**FIELD MARKS**

Length: 1.6 ft.; wingspan: 3 ft.; large round head, brown and white barred feathers, brown eyes, and no ear tufts; females are larger than males; hooting sound described as: “Who cooks for you, who cooks for you all?”

**LIFE HISTORY**

Females lay 2-3 eggs in tree hollows in the spring. Incubation period is 26-30 days. The male provides food for the female and chicks. Born blind, young owls leave the nest at 6 weeks, yet remain with the parents until autumn.

**DIET**

- In the wild, barred owls feed on small mammals, birds, amphibians, insects and fish.
- In captivity, they eat small rodents and chicks. Unlike hawks and falcons, owls carry small prey in beak and swallow it whole, head first. Indigestible material is regurgitated as pellets.

**THREATS TO SURVIVAL**

- Barred owls are not threatened at this time.
- Other owl species, including spotted owls in western North America and several tropical owls, are threatened by habitat destruction (logging, development) which reduces suitable nesting and prey habitat.
- The spread of barred owls into the northwestern U.S. represents an additional threat to spotted owls through habitat competition and interbreeding/hybridization.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**

- Barred owl populations are currently stable and expanding.
California Kingsnake

Class: Reptilia  
Order: Squamata  
Family: Colubridae  
Genus species: Lampropeltis getulus californiae

FIELD MARKS

Length is 30-50 in.; coloration varies with range; 20-40 dorsal crossbands extend to belly.

LIFE HISTORY

Lay from 2-24 eggs between May and August under leaves and plant litter. Incubation period is 60 days. Young are 7-8 in. long.

DIET

• In the wild, kingsnakes eat small mammals, bird eggs, and reptiles, including other snakes.
• In captivity, they eat small mice.

THREATS TO SURVIVAL

• Often killed by humans who mistake them for venomous coral snakes.
• Removed from the wild for the pet trade.

CONSERVATION STATUS

• They are not currently endangered. However, California and Arizona have laws prohibiting collection of wild kingsnakes for the pet trade.

RANGE & HABITAT

• California, Arizona, southern Nevada, Utah, and Baja California, Mexico
• Found in a variety of habitats: desert, chaparral, forest, woodland, and grassland

Kingsnakes have earned their name because of their habit of feeding on other snakes including poisonous rattlesnakes. An anti-toxin in the kingsnake’s blood makes it nearly immune to rattlesnake venom.
Corn Snake
Class: Reptilia  Order: Squamata  Family: Colubridae  Genus species: Elaphe guttata

FIELD MARKS
Length is 30-48 in.; coloration varies widely from reds to silvers within and among populations; a distinct “spearhead” marking runs to a point between the eyes; also known as “Red Rat Snake.”

LIFE HISTORY
Lay from 3-30 eggs in May-July. Females lay eggs in decaying stumps or vegetation. Incubation period is 60 days, and eggs are not cared for by adults. Young are 8-14 in. long.

DIET
• In the wild, corn snakes eat small rodents, birds, eggs, lizards, frogs, and bats.
• In captivity, they eat small mice. Cornsnakes use constriction to kill their prey.

THREATS TO SURVIVAL
• Habitat destruction and human persecution threaten the corn snake and many other native snake species.
• Removal from the wild for the pet trade is also a threat.

CONSERVATION STATUS
• Corn snakes are not currently endangered.

RANGE & HABITAT
• New Jersey to Key West, Florida along Atlantic Seaboard
• Favor relatively dry and exposed habitats with abundant small mammal burrows
• Corn snakes are most abundant in sandy pinewood habitats of southeastern United States

The Corn Snake is usually nocturnal, hiding during the day under loose tree bark, in animal burrows, or in old abandoned buildings.
Eastern Screech Owl (Red Phase)

**Class:** Aves  **Order:** Strigiformes  **Family:** Strigidae  **Genus species:** Megascops asio (formerly Otus asio)

**FIELD MARKS**

Length up to 10 in., wingspan up to 24 in., weight about 7 oz. There are two color morphs (red and gray). The adult red phase is red-brown overall, with reddish stripes, bars, and spots on underparts, and barred wings and tail.

**LIFE HISTORY**

Eastern Screech Owls nest almost exclusively in deciduous tree cavities. Pairs mate for life and often reuse nest sites. They have an elaborate courtship ritual, including multiple calls, male head bobbing, bill touching, and mutual preening. Females lay an average clutch of 3–5 eggs, which they incubate for about 26 days. Adults tend to remain near breeding areas year-round while juveniles disperse in autumn, often as groups of siblings.

