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Source: Arizona State and Fish Department

This rare native turkey is making a remarkable comeback

MT. HOPKINS, Ariz. – Arizona Game and Fish Department biologists released eight rare Gould's turkeys into the Santa Rita Mountains on Feb. 24, which will help these native birds reestablish their range.



The turkeys were net captured earlier in the day at Ramsey Canyon in the Huachuca Mountains and trucked to the top of Mount Hopkins in the Santa Rita Mountains. Since 2007, the Game and Fish Department has introduced more than 100 Gould's turkeys into the Santa Rita Mountains, specifically Madera, Gardner and Casa Blanca canyons.

The Gould's turkey is the largest of five subspecies of turkey in the U.S. They thrive in the rocky, mountainous terrain of southern Arizona, New Mexico, and northern

Mexico. It's also the rarest, with only 600 to 800 birds in the wild, according to the National Wild Turkey Federation, a conservation and hunting organization.

Turkeys are sensitive to climate change, and populations in southern Arizona have been affected by previously low rainfalls as well by increased numbers of predators driven from their habitats by urbanization. Their numbers have thus declined in the Santa Ritas over the years.

The Game and Fish Department, U.S. Forest Service, the Centro Ecologico de Sonora, the National Wild Turkey Federation and other agencies are working cooperatively to reintroduce a strong Gould's population into Arizona and eventually other states where suitable range exists.

To view the TV story on the Gould's, click here

http://www.myfoxphoenix.com/dpp/news/local/tucson/apx_wild_turkey_arizona_022410