



HUMAN-TURKEY CONFLICTS

Most conflicts involve habituated turkeys who have become too comfortable with humans. Wild turkeys may cause damage to property, create loud noise, and display aggressive behaviour.

Examples of common damage caused by turkeys include scratches and dents on vehicles, plant destruction due to searching for food or bedding material, and unsightly lawns caused by fecal matter or digging.

Do not allow turkeys to become habituated to people. Turkeys that are comfortable around people are more likely to cause damage or attempt to intimidate people.



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CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

The BC Conservation Foundation is a not-for-profit, registered charity that has been working in BC since 1969.

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To report wildlife in conflict contact the Conservation Officer Service at

1.877.952.7277

WildSafeBC is funded through the Province of British Columbia and in partnership with communities and organizations throughout BC.



British Columbia Conservation Foundation

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WILD TURKEY



British Columbia Conservation Foundation





MANAGE YOUR ATTRACTANTS

Since wild turkeys can cause significant damage to vehicles and gardens in their search for food or shelter, it is best to ensure they do not become comfortable in your yard.

- 1. Remove ideal nesting habitat at home:** ensure your lawn is kept short and free of weeds. Remove any dense brush that may act like shelter or bedding material.
- 2. Do not feed turkeys:** this will encourage them to return often or stick around permanently, which can lead to conflicts. A turkey may begin approaching people and asserting dominance in search of food.
- 3. Manage fruit trees:** remove all windfall and keep branches trimmed back as much as possible so they are out of reach. You may want to remove fruit-producing plants from your yard or prune in the spring to cut back on maintenance later on.
- 4. Be responsible with birdseed:** ensure bird feeders are set high up where wild turkeys cannot access. Consider taking them down throughout the winter or overnight and clean up any excess spillage with a vacuum.
- 5. Install fencing:** chain-link or woven-wire fencing is typically successful in keeping turkeys out from yards or gardens. Fencing should be around 4 feet tall to ensure turkeys cannot jump or fly in.

! TURKEY SAFETY

Wild Turkeys are hosts for a variety of diseases, none of which pose a threat to human health. They can also be a host for ticks, mites, and lice which can be transmitted to humans. Therefore, it is not recommended to handle, feed or touch wild turkeys.

Vehicle collisions involving wild turkeys can also be dangerous, as a mature turkey's wingspan can cover an entire windshield.

If you come into conflict with a wild turkey call the Conservation Officer Services RAPP Line 24/7 at 1-877-952-7277.



Turkeys are factually classified as wildlife under the BC Wildlife Act. The provincial government has sole jurisdiction of turkeys in BC.

Wild Turkeys prefer open, mature, forested areas. These birds nest on the ground, often at the base of trees, in areas that provide some form of cover. Nesting turkeys search for ideal habitat containing scattered forest openings, agricultural fields, and grazing ranges.

Males are known for their mating displays, like strutting and gobbling, taking place from February to June. Gobbling intensifies in late April and peaks again in mid-May. The older, dominant males do most of the breeding.

Wild turkeys are opportunistic foragers and eat a variety of items such as nuts, fruits, seeds from grasses and sedges, insects, snails, frogs, salamanders and crayfish. They are generally crepuscular; meaning they forage in the early morning and late afternoon. Other foods they may eat include juniper berries, clover, snowberry, watercress and rose hips.

! WHERE'S THE TURKEY?

If you'd like to document your sighting and contribute to the distribution of information for turkeys, submit a report to [iNaturalist](https://www.inaturalist.org).



TURKEY FACTS:

- Wild turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) are one of the most widely distributed game bird species in North America.
- Wild turkeys are a very recognizable bird as they have a featherless head, large legs and a wrinkled neck (known as a beard).
- Wild turkeys are the world's heaviest gallinaceous bird, with some adult males weighing over 10 kg.
- Male turkeys use a mating call to attract females, typically referred to as their 'gobble gobble'.
- Males tend to be much more colourful than females in order to attract mates (polygynous).
- Newly hatched poults (young turkeys) are highly functioning after birth but do require brood care for the first 3-4 weeks.
- Wild turkeys can fly around ten days after hatching and start roosting in trees at about 2 weeks old.
- Predation is the primary mortality factor for turkeys; humans, coyotes and bobcats being the main predators.
- Wild turkeys can host at least 60 different species of parasites.



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