

Eastern Turkey

General Eastern Wild Turkey Information

Scientific Name

Meleagris gallopava silvestris

Size/Weight

Average Length: 3.5 feet, Average Wingspan: 4.5 feet. Average Weight: Males 18 lbs., Females 8 lbs.

Life Span

Wild turkeys don't live long, usually dying before their 2nd birthday.



Range

The entire eastern half of the United States as well as eastern Canada.

Diet

Turkeys live mostly on all kinds of grasses, though they also like to eat acorns, seeds, hazel, chestnuts, blueberries, cherries, fruits, flowers, and certain live prey such as grasshoppers, small snakes, lizards, frogs, and insects.

Breeding

Female turkeys nest on the ground, laying 10-14 eggs. The eggs hatch after about 28 days. The chicks leave the nest in a surprisingly short amount of time, at about 12-24 hours after hatching.

Population Status

The Eastern wild turkey is the most heavily hunted type of turkey. Though hunted, there is no shortage of wild turkeys with an estimated wild population of 5 million.

About the GNC Turkeys

The GNC turkey flock arrived at the Nature Center on June 11th, 2008. They were only one day old when they got here. Prior to the arrival of the baby turkeys, called poults, the only turkey at the GNC was an already extremely old turkey named Strudel. Strudel was a rescue animal saved from being slaughtered for food. Strudel never had the chance to have babies of her own and because she was now so old it was assumed she never would. With the arrival of the poults, the GNC decided to put Strudel in with them to see how she would respond. From day one Strudel accepted the poults as if they were hers, raising them with all the care a mother would show her own babies.



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