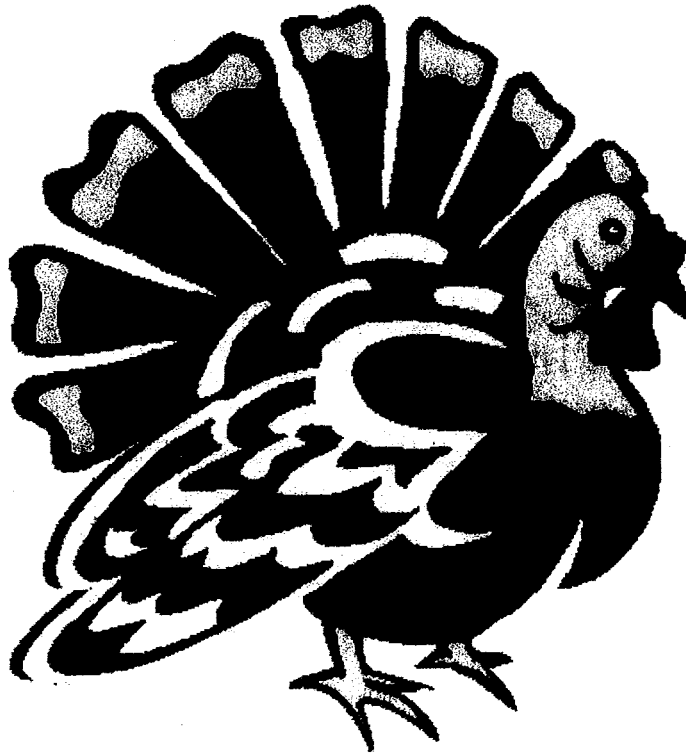


Turkey Workshop



*Beard & Spurs Chapter
National Wild Turkey Federation*

TURKEY HUNTING TIPS

A Turkey Hunter's CODE OF CONDUCT

As a Responsible Turkey Hunter, I will

1. Not let peer pressure or the excitement of the hunt cloud my judgment;
2. Learn and practice safe hunting techniques;
3. Hunt the wild turkey fairly;
4. Know the capabilities and limitations of my gun or bow and use it safely;
5. Obey and support all wildlife laws and report all violations;
6. Respect the land and the landowner and always obtain permission before hunting;
7. Avoid knowingly interfering with another hunter and respect the right of others to lawfully share the out-of-doors;
8. Value the hunting experience and appreciate the beauty of the wild turkey;
9. Positively identify my target as a legal bird and insist on a good shot;
10. Share responsible turkey hunting with others and work for wild turkey conservation. ■



PROPER USE OF DECOYS

Unless the use of decoys is prohibited by law the following guidelines apply:

1. A decoy should never be visible while being transported. Never carry an uncovered (identifiable) decoy any distance.
2. Whenever possible, set-up by a "stand" tree that is wider than your shoulders and taller than your head.
3. From your seated position, identify the clearest line of vision to your front. Establish a "sight line" that allows you 100 yards visibility. Then set your decoy(s) approximately 20 yards from your position on the line.
4. Should you see another hunter (especially if he/she is close to your "line of sight") call out to them in a *loud*, clear voice. Their presence has already compromised your location and a "soft" call may only confuse them, rather than alerting them to your presence.
5. If you are calling over decoys and then elect to move to a new location, check carefully to ensure that no one is stalking your decoys. Check *before* leaving your "stand" tree. Should you see someone in the area, rule 4 applies. ■

Your safety is *your* responsibility - hunt defensively!

