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THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY 2025

Turkeys not as wild as you might believe

By Terry Date
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TERRY DATE/Staff photo

A wild turkey struts over a parking lot island at The Eagle-Tribune in 2019. Turkeys have frequented the campus for years.

EAGLE-TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

A wild turkey grazes in a New Hampshire meadow.

NORTH ANDOVER — The wild turkey chick, maybe a week or two old, came hand-delivered to the Andover Police Department in June.

Someone found it on the streets of Boston and gave it to a woman headed this way.

"She happened to be coming up to Andover and just came in and gave me the turkey," said Katie Kozikowski, Andover's animal control officer.

The misguided logic held that Boston, without woods and fields, is no place for a wild turkey, so let's rescue it by bringing it to a place with open space and woods.

But turkeys don't need the woods.

"They live in neighborhoods," Kozikowski said. "They live in people's backyards."

And yes, they love Andover and North Andover, especially their backyard bird feeders.

But wherever there's sustenance you'll find them, and that includes suburban and urban areas.

Even Boston.

"Where there's food they set up camp and park on it," said David Scarpitti, turkey and upland game project leader at MassWildlife.

He said Massachusetts experiences more widespread and intense human-wildlife conflicts with urban turkeys compared to many other states.

A key to reducing these conflicts is education – learning the sources of problems and how to reduce them. These lessons are imparted by wildlife biologists, state and national park rangers and local animal control and conservation officers.

The turkeys themselves are the best teachers, and teaching assistants.

The Henrietta phenomena in Andover in 2024 — when a wild turkey frequented a busy intersection and was eventually hit by a motorist and killed — gave Kozikowski opportunities to teach.

Henrietta was not standing at the roadside or walking out in traffic due to illness. She was there because people were providing her with a buffet of food, tossing it out their car windows.

Popcorn, peanuts, Little Debbie Cakes, Purina cat food and peanut butter pie.

Our wild turkey flocks are flourishing in a way wildlife conservationists Jim Cardova and Ted Walski did not expect when they re-introduced the species — birds from New York — to Massachusetts and New Hampshire starting in the 1970s.

Trapping and transplanting and conservation and regulated hunting followed.

Each spring Massachusetts hunters bag 2,500 to 3,500 birds.

In New Hampshire, during the 2025 spring season, hunters killed 4,845 turkeys, a 6% increase from the previous year's harvest of 4,562 birds,

In the 1970s and thereafter, the early birds got a toehold at a time when there was more agricultural land and far fewer predators like coyote and bobcat and raptors roamed the region, said Scarpitti.

Now that these predators have proliferated, the well established wild turkeys, resourceful and resilient, have more than held their own.

The birds number about 35,000 in Massachusetts and 45,000 in New Hampshire, according to state wildlife numbers.

Male wild turkeys, or toms, range from 16 to 25 pounds and can stand 4-½ feet tall. Females, hens, weigh about half that amount, from 9 to 12 pounds.

The birds can fly and run up to 25 mph.

Peculiar male features include a snood — a fleshy flap that covers the beak; a spur on the back of their feet; and a protruding, curved growth from the chest called a beard.

A 15-pound bird eats about 5 pounds of food a week.

They eat seeds, acorns, grasses, berries, worms, grubs and other insects including ticks. They even devour snakes or an occasional toad, frog or salamander.

Scarpitti says people always ask him why there are so many turkeys in the suburbs.

"We never really planned on that," he tells them.

Like other species in New England, turkeys have proven to be highly adaptable.

"I think there's a misconception by some people, where they think that you have to go to western Massachusetts or like northern New Hampshire to see wildlife," Scarpitti said.

With a few exceptions, including moose, it is just the opposite of that.

Take the elusive bobcat: Scarpitti regularly sees them.

In the past Kozikowski would receive an occasional call from a resident reporting a bobcat sighting.

"But this year I've gotten a lot of them," she said.

