

RESULTS OF WINTER 2018 WILD TURKEY PUBLIC INTERNET FLOCK SURVEY

For the tenth 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 1st through March 30, 2018. During that time there were 1,372 flock reports, totaling 20,224 turkeys. In comparison, the winter 2017 flock survey recorded 998 flock reports, totaling 19,298 turkeys. Therefore from the winter of 2017 to winter 2018, there was an increase of 374 (37%) flock reports, and an increase of 926 (4.8%) turkeys.

These significant increases from winter 2017 to winter 2018 were probably due to two primary reasons: a statewide increase in the turkey populations, and an easy winter where turkey flocks wandered at will taking advantage of bare ground sites and the abundant acorn crop.

Flock Reports and Turkey Numbers by WMU's and Towns

As usual the WMU with the most flock reports was unit M in southeastern New Hampshire, with 336 flock reports and 5,470 turkeys (Table 1.). The three units from the Southeast (J2, L, M) reported a combined 684 flock reports, or 37.2% of the statewide total and 10,637 turkeys 52.6% of the statewide total. The “average” number in a flock statewide was 14.74 per flock. This is somewhat below the past 10-years average of 16.71 turkeys per flock and below the winter 2017 average of 19.34 turkeys per flock.

Table 2. Records the towns from each county with the most flock reports from winter 2018. Towns from Hillsboro, Merrimack, Rockingham and Strafford counties typically had the most reports, because these towns have the most human population reporting flocks. Noteworthy towns with numerous reports were: 30 Bedford, 44 Londonderry, 26 Derry, 27 Dover, 22 Hudson, 22 Merrimack, 21 Windham.

Table 3. records the towns from each county with the most turkeys reported in flocks . Statewide, there were 63 flocks of 30 or more turkeys in a flock, and 17 flocks had 50 or more turkeys in a flock. There were 3 towns reported with 100 turkeys in a flock: Ossipee, Groveton and Bristol. Large numbers of turkeys in flocks were not expected for winter 2018 because of the lack of snowfall and the abundance of food.

Table 4. records the total flock reports and total turkeys from ten years of the Winter Flock Survey (2009-2018). The numbers were greater for winter 2018 than for Winter 2017, and close to the “average” of the 10 winters.

Winter Food Usage

Table 5. records the statewide food usage categories used by turkey flocks. By far the greatest percentage of use was 337 flock reports (60.72%) at backyard birdfeeders. Another 72 flock reports

(12.97%) were of people feeding corn/grain. The next highest food use was 82 reports (14.77%) using acorns/beechnuts and 49 reports (8.83%) using apples/crabapples.

Acorns on the ground were readily available to turkeys most of the winter. One would think the use observation percentage would have been greater than 14.77%. However, the most turkey flock observations occur at people's houses, and many flocks are not seen feeding under oak trees at wooded sites. The turkeys know that sunflower seeds are more nutritious than corn or acorns and are always going to visit birdfeeders.

General Habitat Use

Respondents recorded three categories of land in which they observed a flock, and the breakdowns was 171 (13.46%) flock in farmland, 411 (32.36%) in woodland, and 688 (54.17%) in residential areas. More and more towns are becoming suburban and semi-suburban in nature and these towns and areas are where most of the flock reports originate. Less reports originate at dairy farms now because there are only about 100 dairy farms left in the state, compared to 434 farms 40 years ago.

Avian Pox Information

Table 6. records information about sites in towns with some avian pox turkeys. During the Winter 2018 flock survey there were 10 sites in 9 towns from 5 counties. Of the reports 8 of 10 were from units L and M in southeastern New Hampshire. Five of the ten flocks had only one turkey in the flock with the obvious head/eye area lesions. Four of the ten flocks had more than one pox turkey in the flock: 2, 3, 3, and 5 birds.

Of the 1,348 flock reports 985 (73.07%) reported no obvious pox turkeys and 353 (26.19%) respondents didn't know. Only 10 persons reported pox turkeys or less than 1.0%.

Preference for Wild Turkeys

Only 1.10% of respondents disliked wild turkeys, 9.08% neither like nor disliked turkeys, 29.03% liked turkeys and 60.78% strongly liked turkeys.

