

WILD TURKEY AS OFFICIAL STATE GAME BIRD

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House Bill 4586 as referred to second committee

Sponsor: Rep. Gary Howell

1st Committee: Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation

2nd Committee: Ways and Means

Complete to 12-11-19

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4589 would create an act to designate the eastern wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*) as Michigan's official game bird. It would take effect 90 days after enactment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the state or local units of government.

BACKGROUND AND BRIEF DISCUSSION:

Michigan is currently represented by many symbols, including the following:

- Bird: American robin
- Fish: brook trout
- Flower: apple blossom
- Game mammal: white-tailed deer
- Reptile: painted turtle
- Stone: Petoskey stone
- Tree: eastern white pine
- Wildflower: dwarf lake iris

Each symbol represents something special about Michigan, whether its beauty, its resources, or something prevalent in the state. Designating the eastern wild turkey as Michigan's official game bird would be no different.

According to committee testimony, turkeys are strong and resilient, as seen not only in their surviving Michigan winters, but in their resurgent population as well. The eastern wild turkey population in Michigan was almost completely wiped out many years ago, yet they can now be found in all 68 counties of the Lower Peninsula and in most counties of the Upper Peninsula.¹

Michigan holds two hunting seasons for wild turkey, one in the spring and another in the fall.²

¹ https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79119_79147_81580-466423--,00.html.

² More information on hunting wild turkeys can be found here: https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79119_79147_81580---,00.html.

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Supporters of the bill argue that because eastern wild turkeys are big, strong, easily recognizable, and popular to hunt in Michigan, they are the most fitting bird to be designated as Michigan's official game bird.

Against:

No arguments opposing the bill were presented in committee.

POSITIONS:

A representative of the National Wild Turkey Federation testified in support of the bill. (6-4-19)

Several students from Waldon Middle School testified in support of the bill. (6-4-19)

The Department of Natural Resources indicated a neutral position on the bill. (6-4-19)

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.