CAMOUFLAGE

Dress for Success

1. Never wear clothing that has any red, white, or blue because they can be mistaken for colors found on wild turkeys.
2. Be sure that accessories you carry that are red, white, or blue (e.g. diaphragm calls, box call chalk, candy wrappers, apples, cigarette packs, etc.) are not visible to other hunters.
3. Camouflage your gun. If not, at least cover up white diamonds or other red or white markings.
4. Always keep your hands and head camouflaged when calling.
5. Wear dark-colored socks and pants that are long enough to keep your bare skin from being exposed.
6. Do not "over-camouflage" by sitting in vegetation so thick that it obscures your vision.
7. If you can legally use a man-made blind of camouflage netting, maintain a clear field of view. ■



SECRETS FOR TURKEY HUNTING SUCCESS

By: Dr. Terry Little and Roger Raisch

SEVEN CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL TURKEY HUNTER:

- PERSISTENCE**-- Hunt all day
- PATIENCE**-- Stay 30 minutes longer than you think you should
- CONCENTRATION**-- Hunt like a turkey is 100 yards in front of you
- KNOWLEDGE**-- Scout your hunting area; learn turkey behavior
- WOODSMANSHIP**-- Move around quietly and invisibly; learn to read turkey sign
- CALLING ABILITY**-- Master one type of calling device (diaphragm calls are most versatile)
- CONFIDENCE**-- Read our book; our tactics will work for you

SIX THINGS TO DO BEFORE THE HUNT:

- Pattern gun--40 yards maximum; #4, #5 or #6 shot
- Master your calling--yelp, cluck, cutt, cackle, kee kee
- Camouflage your gear--gun, clothing, face, hands
- Get permission to hunt on private property
- Scout--find turkeys and learn their movements
- Try to roost turkeys **every** evening

SIX THINGS TO DO IF YOU CAN'T SCOUT OR ROOST:

- Hunt areas you are familiar with
- Use maps from prior years
- Talk with landowners--Where do they see turkeys?
- Talk with other hunters--Where were turkeys last season?
- Listen for turkeys at daylight
- Hunt in traditional strutting and feeding areas

SPRING SECRETS

FOUR WAYS TO HELP YOU WORK A GOBBLER EVERY DAY:

- Scout--learn turkey movements
- Roost gobblers--guarantees a chance the next morning
- Hunt private property--less pressure means more gobbling
- Don't divulge hot spots--don't invite company

FIVE WAYS TO OUTSMART GOBBLERS WITH HENS:

- Roost gobbler--get as close as possible before daylight
- Call the hens--call loud and aggressively; mock the hens
- Use more than one caller--sound like a flock
- Use decoys--hens may be looking for company
- Scatter gobbler from hens--desperation tactic only

EIGHT WAYS TO FOOL SILENT OR HUNG-UP GOBBLERS:

- Use the "silent treatment"--stop calling, make him anxious
- Call constantly and excitedly--fire him up
- Change callers for a different sound
- Use more than one caller--sound like a flock
- Gang up on the gobbler--call with a partner
- Hunt from a strut zone--get there before the gobbler does
- Move to another spot--make him think you are a real hen
- Use decoys--they may bring in the "extra-cautious" gobbler

CLASSIFICATION

Class: Aves

Order: Galliformes

Family: Meleagrididea

Scientific name: *Meleagris gallopavo*

There are only two types of wild turkeys in the world: the ocellated turkey, which lives in Mexico and central America, and the North American. The North American wild turkey is divided into five subspecies: Merriam's, Rio Grande, Gould's, Florida and Eastern. Each subspecies looks a little different. They also live in different parts of the country.

KNOW YOUR WILD TURKEY TOM

TAIL FEATHERS OR RECTRICES

There are usually 18 present, but a gobbler can lose a few when fighting. Tan- to brown-tipped on Eastern, Rio Grande and Osceola subspecies; ivory-tipped on Merriam's.

EAR OPENING

No flap to funnel sounds, but a tom hears extremely well.

HEAD CROWN

Predominantly white during the spring, sometimes with a reddish tint.

EYE

Set into the side of the head for monocular vision; a slight turn of the head allows a 360 degree field of vision.

TAIL COVERTS

Tip colors vary with subspecies.

SNOOD

Long and prominent on a mature gobbler, but no known function.

BACK AND BODY FEATHERS

Provide insulation and shed water. When upraised they refract sunlight to add to a strutting tom's grandeur.

MAJOR CARUNCLES

Large and fleshy. Engorged with blood during the spring.