Coyote, red fox and fisher have adapted and increased their numbers significantly

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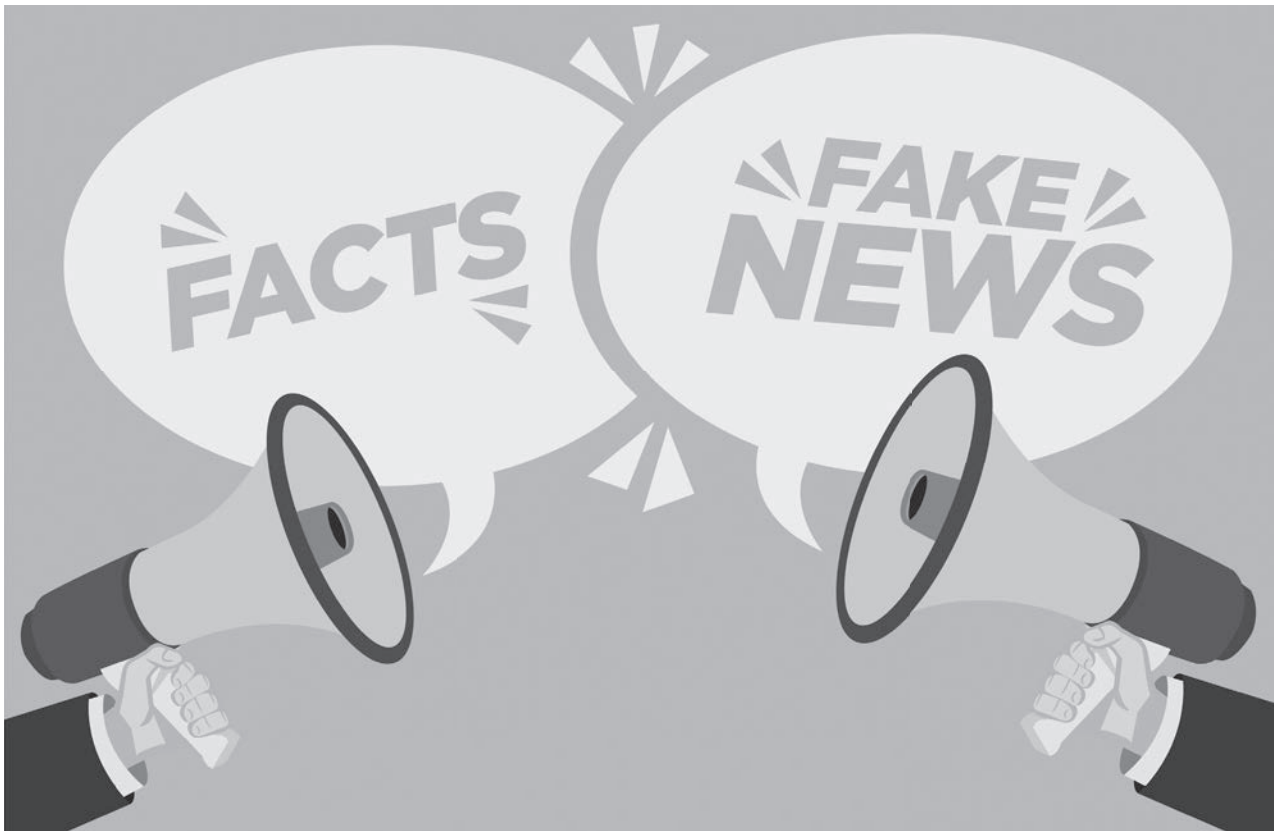

Looking to combat fake news?

