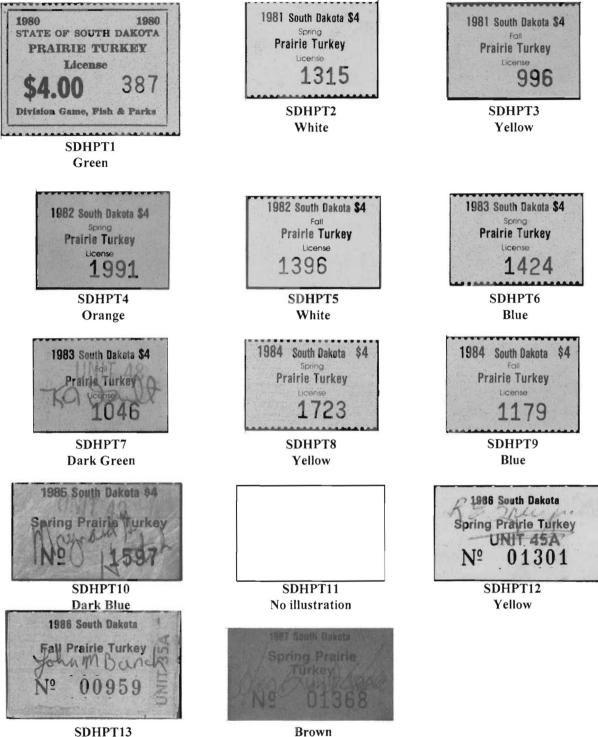


SDHNRBHT4 Orange

South Dakota Custer State Park Turkey



South Dakota Prairie Turkey



Orange

Brown

Tennessee

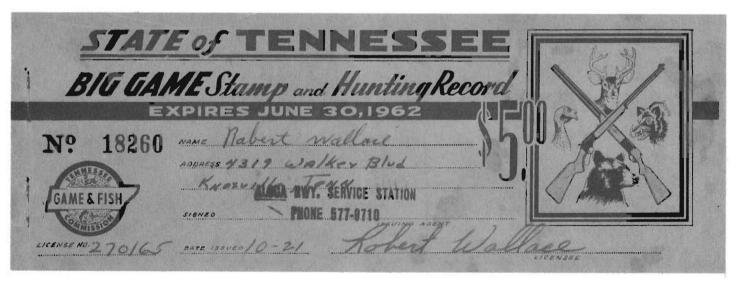
Tennessee Big Game Stamps featured the wild turkey in 1958 (TNHBGS-3). One error exists: a missing serial number (TNHBGS-3a). Beginning in 1960 the Big Game Stamp became a booklet with tags and report cards (TNHBGS 5-17). The series ended in 1973. Each booklet contained a turkey tag (TNHTT) and report card (TNHBG 5c-17c). No booklet was issued in 1963. No bear hunting was allowed for the last three years of this series and therefore the booklet for those years contained only three report cards instead of four.