Table 1. Number of flock reports and total turkeys by WMU's – Winter 2018

WMU	# of flock reports	Total turkeys	Max # in a flock	Avg. # turkeys per flock
A	8	116	36	14.50
B	6	156	100	26.00
C1	12	130	15	10.83
C2	6	109	32	18.17
D1	15	204	54	13.60
D2	33	566	50	17.50
E	11	69	14	6.27
F	24	304	31	12.67
G	82	962	40	11.73
H1	35	716	52	20.46
H2	81	1,015	40	12.53
I1	82	1,359	100	16.57
I2	65	686	35	10.55
J1	47	596	100	12.68
J2	193	2,926	90	15.16
K	181	2,599	60	14.36
L	155	2,241	47	14.46
M	336	5,470	60	16.28
Totals	1,372 reports	20,224 turkeys		14.74 avg.# /flock

Table. 2 Towns per county with most flock reports – Winter 2018

Belknap	Carroll	Cheshire	Coos	Grafton
20 Gilford	17 Moultonboro	11 Fitzwilliam	10 Berlin	11 Canaan
15 Sanbornton	14 Wolfboro	8 Rindge	7 Whitefield	11 Lebanon
12 Belmont	9 Tuftonboro	6 Marlboro	6 Pittsburg	9 Bristol
11 Alton	8 Wakefield	6 Swanzey		9 Thornton
10 Barnstead	7 Ossipee			7 Bath
8 Meredith				7 Enfield
				7 Holderness
				7 Littleton

Hillsboro	Merrimack	Rockingham	Strafford	Sullivan
30 Bedford	19 Concord	44 Londonderry	27 Dover	9 Washington
22 Hudson	17 Hooksett	26 Derry	19 Rochester	7 Claremont
22 Merrimack	12 Epsom	21 Windham	16 Milton	7 Lempster
19 Manchester	12 Pembroke	18 Salem	11 Farmington	7 Springfield
17 Amherst	11 Loudon	14 Sandown	11 Lee	7 Unity
17 Goffstown	11 Warner	13 Auburn	8 Durham	
15 Hancock	9 Franklin			
11 Milford	9 Hopkinton			
	9 Newbury			

Table 3. Largest number of turkeys per flock reported by town and county – Winter 2018

Belknap	Carroll	Cheshire	Coos	Grafton
90 Gilmanton	100 Ossipee	52 Walpole	100 Groveton	100 Bristol
65 Sanbornton	36 Tuftonboro	40 Westmoreland	54 Lancaster	50 Littleton
40 Belmont	33 Moultonboro	36 Marlow	40 Dalton	40 Enfield
38 Tilton	30 Wolfboro	30 Gilsum	36 Pittsburg	37 Warner
35 Barnstead		30 Stoddard	32 Berlin	33 Bath
35 Gilford		30 Sullivan	32 Dummer	32 Lisbon
30 Laconia				

Hillsboro	Merrimack	Rockingham	Strafford	Sullivan
60 Hudson	43 Hill	60 Chester	47 Dover	43 Charlestown
60 Weare	43 Pembroke	60 Exeter	45 Barrington	41 Unity
55 Pelham	34 Empsom	53 Northwood	40 Farmington	35 Claremont
51 Goffstown	33 Pittsfield	48 Londonderry	40 Milton	35 Lempster
50 Greenville	30 Andover	45 Epping	40 Rochester	
50 Wilton	30 Bow	43 Candia	40 Rollinsford	
43 Deering	30 Concord	42 N. Hampton	34 Lee	
42 Hollis	30 Newbury			

Table 4 Number of winter flock reports and number of turkeys for 10 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	17.15
2013	1,787	28,389	150	15.89
2014	1,520	21,532	83	14.05
2015	730	12,574	100	17.22
2016	2,118	38,436	134	18.15
2017	998	19,298	150	19.34
2018	1,372	20,224	100	14.74

Table 5. Food usage categories by turkey flocks, statewide – Winter 2018

Food Category	Number of Observation	Percentage of total Observations	
Acorns/beechnuts	82	14.77%	
Apples/crabapples	49	8.83%	
Birdfeeder	337	60.72%	73.69%
Fed corn/grain	72	12.97%	
Corn in manure	4	0.72%	2.52%
Corn in ensilage	9	1.62%	
Standing corn	1	0.18%	
Grasses	0	0	
Dried berries/fruits	1	0.18%	
Totals	555	100%	
(unknown foods)	(254)	31%	

Table 6. Avian pox virus reports in flocks – Winter 2018

WMU	Town	Locality	# in the flock	# with pox
D1	Lancaster	Fairgrounds Rt. 3	8	3
I1	Hill	Bear Hill Rd	43	5
L	Dover	#40 Toftree Lane	20	3
L	Lee	#18 Lamprey Lane	10	2
L	Lee	#450 Calef Hwy	10	1
L	Pembroke	Third Range Rd	22	1
M	Amherst	Roberge Drive	9	1
M	Raymond	Paradise Drive	22	?
M	Sandown	#302 Fremont Rd	35	1
M	Windham	Patricia Street	30	1