Here are some resources to help you determine if what you've read is true:

» **Politifact** is the Pulitzer Prize-winning fact checking operation run by the nonprofit Poynter Institute. The site fact-checks statements by politicians and debunks myriad Facebook hoaxes.
https://www.politifact.com/

» **FactCheck.org**, run by Annenberg Public Policy Center, performs much of the same tasks, and also let's you ask questions of the fact checkers. An example question: Did the Supreme Court rule that it is illegal to take the oath of office with anything but the Bible? (The answer is no.)
https://www.factcheck.org/

» **Snopes** is the original fact-checking website. Use the site's search bar to get to the bottom of political statements, viral videos and urban myths.
https://www.snopes.com/

» **A Google reverse image search** is the best way to find out if that photo you saw making the rounds on Twitter or Facebook is real. This story from PC Magazine walks you through how to do it on your desktop or your phone.
https://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2492468,00.asp

» **Still need help?** Contact us at the Eagle-Tribune, and we'll get the answer for you, no matter the topic. Email editor Tracey Rauh at trauh@eagletribune.com.

REAL NEWS IN SCHOOLS

How the program works

Your school can have access to local, trusted journalism from The Eagle-Tribune on a daily basis. We report on news throughout the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire, covering all things local – from schools, to sports, to government, people profiles, business, entertainment and more. You get the facts – the real news – from experienced reporters, photographers and editors you can count on at no cost to your school.

Here are the basics of the program:

What is it? The Eagle-Tribune partners with local businesses to provide free digital access to our newspaper to anyone within the school at no cost to the school. This access encourages students to value the vital news coverage being produced by The Eagle-Tribune. They will build awareness and gain critical thinking skills in the process.

Who can participate? This program will benefit teachers, students, and the broader school community.

Where does it take place? You can access our newspaper online. Teachers can incorporate the program into their curriculums, even having reporters, photographers and editors visit your class.

When can we start benefiting? As soon as we have your commitment to participate in Real News in Schools we will go to work to find a local business who wants to sponsor you. Once we have one, we will work with your IT Department to get the program up and running.

Why is this valuable? There's a lot of fake news out there on social media and elsewhere. The Eagle-Tribune, founded in 1868 as the Lawrence Daily Eagle and a twice Pulitzer Prize winning publication, has a long track record of fair and accurate reporting that cuts through the misinformation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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» Turkey

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in the state since the 1970s, said Scarpitti, as have bald eagles, red-tail hawks, and great horn and barred owls.

Black bears numbered under 100 animals in the mid-1970s in Massachusetts. Today the state has some 5,000 bears.

Wild turkey are native to New England but vanished as a result of deforestation and hunting for more than a century.

The last turkey from the state's once thriving native flocks gobbled its farewell in the 1850s.

But the gobbles have returned by way of restoration, conservation and pluck.

About the time of the great wild turkey rebound, the early to mid- 2000s and thereafter, Eagle-Tribune employees began noticing the birds around the property.

The turkey friendly habitat on the Tribune's 13 acres at 100 Turnpike St. in North Andover, with its acorns, fruit trees and lawn, typically draws five to seven or more resident birds.

With a couple notable exceptions, the beady-eyed creatures have made themselves scarce for months.

Several weeks ago a group came to the front door, the surprise visit witnessed by Bridget Simard of advertising.

Nighttime editor Chris Calnan saw several turkeys skulking on a berm and under trees on the property's south border.

Otherwise, our annual ones-that-got-away wild turkey survey counted no sightings.

The exception does not prove the rule, we are told.

Overall, turkey numbers are mighty healthy in the Valley and beyond.

So, what about that turkey chick from Boston?

Andover's animal control officer says the situation might have proven sticky.

The best thing the person could have done was to leave the bird in place giving it the best chance for reuniting with its mother and fellow poults.

But seeing as there was no way of knowing where to return the bird, Kozikowski brought the chick to a bird rehabilitation center which, fortunately, was caring for other poults of about the same age.

It appears that this bird, and many others, has gotten away.

Happy holidays, whatever your celebration.

EDITORIAL

Proposed cutbacks unnecessarily undervalue vital role of nurses

There was a time not long ago when nurses almost universally were seen as heroes.

We all remember the dark days of COVID, especially early on, when we weren't really sure what we were dealing with and personal protective gear was in short supply.