**DIET**

- In the wild, screech owls capture small rodents, bats, moles, birds, insects, spiders, fish, reptiles, and amphibians.
- In captivity, they eat small rodents and chicks.

**THREATS TO SURVIVAL**

- Deforestation and development threaten most owl habitats including screech owls’.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**

- Eastern screech owl populations are currently stable.
Great Horned Owl

Class: Aves  Order: Strigiformes  Family: Strigidae  Genus species: Bubo virginianus

FIELD MARKS
Length of head and body is 1.5 ft.; wingspan is 4 ft.; barred markings, a white throat bib, and large ear tufts; call is variable, but usually deep, resonant, six-noted hoot, “whoo! whoo whoo-whoo! whoo! whoo!”; soft, saw-toothed edge on flight feathers allows owls to fly silently.

LIFE HISTORY
Breed January-February. Nest in abandoned nests of hawks, eagles, crows, and even squirrels. Clutch consists of 2-8 round, white eggs. Male and female incubate eggs for 26-30 days.

DIET
• In the wild, great-horned owls eat small to medium-sized mammals (including skunks!), birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and insects.
• In captivity, they eat rodents and chicks.

THREATS TO SURVIVAL
• Habitat destruction threatens their survival in some areas.
• Sometimes shot as pests by farmers and game hunters.

CONSERVATION STATUS
• Great horned owls are not currently endangered; they and all other native birds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

RANGE & HABITAT
• North and South America
• Woodlands, rainforests, deserts, marshes, and mountainous regions

Ear tufts are used in visual communication; they play no role in hearing.
Prairie Falcon

Class: Aves  Order: Falconiformes  Family: Falconidae  Genus species: Falco mexicanus

FIELD MARKS
Length is 17-20 in.; wingspan is 35-43 in.; streamlined body with long pointed wings, large head; tail narrows at the tip; heavy, sharp, hook bill, and strong, curved talons; uniformly light brown on head and top of wings, light underside with streaks of brown and black axillars (base of underwings).

LIFE HISTORY
Mating system is monogamous. Female lays and incubates 3-6 pinkish-white eggs in nests high above ground. Incubation is 29-35 days. Male feeds female during incubation.

DIET
• In the wild, falcons feed on small mammals, birds, amphibians, and insects.
• In captivity, they eat small rodents and chicks.

THREATS TO SURVIVAL
• Bounty hunting and habitat destruction have reduced prairie falcon populations substantially.
• Insecticides (such as DDT) and mercury concentrated in prey have caused an increasing number of eggs with thin shells, which fail to hatch.

CONSERVATION STATUS
• Listed as a threatened species by the U.S. Department of the Interior since 1973.
• Replacing the peregrine falcon in the Rocky Mountains because it nests earlier; it is reducing the number of nest sites available for the peregrine, an endangered species.
Red-Tailed Hawk
Class: Aves  Order: Falconiformes  Family: Accipitridae  Genus species: Buteo jamaicensis

FIELD MARKS
Length of head and body is 1.5-3.0 ft.; wingspan is 4 ft.; average weight is 2 lbs.; upper body brown, underparts light with varying amounts of darker spotting or streaking across abdomen; upper surface of tail characteristically rusty colored or red-tinted.

LIFE HISTORY
Nests are made of sticks and branches and are built in trees or on the side of cliffs. Female lays 1-4 eggs. Incubation lasts 28-32 days. Female does most of the incubation; the male feeds her throughout this period.

DIET
• In the wild, red-tailed hawks feed on birds, rabbits, small mammals, and snakes.
• In captivity, they eat rodents and chicks.

THREATS TO SURVIVAL
• There are no current threats to the survival of red-tailed hawks.
• They have successfully adapted to sharing habitat with increasing human populations.
• Since World War II, populations of most hawk species have dropped due to persecution by humans, elimination of habitat, and pesticides (such as DDT) in prey, which cause thinning of egg shells.

CONSERVATION STATUS
• Although they are not currently endangered, red-tailed hawks are protected by state and federal law. Enforcement is difficult, however.

