

Introduction to **DOCUMENTING TURKEY BROODS**



Why do we document turkey broods?

We survey turkey broods in the summer because the number of poults (young turkeys) produced by wild turkey hens, and the survival of poults helps us assess annual brood production and wild turkey population trends over time.

What information is needed to report an observation?

We are interested in collecting information on the status of adult hens with or without poults from across the state each summer. number of adult hens and the number of poults found together OR the number of adult hens found without poults. When you observe wild turkey hens or broodswith or without poults this situation, please be prepared to record the following information:

- Number of adult hens with the number of poults or
- Number of adult hens without poults and
- County and date of each observation.

What do we do with the information you help us collect?

Our ultimate goal is to collect 3,000 observations of adult hens with or without poults reported from volunteers across the state each summer, with at least 25 observations in each county. These observations and the resulting wild turkey population trend assessment provide the Indiana DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife with information to use for making wild turkey management decisions.

Other important considerations

- Please provide as accurate a count of both hens and poults as possible.
- It is just as important to record observations of hens without poults.
- One observation is one report submission. Even if you observe different broods from the same county on the same day, record each submission on the website separately.
- If you suspect that you are observing the same brood of turkeys repeatedly, only report your observation one time each month.
- By mid to late August, turkey poults are normally about two-thirds the size of an adult, and a juvenile gobbler (jake) can be about the same size as an adult hen. Use photos below to help guide your reporting.

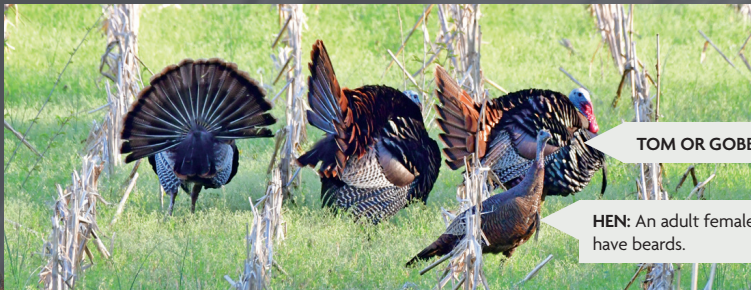
If you have any questions about your observations, please visit:
on.IN.gov/turkeybrood

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO IDENTIFYING FEMALE AND MALE WILD TURKEYS

Females are generally smaller in body size, about the size of a Canada Goose (8-12 pounds). Their coloration is duller brown to buff with no obvious iridescence. In general, female wild turkeys do not have a visible beard. In contrast, males have larger bodies, much larger than a Canada Goose (18-28 pounds). Their general coloration is very dark, appearing black, with an iridescent sheen. Most adult male wild turkeys have a visible beard.

TURKEY TERMS

Each of the five subspecies of American wild turkey has its distinct physical and behavioral characteristics, but here are common terms:



TOM OR GOBBLER: An adult male.

HEN: An adult female, about 5% of which have beards.

STRUT: Springtime courtship display of a gobler in which it fans its tail feathers, drops its wings, flares its back and breast feathers, changes its head and caruncle from blue to red or flesh tone, brings its head and neck down into an "s" shape, and moves about to attract hens.

SNOOD: A flap of skin that hangs down over the beak. Females prefer to mate with long-snooded males, and male turkeys defer to males with longer snoods.

CARUNCLE: Loose, bumpy skin on the head and neck thought to play a role in attracting a mate. The male's caruncles can become engorged with blood and turn red, white or blue.

WATTLE: A flap of loose skin hanging under the chin and neck.

BEARD: A tuft of bristly feathers off the chest of males, although some hens have beards. The longer the beard, the older and healthier the bird. Some toms have multiple beards.



POULT: Newborns, male or female.



JENNY: A juvenile female.



JAKE: A juvenile male.



SPUR: A pointed growth off the back of a turkey's leg just above the foot. Both sexes are born with a small button spur, but the male's continues to grow and the female's does not. Older, more dominant birds have the longest, sharpest spurs, which allow them to fend off younger birds when vying for the right to breed.

