

Arizona Wildlife Podcast Comprehension Activity

Episode 13: A Year in the Life of a Turkey

Part A: Define each of the terms below, as they relate to turkey biology.

1. Brood – to sit on the eggs, or the group of birds hatched at the same time
2. Down Feathers – the soft feathers used for warmth found under the contour feathers of birds
3. Herbaceous – a plant with soft tissues rather than woody one, such as flowers and grasses
4. Mast – nuts, seeds, and fruits used as food for wildlife
5. Poult – a baby turkey
6. Precocial – born mature, independent, and mobile, needing very little nursing or assistance from the parents

Part B: For each of the seasons below, write down the primary food source for turkeys in Arizona.

1. Spring – insects, fresh green growth
2. Summer – insects, grasses
3. Fall – acorns
4. Winter – acorns, pine seeds, juniper berries

Part C: In your own words, explain how each statement below can be true.

1. Flock sizes in winter are usually much larger than the rest of the year.
During the winter (and fall) months, turkeys are relying heavily on acorns. Oak trees are not dispersed widely throughout the state. Thus, in the locations where they are found, turkeys tend to gather in larger groups. Hens with poults join up with other hens with poults in these acorn-heavy areas.
2. Six inches of snow can often be easier to access food than one inch of snow.
If there is a little snow (like an inch or two) that melts quickly and then freezes, it can be difficult for the birds to break through to get the food. On the other hand, turkeys can dig through a soft snow that is deeper (like six to eight inches) to find the buried food.