

RESULTS OF WINTER 2013 WILD TURKEY FLOCK SURVEY

Ted Walski
Turkey Project Biologist
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For the fifth consecutive year, the NH Fish & Game Department conducted a wild turkey winter flock survey in which the public reported their flock sightings on-line. The reporting period was January 1 through March 31, 2013. During that time there were 1,787 flock reports, totaling 28,389 turkeys. In comparison, the winter 2012 flock survey recorded 1,180 flocks, totaling 20,295 turkeys. Therefore, from winter 2012 to winter 2013 there was an increase of 607 flock reports (51.4%) and 8,094 turkeys (39.9%). Two contributing factors to the increase were more snowfall during winter 2013 compared to the practically snowless winter of 2012, and relatively good production of young turkeys during summer 2012.

The maximum numbers of turkeys reported in a flock were 97, 100, 130 and 150 turkeys from four different towns. The “average” number was 15.89 per winter flock. As expected, southeastern NH produced the most flock reports and total turkeys. Results from that region were as follows: unit M (434 flocks and 7,138 turkeys), unit J2 (296 flocks and 4,678 turkeys), unit L (199 flocks and 3,241 turkeys), unit K (209 flocks and 3,107 turkeys).

This was another relatively easy winter for turkeys and deer, in terms of total snowfall and duration of significant snow depth. There were a number of noteworthy thawing periods which created bare ground sites on southerly edges – three during January, three during February and two in March. However, 400 flocks (22.74%) were reported as being fed while 1,116 flocks (63.45%) were not being feed. For another 243 flocks (13.81%) it was not known if they were being fed or not.

The following were the categories of food usage observed from 1,274 turkey flock reports: birdfeeders 451 (35.4%), unknown foods 400 (31.4%), grasses 220 (17.3%), acorns/beechnuts 75 (5.9%), dried berries/fruits 48 (3.8%), apples/crabapples 29 (2.3%), a combination of corn ensilage/corn in manure/standing corn 51 (4.2%). Another 359 flocks (22%) were observed when “not feeding.” During fall 2012 acorns were “spotty,” there were no beechnuts and practically no wild apples.

Note: A more detailed summary of the Public Internet 2013 Winter Turkey Flock Survey will be available around May 15th.