

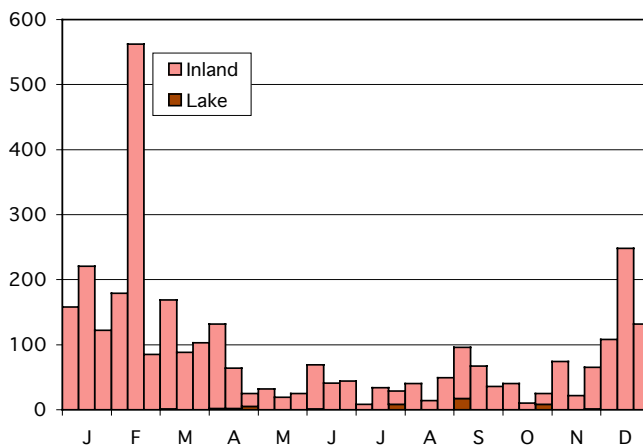
## Wild Turkey

## *Meleagris gallopavo*

### Historical Information

First Published Record: The earliest published account of this species involved 500 birds reported in Clay County 14 February 1848 (DNR files).

Butler (1890) referred to the Wild Turkey as a resident, “which was formerly common throughout the state, but now extinct in most places.” Keller et al. (1979) noted that it was a “locally restocked permanent resident,” which was more numerous in southern reaches of the state. Mumford and Keller (1984) provide a concise summary of this species in Indiana, noting that it was likely extirpated by 1900. These authors also detail the reintroduction of birds with stocks from Arkansas and Missouri.



### Status

Physical Evidence: Two specimens are housed in the Indiana State Museum (Richards 1987).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
Indiana State Museum				2
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	5	6	6	6
Central Tier	6	7	7	7
Southern Tier	5	6	6	6
Entire State	5	5	6	5

### Current Status

Following the reintroduction, Wild Turkey numbers have gradually increased in recent years. It has been recorded in 61 counties and is now Fairly Common (5) to Rare (7) throughout much of the state. DNR data show that the number of turkeys taken annually by Indiana hunters has increased exponentially from about 200 in 1985 to almost 11,000 in 2002 (S. Backs, personal communication).

### Occurrence

The largest numbers occur in the southern tier and west-central Indiana, but turkeys have been reported in at least half of the northern tier counties.

### Breeding

The *Atlas of Breeding Birds of Indiana* (Castrale et al. 1998) shows confirmed breeding in some 18 southern Indiana counties, one central Indiana County, and four northern Indiana counties, clearly documenting the stronghold in southern reaches of the state. Young birds in family groups have been noted from 15 April through 30 July.

### Wild Turkey Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
All				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
500	14-Feb-1848	Clay Co	???	DNR
108	19-Dec-2003	Lake Monroe	J. & S. Hengeveld	INB
79	18-Jan-2002	Parke Co	A.W. Bruner	IAQ
60	07-Jan-2000	Parke Co	A.W. Bruner	IAQ
56	01-Feb-1992	Parke Co	A.W. Bruner	IAQ

### References Cited

Butler, A. W. (1890) The Birds of Indiana, Appendix to *Transactions of the Indiana Horticultural Society for 1890* (available on the web).

DNR files, A collection of data compiled on computer disks for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources by C.E. Keller.

Castrale, J.S., E.M. Hopkins, and C.E. Keller (1998) *Atlas of breeding Birds of Indiana*, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 388 pp.

Keller, C.E., S.A. Keller, and T.C. Keller (1979) *Indiana Birds and Their Haunts*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind. 214 pp.

Mumford, R.E. and C.E. Keller (1984) *The Birds of Indiana*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind. 376 pp.

Richards, R.L. (1987) The Vertebrate Collection of the Indiana State Museum: "Old" Specimens and Records, *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science* 97:547-570.