

PENNSYLVANIA

Turkey TALK

2009 Fall Edition



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A Publication of the Pennsylvania State Chapter of the NPTF

Message From The President

Good Luck to each of you as you travel into Penn's Woods to match wits with our premier game bird - the Wild Turkey.



We have recently completed the Leadership Weekend in State College - a yearly activity that everyone who attends looks forward to and plans for in the next year. Attendance this year was at an all time high, the trap shooting and BBQ on Saturday evening was well attended, and the Leadership Meeting on Sunday was extremely informational. Bob Fountain, VP of Field

Operations, NWTF, addressed those in attendance on Sunday and fielded questions from the audience. Our RD's did their usual outstanding job of coordinating the weekend and keeping everything running smoothly. Several Board members related their positive experiences that helped them each create a successful banquet. Please see Southern Strutter's President John Groff's write-up in this issue. Photos in this issue will demonstrate just how successful this weekend really was. For your planning purposes, mark your calendars - August 7 & 8, 2010 is the next Leadership Weekend. Hope to see you there!

Included in this issue is information about the upcoming 35th Rendezvous and Awards Banquet on Saturday, January 9, 2010. This annual event has also grown in attendance over the last few years and should reveal a record attendance once again. Make your reservations early and take advantage of the "early bird special." There is a great line-up of seminars, and this coming year the speakers will cover food plots/habitat improvement, turkey oddities, videoing your hunt and building a better banquet. They will run from 10.00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., and you won't want to miss any of them! The evening will be topped off with the Awards Banquet, and will provide highlights that people will be talking about for a long time to come. You will be glad you were there!

If your local chapter participates in the Conservation Seed Program, please make sure to read the included information regarding seed ordering. As a reminder,

if you are a member of a local chapter who does not participate, but you do want some seed, please contact Tom Bunty to do so.

Deer archery season is upon us, and soon the fall season for squirrel and grouse will open. To a turkey hunter, that means added opportunities to do some pre-season scouting and maybe even nail down the travel route of a flock or two. October 31, the opening day of the fall season, is just around the corner, so time spent scouting now will pay off once the season is underway. Try to leave your calls at home and focus on locating scratchings, droppings, tracks and other signs. There is no good point to pre-season calling that only helps to educate the turkeys. Good Luck to each of you as you travel into Penn's Woods to match wits with our premier game bird - the Wild Turkey. Remember, above all - Positively Identify Your Target, and Beyond!

Jon Pries



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NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION MISSION STATEMENT:
Dedicated to the conservation of the wild turkey and preservation of our hunting heritage.

PANWTF.ORG



“Red” Answers the Last Call

By Bob Goehring

The NWTF lost a pioneer member with the recent passing of Lionel “Red” Perry of Blairsville, PA. As a willing worker for PA Local Chapter No. 1, you could always depend on him to help at the fundraisers. Red was also a maker of custom crafted box calls, and once turned down an offer from a call manufacturer to mass produce his calls as he refused to sacrifice quality for quantity. Many birds fell victim to the sweet notes of his calling and you are fortunate if you own one of his calls. You are more fortunate if you count Red as a friend before he answered his last call.



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of the National Wild Turkey Federation



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For sending digital photos, follow these guidelines:

- Digital images **must be 5x7 inches at 200 dpi** for use in Turkey Talk.
 - Always try to identify the person(s) in the photo.
- Photos taken from a cell phone are not print quality and may not be accepted.

Deadline for submitting articles for the 2010 Winter Issue of Turkey Talk is NOVEMBER 13





On Saturday, July 18, 2009, at the Henrietta Sportsman Club, the Tussey Mountain Strutters and the Allegheny Mountain Chapters of the NWTF hosted their Fourth Annual Youth Field Day. Approximately thirty-nine youths ages 3 to 17 and their parents participated in various outdoor events.

The children were divided into six groups and rotated between six stations. Station #1 was Archery. All supplies were donated by Freedom Archery; here the children learned proper archery skills, and shoot at 3D targets, donated from the Henrietta Sportsman's Club. At station #2 The Shavers Creek Environmental Club introduced the kids to different birds and reptiles. Then onto station #3 where the Blair County Fish and Game Commission presented information about black bears. Station #4 was Kevin Kunsman and his son Koby, teaching turkey calling techniques. Dave Feathers showed the children about crossbows and muzzleloaders, proper techniques and answered any questions the youth had, at station #5.

Then last but not least was station #6, where the youth learned how to tie flies and then onto the pond where they learned how to fly fish.

After lunch, door prizes donated by Martinsburg Pizza, Leidy's Home Furnishings, Gary's Tire, and Subway were awarded. The top prizes were, a Red Ryder BB Gun won by Henry Wentz, of Osterburg, PA. A .410 shotgun won by Drew Hileman of Williamsburg, PA and a bean bag chair won by Eddie Kunsman of Williamsburg, PA. The Tussey Mountain Strutters and the Allegheny Mountain Chapters would like to thank Richey's Dairy and Roaring Spring for donating the drinks, and also thank everyone who volunteered and who participated in the day, we really appreciate the participation.

**Don't miss the 34th Annual NWTF Convention and Sport Show!
Feb. 18-21, 2010 at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel
in Nashville, Tennessee**



Fun for the entire family-all under one roof! Call (888) 777-6779 to reserve a hotel room! Room rates are \$165 per night for a traditional room or atrium view room. To find out more about the Gaylord Opryland hotel, please visit www.gaylordhotels.com/gaylordopryland. Every year the NWTF gathers to celebrate the amazing comeback story of the wild turkey. This year's Turkey Party includes Calling, Call making and Taxidermy contests, great speakers, entertainers and the NWTF honoring the volunteers and partners who make us the best conservation organization. To find out more about the convention activities and events please visit www.nwtf.org. If you are planning to attend this year's National Convention, and want to sit with other Pennsylvania attendees at dinners and other events. Please forward your registration and payment by December 15, 2009 to Jon Pries, 612 Harman Road, Trout Run, PA 17771.

Editor's Note:

Please note the following changes to last issues JAKES Hunt of a Lifetime article. Heather Sempowski's Chapter is the Fort Chambers Chapter and not the Foothill Spurs Chapter. We would also like to thank Buddy Stang of Talkin' Stick Game Calls, who donated the calls for this years hunt. We apologize for these omissions.

Annual President's Leadership Weekend

-State College

A life changing experience.

By John Groff



NWTF Regional Director Ray Smith congratulates Block Shoot Winner Dennis Wade and his son Casey from the Lakefront Gobblers Chapter.



For the past three years, I have been drawn in with the most self gratifying entity that I have ever been involved with. That is the NWTF. If someone were to of told me that I could get this much enjoyment out of volunteering, I would have told them that they were crazy.