Nurses risked their lives for us. Their expertise kept our hearts beating. They worked hours on end, and separated themselves from their families and loved ones. When the afternoon rolled around, we would open our windows, cheer and bang pots and pans, generally raising a ruckus in appreciation for them.

Now, the federal Department of Education is demeaning their sacrifice and their expertise in ways both symbolic and literal.

Under the Trump administration's "Big Beautiful Bill," passed by Congress earlier this year, nursing would no longer be considered a "profession."

Technically, the ruling by the Department of Education is that nursing programs are no longer professional degree programs, but the outcome is the same. The move will limit the student loan borrowing power for those wanting to start or continue a career in nursing.

This limitation in financial assistance would affect hundreds of thousands of prospective nurses. According to the American Nurses Association, there are more than 260,000 students enrolled in entry-level Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs and another 42,000 in associate degree programs.

"To eliminate the possibility of gaining an education is only going to be harmful for so many people in need," said Mary Havlicek Cornacchia, a nurse at Tufts Medical Center and a member of the Massachusetts Nurses Association board.

"Oftentimes, the people who are seeking their education in these roles are trying to serve their own community that is lacking the care that they need," she said. "So you're cutting off an entire segment of the population that wants to get into the healthcare profession and provide for more people."

It also throws up barriers for those looking to grow in the profession.

"With a cap on federal student loans, fewer nurses will be able to afford graduate nursing education, such as master's and PhD degrees," Olga Yakusheva, a professor of nursing and business of health at Johns Hopkins University, told Newsweek.

Such degrees, she said, give nurses pathways to "organizational leadership, (the) ability to diagnose and prescribe medications, training to lead independent research, and credentials to teach at institutions of higher education."

It could also exacerbate what is already a crisis-level shortage of nurses in the United States and threatens the progress Massachusetts has made in addressing the problem.

In a report released earlier this month, the Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association found the number of vacancies at 60 acute care hospitals across the state has fallen from 19,000 in 2022 to 13,600 last year. That's a drop of 28%.

And it's a drop that will be put at risk if nurses and prospective nurses are effectively cut off from the loans they need to advance their careers.

We know, of course, the American public holds the nursing profession in higher regard than the Trump administration does. A Gallup poll taken in January 2025 proves it, finding that nursing is the most trusted of 23 professions in the country with 75% of Americans finding nurses to be highly honest and ethical.

They need to be treated as such. They deserve and must be treated as the vital, lifesaving professionals they are.

TIM JEAN/Staff photos

Former patient Veikko Huuskonen, center, is reunited with Holy Family Hospital health care workers in Methuen who treated him during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Joe Bevilacqua, center, hands breakfast to Valarie Roderick, RN, outside Holy Family Hospital in Haverhill in 2020.

RIGHT: Workers from Holy Family Hospital wave as Methuen Public Works, Police and Fire department workers paraded their vehicles past them thanking all the nurses, doctors, and frontline workers for their work during the coronavirus pandemic in April 2020.

PHOTOS FROM THANKSGIVING DAY FOOTBALL

CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

Haverhill's Jayden Berube eager to run the ball on Thanksgiving Day.

TIM JEAN/Staff photo

Central senior Connor Cowan runs for a big gain against Lawrence during Thanksgiving Day football at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

Haverhill's Stavy Baptiste looks for running room with blocking from his teammates on Thanksgiving Day.

TIM JEAN/Staff photo

Lawrence quarterback Manny Perez throws a pass against Central Catholic on Thanksgiving Day.

REBA SALDANHA

North Andover quarterback Austin Allen tries to avoid Andover's Nate Bernardin on Thanksgiving Day.

