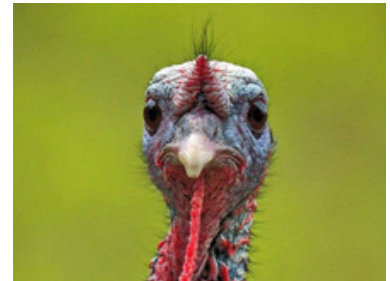


The Great American Cock Art History with Your Own Backyard's Avifauna

Melora Cann

a·vi·fau·na / āvē'fônə / avē'fônə / noun [ZOOLOGY]
the birds of a particular region, habitat, or geological period --
"I am not familiar with West Virginia mountain avifauna." (from
<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/avifauna>)



Time to get your 'avifauna' on!

Meet the artist: John James Audubon

Meet the subject: the wild turkey of Eastern North America

4 pages

The Great American Cock
Art History with Your Own Backyard's Avifauna (continued)

№ 1

PLATE I



Illustrated by J. Audubon. Engraved by G. S. Edwards.

Wild Turkey MELSAKES GALLINUS, Linn. Male. American. *Meleagris macrolopha*.

Published by G. S. Edwards, New York.

Audubon's Male Turkey

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Audubon's Turkey Hen (female) with Young

The Great American Cock

Art History with Your Own Backyard's Avifauna (continued)

The Artist:

Audubon was born Jean Rabin in Haiti in April 26, 1785; he was re-named Jean-Jacques Fougère Audubon by his father when they returned to France, and he finally Anglicized his name upon settling in America; he died January 27, 1851 in New York City.

Curious fact: John James Audubon did not found the Audubon Society – it was named in his honor.

More info-bites from wiki:

- His major work, a color-plate book entitled *The Birds of America* (1827–1839), is considered one of the finest ornithological works ever completed.
- Audubon is also known for having identified 25 new species.

How he did it:

He combined the art of taxidermy with the philosophy of Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum – he killed, stuffed and mounted birds that he then arranged, using wires, into life-like poses; once set and unmoving, he sketched and painted their likenesses in minute detail.

His 'The Birds of America' consists of 435 hand-colored prints of 497 bird species; the pages were organized for artistic effect and the first and perhaps his most famous plate was the frontispiece of the wild turkey, which he called "The Great American Cock." The book took more than fourteen years to complete.

Sacrificing scientific logic for artistic drama, he often posed his birds in interaction grouping, far too closely for actual flight but incredibly beautiful compositions. He retained exacting accuracy of physical details despite unlikely acrobatic displays in the compositions.

Want to learn more?

Visit YouTube and watch this excellent video:

Curator Tour of Audubon and the Art of Birds

Curator Tour by Don Luce, Bell Museum of Natural History

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flpv4zdr1Jc>