PRIMARY WING FEATHERS

Marked by distinctive white bars (less barring on the Osceola). Toms rub off wing tips with extended strutting.

BREAST FEATHERS

Black tips give a gobbler a coal-black appearance.

SPUR

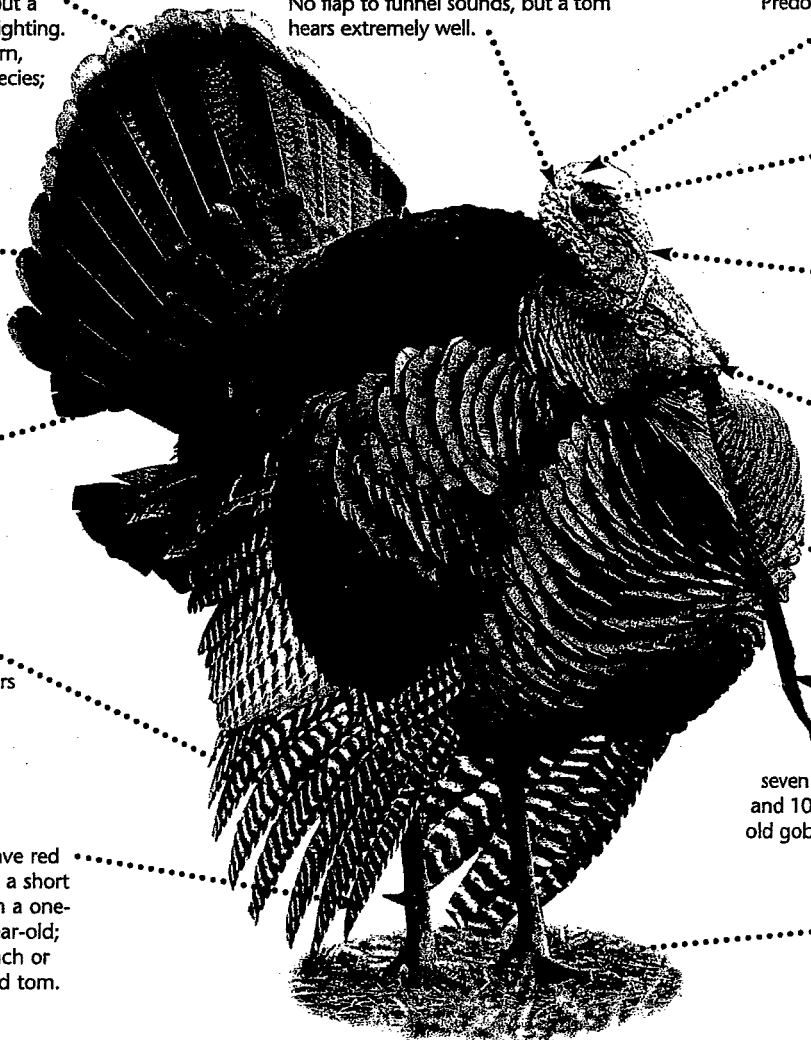
Most spurs are black, some have red or blond tints. They appear as a short button on a jake; just less than a one-inch straight spur on a two-year-old; and as a sharp, curved, one-inch or longer spur on a three-year-old tom.

BEARD

Three to four inches on a jake; seven to nine inches on a two-year-old; and 10 inches or longer on a three-year-old gobbler. Thickness varies. Some toms have multiple beards.

FOOT

Three long toes. The middle toe measures 2½ to 3½ inches on a gobbler.



Signs of a Wild Turkey

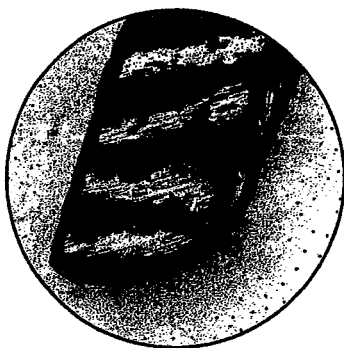
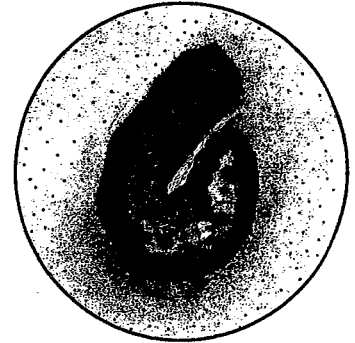


Tracks: You can tell which way a turkey is moving by looking at its tracks. You can also tell whether the turkey is a male (gobbler or tom) or a female (hen). A gobbler's toes are wider and the middle one is longer than a hen's.

