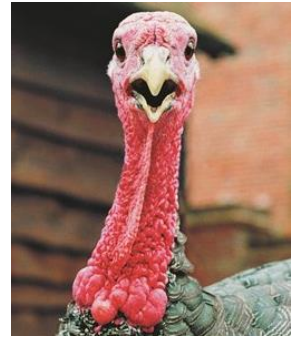


Let's Talk Turkey

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Turkeys have gone through some tough times in New Jersey, and not because most of us will include one as part of our Thanksgiving Fest.



By the mid 1800's there were only a few turkeys left in New Jersey due to the overhunting and loss of mature forest habitat. During the early 20th century their populations began to increase as the forests began to regrow providing the habitat they require, but it was a slow process. To help speed their recovery, NJ Fish and Wildlife with the help of the NJ Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation reintroduced 22 turkeys from New York and Vermont to the Delaware Water Gap area in 1977. In 1979, biologist live trapped and relocated turkeys throughout the state and today NJ has well over 20,000 turkeys strutting through our forests and fields.

Other NJ native wildlife species including white tailed deer and beaver shared the same story as the turkey. All of these animals were brought back from the brink of extirpation in New Jersey with reintroduction and conservation efforts of the NJ DEP.



SNOODS AND WATTLES

Male Turkey, known as Toms, are an interesting sight to see. The fleshy skin hanging from the top of the tom's head is called the snood, the fleshy area under the chin is called the wattle. Both the snood and wattle can change colors to red, blue or white to show their physical health or emotional state.

Turkey Facts:

- A female turkey can lay one egg a day (up to 17 eggs) but all the eggs will hatch at the same time
- Turkeys can run up to 25 mph and fly up to 55 mph
- Beards, modified bristly feathers on the tom's chest, are thought to help attract females. The longest beard on record is 22.5 inches!!
- Benjamin Franklin once honored the turkey in a letter to his daughter by stating it as being "a more respectable bird" than the bald eagle but contrary to common belief never proposed the turkey as a symbol for America.