RANGE & HABITAT
• Virtually all of North and Central America including tropical forests, deserts, and tundra
• Prefer to live on forest edges or grasslands with tall trees

Red-tailed hawks are soaring hawks. They circle overhead and drop in a steep dive onto their prey.
Saw-Whet Owl

Class: Aves  Order: Strigiformes  Family: Strigidae  Genus species: Aegolius acadicus

FIELD MARKS
Length of head and body is 7-8.5 in.; wingspan is 17 in. Smaller than a screech owl and lacking ear tufts. These owls have bright yellow eyes and conspicuous white eyebrows forming a “V” above the bill; derives name from characteristic alarm call which sounds like a saw blade being sharpened.

LIFE HISTORY
Breed mid-March to mid-April and usually nest in the abandoned hole of a woodpecker such as the common flicker. The nest is lined only with breast feathers. Four to eight eggs are laid two days apart and hatch after 28 days. The female begins to incubate the tiny eggs once she lays them, resulting in young of different ages in the nest.

DIET
• In the wild, saw-whet owls eat small mammals, birds, and amphibians.
• In captivity, they eat small rodents and chicks.

THREATS TO SURVIVAL
• Saw-whet owls are not threatened. Individuals may be preyed upon by barred owls.

CONSERVATION STATUS
• Population is currently stable. Because the saw-whet is a secretive bird, it may be more common than originally believed.

RANGE & HABITAT
• Southeast Alaska, Canada, western and northeast United States to central Mexico
• Coniferous or deciduous forests and swamps

This is the only small, tuftless owl that can be seen in the eastern and central United States. This owl typically weighs only 85 grams or about 3 ounces. In spite of its light weight, it has a 17 inch wingspan.
Snowy Owl

Class: Aves  Order: Strigiformes  Family: Strigidae  Genus species: Nyctea scandiaca

FIELD MARKS
Largest of the North American owls; length of body is 20.7 in.; wingspan is almost 5 ft.; weighs 3-4 lbs.; white with dark flecks on feathers more pronounced in females; call ranges from deep croak to a shrill whistle and can be heard from 2 miles away.

LIFE HISTORY
Prefer to nest in areas with rocky ridges or outcrops. Female lays 3-13 eggs, depending on lemming population. Male feeds mother and her young. Snowy owls can live up to 35 years in captivity.

DIET
• In the wild, snowy owls feed on lemmings, arctic hares, rodents, waterfowl.
• In captivity, they eat small rodents and chicks.

THREATS TO SURVIVAL
• The tundra is a fragile environment. Low temperatures and a short growing season limit regrowth and retard decomposition of pollutants such as oil, sewage, and pesticides.
• As the demand for oil increases, the risk of lasting damage to this arctic environment increases. Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would substantially damage the habitat of this and other sensitive species. For more info and to take action, go to http://www.savearcticrefuge.org/

CONSERVATION STATUS
• Snowy owls are not currently endangered. However, they may become so if their habitat is not protected from development and extreme climate change.
• Snowy owls are protected by law.

RANGE & HABITAT
• Circumpolar arctic regions
• Nests north of tree line and on barren ground
• Every four or five years, due to fluctuations in abundance of prey, they migrate to Southern Europe, Southern United States, and Northern China

Very few young owls survive due to predators and short arctic summers which offer little time to learn hunting skills.
Black Vulture

**Class:** Aves  **Order:** Falconiformes  **Family:** Cathartidae  **Genus species:** *Coragyps atratus*

**FIELD MARKS**

Length: 23–27 in., wingspan: 52–56 in., weight: 4-5 lbs. This bird has a short, square tail, whitish patches toward the wing tips, and a bare, blackish head. Their legs are longer and whiter than those of turkey vultures. Display quick, labored flapping followed by short glides compared to longer, smoother glides associated with turkey vultures.

**LIFE HISTORY**

Also known as the Black Buzzard, Carrion Crow, or Black Scavenger, these birds lay 1-3 pale green/blue eggs annually from March-May. The females lay them on the ground under logs or in rock cavities. Incubation period lasts 37-48 days, and the young fledge after 70 days.

**DIET**

- In the wild, vultures are commonly seen gathering after an animal's death where they consume fresh or putrid carrion. They also eat grasshoppers, fish, and tadpoles.

**THREATS TO SURVIVAL**

- There are no current threats to the survival of black vultures.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**

- Like all migratory birds, black vultures are protected from hunters by state and federal law. Even without lawful protection they are unlikely targets because hunters recognize their important role as scavengers.