—Multiple sources

PHOTOGRAPHS OF DIFFERENT SCENARIOS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER WHEN OBSERVING TURKEY BROODS

You may encounter several different scenarios when you are documenting turkey broods. We have included photographs of those common scenarios to help you feel more confident about counting the number of hens and poults you have observed. Remember, documenting hens without poults is an equally important observation as a hen with poults!

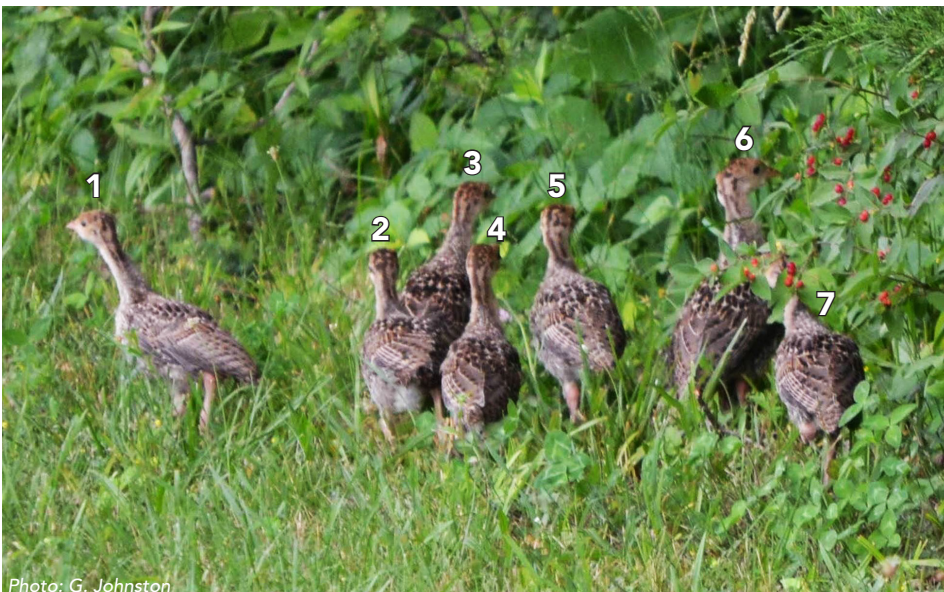


Example 1

Adult hen with no poults.

HOW TO RECORD:

Adult hen: 1, Poults: 0



Example 2

Poults with no adult hen.

HOW TO RECORD:

Adult hen: 0, Poults: 7

Photo: G. Johnston



Example 3

Adult hen with very young poults.

HOW TO RECORD:

