

Wild Turkeys

Wild turkeys were first introduced into California about 100 years ago with many subsequent reintroductions throughout the state. They have become well established in many areas, including the Bay Area. Turkey nests and eggs are protected by Federal law.



Wild turkeys live in woodland habitats, which contain both trees for roosting and open grasslands for foraging and nesting. Local turkey populations have recently increased in size, with some flocks containing 50 or more birds.

Turkeys are ground feeders, and consume a wide variety of food including grasses, grains, acorns, fruits, insects and agricultural crops. In particular, their fondness for acorns may hinder oak regeneration and rob native wildlife of a valuable food resource. Turkeys are a protected game species.

Many residents enjoy seeing these impressive birds; however, they have become a nuisance in some suburban areas due to the damage they can cause by foraging in gardens and landscaping and the droppings they leave behind. In many cases, these problems are caused or exacerbated by residents who feed the turkeys and thereby attract them to residential neighborhoods. Feeding wild turkeys puts them in jeopardy by altering their wild behavior and encouraging close contact with people.

If wild turkeys begin roosting in your trees or causing damage to your property and you need help, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife can provide specific advice. Turkeys can be discouraged from your property with motion-activated sprinklers.