Our chapter was looking for different ways to reach people in the community. So we decided to promote our chapter a little different. We started doing the outreach programs and getting involved with our communities. I think sometimes people forget what these outreach programs can do for a chapter.

They have made our chapter numbers and enthusiasm go through the roof. I think that if everyone in the NWTF were to get involved with one of the following outreach programs, JAKES, WITO, Wheelin' or Turkey Hunter Care Program, they too would see a major change in their chapters. There are so many great opportunities through the NWTF for us all to get involved with. All it takes is a little time and effort. The great thing is you can involve your whole family so that you do not have to take time away from them, it can create more quality time with them.

To see a kid put a fishing rod into their hands for the first time, a women getting out and being involved with what we are all so passionate about, to take a meal to a family in need at the holidays, to take someone who is disabled out hunting or introduce them to the outdoors are some of the most rewarding and gratifying things that I have ever done. In 2008, we did our first Wheelin hunt and

even though we didn't hear or see anything, the hunter was just grateful that the volunteers took the time out of their weekend to take him out hunting. I have personally been involved in all of these things, and I'm telling you that if you promote these programs to your chapters and push them a little you will see unbelievable changes. You just can't describe in words the way it makes you feel to be helping others. Since we have gotten so involved in all of these things, our chapter has people involved that never did anything before. They want to do more and more for the outreach programs and our chapter.

I feel you need to promote your chapter to your local communities. Let them know that the NWTF does more than habitat work, conservation, and hunting heritage. Let them know that we want to do things for our communities. Ask them what we can do to help. I think we need to tap into some of the areas that are unchartered. The hunting communities are just a small piece of the pie. We need to focus on the whole spectrum that is out there. We need to educate the uneducated about what the NWTF is "ALL ABOUT."

I hear a lot of people say, "What is the NWTF going to do for me?" I can tell you what it has done for me. It has created memories and friends that will last a lifetime. Material things can be taken from you, but the friends and memories you get out of this will never be taken from you. So I say, "What can I do for the NWTF?" The more I can do... the more gratification, memories, and friends I can create.

On Saturday, August 8th, the Central PA Limbangers of the National Wild Turkey Federation, held their 3rd Annual JAKES Event at the Sandy Ridge Sportsman's Club. Limbanger members, along with support from Nittany Valley Longbeard members and shooting instructors from Sandy Ridge, passed on their knowledge to the JAKES, ages 6-17, and their parents and guardians who attended.



The events of the day opened with a presentation by Mike Evangelista, a professional videographer and Hunt Nut pro staff member. He spoke on basic turkey hunting techniques with an emphasis on safety. Activities included archery, turkey calling, hunting from a blind, small caliber rifle, shotgun patterning and trap shooting. Lunch was served by volunteers from the Sandy Ridge Sportsman's Club. The Limbangers thank all sponsors, both business and private, for helping in our success, and the Sportsman's Club for the use of their facility, and help from their members.

With over 40 boys and girls attending, this was our biggest JAKES event yet. We want to thank the parents and guardians for taking the time to bring their kids, and most of all, "thanks" to our JAKES for attending. "They are what it's all about."

The Limbangers are continuing to be active, with our Hunting Heritage banquets, JAKES events, and Turkey Hunter's Care (supplying frozen turkeys to those less fortunate). For information about the chapter or any of its activities, contact Ken Fernburg at 342-3934 or Rich Myers at 339-6557.

FRIENDS, FAMILY & FUN!

35th Anniversary Pennsylvania Chapter
National Wild Turkey Federation's

Annual Rendezvous & Awards Banquet

Saturday, January 9, 2010

Ramada Inn - State College - 814.238.3001

(Rooms \$69/Night; please call reservations and mention NWTF for special rate)

Awards Banquet with the Premiere Introduction of the 2010 Banquet Package along with Chapter and Individual Awards 5:30 pm

- Prime Rib & Stuffed Chicken Dinner
- JAKES Hunt of a Lifetime on Live Auction
- Drawings for Sponsor, JAKES Hunt of a Lifetime and WITO Wyoming Hunt Raffle
- Silent Auction, Live Auction, Guns, Prints, Raffles
- Custom One-Of-A-Kind Turkey Calls From Various Call Makers Plus Other One-Of-A-Kind Items On The Live Auction

Early Bird Core Package Raffle

\$300 WORTH OF TICKETS FOR \$100

Early Bird Deadline December 15

Make Checks Payable to: PA CHAPTER NWTF Mail to: Jim Panaro, 224 Buck Rd., Ebensburg, PA 15931

<input type="checkbox"/> Adult Banquet Meal Ticket	\$30	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Child Banquet Meal Ticket (10 & Under)	\$15	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Bird Raffle Package	\$100	\$ _____
GRAND TOTAL		\$ _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

(Names of all people attending): _____

** Tickets Will Be Held At The Door*

RENDEZVOUS SEMINARS

Building a Better Event 10 AM

By Scott Wojton
Panel Discussion/ presentations on ideas to improve your local events, including banquets, JAKES Days, WITO events, and Wheelin' events and hunts. Audience participation will be encouraged, please bring your ideas and questions to make this seminar a success.

Turkey Oddities \ 12 PM

By NWTF Regional Biologist, Bob Eriksen

Not all wild turkeys are created equal. If you hunt turkeys for long enough you will hear about turkeys that don't follow the normal rules for coloring or other attributes. Bob Eriksen, NWTF Regional Biologist will present a powerpoint and discuss wild turkey oddities including various color phases seen in wild turkeys, odd markings, oddly colored beards, the prevalence of bearded hens, multiple spurred gobblers and other unusual things. If you have photos or specimens of strange looking turkeys, bring them along!

Food Plots - Habitat \ 1:30 PM

By Bob Schmid

Alternatives to Food Plots: Ever wonder what kind of habitat improvements can be done other than planting food plots? Are you planting more food plots than your wildlife can consume? This seminar will discuss alternatives to planting more food plots.

Maintaining Existing Food Plots: Replanting food plots can be expensive and time consuming. This session will discuss various techniques for maintaining your existing food plots.

How To Video Your Hunts 3:30 PM

By Mountain View Productions, Mike Evangelista

Mike has had years of experience filming various hunts. He will explain how to set up and how to best capture your hunt on video so you have memories that will last forever.



*By Bob Eriksen,
NWTF Regional Biologist*

Conservation Seed Update



The Pennsylvania State Chapter began to charge a small fee for each bag of Conservation Seed obtained by members a couple of years ago. Conservation Seed is made available to conservation groups like NWTF by seed companies to be used for wildlife plantings. The annual grains such as corn, sorghum, wheat and sunflowers available as supplies allow consist of one-year old seed. The key word is "as supplies allow". We are able to obtain only the seed that the seed companies have left and supplies can be very limited on certain types of seed.

