

Wisconsin Turkey Vultures

by Tanya Rothe

Central WI is filled with many *Turkey Vultures* soaring through the sky looking for their next tasty meal. Many people have become frightened by this enormous bird; however, there is nothing to be afraid of. They are only interested in keeping to themselves and searching for fresh carcasses to feast on. From a distance, they are sometimes mistaken for an Eagle or Osprey until you see their unique flight pattern. Turkey vultures fly in large circles with their wings pointing up in a “v” shape. They are considered scavengers using their sharp sense of smell from high in the sky.

Turkey Vulture

WI Turkey Vultures Photos

Their feathers are a darker brown color and they have a reddish colored head. The habitat of Wisconsin Turkey Vultures is generally open areas around roadsides and farm fields. This magnificent bird has such an extreme sense of smell that enables it to be able to find food below a ceiling of treetops without even seeing it ahead of time. Turkey Vultures have a lot of great stories being told about them including one very interesting tale. Tibetan Buddhists actually incorporate them into their funeral services. They have what is called a “Sky Burial,” where they have the turkey vultures consume their dead bringing them into the sky above.

Cathartes Aura

Name: Turkey Vulture

Scientific Name: Cathartes Aura

Measurements: 31 inches long, 4.5 pounds, 70 inch wingspan.

Habitat: Open areas including roadsides and farm fields.

Diet: Fresh including dead carcasses

Behavior: Fly in lower levels with wings held in “v” shape, after breeding times they group themselves in huge flocks.

Reproduction: These Buzzards do not make complete nests (Baby Vultures can be found in hollow logs and abandon sheds); lay up to 3 eggs, 40 Day incubation, 84 day nesting, after breeding the pair will fly together in specific pattern for up to 3 hours.

Predators: Skunks, owls, snakes, and hawks.

Life Expectancy: Up to 16 years in wild, up to 30 years in captivity.

Extra Facts: tend to vomit when stressed or when predators arrive, don't have voice box, and are usually blind and defenseless as babies.

Part of Wisconsin it generally resides: Pretty much throughout all of the state. According to this map <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Turkeyvulturerange.jpg> Turkey Vultures are not in Wisconsin Year Round but only in the summer months.

Turkey Vultures in WI

Video of Baby Turkey Vultures

<p align='center'><iframe frameborder="0" width="560" height="315"
src="http://www.dailymotion.com/embed/video/x11g156"></iframe>
<a
href="http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x11g156_turkey-vultures_animals"
target="_blank">Turkey_Vultures <i>by <a
href="http://www.dailymotion.com/LandmanRealty"
target="_blank">LandmanRealty</i></p>

Vultures

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