

Wild Turkey Habitat Basics

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Nesting Habitat

Hens will select a variety of habitat types for nesting: forest understories, old fields, forest edges, utility rights-of-way, etc. The vegetation structure common to habitat immediately surrounding the nest is dense lateral cover, regardless of habitat type. The majority of nest sites will have some shrub cover at ground level. This mix of herbaceous and shrub vegetation conceals the nesting hen from predators.



- 1 utility right-of-way
- 2 old field
- 3 pine understory

Brood Habitat

Brood habitat consists of herbaceous vegetation, bare ground, and an abundance of insects. Suitable habitat permits chicks to forage efficiently underneath the protective canopy of herbaceous vegetation and allows the hen to see over the vegetation to locate predators. Hens with broods less than two weeks old will select areas in close proximity to shrub cover.



- 1 blackland prairie
- 2 pine forestland opening
- 3 roadside

Roosting Habitat

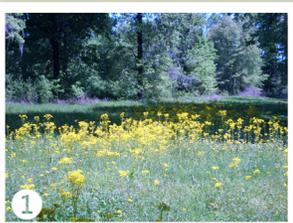
Turkeys roost in a variety of habitats in both upland and bottomland forests. Where available, they will roost over water in bald cypress or tupelo gum trees, and hardwood trees growing along riverfronts. On upland sites, turkeys will roost on slopes adjacent to ridgetops. These areas provide shelter and protection from harsh weather.



- 1 cypress wetland
- 2 riverfront hardwood
- 3 upland hardwood slope

Seasonal Adult Habitat

Adult turkeys utilize a variety of habitats throughout the year: pine plantations, bottomland and upland hardwoods, mixed pine-hardwoods, pastures, old fields, etc. Regardless of the habitat type, they show a strong preference for openings in the spring and summer. Openings provide an abundance of food resources, such as succulent vegetation, insects, seed, and soft mast (e.g. dewberry). Turkeys tend to decrease their use of open areas and increase their use of forested cover during the fall and winter. As the season progresses, they shift their home ranges in response to food availability.



- 1 woodland opening
- 2 thinned-burned pine plantation
- 3 upland hardwood