Germination rates are still good on this seed, but cannot be guaranteed to be close to 100 percent. Seed companies cannot sell the seed so their options are to provide it to organizations at the cost of re-bagging and shipping or to place leftover seed in landfills. Because the seed must be re-bagged and shipped the cost per bag has averaged between \$4.00 and \$6.00 per bag.

Seed must be ordered by the truckload. We cannot split truckloads. When the chapter receives orders, the amount of seed ordered is totaled and a decision is made on how many truckloads and what type of seed to order. This year, for instance, the chapter had orders from some people for corn, sorghum, wheat, sunflowers and alfalfa. The only type of seed that was ordered in a large enough quantity to place an order for a truckload was corn. The chapter ordered one truckload of corn and some folks who wanted other types of seed were disappointed.

Many of our members have thought of the Conservation Seed Program as "free seed". In reality there is a cost to the chapter for providing the seed to members. In the past that cost has been borne by the Hunting Heritage Super Fund. In the difficult economic times in which we find ourselves, there are many demands on the Super Fund even as income is

understandably declining a bit. Increases in the price of fertilizer, lime, fuel and supplies have further trimmed the amount of habitat work our chapters can accomplish. In order to continue to provide funding for outreach programs, habitat improvement projects, research, hunter safety and education, hunting heritage and the other things those dollars are used for, many state chapters have begun to place a minimal fee on Conservation Seed. This allows the chapter to recoup some of the cost associated with obtaining the seed while still providing wildlife habitat options to members.

The fact that the chapter requests its members to cover the cost of bagging and shipping might have come as a surprise to some folks but it is in the best interest of helping the chapter put more conservation on the ground. Members who take advantage of this offer need to realize the savings provided through

the program. Purchasing a bag of seed corn or other grain seed in today's market would normally cost from \$60.00 to \$90.00. This program has been enormously successful, improving fall and winter food supplies for wildlife and increasing hunter success for our members at low cost. We appreciate your continued support of this and other programs.



If you plant it,
they will come.

Conditions of Acceptance Form

Conservation Seed Program

THIS IS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SPECIAL CONDITIONS FOR THE ACCEPTANCE, USE AND DISPOSAL OF SEED FOR CONSERVATION USE ONLY

I understand that the seed I receive is intended for wildlife plantings only. I agree that I have no intent of acquiring genetic material and that acceptance of this seed does not give any rights to use the genetics contained within the seed or grain or any plant or plant parts, pollen or seed produced therefrom for breeding, research or seed production purposes or for any other purpose whatsoever, other than use in wildlife plantings.

I understand that misuse of this seed may subject me to legal action under U.S. Patent Laws and/or the Plant Variety Protection Act. This seed will not be used for commercial harvest. I also agree to leave the grain crop standing for wildlife food.

I understand that the seed I receive may be slightly below standard in germination and that I will hold no claims through the use of the product.

If I am unable to plant all of the seed, I agree to make the surplus available to other landowners who have this same agreement for the purpose of wildlife food plots or to dispose of the seed in an acceptable, safe manner. I understand that this seed has been chemically treated and under no conditions will this seed be used for direct food for livestock or wildlife.

I also understand that a violation of this agreement may result in this organization and/or all organizations in this state permanently losing the right to distribute seed under this program.

CAUTION: The seed is a biological product. Improper storage can result in damage to the seed. Try to avoid high temperatures and moisture. In meeting pesticide standards, seed should not be stored near any food products.

Distribution Point:

**H R Bierly's
Garage & Auto,**
585 N Pennsylvania Ave,
Centre Hall, PA 16828

Distribution Coordinator:

Sam McCartney
Preferably by email at:
svm@goh-inc.com
814.359.2338
or cell 814.571.4287
for Bierly's Garage near Center Hall

Chapters will be notified when the seed arrives and will be responsible for picking up their seed. **An important change this year is Chapters will be responsible for paying the \$4 per bag transportation fee AT THE TIME THE CORN IS PICKED UP!!!** Chapters can receive their own tractor trailer loads as long as they have a forklift and a suitable storage building. Individual members can order directly but they are encouraged to work through a local chapter to consolidate with their order. Find chapters in your area on **PANWTF.org**.

Several chapters may consolidate orders to obtain a full load. Different types of seed cannot be combined to achieve a full load. Chapters receiving their own loads must still order through Tom Bunty. The coordination of the receipt, unloading and distribution will be the responsibility of the chapters involved.

2010 Conservation Seed Order Form

Note: In the past, orders have been missed due to some chapters emailing or leaving phone messages. For this reason, only orders placed on this form and returned by US Mail will be accepted. Thank you for your cooperation.

Chapter: _____	Seed Desired: _____	# of Bags _____
Chapter Contact Info:	Corn _____	
Name: _____	Alfalfa _____	
Address: _____	Sorghum _____	
_____	Sunflower _____	
Phone #: _____	Winter Wheat _____	
Email: _____		

Send this form to: **Tom Bunty, 2050 Park St., Dover, PA 17315**
Deadline for orders is 11-1-09. Please make a copy for your records.

Complete this form prior to picking up seed.

Are you planting all the seed you are picking up? Yes No

If no, then you understand you are to take copies of this form with you to have anyone you distribute seed to, sign form agreeing to the proper use of seed. You will be responsible for returning documentation to the chapter contact person. Should you not be able to produce documentation showing where you have distributed seed, you will be held responsible for any seed you picked up.

Use separate form for each person that receives and plants seed.

Print clearly the information of person **planting seed**:

Name: _____	<u>Indicate number of bags:</u>
Address: _____	Corn _____
_____	Alfalfa _____
Daytime Phone #: _____	Sorghum _____
Email: _____	Sunflower _____
	Winter Wheat _____

Name of person **picking up seed**. PRINT CLEARLY

Signature of person **picking up seed**. Date: _____

Signature of person **planting seed**. Date: _____

Please note: corn, sorghum, winter wheat and alfalfa come in 50 lb. bags and sunflower comes in 25 lb. bags. A full trailer load of corn, sorghum, winter wheat and alfalfa consists of 858 fifty-lb. bags. A full load of sunflower consists of 1716 twenty-five lb. bags. To curtail misuse of the seed there is a 3 bag limit per seed type per person.



WHAT THE HECK IS

YHEC?

By Dean Zimmerman

In January of this year, I was inducted into the Pennsylvania Chapter of the NWTF as a Board of Director. This was a challenge I have always looked forward to and hoped I could continue in the footsteps of some great conservationists that built this chapter into the great success story that it is today. We work with the leaders of the national board and state organizations such as the Game Commission, to set guidelines for the 87 local chapters in Pennsylvania and promote habitat and youth involvement into our outdoors. Every new board member is put into certain committees to work on the "trench work" responsibilities and then report back to the entire board. As the JAKES coordinator of my local chapter, I wanted to have some input into this area on a state level. Our chapter President, Jon Pries, put me on the state's JAKES committee and asked if I was interested in being the head of the committee for the involvement that PANWTF has with YHEC.

