



LARRY DITTO/KAC PRODUCTIONS

Think you're tough? Two toms bump chests to see who might be the strongest. Neck-wrestling may follow (circle).

ROGER GIVENS/DRK PHOTO; DONALD M. JONES (INSET)



IT'S MATING TIME

Every spring, male turkeys, called *toms*, strut their stuff. It's mating season, and they're trying to prove who's the biggest, baddest, and best turkey in the flock. The skin on their heads and necks turns bright red, white, and blue. They fluff out their feathers, spread their tails as peacocks do, and drag their wing tips on the ground. *Gobble, gobble, gobble*, they say, trying to call in hens from all around.

But it's not all strutting and showing off. Two rival males may approach each other and



*Pick me! Pick me!
Tom turkeys puff
up and prance
about, hoping to
win a mate.*

bump their chests together. And if one doesn't back down, it's neck-wrestling time. The "top tom" gets to mate with the most hens.

TURKEYS GO TO TOWN

Wild turkeys now live in every state except Alaska. And you don't have to trek deep into woods to find them. In fact, some may show up in your backyard someday—if they haven't already!

Turkeys are even moving into cities. Brookline, Massachusetts, is a good example. Turkeys stroll down the sidewalks there, making



Farm-Raised Turkeys

Farm-raised turkeys (**above**) are bred to be extra big and meaty. The birds are so heavy that, unlike their wild cousins, they can't walk very well, or fly at all.

Many farm-raised turkeys live crowded together in barns.

And sometimes their food has chemicals in it to fight diseases and make them grow faster. Having turkey for Thanksgiving? You may want to buy one labeled "free-range" and "antibiotic-free."

INGA SPENCE/SCIENCE SOURCE (T); MARK WILSON/BOSTON GLOBE/GETTY IMAGES (B)



*This sidewalk is made
for strutting! So, get
out of my way!*

people stop and stare. They raid birdfeeders, gardens, and pets' food bowls. They rest in trees and on rooftops. And during the mating season, tom turkeys may even chase and

try to pick fights with people! Who knows? One day a wild turkey may be bold enough to invite itself to someone's Thanksgiving dinner—as a guest, of course! 🦃