

RESULTS OF WINTER 2015 WILD TURKEY PUBLIC INTERNET FLOCK SURVEY

For the seventh consecutive year, the Fish & Game Department conducted a wild turkey flock survey in which the public reported their flock sightings on-line. The reporting period was January 1 through March 31, 2015. During that time there were 730 flock reports, totaling 12,574 turkeys. In comparison, the winter 2014 flock survey recorded 1,520 flocks totaling 21,352 turkeys. Therefore, from winter 2014 to winter 2015 there was a decrease of 790 flock reports (52%) and 8,778 turkeys (41%).

Flock Reports and Turkey Numbers by WMUs and Towns

The WMU with the most flock reports, as well as the most total turkeys was unit M with 200 reports and 3,389 total turkeys. This was also the case during winter 2014. The 3 units from southeastern NH (units J2, L, M) reported a combined 393 flock reports (54%) of the statewide total of 730 flock reports (Table 1). The average number in a flock statewide was 17.22 turkeys per flock.

Table 2 records the towns from each county with the most flock reports from winter 2015. Wildlife management units from southeastern NH had the higher number of flock reports per town, as compared to western and northern NH. A primary reason is because of the much greater human population and road numbers in southeastern NH. Towns from Rockingham County particularly had higher numbers of flock reports.

Only 19 towns from the 18 WMUs or 10 counties reported flocks of 50 or greater turkeys per flock. The highest numbers per flock were Nottingham 100, Haverhill 79, Stratham 75 and Danbury 73. It was interesting to note that the original 1969-70 release town of Nottingham that failed with a transplant of West Virginia turkeys, had the largest flock reported in winter 2015.

Table 4 records the total flock reports and total turkeys from the seven years of this public internet flock survey (year 2009 through 2015). The numbers have been fairly similar over this span, except for winter 2015. A primary factor for the decline in flock reports from winter 2015 was probably due to weather conditions. The 2-foot of snowcover without a crust greatly restricted turkey movements during February 2015, thereby making flocks a much less visible to people to report. The 7 years averages were: 808 flock reports per winter and 18,289 turkeys per winter survey.

General Habitat Use

There were 670 flock reports identifying three general categories of habitat or land use: farmland 91 reports (13.5%), woodland 238 reports (35.52%) and residential 341 reports (50.90%).

Winter Food Usage

Table 5 records the statewide food usage categories by turkey flocks. As expected, by far the greatest percentage of use was 246 flock reports (76.9%) at back yard birdfeeders. This was close to the 78.0% of winter 2014. The next highest use was 48 flock reports (15.0%) using acorns/beechnuts, and then 14 flock reports (4.4%) using apples/crabapples. The wild apple crop was pretty much a failure during fall 2014. There were no flock reports of small dried berry/fruit usage.

Avian Pox Information

During winter 2015 there were only 7 of 535 flock observations (0.97%) that reported 7 sites from 7 towns, from 4 of the 18 wildlife management units (Table 6). Only one turkey from each flock was observed to have the characteristic lesions in the area of the head/eyes.

Table 1. Numbers of flocks reported and numbers of turkeys by WMUs – Winter 2015

WMU	# of flocks Reported	Total turkeys	Max. # in a flock	Avg. # turkeys Per flock
A	5	69	22	13.80
B	5	124	45	24.80
C1	2	24	15	12.00
C2	4	27	19	6.75
D1	7	108	23	15.43
D2	16	248	79	15.50
E	11	115	20	10.45
F	26	377	40	14.50
G	41	704	73	17.17
H1	20	440	63	22.00
H2	40	702	47	17.55
I1	27	371	50	13.74
I2	23	341	30	14.83
J1	36	570	32	15.83
J2	105	1,838	61	17.50
K	74	1,201	70	16.23
L	88	1,926	100	21.89
M	200	3,389	75	16.95
TOTALS	730	12,574		17.22 = avg.