My first question was...What the heck is YHEC?

The computer is an amazing tool to do research. It turns out that since 1985 there has been an outdoor youth group called Youth Hunter Education Challenge, which promotes safe hunting through hands-on education and field challenges. Any youth that has their Hunter Ed. Certificate and is still in high school is eligible to participate. Boys and girls are on the same team and may be in the junior or senior division depending on their age or experience. There are six areas that the youth are scored on as an individual and/or team: hunter responsibility exam, wildlife identification, 22 rifle, muzzleloader, shotgun (trap), and 3D archery.

The teams work year round honing their skills for a chance to advance their youth through the state competition held at Scotia Range and then onto the national competition held in New Mexico. Next year the nationals will be in Pennsylvania. On Saturday, June 27th, 2009 my wife and I joined President Jon Pries at Scotia Range. What an awesome day watching 180 plus youth (and their families) enjoying a wonderful event. All of the youth first took the hunter responsibility exam which is used as a tiebreaker for the other events. The other five events were broken into stations, which the groups rotated through during the course of the day. At the end of the day scores are tallied and awards are given out for the best in different categories.

The great news is these are our future sportsmen and women that are being taught the true meaning of using the outdoors for all good intent. The bad news is some teams could not make the state and/or national competition due to lack of funding. I was proud to find out that the PANWTF supports this organization and has a member on their committee to help with their planning of the state competition. We also have board members that volunteer to help run one of the stations at the shoot. My challenge is for any chapter or individual that can support their local YHEC to get involved. My local chapter did and we now have many more members in our chapter.

For more information, please visit www.panwtf.org or www.payhec.org.



Turkey Camp

By Gene Alwine



I was recently taking a trip down Memory Lane and thought of all the camps I've been a part of while cutting my teeth as the outdoor enthusiast that I am today. It seems that some of the best memories my brain has stored involve sharing time and space with others at camp. These humble, back-in structures were definitely busiest during the rifle deer season, when masses of friends and relatives gathered to pursue that big ol' 8 point that "snuck" round us through the wildest of terrain the boundaries afforded. It was typical to expect that one of the several most seasoned elders of camp would end up tagging the monarch, if anyone could. Other than these times, camp was, for the most part, deserted unless there happened to be a nice stretch of trout stream nearby.

These days, I see more elaborate and better maintained "residences" situated throughout these private spots. Many have yards to mow and even fields to farm as these modern-day "clubs" enjoy assisting our wildlife agencies in managing the animal populations. It's not just the harvest, anymore. You'd be hard-pressed not to find a variety of tree stands and archery targets, seed bags and ground-workin' machinery, trail cams and, Oh boy, modern kitchens and indoor plumbing! Summer picnics and reunions are now an annual part of the camp schedule. It's easy to relax and enjoy time spent in the comforts of "home away from home." This is, no doubt, why these places are occupied much more frequently than in years past.

A camp event that's gaining in popularity, that I enjoy taking part in, is the spring turkey season. Being a guest at camp provides advantages for me that I am eternally grateful for. Mostly, it's because so much of the pre-season scouting has been done for me. I've grown to enjoy the tag-team style of hunting them and this is how I get to repay the host for inviting me to camp. It's every bit as enjoyable to observe someone through the process as it is to have it unfold for myself...and sometimes a double takes place! Learning experiences can occur and now it can be discussed and evaluated between two or more folks, enhancing the understanding of "what just happened, here."

I'm hoping to popularize fall turkey season at the camps I've been frequenting. This won't come as easily, I suspect, due to all the other seasons that have been a tradition there. I'll probably spend more time on solo hunts and be limited to where my wandering boots can go. No matter, though. Just being able to get away is what I'm after, anyhow. We can relate our stories as we gather together at this sacred place and kick back for the night. The quiet serenity of camp is always a plus and why we hastily pack our weekend bag and head for the hills.

Remembering this past spring, "quiet time" wasn't as crucial as we'd normally seek for the post-hunt. This year was a bit different. After kicking back, it was time to grab the AM/FM radio from the shelf...you know the one with the aluminum foil antenna extension...and listen intently, as the Penguins took care of business in the final series of the Stanley Cup playoffs. *Who cooks for youallll?*



SCHUYLKILL SPURS HOLDS FIRST JAKES DAY

By Kevin Titus

The Schuylkill Spurs chapter of the PANWTF held its First Annual Jakes Day on June 27, 2009. The event was held at the Silverbrook Rod and Gun Club near McAdoo, PA. Members of the Schuylkill Spurs and the Silverbrook Club provided 17 youths, 13 boys and 4 girls, with instructions on shooting rimfire rifles, recurve bows, and shotguns, along with a trapping demonstration and a turkey hunting and calling seminar. Later, several safety videos were shown, followed by a discussion on turkey hunting safety and ethics. Finally, a lunch was served and each youth received prizes and a Jakes membership. One lucky winner won a fully guided spring turkey hunt in 2010. It will be hosted by the Silverbrook Rod and Gun Club.

It appears the event was a success, as several weeks later chapter members were still receiving very positive feedback from parents and friends of those attending. I believe we have definitely recruited some new turkey hunters and, hopefully, lifelong NWTF members into our ranks.

Members of our chapter, along with the Silverbrook Club, can't wait to do this again, hopefully making it bigger and better every year. The Schuylkill Spurs would also like to thank everyone who helped at the event and those who donated prizes for investing in our future.

See you in the woods.

Wild Turkey Management By The Book, Part 1

By Don Heckman



Since the early 1950's Pennsylvania's wild turkey management program as administered by Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) has been a tremendous success story for turkey hunters. Their management plan results have increased state-wide wild turkey populations, improved wild turkey habitat, emphasized and taught safe and successful turkey hunting safety and new turkey hunting regulations have created new turkey hunting opportunities. Today's successful wild turkey management plan has a history of one step at a time change and regulation approach.

This was not accomplished just by accident or through wild turkey CAC's. PGC "Management Plan for Wild Turkeys in Pennsylvania" Goal is "provide optimum wild turkey populations in suitable habitats throughout Pennsylvania for hunting and viewing recreation by current and future generations". Objective: "Sustain or enhance healthy wild turkey populations in each Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) at or below social carrying capacity".

I personally preferred habitat carrying capacity as primary with social as a secondary, however I do understand what the PGC was doing by stating that objective that way. It is my belief habitat carrying capacity is the primary objective, not social carrying capacity. PGC will not know carrying capacity until it is reached or quite possibly by a steady decline in state-wide wild turkey populations impacted by other means than turkey hunting.

If at all possible a 2 week or 3 week fall season in all WMU's would be optimal. We are far away from that based on today's varied fall season lengths and the fact we are not at 450,000 stable 3 year state-wide wild turkey population. There are WMU's across the state that are accomplishing an increase in wild turkey populations; including WMU 5A which I am very familiar with the past 13 years of the wild turkey task force I started in cooperation with PGC, DCNR, PANWTF and 4 NWTF local chapters.

