

Wild Turkey Feather Collections

The Department requires hunters to check wild turkeys that are harvested in the fall at Game Check Stations. Wing and breast feathers are collected during the checking process. These feathers are used to determine the age and sex of the harvested bird. The ratio of juveniles to adult female in the harvest is used as an index to reproductive success. A ratio of 3 or more juveniles per adult female would indicate a very successful reproductive season, whereas much lower ratios would suggest poor recruitment.

Unfortunately, many times the wrong feathers are collected and the sample is useless. To help check stations and hunters identify the correct feathers we have provided photos and directions below.



Pull the **FIRST** large wing feather. This feather should be approximately 9-12 inches in length.



The first wing feather on an adult bird is rounded with white barring to the tip of the feather. Juvenile wing feathers are pointed and the tip of the feather does not have white barring.



Pull a breast feather from the **CENTER** of the breast. The tips of breast feathers of male birds are black whereas the tips of females are brown.



Male

Female