**RANGE & HABITAT**

- Commonly found in open fields ranging from Texas and Arkansas north and east to New Jersey and Florida in the US.
- Also found in Mexico, Central America, and South America. They breed in thickets or woodlands.
- It is unusual for Black Vultures to be found this far north, and their range may be expanding due to global climate change. On summer days we have had over 100 vultures here at the Trevor Zoo which changes their status from "guests" to "pests."

Black vultures have no head feathers because of their eating habits.
Bobcat

Class: Mammalia  Order: Carnivora  Family: Felidae  Genus species: Lynx rufus

FIELD MARKS
Length of head and body is 2-3.5 ft.; length of tail is 4-8 in.; weight is 13-40 lbs.; brown-spotted coat with white underside, short ear tufts, and yellow-brown eyes; males usually larger than females.

LIFE HISTORY
Home ranges of male bobcats overlap those of one or more females. Males mate with as many females as possible, while keeping other males away. Dens are located in caves, rock crevices, or hollow logs and trees. Females line the den with leaves and moss. Gestation is 60-63 days. Average of 2 kits per litter born in late winter.

DIET
• In the wild, bobcats feed on rabbits, rodents, and birds.
• In captivity, they eat rodents and chicks.

THREATS TO SURVIVAL
• The most serious threat to their survival is the fur trade. An intricate matching system requires a large number of furs to make each garment.
• Their populations are also threatened by habitat destruction and persecution as pests.

CONSERVATION STATUS
• Although the bobcat is not currently threatened, it may become so without fur trade regulation and habitat protection.

RANGE & HABITAT
• Southern Canada to Mexico
• Rocky, rough ground, thickets, and swamps

Bobcats tend to be solitary animals that hunt by night and therefore rely on keen eyesight and hearing to stalk their prey. Their sense of smell is not acute.
Common Raven

Class: Aves  Order: Passeriformes  Family: Corvidae  Genus species: Corvus corax

FIELD MARKS
Largest of the crow family. Tends to be solitary. Body length ranges from 22-27 in. and wingspan can be up to 4 ft. Females are generally smaller than males. Males average 3.75 lbs. and females weigh about 2.5 lbs.

LIFE HISTORY
Ravens build large, bulky nest in cliffs, crevices, or in coniferous trees. A nest commonly reaches 2-3 feet across and 4 feet high. Ravens will lay 3-7 eggs between March and June. Eggs are light green with brown spots. The female incubates the eggs for 18-20 days. Young can fly 35-42 days after hatching. Pairs mate for life.

DIET
• In the wild, ravens are scavengers, eating mostly animal carcasses. They also eat frogs, mice, worms, crabs, eggs, berries, insects, and have been known to take young songbirds from nests.
• In captivity, they eat kibble, bread, rodents, and vegetables.

THREATS TO SURVIVAL
• Loss of natural habitat
• Consumption of poisoned carcasses
• Trapping

CONSERVATION STATUS
• Raven populations are currently stable.

RANGE & HABITAT
• Widespread in North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa
• Present in virtually all habitats excluding tropical rainforest

Ravens are very intelligent, with cognitive abilities comparable to parrots. Ravens use tools and store food in caches for later consumption. They are important spirit animals for northwest coast Native Americans.
Domestic Rabbit

Class: Mammalia  Order: Lagomorpha  Family: Leporidae  Genus species: Oryctolagus cuniculus

FIELD MARKS
Length of head and body is 12-18 in.; weight is 1-5 lbs.; long hind feet, large ears and eyes; very soft white, black, brown, or gray fur.

LIFE HISTORY
Highly territorial breeding groups. Give birth to 3-10 helpless offspring after gestation period of 28-33 days.

DIET
• In the wild, rabbits eat vegetables, grasses, seeds, and browse.
• In captivity, they eat rabbit pellets, hay, and maple browse. Rabbits are coprophagous—they ingest their own feces in order to obtain vitamins synthesized during the first passing of food through the gut.

THREATS TO SURVIVAL
• Few are able to survive more than a year in the wild due to predation, hunting, and crossing roadways. These factors, however, do not pose a threat to the survival of the species.

CONSERVATION STATUS
• Modern agriculture has created open grasslands, available food sources, and elimination of natural predators—all favorable conditions for explosions in rabbit populations.
• Management strategies include poison baits, buffer crops, repellents, fencing, shooting, and trapping.
• The introduction of the rabbit to Australia led to the devastation of virgin habitats and cultivated areas between 1900-1959.
• In Australia, authorities introduced the virus myxomatosis between 1951 and 1952. Although the virus eliminated massive numbers of rabbits, the survivors have begun to develop immunity to it.