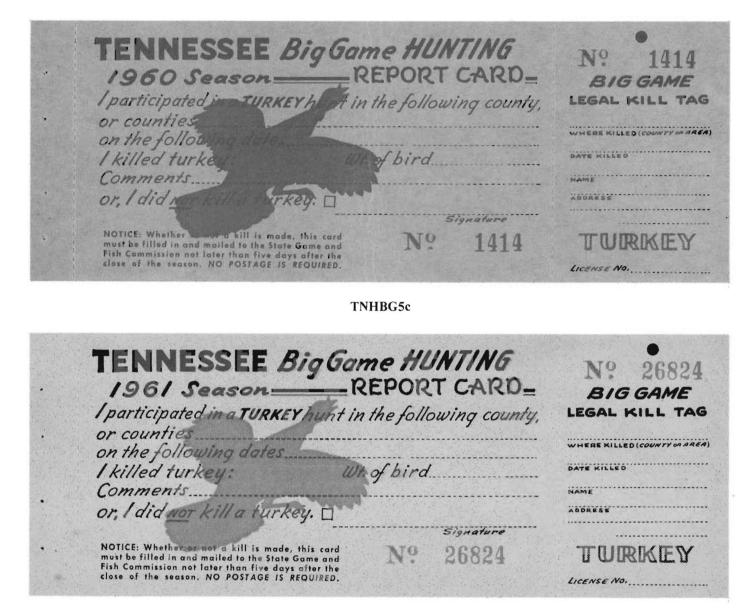
TNHBG3



TNHBG3a



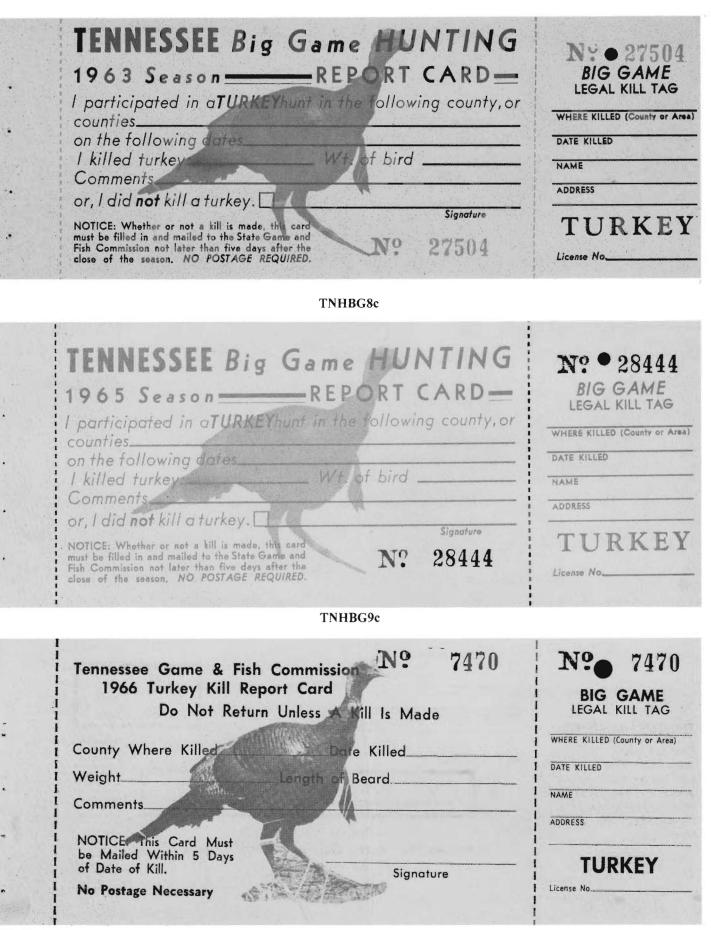
TNHBG7, The only Tennessee big game booklet cover to illustrate a turkey.



