

# Chickens and Turkeys – Who are They and Why Should We Care?



**Ivy & Ruby**

*Photo: Jim Robertson*



**Beautiful Amelia**

*Photo: Davida G. Breier*

A Presentation by Karen Davis, PhD  
President of United Poultry Concerns



*Photo by Frank Johnston,  
The Washington Post*

# The story of the little chicken named Viva who started it all. . . .



# Chickens – Who Are They?

Chickens evolved in the tropical forests of Southeast Asia and the rugged foothills of the Himalayan Mountains where chickens live and thrive to this day in a lush green world rich in sounds, colors, and vibrant activity.



*Art print of Red Jungle Fowl  
Chicken Rooster and Hen*

***Despite thousands of years of domestication, chickens are essentially the wild jungle fowl of their ancestry, with the same cravings for lush soil, trees, and activities suited to the tropical forests they originated in.***

*UPC Sanctuary hens rescued from battery cages. Photo by Susan Rayfield*



**Chickens are  
intelligent birds  
with strong  
emotions, devoted  
family ties, and a  
lively social life.**



**Rooster Lincoln, hen Sno-Pea,  
and chick Luv-Bug.**

*Photo by Matt Kelly*

# Mother hen with her chicks in a park in the Florida Everglades.

*Photo by Davida G. Breier*



## **Science Confirms:**

Contrary to the view once held by conventional ornithology that birds are mentally inferior to mammals and that chickens, turkeys, quails and other ground-nesting birds are “unquestionably low in the scale of avian evolution,” science now shows that birds are as intelligent as mammals (“it is now clear that birds have cognitive capacities equivalent to those of mammals”) and that “the chicken is not an inferior species to be treated merely as a food source.”

**Dr. Lesley J. Rogers, *The Development of Brain and Behaviour in the Chicken***



# Do You Know?

- **Why Roosters Crow?**

*Perched in the trees and sensitive to infrared light, chickens see sunrise an hour before we do. During the day, chickens break into small subgroups to forage on the forest floor.*

*Through the dense foliage, the roosters in each subgroup crow back and forth to keep track of one another and send out alerts.*

*Scientists call these communications “locater crows.” As protectors of the flock, roosters are always on the lookout.*



**UPC rooster, Bantu, calls to his hens.** *Photo by Karen Davis*

# Do You Know?

- **Why Hens Lay Eggs?**

*Like all female birds, hens lay eggs in order to hatch chicks so the species will continue through new generations. In nature, hens and roosters live together in flocks, so wild hens' eggs are usually fertile meaning there's an embryo growing inside the egg.*



# Do You Know?

- **Why Hens Hide Their Eggs?**

*Hens hide their eggs to protect the embryos growing inside from predators – animals such as foxes, raccoons or hawks who would steal the eggs and eat them. In nature, the hen and rooster go together to look for and scoop out a ground nest that will camouflage the hen while she sits on her eggs for 21 days of incubation.*



**A chicken family in  
the Florida Everglades.**

*Photo by Davida G. Breier*

# Turkeys – Who Are They?

**Abigail invites us to get  
to know them . . .**

Photo of Abigail at UPC's sanctuary courtesy  
of *The Washington Times*.



**A mother turkey  
shelters her poults  
safe for the night.**

***What Wings  
are For!***



Like chickens, turkeys belong to the scientific order known as *galliforms*, meaning “cock-shaped.” Galliforms make their nests on the ground instead of in trees, like robins or blue jays, or on cliff ledges, like penguins, gulls, doves, and pelicans. Galliforms include chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quails, peafowl and guinea fowl.

Unlike chickens and other pheasants of Asian origin, turkeys are Native American birds. When the Europeans arrived in the 15th century, turkeys roamed the woods, meadows, prairies and fields of North, South, and Central America, the West Indies, and Mexico. In one description:

*Turkeys were very tame along tributary streams, where there were beautiful forests full of stags and wild turkeys. The birds merely looked down from the treetops at canoes passing down the stream near cliffs rising high above with pine trees and red cedars. Bald eagles soared above their tops . . .*

John Bakeless, ***America As Seen By Its First Explorers***

# Did You Know That:

- Turkeys can swim, “even should the river be a mile in breadth.”
- Turkeys can fly up to 50mph and run 12mph, though for their daily excursions, they prefer walking.
- Like chicken parents, turkey mothers will fight a predator, such as a hawk, to the death to protect their young.



*Photo by Jeff Borchers in Jacksonville, Oregon, 2013.*

# Turkeys Can Swim!







**Poults (very young turkeys) can swim well if they need to.**

# Did You Know That:

- Turkey and chicken embryos alike communicate with their mother and siblings from inside the egg long before they are born. Young turkeys stay close to their mother for 5 months before venturing off on their own. Like chickens, turkeys have excellent hearing and full-color vision. Newborn turkeys and chickens make eye contact with their mother and siblings as soon as they hatch as part of their family bonding experience.