I believe correct wild turkey management plan sound scientific wildlife management principles are at work these past 50 years and will continue to succeed given the proper conditions throughout Pennsylvania and as long as turkey hunters continue to support the PGC wild turkey management plan. Turkey Management Areas started in 1985, were converted to Wildlife Management Units in 2003, and have provided PGC and turkey hunters with fall hunting season boundaries as defined by management plan objectives and strategies.

Hopefully turkey hunters have agreed with this management approach and will continue to support fall season wildlife management units for turkey hunting. The recently completed first ever 4 year state-wide gobbler leg band study and the soon to be started 4 year hen harvest rate study will have scientific management impacts for the next 50 years. Hopefully turkey hunters will agree to fully fund the PGC wild turkey management plan and will support a turkey hunting license/

stamp for \$5 resident and \$25 for non resident license/stamp.

PGC currently manages a state-wide wild turkey population estimated to be between 300,000 to 350,000, with a high of 410,000 in 2001. Back in the late 1950's-1960's the population was an estimated 50,000-100,000 primarily located in south central and north central Pennsylvania. With this growing population, every 100+ years is not enough opportunity to fund state-wide or regional wild turkey management research projects. If turkey hunters are to expect Pennsylvania Game Commission to continue to evaluate, research, and provide optimal future hunting opportunities in the next decades a better source of revenue funding wild turkey management will be needed.

Successful wild turkey management and turkey hunting safety opportunities through the wild turkey management plan will be able to support a Pennsylvania wildlife habitat capable of supporting a 3 year, stable, state-wide WMU 450,000 wild turkey population with a 4 bird limit. Bag limits and other turkey hunting regulations will be defined by PGC Biologists, Executive Staff, and Commissioners based on correct decision making and regulation criteria.

That's the way I see it based on the state-wide populations during the 1930's, 1950's, 1970's, 1990's, and now 2009 leading into the 2010 and 50 years beyond. During these last 9-10 years my question has been and continues to be... Will Pennsylvania weather conditions, wildlife habitat and their environments, wild turkey management plan objectives and strategies, support for revenue funding wild turkey hunting license/stamp, and Pennsylvania turkey hunters be ready for the responsibilities that go with the opportunities and the demanding challenges to see that goal achieved?

When PGC turkey biologists I know wrote the plan utilizing wild turkey trap and transfer to populate other suitable PA turkey habitats in the 1960's-1970's-1980's, to start the first ever spring gobbler season in Pennsylvania in 1968, downsize and eliminate PGC turkey game farm in 1980-1981, create first ever turkey management areas for fall season hunting regulations in 1985, create the first wild turkey management plan in 1999, and then revised and updated the wild turkey management in 2006, increased 12 turkey management areas to 22 wildlife management units in 2003, estimated first time ever state-wide wild turkey population reached 410,000 in 2001, improved turkey hunting safety portion

of PGC HTE course by adding turkey hunting safety section and questions in course material, created a first ever special Saturday for youth spring gobbler hunting day established by regulation one week before regular spring gobbler season starts beginning April 24, 2004, established first ever state-wide special second spring gobbler tag issued in 2006 after Legislation was signed in 2004 and regulations added in 2005, established first ever 4 year state-wide PGC gobbler leg banding study starting in 2006, established first ever Mentored Youth Hunting Program initiated in 2006 through signed Legislation for spring gobbler, squirrel, and groundhogs with turkey hunting starting spring gobbler season 2007, they did so based on the requirement to manage wild turkey population and turkey hunting opportunities by sound scientific wildlife management principles as cornerstones of the PGC's wildlife management foundation.

They did so based on thorough PGC Executive Leadership and Commissioner evaluation and support to improve and change wild turkey management criteria and regulations. Wild turkey management field data, indices, hunting and harvest densities, and hunter surveys obtained over a century of data collection provide the data cement for the cornerstones of that foundation.

Pennsylvania State Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation was founded and formed in June 1975 to promote wild turkey management principles, work on habitat management, educate and inform turkey hunters, improve turkey hunting safety, and grow the organization into a viable conservation organization.

State-wide wild turkey populations have increased in each quarter of the 20th century. There is every reason to believe that will happen in the 21st century. Turkey hunters were a valuable component of that increase in the latter half of the 20th century and it is my hope they will continue to be a valuable asset throughout the 21st century.



Laurel's Longbeards, Chester County, presented Oxford Area High School Senior, Patricia Weir, with a \$500.00 scholarship and wish her all the best in her college endeavor. Patricia is an avid hunter and thoroughly enjoys wildlife and the outdoors. She will be attending Penn State University Park in the fall to begin pursuit of a career in law.

Patricia's high school activities included: Football Cheerleading, 2009 Yearbook Editor, President of the National Honor Society (leading the most successful American Red Cross Blood Drive in the history of the high school -- 143 pints) and Treasurer of the Helping Hands Organization (Relay for Life, Earth Day Clean-up, Make A Wish Committee Chair, Spirit of Giving Luncheon, Special Olympics Volunteer).

Laurel's Longbeards are dedicated to helping train and support youth in outdoor sports (hunting, fishing, archery, conservation, etc.) and annually hold a Youth Day for those activities. They also are committed to giving a yearly scholarship to a deserving student.

