

## **DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY**

### **Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife and Fisheries Commission**

Richard K. Yancey and Sherburne WMAs  
Amended Turkey Seasons

In accordance with the emergency provisions of R.S. 49:962 and R.S. 49:962.G. and under the authority of R.S. 56:115 and 116, the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby adopts the following Declaration of Emergency:

All portions of Richard K. Yancey and Sherburne Wildlife Management Areas are hereby closed to turkey hunting for the duration of the 2023 hunting season.

Turkey populations on both Sherburne and Richard K. Yancey WMAs have declined significantly since 2011. The primary reasons for these declines include above average rainfall for 8 out of the last 11 years within the management region and intensive flooding for long durations during the nesting and brood rearing periods (April-June). The Morganza Spillway opening in 2011 caused significant direct mortality of wild turkeys at Sherburne WMA. In addition, seasonal flooding has severely limited wild turkey reproduction on both Sherburne and Richard K. Yancey WMAs over the past decade. In an effort to moderate the decline, hunting opportunity has been reduced in past years by reducing season length. This effort has been ineffective due to continued poor environmental conditions (excessive rainfall and flooding) for nesting and brood rearing. While hunting has not been a primary cause of the turkey population declines on these areas, it could contribute to declines and delay population recovery because these flocks are at a very low density. For these reasons, it is recommended that turkey seasons on both Richard K. Yancey and Sherburne WMAs be closed until further notice. These measures may allow for population recovery and circumvent the need to restock wild turkeys should environmental conditions (i.e. below average rainfall and consecutive years of no flooding from April-June) improve on these areas and allow opportunities for the birds that are present to reproduce.

This Emergency Rule shall become effective January 5, 2023, and remain in effect for the duration of the 2023 Turkey Hunting Season upon adoption by the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. The Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is authorized to take any necessary steps on behalf of the Commission to promulgate and effectuate this Declaration of Emergency.

Joe McPherson  
Chairman