

External Anatomy of Poultry Kept on Small or Backyard Flocks: Turkey

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Turkeys have many of the same basic external parts as chickens—ears, earlobes, eyes, eye rings, beak, wings, tail, thighs, hocks, shanks, spurs, claws, and toes. However, some differences exist in the external anatomies of turkeys and chickens. For example, a turkey's head (shown in Figure 1) differs from a chicken's head in several ways. A turkey does not have a comb on the top of its head. Instead, it has a fleshy growth from the base of the beak known as the **snood**. The snood is longer in males and hangs down over the male turkey's beak. A turkey has a wattle under its beak and fleshy growths on the head and neck called **caruncles**.

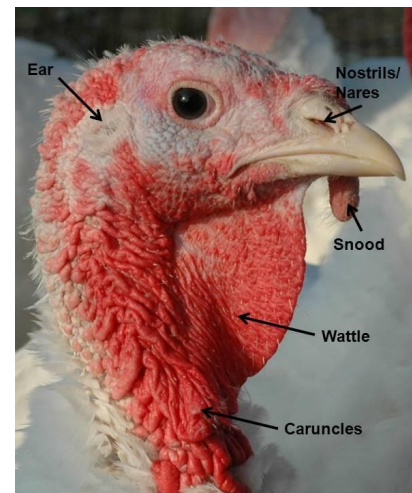
Fig. 1. Parts of a male turkey's head. Photo: Sally Noll, University of Minnesota.

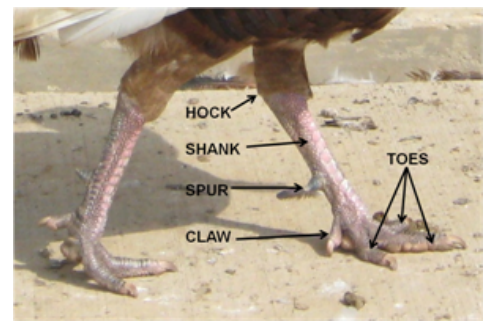
A male turkey, or a Tom, has a tuft of long, bristle-like fibers attached to the breast, as shown in Figure 2. This tuft is referred to as a **beard**.

Fig. 2. Location of the beard on a male bourbon red turkey. Source: Jacquie Jacob, University of Kentucky.

Like chickens, turkeys walk on their **toes**, as shown in Figure 3. The **hock** is the equivalent of a human ankle, and the **shank** is the turkey's foot.

Fig. 3. Parts of a male turkey's foot. Source: Jacquie Jacob, University of Kentucky.





For More Information

[Poultry: A Guide to Anatomy and Selected Species](#), University of Illinois