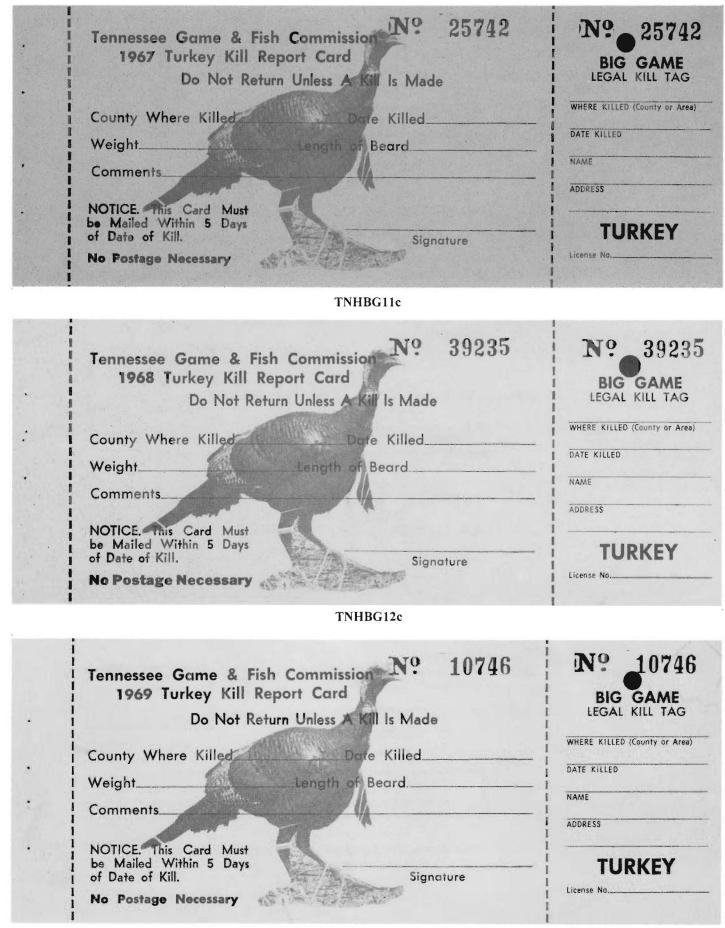
TNHBG6c



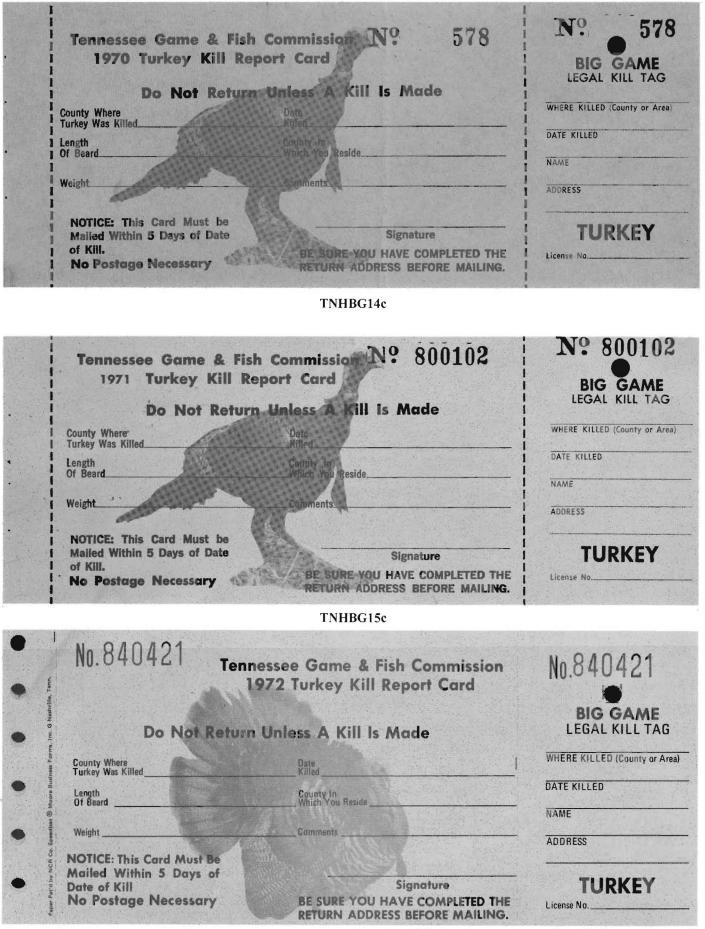
TNHBG7c



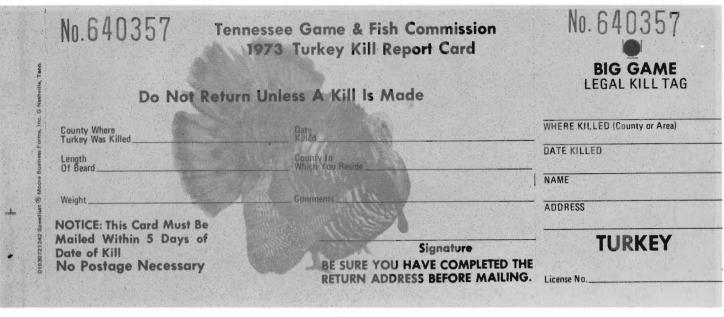
TNHBG10c



TNHBG13c



TNHBG16c



TNHBG17c

Texas

Texas has a required pictorial stamp beginning in 1991 through the present (HTXTS 1-4) and a tagging system (TXHTT).



TXHWT1



TXHWT2

Vermont

Vermont has a tag (VTHTT).

Virginia

Virginia has a tag (VAHTT).

West Virginia

West Virginia has a tag (WVHTT).

Wisconsin

Wisconsin has a pictorial stamp series running from 1984 to present (WIHTS 1-12).



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North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismark Expressway, Bismark, ND 58501.

Tennessee Department of Wildlife Resources, Box 40747, Nashville, TN, 37204.

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