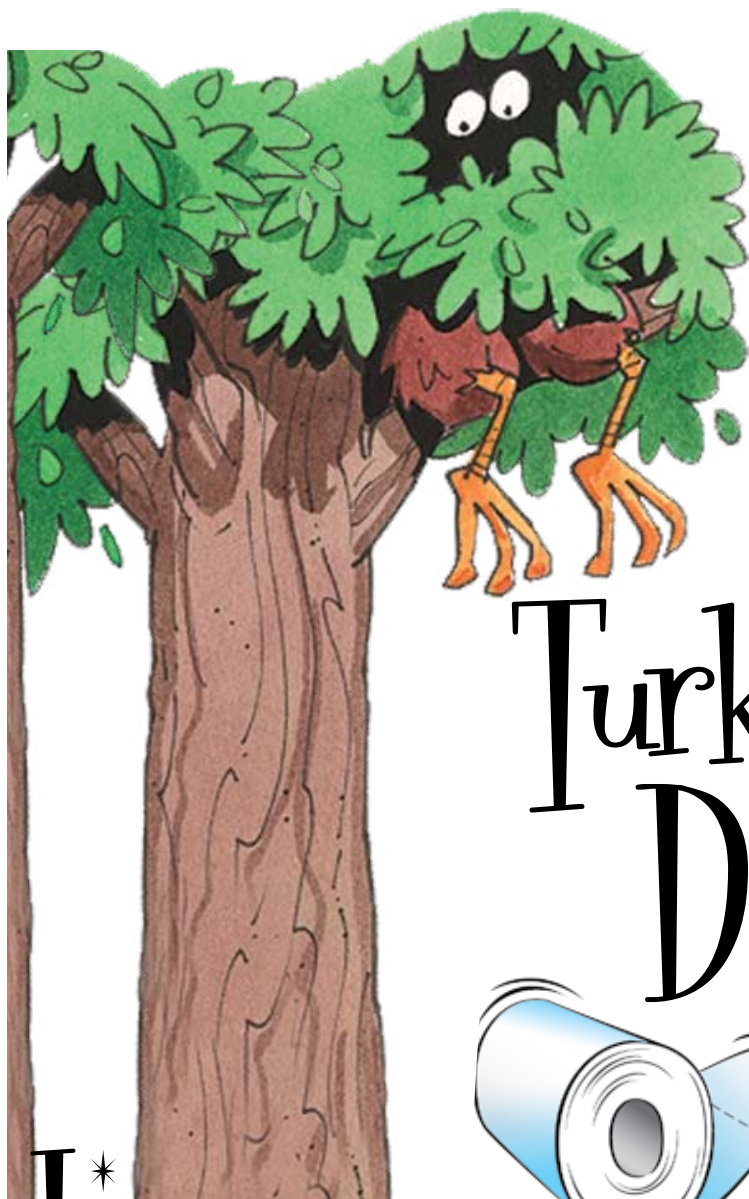


At the **10th Annual Lenni Lenape Hunting Heritage Banquet**, successful 1st Bird Harvest Award winners were recognized. Present at the banquet to receive their 1st Bird Awards are, pictured from left to right (photo by Jeff Sidle):

Lenni Lenape Chapter President Kerry Welsh, and his daughter Sarah Welsh age 14, Wade Gilpin age 11, his father Pike County Treasurer John Gilpin, and his brother Austin Gilpin age 10. At right is Dave Norman who was 17 when he killed his first bird in May.

The Lenni Lenape Chapter invites all 1st Bird Harvest Award winners to participate in this recognition during their Hunting Heritage Banquet. What a great way to support our Hunting Heritage! The PANWTF salutes the Lenni Lenape Chapter for this terrific recognition program.





Hunting with the Honey Hole

By Gary L. Gray

Turkey Dogs

"Meet me and Joe Cortese. at the Mini-Mart at 3:30 AM" he said on the phone the night before. Joe is another Honey Hole Turkey Dog, hunting accomplice of Mark, and the least ugly of the two. "3:30?" I replied, "You mean to say there are two 3:30's?" Since I live about 40 miles from Mark I quickly did the math and figured that I needed to get up around 2:00 and be on the road at 2:30 to get there by 3:30.

The upside to this is that I got to spend a few minutes of quality time with my 25 year old son who was just getting in from the club scene as I groggily made my way out the door.

You see hunting with the Honey Hole Turkey Dogs, just like other forms of hunting, is highly specialized and steeped in tradition. The first tradition is that the new guy gets to buy the coffee at the Mini Mart – two sugars and cream for Mark, black for Joe. The tradition continues as you stand around the truck in the parking lot for the next half hour to discuss the coming hunt's strategy, leaky boots, local politics, and who the new cashier is behind the counter. After about the 3rd cup, my brain finally started to function enough to make me think about how the last half hour of lofty conversation equated to a half hour of extra sleep I could have had the night before.

The next time honored tradition observed when hunting with the Honey Hole Turkey Dogs is that the new guy always gets to be the chauffer for the group and drive his truck to the hunting hot spot. Turns out the hot spot was previously deemed to be inaccessible to any vehicle until I came along.

Upon reaching the hot spot parking area and making a few unexpected stops along the way to pick up "unnecessary" parts of my vehicle like side view mirrors, bumpers, and muffler,



In case you haven't heard, hunting with a dog is now legal for spring turkey season in PA. That is, if the dog is a 6'4", 250 lb. "dog" named Mark Ferdinand, President of the Honey Hole Longbeards NWTF chapter in Hazleton PA. Mark has an uncanny ability to sniff out gobblers, so when he invited me to go on my first turkey hunt with him a couple of years ago I jumped at the chance, never realizing that in addition to the hunting experience, there would be some extra entertainment and adventure along the way.



we started our trek into the woods. Even this hike in is tradition bound when you hunt with the Honey Hole Turkey Dogs. Mark, the senior Turkey Dog, self proclaimed Supreme Intercontinental Grand Master turkey caller, and the only one with half an idea about where we were going, took the lead at the head of the procession. Me, the junior member of the crew trailed behind. Everything was by design. Since I was the last one stumbling down the trail in the dark I got to pick up and carry everything that fell out of Mark and Joe's turkey vests. They had more pouches and zippers on those things than I could count, and every one had something seemingly important in them. Things like cigars, Twinkies, toilet paper, and a book on "How to Find Your Way Out of the Woods". I noticed the book had numerous pages missing, no doubt attributable to trips where they forgot to pack the toilet paper.

The highlight of the 3 mile death march walk into the hot spot was the crossing of a raging creek by means of two wire cables. Legend has it that years ago a sadistic turkey hunter hung two wire cables across the creek just to see who was crazy enough to try to use them to cross it. Turkey hunters are commonly known to be crazy because of the ungodly times they get up in the morning and the strange company they keep. Stands to reason that only a deranged turkey hunter would attempt to cross these cables and we were no exception.

The first rule of making the cable crossing is to ensure that all important essentials are kept dry. Things like toilet paper and cameras fall into this category. Turns out the camera could have been invaluable in capturing numerous "photo opportunities" of the lead Turkey Dog's cable crossing.

The cables were strung horizontally across the creek, one about four feet directly above the other one. They were anchored securely to trees on either side of the bank. Because of the distance of the span and the weight of the cable there was a fair amount of sway in them, and each one would prove to have a mind of its own.

The idea of the crossing was to use the top cable as a handhold while you slide your feet carefully across the bottom one and make your way across. I had visions of tightrope walkers and other circus performers being able to accomplish this, but not a couple of klutzes weighed down with backpacks, heavy clothing, decoys and turkey guns. All the while, gentle wisps of foam rising from the rapids below landed on the bottom cable to keep it well lubricated. Tips like "Lean forward while you make your way across" seemed like good advice at the time. I wisely broke the tradition of the new guy going first by asking to observe the senior Turkey Dog in this crossing process.

