

# Wild Turkey SMART Brochure

Michigan Wild Turkey

[Graphic: Profile of a male turkey]

[Graphic: DNR Logo]

## Species

Meleagris gallopavo

A member of the Phasianidae family or class aves

## Life Span

3-4 year on average in the wild

## 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 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 to 25 lbs. while females weigh 5 to 12 lbs.

Heights may reach 4ft tall.

[Graphic: silhouette of turkey with wings stretched out. Wingspan from 4 to 5ft written in the silhouette of the bird.]

[Graphic: DNR logo]

# 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 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!

## SMART

- S: Shiny objects and windows attract turkeys.
- M: Make loud noises to scare them away.
- A: Always remain cautious when driving.
- R: Roosting turkeys in your yard may become territorial.
- T: Try to keep bird feeding areas clean or avoid using them.

## Fun Turkey Facts

Wild turkeys stay in Michigan year-round.

[Graphic: outline of the State of Michigan]

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

[Graphic: clock clip art.]

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

[Graphic: outline of male turkey with feathers fanned out.]

## 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.
- Typically, 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)

Michigan DNR Wildlife Division 517-284-WILD (9453).

### 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 989-275-515

### Sault St. Marie

PO Box 798 2001 Ashmun Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783 906-635-6161

### Traverse City

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