Consider these universities that are reviving higher ed's civic seriousness

Commentary

By George F. Will

High school seniors completing college applications confront a smorgasbord of choices. Herewith, eight suggestions:

- Arizona State University, because of its School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership.
- University of Florida, because of its Hamilton School for Classical and Civic Education.
- Florida State University because of its Institute for Governance and Civics.
- The University of Texas, because of its School of Civic Leadership, and Civitas Institute.
- The University of Tennessee, because of its Institute of American Civics.
- The University of North Carolina because of its School of Civic Life and Leadership.
- The University of Mississippi because of its Declaration of Independence Center for the Study of American Freedom.
- And The Ohio State University, because of its new Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society.

These eight institutions — with similar programs gestating in other states — are reviving universities' civic seriousness — reinvigorating the humanities, inspiring students eager to grapple with big questions, and reversing academia's forfeiture of its prestige.

All eight share the Chase Center's conviction that "American citizenship is a high calling" and that "citizenship well-lived" must be grounded in "the historical ideas, traditions, and texts" — the Federalist, Supreme Court cases, consequential rhetoric, etc. — that have shaped America's polity and society.

Such programs are usually prompted by state legislatures, which, although occasionally clumsy and overreaching, are less threatening to academic freedom than are today's campus monocultures enforced by censorious faculty factions. Such programs have inexpungable political resonances, so planting them in the groves of academe requires delicate tenacity.

The planting presupposes that the nation's intellectual patrimony is worthy. Nowadays this is controversial. But the Chase Center and kindred programs operate on the assumption that "progressive patriotism" is not an oxymoron. Furthermore, civics programs often provide courses (e.g., military and diplomatic history, and political theory) that other departments ignore. Courses found only in civics programs sometimes even include those on the American Revolution and American intellectual history.

Many academics seem mystified about the 20-plus year decline of humanities majors. William Inboden believes curricula pertinent to civic thought, but nowadays largely neglected, can "re-set the demand signals in the academic marketplace" for courses and for specialized faculty to teach them.

Former Arizona governor Doug Ducey, who oversaw the 2017 birth of ASU's program, helped to ignite this movement. Inboden has spread the movement's gospel (literally, "good news") through good works at two universities. He left the University of Texas to assist the flourishing of Florida's Hamilton School, then returned to Texas as provost. The Hamilton School, which has its own majors, degrees, and tenured faculty, is not an agency of "counter-indoctrination." Rather, it is a small cluster of liberal arts excellence. It leavens the educational menu for a small (about 1,500) but intellectually thirsty fraction of Florida's 40,000 undergraduates eager to study the Western civilization of which our nation is an emanation and elevation.

Writing in National Affairs, Inboden notes that universities should be conservators and transmitters of the best that has been thought and said. Therefore they have an inescapably conservative function that is the essence of universities' "social contract with American society." The rupture of that contract included Yale's 1995 rejection of a $20 million gift because it was designated for studying Western civilization.

Students, Inboden says, have been voting with their feet, walking away from the sterile humanities dogma that identity (racial, ethnic, sexual) is the decisive dimension of human identity. This idea, which discounts the history-making role of ideas, yields, Inboden says, an "impoverished view of the human person, the communities we form, and the endeavors we undertake."

These eight institutions are reinvigorating the humanities, inspiring students eager to grapple with big questions, and reversing academia's forfeiture of its prestige.

No wonder disappointed students and dismayed scholars are flocking to places like Hamilton. It had more than 2,000 applicants for the first 55 faculty positions it filled, and in one year hired four Harvard and four Cambridge PhDs.

Ohio State's Chase Center advances the 21st century renaissance of civic education by invoking Salmon P. Chase, President Lincoln's treasury secretary, then chief justice of the Supreme Court. He lived a life of 19th-century usefulness and heartbreak: Implacably anti-slavery, he lost three wives and four of his six children to diseases. Ohio State is a land grant university spawned by legislation signed by Lincoln, the 1862 Morrill Act.

Long ago, a droll president of the University of Oklahoma vowed to make OU an institution its football team could be proud of. Ohio State — a top 15 research university in a National Science Foundation survey, ranked ahead of Harvard and Yale, and decent at football — is such a place, and becoming even better because of the Chase Center.

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