

The Parting Shot

by Thom Jorgensen



Well I was feeling pretty confident going into turkey season this year, mostly because I found myself living in the middle of a pretty good-sized flock of toms last winter. Last year

was a really bad year for turkeys around here and I heard of more than a few guys going the whole season without seeing a legal bird. Luckily I had caught up with Floyd Wells and Ken Meyer during the banquet and talked about turkey diet and learned more than a little about why this year was so challenging for them with the depth of snow and the thick ice layer it covered.

All winter I had 17 toms that came in almost daily. As their food sources started to become inaccessible, I started feeding them a complex diet with some grit within the DNR guidelines. I had to stop feeding them before the ground was clear, but a small opening of green soon followed and at the beginning of spring I still had 17 boys running around the property. The girls started showing up and the numbers more than doubled overnight. A few days later the flocks started breaking apart, and then they reformed into many smaller groups that still frequented the plots and pastures.

About this time I had a nice bow and arrow setup, and my blind was already out in front of their main trail from the roosting trees to the fields. I had decoys and was well practiced with my calls.



Did I mention I was confident? I was too confident. I drew the first week of season this year so I had limited time to hunt, to make matters far worse I had a big rush of work that put me on the bench for the first 4 days of it!

Here is how my blind looked those first days of turkey season when I wasn't in there!



I went out for my first hunt and passed on a tom because I didn't like the angle of the shot. The next day I swore I'd shoot the first legal bird I saw. The following evening a really sweet little bearded hen walked in. She walked up to about 10 feet and started scratching and purring along with another hen. I couldn't do it, self-made promises and all, I couldn't do it. I watched those girls for the better part of an hour and just enjoyed the privilege of being in their company.

I walked into the house thinking about just hanging up my bow and calling it a season, then I got the word that a friend in the next town over had just seen a wounded tom wander onto his property. I grabbed my bow and my quiver and I went over and dispatched the wounded animal. It was a beautiful tom almost 20 pounds. The meat was delicious, and the wings and tail feathers have already been put into crafts.

The bird was a blessing to our household. I believe my willingness to tag this animal was a blessing to the conscientious landowner. I hope a very swift end was a blessing to the suffering creature.

Last issue I said I'd submit for a Turkey Award if I killed a bird; I can't follow through on that. I didn't observe this animal to learn its habits. I didn't use blinds/calls/decoys to tip the scales for me and my longbow. Frankly, I don't feel like I earned it. Since some folks who read *STICKTALK* also ate some of that turkey chili the next weekend at the Spring Shoot, I thought I'd better put this story down so everyone knew why there was no award to go with that chili!

Looking back at the entirety of the last several months with me and turkeys, everything seemed to work out in just the way it was supposed to. Now I can start looking forward to turkey season 2015 and doing it the right way!