Table 2. Towns per county with most flock reports – Winter 2015

Belknap	Carroll	Cheshire	Coos	Grafton
Alton 6	Brookfield 7	Jaffrey 8	Colebrook 3	Campton 7
Gilford 19	Wakefield 8	Fitzwilliam 3	Lancaster 1	Landaff 3
Belmont 6	Wolfeboro 7	Westmoreland 5	Pittsburg 1	Lebanon 5
	Effingham 6	Hinsdale 3	Stratford 3	Plymouth 3
				Rumney 3
Hillsboro	Merrimack	Rockingham	Strafford	Sullivan
Amherst 7	Concord 8	Atkinson 8	Barrington 7	Newport 5
Bedford 9	Chichester 4	Deerfield 9	Farmington 8	Sunapee 3
Merrimack 12	Danbury 4	Derry 15	New Durham 9	Goshen 3
Weare 14	Pembroke 5	Epping 8	Rochester 7	
	Franklin 5	Fremont 7		
	Sutton 6	Greenland 18		
		Hampton Falls 7		
		Kingston 10		
		Londonderry 17		
		Nottingham 17		
		Raymond 8		
		Salem 9		
		Stratham 9		

Table 3. Largest number of turkeys per flock reported by town and county– Winter 2015

Belknap	Carroll	Cheshire	Coos	Grafton
Belmont 53	Wolfeboro 41	Hinsdale 47	Stratford 45	Thornton 40
Gilford 40	Bartlett 20	Jaffrey 47	Columbia 25	Haverhill 79
Sanbornton 50	Effingham 27	Roxbury 40		Lebanon 45
				Orford 39
Hillsboro	Merrimack	Rockingham	Strafford	Sullivan
Amherst 40	Danbury 73	Deerfield 60	Farmington 60	Charlestown 40
Bedford 39	Pembroke 40	Derry 52	New Durham 40	Newport 63
Bennington 70		e. Kingston 46	Strafford 61	
Greenville 51		Epping 50		
Merrimack 60		Fremont 43		
New Ipswich 40		Kingston 40		
		Londonderry 53		
		Newmarket 49		
		N. Hampton 43		
		Nottingham 100		
		Raymond 43		
		Rye 50		
		Stratham 75		

Table 4. Number of winter flock reports and number of turkeys for 7 years.

Year of survey	# of flock Reports	Total turkeys	Max. # in a flock	Avg. # turkeys Per flock
2009	1,528	23,922	100	15.66
2010	1,291	19,219	100	14.89
2011	1,497	27,521	150	18.38
2012	1,180	20,595	150	17.45
2013	1,787	28,389	150	15.89
2014	1,520	21,352	83	14.05
2015	730	12,574	100	17.22
7 year avg. =	808	18,289		16.22

Table 5. Food usage categories by turkey flocks statewide – Winter 2015

Food category	Number of Observations	Percentage of Total observations	
Acorns/beechnuts	48	15.0%	
Apples/crabapples	14	4.4%	
Birdfeeder	191	59.7%	76.9%
Corn/grain fed	55	17.2%	
Corn in manure	5	1.56%	
Corn in ensilage	6	1.88%	3.44% farm grain
Standing corn	1	0.003%	
Dried berries/ Fruits on shrubs	0		
TOTAL	320	100.0%	
(unknown foods)	(114)	(26.27%)	

Table 6. Avian pox virus reports in flocks– Winter 2015

WMU	Town	Location	# of turkeys in flock	# in flock with pox
K	Dunbarton	11 Hawk Lane	17	1
K		Adams Hill		
	Greenville	Rd/Bacon St	51	1
K	New Ipswich	Timbertop Rd	13	1
G	Lyme	Lyme Center	7	1
G	Orange	Cardigan Mt. Rd	25	1
J2	Gilmanton	442 Loon Pond Rd	13	1
M	Miford	Dear Lane	20	1

