



2020 Online Winter Turkey Flock Survey

For the 12th consecutive year, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department conducted a wild turkey flock survey in which the public reported sightings of turkey flocks online. The reporting period was January 1st through March 31st. During that time, there were 2,309 flocks reported totaling 40,476 turkeys statewide. This was much higher than the 486 flocks totaling 9,833 turkeys reported in 2019 and also higher than the previous winter of 2018 when survey results yielded 1,372 flock observations totaling 20,224 turkeys.

The significant increase in observations during winter 2020 may be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. With government issued stay-at-home and social distancing recommendations, many people were either out of work, working less, or working from home during this time period and many businesses such as restaurants and movie theaters were closed. This likely resulted in many people having more time to wildlife watch and report their observations.

Numbers of turkeys reported

A total of 54 towns from every county except for Coos, had winter flocks of 50 or more turkeys per flock reported. The largest flocks were from: Exeter (150), Greenland (110), Alton (100), and Sullivan (100).

Table 1. Winter 2020 flocks of 50 or more turkeys by town and county.

BELKNAP	CARROLL	CHESHIRE	COOS	GRAFTON
Alton 100	Wolfeboro 62	Sullivan 100	n/a	Wentworth 75
Gilmanton 60	Freedom 58	Chesterfield 67		Hebron 71
Belmont 50	Tamworth 56	Surry 55		Alexandria 61
Gilford 50	Madison 50	Richmond 50		Bridgewater 55
Meredith 50	Ossipee 50	Walpole 50		Lyme 52
				Piermont 50
HILLSBOROUGH	MERRIMACK	ROCKINGHAM	STRAFFORD	SULLIVAN
Merrimack 74	Hopkinton 80	Exeter 150	Lee 75	Cornish 70
Deering 72	Danbury 75	Greenland 110	Durham 61	Claremont 67
Weare 60	Canterbury 70	Kensington 77	Rochester 60	Acworth 56
Sharon 58	Northfield 60	Fremont 75	Rollinsford 57	
Greenfield 54	Wilmot 60	Chester 68	Strafford 51	
Bedford 50	Epsom 55	Newington 66	Dover 50	
Goffstown 50	Franklin 53		Farmington 50	
New Boston 50			Middleton 50	
Temple 50				

The average number turkeys in a flock statewide was 17.53 turkeys, compared to 20.23 the previous year, or a 15% decrease in flock size from 2019. Unit M (588) had the highest number of flocks reported, followed by unit K (364), and unit J2 (306). These were the same three highest units as the previous year.

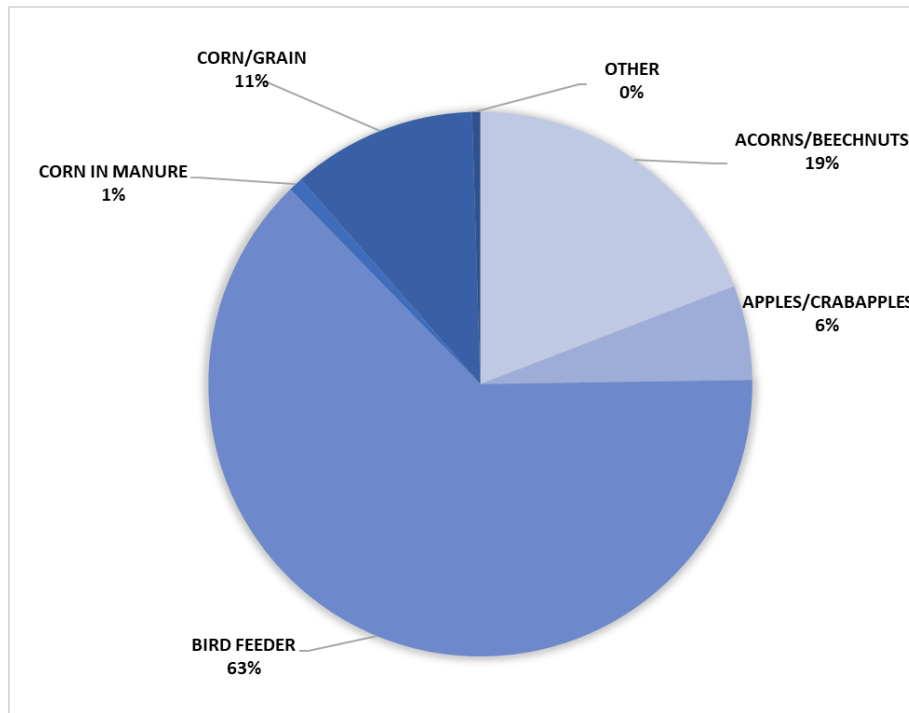
Table 2. Average number of turkeys per flock by WMU - Winter 2020

WMU	# Flocks	# Turkeys	Max	Average
A	13	126	27	9.69
B	15	161	38	10.73
C1	9	103	26	11.44
C2	1	3	3	3
D1	25	399	35	15.96
D2	40	655	50	16.38
E	24	281	26	11.71
F	38	626	51	16.47
G	127	2077	75	16.35
H1	57	1389	70	24.37
H2	141	2719	100	19.28
I1	136	2568	80	18.88
I2	98	1412	50	14.41
J1	48	1043	62	21.73
J2	306	5540	100	18.1
K	364	6129	72	16.84
L	279	5383	75	19.29
M	588	9862	150	16.77
Totals	2309	40476	.	17.53

Categories of food use

By far the greatest percentage of reported food use was 516 flocks (63%) feeding at backyard birdfeeders. Another 90 flocks (11%) were of turkeys feeding on corn/grains. The next highest category of food usage was 157 reports (19%) of turkeys feeding on acorns and beechnuts. Fall 2019 was an abundant year for hard mast with acorns and beech nuts readily found both in the woods and residential areas. Use of apples/crabapples was only 6%. Other foods included standing corn, corn silage, and grasses; combined these totaled less than 1% of reported observations.

Figure 1. Wild turkey food usage observations – Winter 2020



Disease monitoring

During winter 2020 turkeys with visible lesions which may be indicative of avian pox or LPDV were reported from 11 towns from 5 different Wildlife Management Units. Overall, reports of symptomatic turkeys remains low.

Table 3. Avian pox/LPDV infected turkeys observed by town - Winter 2020

WMU	TOWN	# WITH VIRUS
H2	ALSTEAD	1
M	CHESTER	1
J2	EPSOM	1
J2	LOUDON	3
I2	NEWBURY	1
M	NORTH HAMPTON	2
L	NORTHWOOD	1
M	SANDOWN	2
I2	SPRINGFIELD	6
J2	STRAFFORD	1
I2	SUTTON	2
	Total	21