Adult hen: 1, Poults: 3

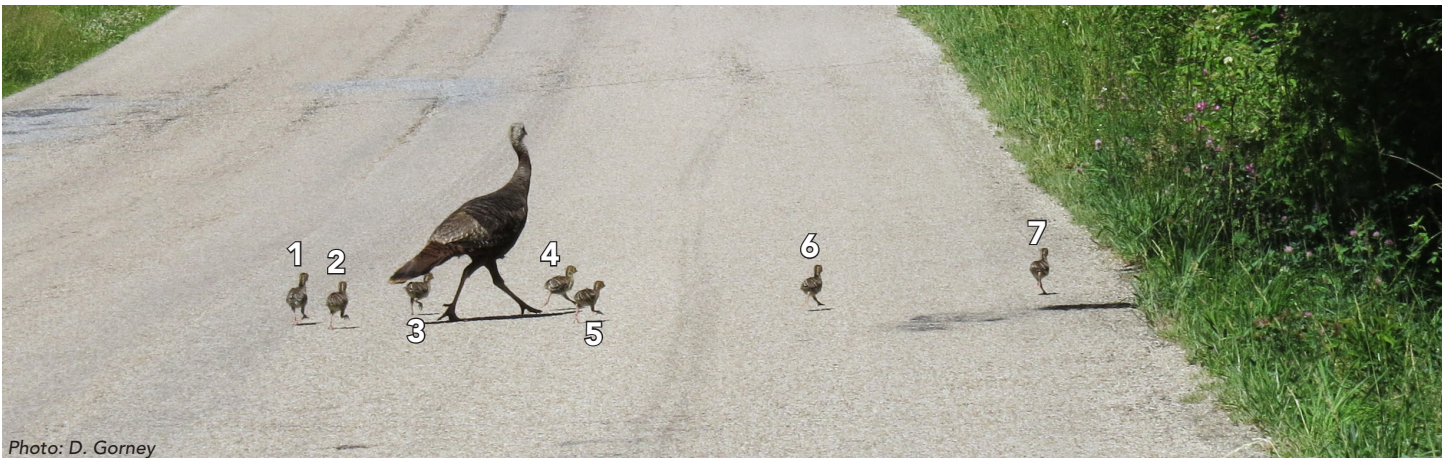


Photo: D. Gorney

Example 4

Adult hen with one week old poults.

HOW TO RECORD:

Adult hen: 1, Poults: 7



Example 5

Adult hen with two week old poults.

HOW TO RECORD:
Adult hen: 1, Poults: 5



Example 6

Adult hen with young poults.

HOW TO RECORD:
Adult hen: 1, Poults: 7



Example 7

Adult hen with poults.

HOW TO RECORD:

Adult hen: 1, Poults: 8

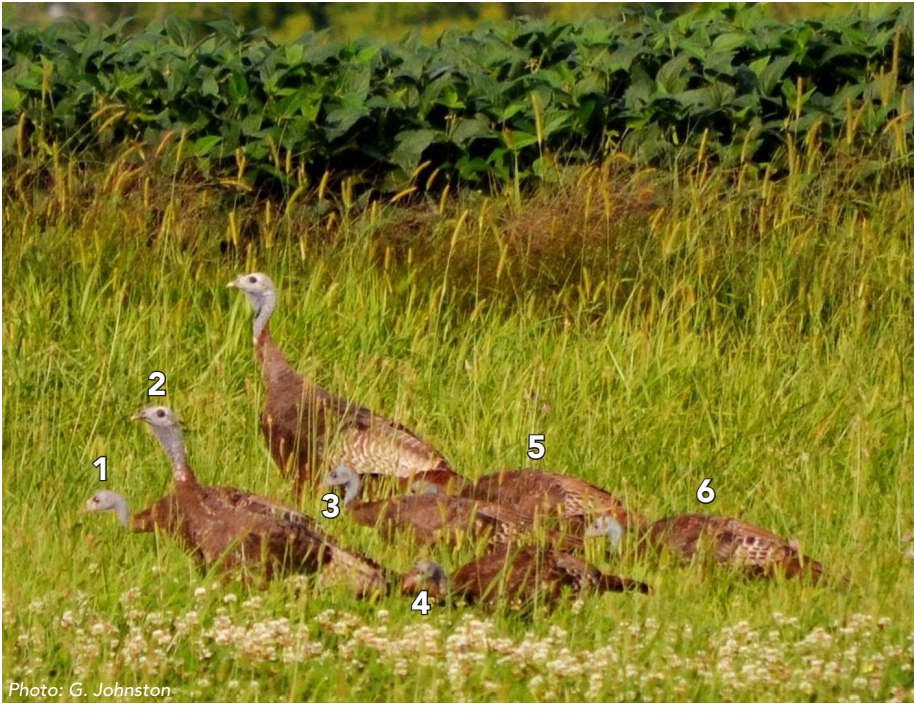


Example 8

Adult hen with poults.

HOW TO RECORD:

Adult hen: 1, Poults: 9



Example 9

Adult hen with nearly grown poults.

HOW TO RECORD:

Adult hen: 1, Poults: 6



Example 10

Adult hen with nearly grown poults.

HOW TO RECORD:

Adult hen: 1, Poults: 4

Example 11

Two adult hens with poults.

HOW TO RECORD:

Adult hen: 2, Poults: 3



Example 12

Two adult hens with poults.

HOW TO RECORD:

Adult hen: 2, Poults: 11





Example 13

Four adult hens with poults.

HOW TO RECORD:

Adult hen: 4, Poults: 4