

# Tales From Along the Trail...

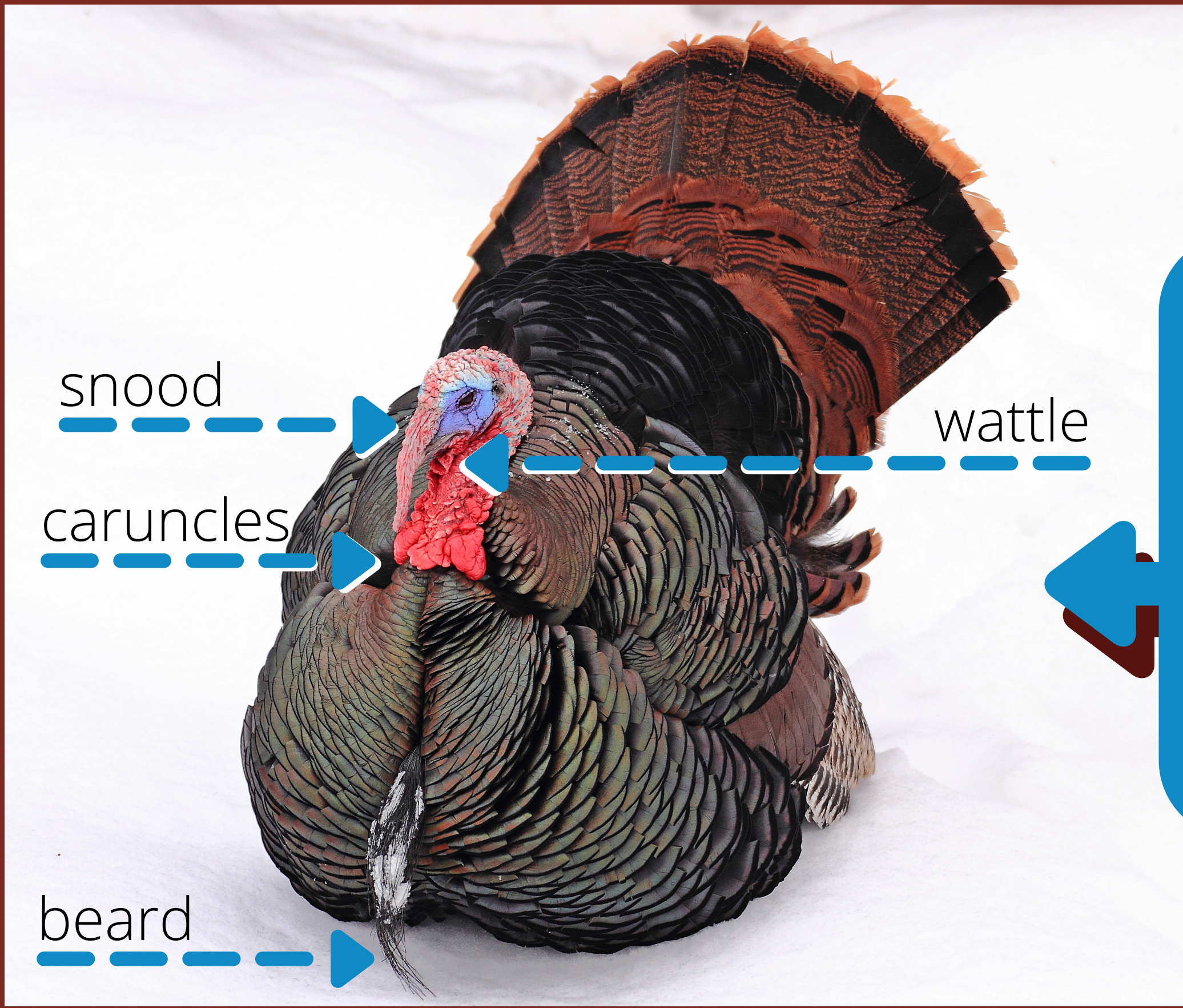


## Talking Wild Turkey "Trot" (*Meleagris gallopavo*)

with Naturalist Cathy Ricks

### Bachelor Jake "Posse"

During our Kent winters, turkeys separate into three groups (called a flock, crop, dole, gang, posse, or raffle). Adult males (toms), jakes (young males), and hens (females of all ages) will forage and roost together. Fun fact: toms have j-shaped scat and females have spiral shaped, like a snail shell.



### Wattles, Caruncles, & Snoods- Oh, My!

Toms develop a thick layer of winter fat called a breast sponge in advance of the spring courtship frenzy: impressing hens with their "gobbling," strutting, with pronounced beard and fanned tail feathers. Colorful blue wattles, snoods, and red caruncles embellish their beaks and throat and add to their "flashy dance." Turkeys are exceptionally adapt at sensing danger with their color vision and hearing far better than ours.

### Dine & Dash with the Girls' Gang

Wild turkeys spend 99.9% of the daytime on the ground-scavenging in flocks: scratching up seeds, acorns, crabapples, wild black cherries, insects, and grains such as corn and soybeans. When threatened, the wild turkey will sprint (up to 15mph) or explode upward in a short, powerful flight to safety. This hen will join her all-girl winter "gang" at night to roost in tall trees. Juvenile females are called "jennies."



Click here to participate!

### Citizen "Turkey Watching" Science

Abundant at the time of pioneer settlement, turkeys were extirpated from Ohio by 1904. Reintroduction and management have led to an estimated statewide population of 180,000-190,000 turkeys. If you love to watch turkeys, think about taking part in the annual citizen science project to collect sightings or by helping to protect wildlife habitat with "don't mow, let it grow" plots.