Mark started off, slowly inching his way to the center. All seemed fine for a while and the leaning forward idea seemed to be working and keeping him somewhat upright. However the bottom cable was becoming dangerously close to the raging torrent as he made his way to the middle of the creek. The cables groaned and sagged under the weight. Suddenly we heard a "WHOAHHHHH" as the bottom cable swung out downriver and Mark hung on for dear life to the top one, which now compensated for the downriver movement with an upriver move of its own, leaving the Turkey Dog suspended between the two in a perilous position. Somehow the combination of his death grip on the top cable and his size 14's pushing downriver on the bottom cable kept him barely connected to the two and prevented him from falling in. He was suspended there in the middle, hanging backward at a 45 degree angle, the light from his headlamp shining up into the starry night above. His gun, which was slung across his back for the crossing was now getting its stock dipped in and out of the water as the two cables bounced up and down with his body now serving as a connector to synchronize their swaying movements. A photo opportunity to say the least, except that I was laughing too hard to remember to take the picture! The "dog" was going to get a bath and Joe and I rolled on the bank in laughter.

Eventually he was somehow able to muster enough strength to pull him upright and get his posterior seated on the lower cable, his hands reaching upwards to the upper cable and his feet dangling below him, dipping in and out of the curls at the tops of the rapids. From that point he proceeded to scotch his behind across the cable to the other bank, leaving a permanent 1/2" cable burn on both his Mossy Oaks and his Soggy Bottom. Joe and I, once we regained our composure and wiped the tears of laughter from our eyes, sought out a shallower crossing slightly downstream and rejoined Mark on the other side as he regained his composure and tended to the delicate nature of his cable burns.

The rest of the hike in was uneventful by comparison and we arrived at our destination in time to hear a host of gobblers sound off, each one tempting us to follow it up. We quickly decided on the closest one and the three of us set up off of an old logging road and waited for the first rays of light to illuminate the decoys we hastily set up 25 yards away. Mark and Joe set up separately behind me to call for me, the apprentice Turkey Dog. We were set up somewhat in the shape of a triangle, with me as the point man closest to the gobbler. Turns out this formation was by design too, as they both wanted to have a clear vantage point to observe the antics of a first time turkey hunter shooting a newly

purchased 12 gauge, 3.5 inch magnum turkey cannon. You see, I just bought the gun from Joe and was assured that it was patterned to be right on so why bother shooting it in advance? Up to this point in my shotgunning career I was an upland game hunter only and the heaviest load I'd ever shot was a 2 3/4 inch pheasant load.

Things happened pretty quickly after that with both of them calling for me. A virtual symphony of turkey calls ensued, performed on an orchestra of instruments as they tried to lure the gobbler in. I can honestly say I never heard anything like that in my life, except maybe once when I accidentally slammed the door on the cat's tail. Afterwards, Turkey Dog Mark said he was trying to sound and act like an old hen, something I told him came naturally for him.

Soon a jake with a death wish appeared from the shadows, head erect and alert, obviously searching to open a can of whoopin on a cat with a broken tail. Slowly I raised the turkey cannon, took aim at his head and fired. He disappeared from view! So did I for a bit until I slowly picked myself up off the ground and took inventory of all my body parts, teeth, and fillings. Once my sense of sight and hearing came back I turned in pain to see them rolling around on the ground and laughing behind me. "Hey Gary, you want some cheese with that whine?" said Joe. "I should have warned you about that kick". In my excitement I also neglected to pull the turkey cannon in tight before firing and the pain coming from my shoulder and bicep indicated I would not be wearing a short sleeve shirt to work on Monday.

We approached the downed jake and celebrated as if it was a tom with a 10" beard. It was my first turkey and in spite of the rigors of the cable crossing, the early rising, and the punishment of the turkey cannon I was hooked on this new sport. I knew I had fallen into bad company and was enjoying it immensely. I've been turkey hunting for 3 years now and it's a lot of fun, especially if you have some Turkey Dogs to hunt with.



Should I Take That Jake?

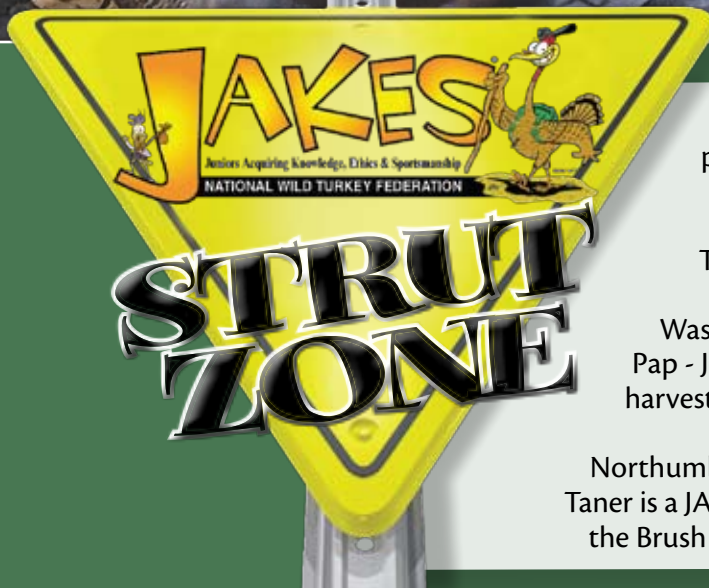
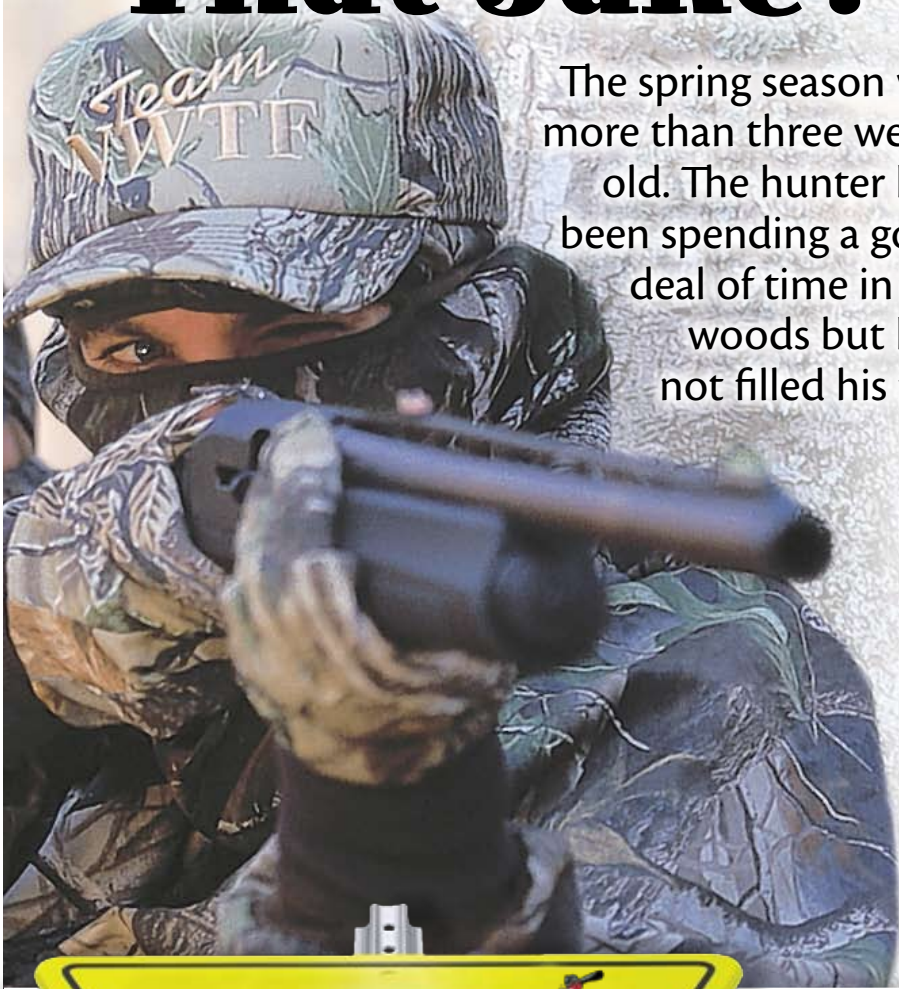
The spring season was more than three weeks old. The hunter had been spending a good deal of time in the woods but had not filled his tag.

