

GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING WILD TURKEYS FOR SUMMER TURKEY SURVEY

Gobblers:

- ✓ Body appears black; In sunlight, metallic iridescence is noticeable
- ✓ Head brightly colored but variable with red, white, and blue
- ✓ 6+ inch beard protruding from chest
- ✓ During summer, gobblers do not typically display with tail fan open
- ✓ Often travel alone or in bachelor groups with other gobblers in summer



Typical gobbler in summer. Look for darker body and more brightly colored head than hens and poults. Adults gobblers almost always have a 6+ inch beard.

Hens:

- ✓ Body brown and tan; duller than gobblers
- ✓ Head gray or pale blue sometimes with light pink evident
- ✓ Hens typically beardless but some have thin beard
- ✓ Smaller than gobblers but usually larger than poults
- ✓ Several hens (with or without young) will often travel together in summer



Hen with poults. Note the dull brown body and gray or pale blue head.



Bearded hen with poults. About 5-10% of hens will have beards, making other characteristics more important in sex determination.

Poults (young of year):

- ✓ Young can vary in size from baseball-sized to almost full-grown
- ✓ Will almost always be seen with 1 or more adult hens
- ✓ Size difference is best way to identify poults
- ✓ Sexes not discernable
- ✓ No visible beard
- ✓ Older poults can be similar in size to adult hens, especially in late summer



Older poults can be similar in size to adult hens, making age determination difficult. When in doubt, record flocks of older poults and hens as “unknown.”