RANGE & HABITAT
* Originated in southwestern Europe but have been introduced to all continents
* Dig “warrens” in open fields

The only known auditory signals are the characteristic foot thumps resulting from alarm or aggression and the distress screams when captured.
North American Porcupine

**Class:** Mammalia  
**Order:** Rodentia  
**Family:** Erethizontidae  
**Genus species:** Erethizon dorsatum

**FIELD MARKS**

Length of head and body is 2-3 ft.; length of tail is 6-12 in.; weight is 7-15 lb., although some can weigh up to 40 lbs.; soft, woolly underfur covered with up to 30,000 sensitive stiff guard hairs and longer soft quills (2-4 in.); underparts lack quills.

**LIFE HISTORY**

Breed from November to April. Elaborate courtship ritual where the male vocalizes, dances around the female, and sprays her with urine. One porcupette born after gestation of 210 days. Weaning can occur as early as two weeks in the wild; young can eat vegetation several days after birth.

**DIET**

- In the wild, porcupines eat tree parts, fruit, nuts, seeds.
- In captivity, they eat rodent chow, fruit, vegetables, and browse.

**THREATS TO SURVIVAL**

- There are no current threats to the porcupine’s survival.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**

- The fisher, a member of the weasel family that preys on porcupines, has been reintroduced to some areas of North America to help control porcupine populations.

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**RANGE & HABITAT**

- North America from Alaska to northern Mexico, except the central and southeastern US
- Spend most of time in a single “station” tree

Contrary to popular belief, porcupines cannot throw their quills; they become detached when they detect pressure.
North American River Otter

**Class:** Mammalia  **Order:** Carnivora  **Family:** Mustelidae  **Genus species:** Lontra canadensis

**FIELD MARKS**

Length from head to tail is 2-3 ft.; weight is 10-31 lbs.; streamlined body, short legs with webbed, clawed feet; tightly packed underfur with long, water-repellent guard hairs.

**LIFE HISTORY**

Breed March through April. Implantation of fertilized eggs may take a few days to 10 months, depending on environmental conditions. 2-3 kits are usually born the following Spring.

**DIET**

- In the wild, river otters eat fish, crayfish, worms, snakes, birds, small mammals, and some plant matter.
- In captivity, they eat ground meat with vitamins, chicks, fish, vegetables, and cooked eggs.

**THREATS TO SURVIVAL**

- Suffer from over-hunting and habitat destruction.
- Viewed as pests by fishermen who believe otters threaten fish populations.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**

- North American river otters have never been abundant in their range, and the fur trade caused populations to decline dramatically.
- There have been successful reintroduction programs, however, and there is a trapping season regulated by state conservation laws in many parts of the US.
- Although not listed as endangered, international commercial trade of the otter is regulated by international law.
Red Fox

**Class:** Mammalia  **Order:** Carnivora  **Family:** Canidae  **Genus species:** Vulpes vulpes

**FIELD MARKS**
Length of head and body is 1.5-3.0 ft.; length of tail is 12-19 in.; height is 10-19 in.; weight is 10-20 lbs.; coat is rust to flame red on the upper body and white to black on underparts, tip of tail is often white; pointed nose and ears, long bushy tail; anal glands for scent marking.

**RANGE & HABITAT**
- Arctic circle to North African and Central American deserts and Asiatic steppes; Arctic tundra to European city centers; natural southern limit in Sudan
- Prefer woods, farmland, and marshes

*Red foxes sleep outside, even in freezing weather, using a den mainly for refuge or raising kits.*

**LIFE HISTORY**
Breed during January and February. Gestation is 60-63 days. 4-9 kits are born in a grass-lined den. Males assist in feeding the nursing vixen and kits.

**DIET**
- In the wild, red foxes eat small rodents and rabbits, bird eggs, insects, fruit, nuts, vegetation, and carrion; in season, fruit can comprise as much as 90% of their diet.
- In captivity, they eat dog kibble, mice, chicks, and apples.

