

## Know the Laws

Once a declining species in the United States, wild turkeys now thrive nationwide. In Michigan, turkeys can be found in most counties in the Lower Peninsula and in some parts of the Upper Peninsula. Wild turkeys are an important big game species in Michigan and can be hunted in the spring and fall.

Hunters in most parts of the state may apply for a turkey license in the spring and in the fall for each season. Season dates and information regarding how to apply for a license can be found at [Michigan.gov/Turkey](http://Michigan.gov/Turkey).

In many suburban areas, hunting may not be allowed for certain reasons. Local wildlife biologists or nuisance wildlife control companies can be contacted if there is an aggressive turkey in your area. Find contact information at [Michigan.gov/Wildlife](http://Michigan.gov/Wildlife).

## Did You Know?

- Wild turkeys can reach speeds of up to 55 mph.
- A group of turkeys is called a “rafter.”
- Flocks can range anywhere from 5 to 50 birds and usually consist of only males or females.
- Generally, only male turkeys puff out their feathers and fan their tails to attract females.
- Male turkeys have spurs on their legs that get longer as they age. Spurs are used to grapple with other turkeys over breeding rights.

Learn more about Wild Turkeys by visiting:

**[Michigan.gov/Turkey](http://Michigan.gov/Turkey)**

## DNR Offices

*Open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.,  
or visit us online at [Michigan.gov/DNR](http://Michigan.gov/DNR).*

### Baraga

427 US-41 North  
Baraga, MI 49908  
906-353-6651

### Bay City

3580 State Park Drive  
Bay City, MI 48706  
989-684-9141

### Cadillac

8015 Mackinaw Trail  
Cadillac, MI 49601  
231-775-9727

### Crystal Falls

1420 W. US-2  
Crystal Falls, MI 49920  
906-875-6622

### Detroit Metro

1801 Atwater St.  
Detroit, MI 48207  
313-396-6890

### Escanaba

6833 US-2 41 & M-35  
Gladstone, MI 49837  
906-293-5131

### Gaylord

1732 W. M-32  
Gaylord, MI 49735  
989-732-3541

### Lansing

4166 Legacy Parkway  
Lansing, MI 48911  
517-284-4720

### Marquette

1990 US-41 South  
Marquette, MI 49855  
906-228-6561

### Naubinway

PO Box 287  
W11569 US 2E.  
Naubinway, MI 49762  
906-477-6048

### Newberry

5100 M-123  
Newberry, MI 49868  
906-293-5131

### Norway

520 W. US-Hwy 2  
Norway, MI 49870  
906-563-9247

### Plainwell

621 N. 10th St.  
Plainwell, MI 49080  
269-685-6851

### Roscommon

I-75 & M-18 South,  
8717 N. Roscommon Rd.  
Roscommon, MI 48653  
989-275-5151

### Sault Ste. Marie

P.O. Box 798  
4131 S. M-129 Hwy.  
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

### Traverse City

2122 South M-37  
Traverse City, MI 49685  
231-922-5280

# Wild Turkey

## Michigan Wild Turkey



Species

# Meleagris gallopavo

A member of the *Phasianidae* family and the class *Aes*

Life Span

**3 – 4 years**

on average in the wild.

Home Range

Found in most counties in Michigan and across the U.S. and some parts of Canada. The species was

## reintroduced in the 1950s

following a drastic population decline due to habitat loss in the early 1900s.

Habitat

Open grasslands and forests. They nest on the ground using dead plant material.

Clutch Size

**10 – 14 eggs**

Vocalizations

**Males make a gobbling sound.**

Both males and females make a variety of calls including, but not limited to:

**purrs, cackles, yelps, and clucks.**

Appearance

Iridescent, dark feathered plumage with white barring on wings and white or red tips on tail and rump. The head color ranges from blue, white, and red. Males have "beards" located on the chest.

Size

Males weigh

**11 – 25 lbs,**

while females weigh

**5 – 12 lbs.**



Wingspan from **4 to 5 ft**

Height may reach **4 ft** tall

# Wild Turkey

Although great to observe and hunt, wild turkeys can become unwanted guests in suburban settings.

Here are some tips for staying SMART about wild turkeys... ▶

## Living with Wild Turkeys

Wild turkeys are found in rural and suburban areas. Use caution when driving as wild turkeys may cause accidents when crossing the road.

Wild turkeys are omnivorous; they forage in forests and grasslands for insects, berries, seeds, leaves, grasses and hard mast from trees like acorns and nuts. Turkeys enjoy birdseed; bird feeders and agricultural fields attract wild turkeys. Use caution when feeding songbirds as not to attract wild turkeys to your backyard.

Turkeys may become aggressive if comfortable in a suburban area. If they become a nuisance in your neighborhood, remove all food attractants from your backyard at once and ensure your neighbors are not feeding them.

Young plants may attract turkeys. Protect young gardens with fencing, hardware cloth or motion activated scaring devices. Do not use netting as wildlife can become entrapped.

Wild turkeys establish a pecking order; one turkey in each male flock becomes dominant. Male turkeys may become aggressive. They may attack their reflections. Cover or disguise windows and other shiny objects like hubcaps and car paint.

It is important to establish your dominance; if turkeys become habituated, they may act aggressively. Use gentle hazing techniques to deter them. Start by making loud noises and waving to frighten the turkeys. Consider using a sprinkling system or spraying water from a hose to harass them. Leashed dogs can also be used to scare them away.

Remember, wild turkeys are not domestic and are naturally afraid of humans!

**S**hiny objects and windows attract turkeys.

**M**ake loud noises to scare them away.

**A**lways remain cautious when driving.

**R**oosting turkeys in your yard may become territorial.

**T**ry to keep bird feeding areas clean or avoid using them.

## Fun Turkey Facts

Wild turkeys stay in Michigan year-round!



Breeding begins as temperatures rise and daylight hours increase in spring.



Males attract females by strutting, gobbling and fanning their tails.



Fleshy growths above the beak are called the wattle and snood.



Nests made of leaf litter are built at the base of a tree, under shrubs or brush piles, and in open fields.



Incubation begins after the last egg is laid and takes between 25 and 31 days.

