

Wild Turkeys

As upland game birds, wild turkeys are not a federally protected species under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act but are protected by state law in North Carolina. Turkeys are a big game species.

What is the common damage caused by turkeys? Most problems with wild turkey stem from birds being fed either intentionally or unintentionally by people. Individuals may have nuisance turkeys that will not leave the property or cause lawn damage when scratching for food. Turkeys can act aggressive toward their reflections, thinking it is another bird, and cause damage to windows.

Can a WCA write a depredation permit? No, wildlife damage control agents are not authorized to write depredation permits for big game. Depredation permits for turkeys can only be issued by [district biologists](#). The individual incurring the property damage can have a WCA listed as a second party on the depredation permit.

Can turkeys be relocated? Relocation of wild turkeys would fall to the discretion of the District Biologists. Any relocation options would have to be approved by the appropriate district biologist.

What can I do with sick or injured turkeys? Wild turkeys cannot be rehabilitated. Advise the individual to leave the birds alone and let nature take its course.

Are there safety concerns? No, but turkeys are large birds so be cautious when handling.

Non-lethal Options:

- Harassment
 - Loud noises or spraying the bird with a garden hose can be effective means of harassment. Harassment is most effective when birds have just begun coming into the area.
- Exclusion
 - Toms can act aggressively when they see their own reflection in windows, especially during breeding season. Often people will use soap, tempera paint, or one-way transparent tape to prevent birds from seeing their reflections.

Lethal Options:

- Depredation permits for wild turkey can only be issued through the district biologists.
 - A WCA can be listed as a second party, allowing them to do the removal.
- As turkeys are not protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, no federal permits are required for removal.
- Male or bearded turkeys can be taken during the established hunting season.