# **Chickens and Turkeys on Factory Farms Never Know This:**

**A mother hen shelters  
her chicks in the  
Florida Everglades.**

*Photo by Davida G. Breier*



# Instead They Know This:

**Hatcheries throw away thousands of unwanted baby chicks every day, hundreds of millions every year.**



*Photo courtesy of The Animals Voice*

# And This:

**Chickens and turkeys never know the comfort of a mother bird's wings or the joy of exploring the world with her.** *Photo courtesy of The Animals Voice*



**Birds raised for “meat” are painfully lame and obese. They cannot exercise their natural desire to walk, run or perch and they are too crowded to move even if they tried.**

**Typical factory-farm chicken house,  
Perdue Farms in Delaware**

*Photo by David Harp*





**“Free-range organic” young turkeys with surgically mutilated beaks at Diestel Turkey Ranch, a supplier to Whole Foods.**

*Photo by East Bay Animal Advocates*

**Egg-laying hens are kept in filthy cages or crowded in “cage-free” buildings filled with feces, cobwebs and grinding machinery.**





**The sensitive beak ends of turkeys and egg-laying hens are burned off as soon as they are born, causing excruciating pain and injury.**





**Baby Turkeys  
on a Laser  
Debeaking  
Carousel at the  
Hatchery.**

**Male and female turkeys are sexually molested for reproduction by “milkers.”**



**Jammed in crates, sick, scared, and injured young turkeys and chickens go to the slaughterhouse. All they have ever known of life is suffering, fear, and pain, which those who eat them consume in an endless recycling of violence.**



**Six-week-old baby  
chickens on their  
way to being  
slaughtered in  
Maryland.**

*Photo by Linda Howard*



**Chickens and turkeys try to hide their faces in the feathers of the birds beside them when they are hung upside down on the slaughter line. A former chicken slaughterhouse worker said, “You can tell by them looking at you they’re scared to death.”**



**Six-week-old female chickens about to be tortured with electricity and slaughtered in a Tyson slaughterhouse in Richmond, Virginia.**

*Photo by L . Parascandola*

**These fully conscious chickens are now paralyzed in agonizing pain after being dragged through electric shock water at Tyson in Richmond, Virginia.**



*Photo by L. Parascandola*

**These chickens are still alive at the Townsend slaughter plant in Millsboro, Delaware. Many will then be scalded alive.**

*Photo by Carol McCormick*





A Tale of  
Two  
Turkeys:  
Priscilla  
& Mila



A Story of  
Two  
Chickens:  
Gabby &  
Felix





The Story of Reva who was  
rescued from the Chesapeake  
Bay Tunnel Bridge June 3, 2016.





**Our sanctuary chickens and ducks savor a spaghetti dinner in the yard.**

# UPC Chickens Say “Eat Your Greens!”



*Photo by Richard Cundari*

# In memory of our loving turkey Boris.

*Photo by Susan Rayfield*

*"Don't Gobble Me!"  
-- Boris the Turkey*



*Turkeys are friends, not food  
- go vegan!*

In Memory of  
Miss Earth  
Angel, who  
died June 13,  
2016

*Photo by Karen Davis,  
Dec. 28, 2015*



# These hens, rescued from battery cages, find peace in our woodsy sanctuary.

*Photo by Davida G. Breier*



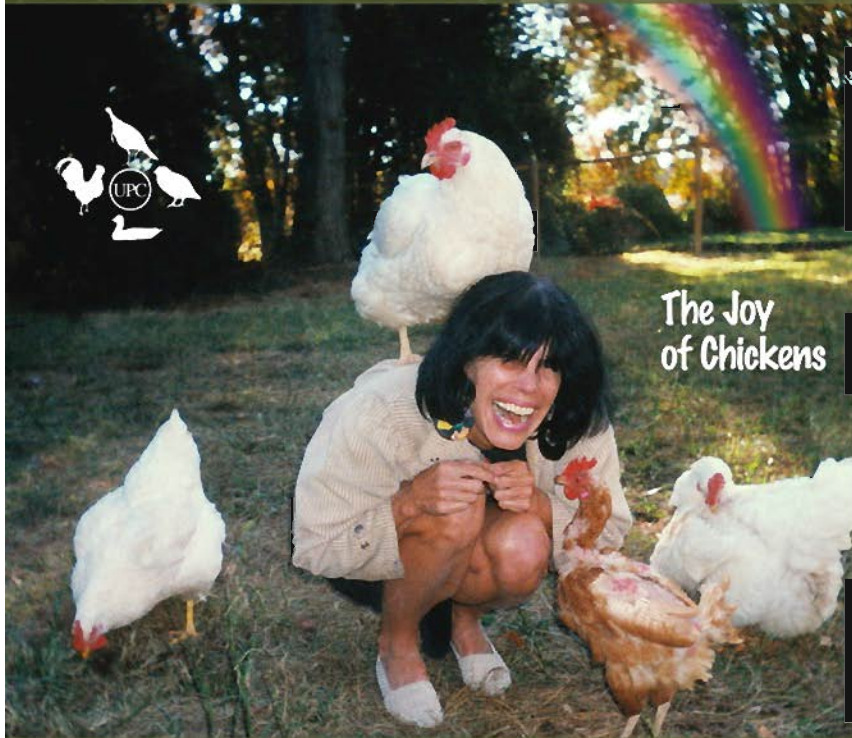


**While his hens  
dustbathe, Ivan  
keeps watch on  
a beautiful day  
in May at  
United Poultry  
Concerns.**

*Photo by Richard Cundari*



# Come See What a Chicken Can Be



The Joy  
of Chickens

## When a Chicken is Free!

United Poultry Concerns • P.O. Box 150 • Machipongo, VA 23405  
Tel. 757-678-7875 • [www.upc-online.org](http://www.upc-online.org)

# **Florence and me at UPC – What a Turkey Can Be When She is Almost Free!**

*Photo courtesy of The Virginian-Pilot*



**Nathaniel  
and I share  
happiness  
and love.**

*Photo: Richard Cundari*



For more information, visit



**PO Box 150, Machipongo, VA 23405**