**THREATS TO SURVIVAL**
- There are no threats to the survival of the red fox. They adapt well to human encroachment. However, they are often killed for sport and or predator control, hunted for pelts, or slaughtered for rabies control.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**
- With the clearing of forests, red foxes have increased in both abundance and range, despite being persecuted as a pest.
Red Wolf

**Class:** Mammalia  **Order:** Carnivora  **Family:** Canidae  **Genus species:** Canis rufus gregoryi

**FIELD MARKS**
Stand about 26 in. at the shoulder; 4 ft. long from the tip of the nose to the end of the tail; weight is 45-85 lbs.; reddish-tawny coat with gray and black highlights.

**LIFE HISTORY**
Only the alpha pair in the pack will breed. Breed mid-February to mid-March. Give birth to 4-9 pups in April and May in den after gestation of 61-63 days.

**DIET**
- In the wild, red wolves eat small mammals, deer, fruit, & vegetables.
- In captivity, they eat dog kibble, ground meat, small rodents, fruit, and vegetables.

**THREATS TO SURVIVAL**
- Expanding human populations and land clearing.
- By the mid-1900’s, trapping, poisoning, and shooting of wild wolves caused a breakdown of the red wolf social structure. This encouraged cross-breeding with the gray wolf and coyote which threatened red wolf genetic integrity.
- As numbers became fewer, they became more susceptible to parasitic infections such as mange, hookworm, & heartworm.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**
- The Red Wolf is part of AZA’s Species Survival Plan program.
- In 1973, to save this endangered species from extinction, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service captured the 14 remaining pure red wolves to establish a captive breeding program.
- Presently, there are between 180 and 200 red wolves at 33 captive breeding facilities in the United States.
- As a result of reintroduction programs, the wild red wolf population numbered around 100 individuals in 20 family groups in Northeastern North Carolina in 2003.
Turkey Vulture

**Class:** Aves  **Order:** Falconiformes  **Family:** Cathartidae  **Genus species:** Cathartes aura

**FIELD MARKS**
Bare head is red to purple-red in adults, black for immature birds. This large black bird has two-toned blackish wings which it holds in a “V” when soaring.

**LIFE HISTORY**
From February to June, 1–3 eggs are laid on the bare floor of caves or cliffs or in the rotted wood of old trees and stumps. They are incubated by both parents for 38–41 days. Young can fly at 70–80 days.

**DIET**
- In the wild, vultures are commonly seen gathering shortly after an animal’s death, and they consume both fresh and putrid carrion. They have also been known to eat grasshoppers, fish, and tadpoles.
- In captivity, they eat rodents and chicks.

**THREATS TO SURVIVAL**
- There are no threats to the survival of the turkey vulture. An ample supply of road kill has allowed this animal to flourish.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**
- Like all migratory birds, turkey vultures are protected from hunting by state and federal law.

**RANGE & HABITAT**
- Southern Canada and most of the US, expanding to northern New England where it was once rare
- Usually seen soaring over open land or cleaning up roadsides
- Roost in deciduous woodland habitats

*During migration, vultures have been known to soar at altitudes of 4,000 to 5,000 feet. Unlike most birds, turkey vultures have a keen sense of smell and have located prey when temporarily blinded under experimental conditions. Because of their eating habits, turkey vultures have no head feathers.*
**Wild Turkey**

**Class:** Aves  
**Order:** Galliformes  
**Family:** Meleagrididae  
**Genus species:** Meleagris gallopavo

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**FIELD MARKS**

Length is 4-5 ft.; weight is 6-20 lbs.; males may be twice as large as females; dark plumage with iridescent bronze and green, more pronounced in males; head and neck free of feathers, with wattles and other ornaments used in displays; males have a “beard” of coarse bristles extending from the upper breast.

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**LIFE HISTORY**

Polygynous (one male mates with several females). Courtship ritual involves male displaying tail fan, strutting, and puffing up to appear larger than rivals. Female lays 8-15 eggs per brood and is solely responsible for incubating them. More than one female may lay eggs in one nest, so that there may be as many as 20-30 eggs.

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**DIET**

- In the wild, turkeys eat seeds, berries, and acorns, invertebrates, and small vertebrates.
- In captivity, they eat game and turkey grain, fruit, and acorns.

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**THREATS TO SURVIVAL**

- After European settlement, they disappeared from original range due to relentless hunting and habitat destruction.
- Once seen as an agricultural pest.
- Hunted and raised as a valuable source of meat.

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**CONSERVATION STATUS**

- Today in the U.S., wild turkeys are more widely distributed than in early 20th century because of reintroduction efforts and habitat improvement.