

2011-11-13 Turkey Hunt

I shot my first fall turkey today. It was the most difficult aerobic, hunting workout I can remember. It all started where I've shot two spring turkeys in the past.

I woke up at 4:30 AM, which was kind of late, considering I had an hour drive, I needed to fill up my 25-gallon gas tank, get some coffee, and hike in the dark to my usual spot. After arriving about 30 yards shy of where I wanted to be at sun up, I had to settle in before I would be visible to any roosting turkeys. It was here that I spotted a nice 3x3 antlered deer, a doe, and a fawn. I was pleased to see the buck since I've wanted to hunt this location for deer as well. Besides deer and other few other animals, I didn't see or hear any turkeys. I decided to hike back to my truck and head to my friends' farm and hunt geese. As I was walking back to my truck I heard some geese and decided to try another spot, close by, which could have either geese or turkey.

As I pulled into the designated parking location, I saw about 40 turkeys feeding on the private property side of the road. I figured the hunt was over since on a normal day they would have kept traveling west, away from me, with the sun at their backs.



I hopped out of my truck anyway and loaded some number 2 steel shot shells just in case some geese came flying over. I decided to go in a direction I have never gone before because I wanted to be uphill from the turkeys and in the direction; they would travel if something spooked them. It was highly unlikely that they would come my direction but I was hopeful to come across some geese. As I climbed the steep hill, a white truck started diving by the turkeys and spooked them in my direction. I was shocked but even more shocked to hear a shot from some other hunters that were in the area. I heard the hunter say "I don't think I hit him."

It didn't look like any of the birds were hit and I just watched and listened as the Turkeys got closer. Unfortunately, I didn't think they would get in range so I tried to move closer. That was a stupid move on my part, because I scared a Tom that was only about 25 yards away. I just didn't see it through the thick brush. I took a long shot at one's head but I didn't notice that it did anything to the bird. At that point, I simply started chasing them up the hill through thick brush.

When I reached the top of the hill, I took a few shots at some turkeys that were on the ridgeline that spooked up and started to fly. I was so upset that I missed and it made me want to keep pushing through the vegetation. I put my thick wool sweater back on to keep from getting too scratched up.

150 yards later I ran into them again as they made a quick getaway. I continued to pursue them and about 200 yards farther I spooked them up again. I made a fast push through the brush this time and was lucky to be situated between a couple of groups of birds on either side of the ridgeline. I could hear them making regrouping calls and I decided to throw a few large rocks to confuse them so they wouldn't know my exact location. A few minutes later, I spotted a Tom walking about 12 feet from me. I took a shot through two bushes; he began to fly down the hill I took two more shots. I ran down to the last spot I saw him and he was still trying fly away. I took a fourth shot to finish him off before I could claim my thanksgiving bird; and boy was I thankful, that was one of toughest hunts I can recall.