

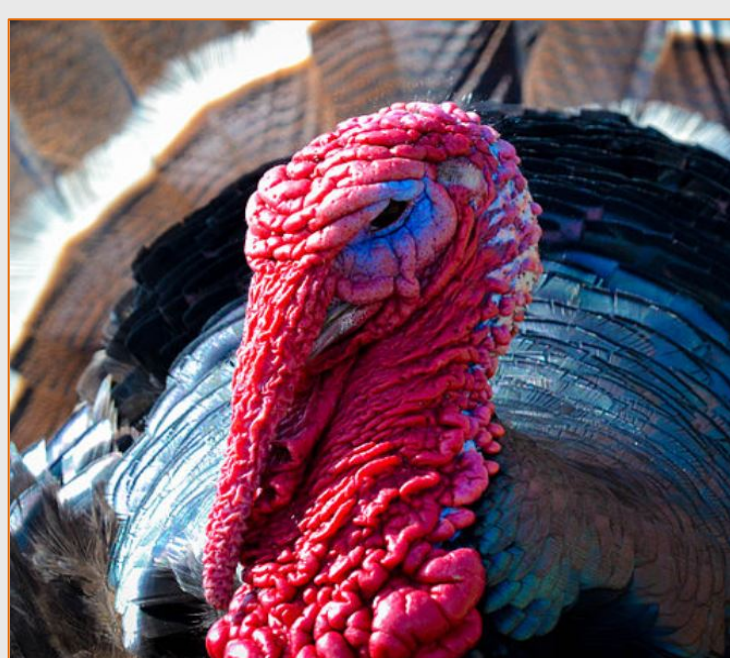
How to Tell Wild Turkeys Apart

Identifying male and female turkeys is critically important when turkey hunting. For new hunters (or just new turkey hunters), it can be pretty confusing. But there are four primary ways to reliably identify a male (gobbler/tom) from a female (hen).

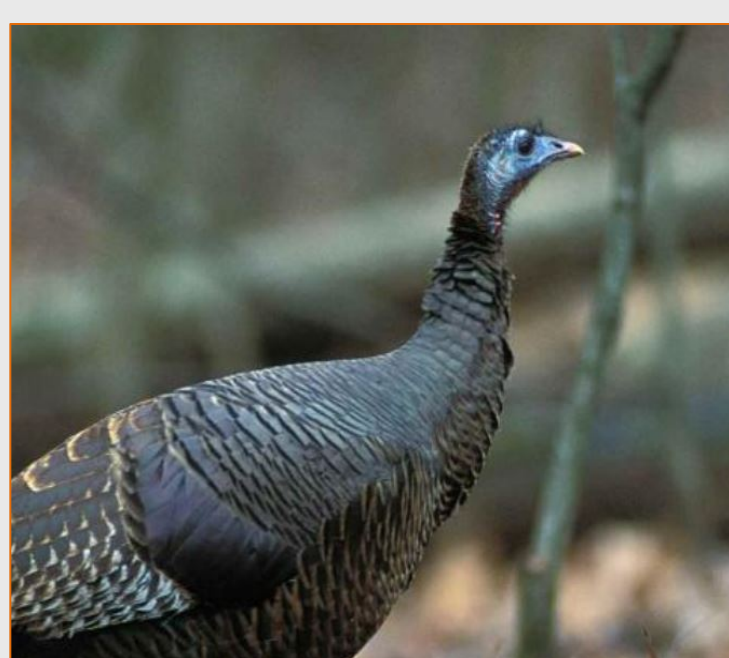
MALES

FEMALES

HEAD COLOR



VS



Males have bright blue and red heads with bumpy “wattles” all over (especially in spring). Females have bluish gray heads, usually with fine feathers attached.

BEARDS ON BREASTS



VS



Males have feathery “beards” attached to their lower breast, which get longer with age. Females rarely have these beards, but some do. Don’t use just this indicator alone.

SPURS ON LEGS



VS



Males have bony spurs on the back of their legs, which get longer with age. Females don’t usually have spurs.

BODY SIZE AND FANS



VS



Males usually have bigger bodies and fluff their feathers/tail fans to “strut” for females. Females are usually smaller in size and don’t display their tail fans.

These are general rules. Don’t use any one by itself; combine them all to be reliable. Identifying turkey males from females takes time and practice in the outdoors. Print out this guide and bring it with you for a field identification refresher!



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