Look for tracks in muddy roads and trails and in fields that have just been plowed.

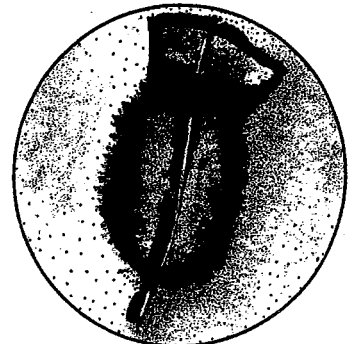
Scat: If you find droppings, you'll know a turkey was in the area. You can also tell whether the turkey is a gobbler or a hen. Gobbler droppings are shaped like a "J" or a fish hook (see drawing on the right) while hen droppings look like a spiral-shaped pile.

If droppings are old, they'll crumble when you touch them with a stick. Fresh droppings are soft, which means a wild turkey was recently in the area.



Drag Marks: During the spring, gobblers put on a show to attract the attention of hens. They fan their tails out, drag their wings on the ground and take a series of steps in a display called strutting. The feathers on their wings leave marks on the ground when they strut. These marks look like someone drew several parallel lines. If you look, you might find these "drag marks" along sunlit roads and at the edge of fields.

Feathers: If you find a feather, you can be sure a turkey was there. Feathers under a tree may mean turkeys spent the night roosting in that tree.



HELPFUL TIPS FOR PATTERNING

Use a bench or some other kind of rest for the best and most accurate results. Remember you are testing the aiming point of your firearm, not your ability to aim the firearm freehand!

Take your closer range shots first, and your longer range shots last.

Always make sure you have an area with a suitable backstop before setting up a target or anytime you are discharging a firearm. Check local rules and regulations in the area you plan to shoot your gun in.

Always double check to make sure the area is clear before pulling the trigger.

Make sure to mark the shot size, choke and distance! Avoid confusion between load and choke performances.

Always wear safety glasses and earplugs when shooting a firearm.

Tests have proven that several firearms of the exact make will shoot the same manufacturers' ammunition differently. That's one of the reasons we pattern our guns. Finding the right BRAND of ammo for your gun could well make the difference in your scoring ability. You can also test to see if you are happy with the choice size that you are using for a particular game or distance of shot.

After firing the shells you want to test, look at each target and check the results.

Count the number of pellets in the 30" circle. Check the consistency of the pattern. Is it evenly distributed throughout the circle? Could you have hit the game with enough pellets to make the kill? Is the pattern centered with the 30" circle? Which manufacturers shell performed the best with your gun? Are you using the right choke for the particular situation?

By patterning your shotgun, you'll learn a lot about the performance of your equipment and you'll be more likely to score with every shot you take. That's not only good for your ego, but it also makes for good conservation. Uneven patterns probably account for a lot of crippled or lost game! It would be way better to shoot at 4 birds and kill 4 birds than it would be to hit 10 birds and take home only 5! Good luck shooting and above all, **BE SAFE and HAVE FUN!!**

Basic Approx. Pellet Count Table-Lead

Basic Approx. Pellet Count Table - Steel

Shot Size/Number	# Pellets per shell 1oz	Shot Size/Number	#Pellets per shell 1oz	# Pellets per shell 1-1/8 oz
00 Buck	8	F	40	45
BB	50	T	53	53
#2	90	BB	72	72
#4	135	#1	105	105
#5	170	#2	125	125
#6	170	#3	155	155
#7 1/2	350	#4	190	190
#8	410	#5	245	245
#9	585	#6	315	315

