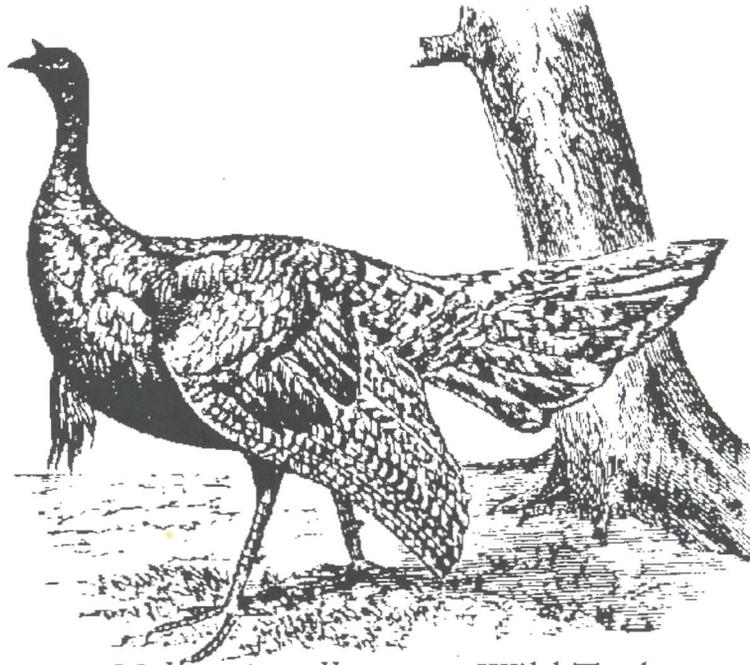


TOWN OF WELLESLEY

# Wild Turkeys



*Meleagris gallopavo* - Wild Turkey

WITH MORE THAN 20 confirmed sightings this March and April, the wild turkey can be added to Wellesley's bird list. Wild turkeys have been spotted from Route 128 in the east to the North Forty west of Weston Road.

The flock consists of at least eleven birds, with two or three males. Wild turkeys are *big* birds—the male 48 inches from beak to tail tip; the female 36 inches. Their heads are naked and bluish with a fleshy growth over the beak and conspicuous red wattles in the male. Turkey feathers reflect a bronzy iridescence, particularly in the male, which displays its tail in a fan. The males and

sometimes the females have a tuft of feathers called a "beard" on the breast. Although they can fly, and roost in trees at night, they prefer to use their long, strong legs. And yes, they "gobble." They also call and make a *puck-puck* sound.

Wild turkeys are usually very shy. The fact that these birds are not shy reflects the probability that these are escapees and/or descendents of farmed and restocked birds.

When you go walking, keep your dog on a leash and bring your camera along. You won't forget seeing your first wild turkey!