



Wild Turkey

Meleagris gallopavo

Family: Meleagridinae

Omnivorous / Prey

Native to Virginia

The Wild turkey is a very populous species found throughout the eastern United States and can be seen traveling in large flocks in certain parts of the James River Park System. Turkeys live primarily in forested areas, but are also common in swamp and wetland environments. Male turkeys are larger and more colorful than females and have the familiar red wattles on the throat, a fanlike tail, and bronze wings. The Toms have a distinctive gobble during mating season that can be heard up to a mile away.

Fun Facts

- Wild turkeys are about half the weight of domestic turkeys raised on farms to be eaten
- The skin on a turkey's throat can change color to blue, white, or red if the turkey becomes excited or scared
- Turkeys can see in color and have great hearing, but have an extremely poor sense of smell
- The tuft of hair that grows out of the chest of male turkeys is known as a 'beard' and is actually composed of modified feathers.
- Benjamin Franklin wanted the national symbol of America to be the Wild Turkey