Twice earlier in the season longbeards had presented opportunities to him, but things weren't quite right. In the second week, two longbeards had sneaked in quietly behind four hens. The hens came in close, well within effective range of his shotgun, but the gobblers held back. They drew a line in the sand and stood, necks stretched periscoping their heads at 40 to 45 yards. Was his gun capable of making that shot in open woods? The answer was, "Probably," but he simply wasn't willing to take a chance at that range.

Just a couple of days later, he moved in on a bird thundering on the roost in the pre-dawn light. He got as close as he dared, but was downhill from the bird. The woods were wide open and moving around any more with the increasing light was out of the question. He scratched out a tree call on his slate and the bird gobbled back. By then it was quite light, not bright enough to expect the gobbler to fly down, but close. He produced a fly-down cackle on his mouth call and the bird double-gobbled. The hunter eased his knee up and readied his shotgun.

A few minutes later he saw the bird fly down. It gobbled and then went quiet. The minutes passed but it was still dark in the shadow of the hemlocks. Suddenly the gobbler appeared as if materializing from nothing at about 40 yards. He wasn't displaying. Instead, he was walking, searching for the hen. In spite of his racing heart and dry mouth, the hunter mustered a cluck in an attempt to stop the bird for a second. The gobbler kept walking and began to turn away. It was now or never. The hunter decided it was a risky shot and let the bird walk. As soon as he was out of sight he began gobbling again but refused to answer the man's calls. The gobbler's path took him across a property line and out of reach.

Here he was on a cool, clear and calm morning on Tuesday of the last week. He breathed in the spring air and waited to hear the first gobble. Three birds opened up as the east-



While participating in the Mentored Youth Hunting Program, Taner Yoder, age 8, from Paxinos, PA.

Was mentored by his Pap - Joe Petrovich and harvested this turkey in Stonington, PA Northumberland County. Taner is a JAKES member of the Brush Valley Chapter.



ern sky brightened. Two gobbled sporadically from a distance away. One bird, closer than the others, gobbled time after time hardly taking a break from announcing his presence. He sounded as ready as a gobbler can be. The hunter walked quickly for a quarter mile across the hay field and entered the woods carefully. He was thankful that the leaves were fully developed because the gobbler was only 70 or 80 yards into the woods. Earlier in the season this set-up would have been impossible. He tip-toed to a large red oak just 10 yards into the woods, placed his stool on the ground and set up. He faced the gobbling bird with his left shoulder pointing directly toward it. Off to his right was the hayfield and a few yards behind him was a downed tree providing even more shadow to break up his silhouette than the big oak he sat against.

His tree call was answered by a triple gobble. He had the bird's attention. The bird continued to gobble regularly as daylight increased. The hunter used his mouth call to cluck a few times and those clucks were literally cut off by the roosted bird. His fly-down cackle produced another string of gobbles. Once again he was close enough to see the bird fly down. The gobbler flew downhill and then proceeded to walk back up. The hunter figured that bird would come straight for him, but he was wrong. The gobbler flanked the hunter and entered the hayfield. The tall grass was wet with dew and the hunter had not figured on the gobbler taking that route. The bird gobbled twice from the field but there was just enough hill in the field that the bird was not visible. The next time he gobbled he was to the hunter's hard right- behind the fallen tree, but still in the field. The hunter took a chance and shifted his position so he could cover the field. He yelped on the mouth call and the bird responded with a thundering gobble from less than 25 yards.

In less than a minute the gobbler appeared right at the end of his gun barrel walking back

toward his position and in perfect range. His neck was stretched out and he was looking for the hen- a perfect shot. But instead of being a wary old longbeard, the bird that had made his heart race and almost given him the slip was a jake with a four inch beard. The hunter hesitated. The milliseconds ticked by. His safety was off, he had the shot. Still he hesitated. What would his friends say if he shot a jake? Several of them had taken good longbeards. The landowner had not set any rules about the age of gobblers to be taken. Was it fair to shoot a jake? Was it even ethical to shoot a jake? Thoughts raced through his head. He had made the ethical choice to pass on two adult gobblers already. Now he had an ideal shot. He had called the bird up fair and square and the bird had performed admirably. His gobble was loud and deep like a big tom. There were only a few days left in the season. Should he take the shot? Should he let the bird walk?

All these thoughts went through his mind in the few seconds that the jake stood still. He made his decision, sighted carefully and squeezed the trigger. His tag was filled and his season was over.

The questions this hunter had as he made his decision are discussed around the campfire, across the dinner table and at the coffee shop. I can't tell you how many times people have asked me, "Is it ethical to shoot a jake in the spring?" My response is that taking a jake in the spring is a personal decision. Some hunting clubs and some landowners have rules permitting hunters to take only adult gobblers. Only one state, Mississippi, limits hunters to gobblers with at least a six inch beard. The objective is to allow more jakes to survive to be two year olds. The question no one can really answer is, "Does that work?"

In most years and in most states adult gobblers comprise the bulk of the harvest. Most of the northeastern states that operate checking stations consistently report that the harvest ranges from 60-70 percent adult toms and 30-

40 percent jakes. Gobbler survival studies and research on spring harvest rates have generally shown that adult gobblers are harvested at higher rates than their younger counterparts. No one can say definitively what the reason is for that. It could be that hunters often select older gobblers, or it could be that juvenile gobblers are less vulnerable to hunters in the spring than the adult- especially the two year olds. When it comes to survival, jakes do have a better chance of making it to the next spring than adult toms. Annual survival of jakes ranges from 60-80 percent. Annual survival of adult gobblers ranges from 20-40 percent in general.

So if you look at the odds, a jake has a 3:1 chance of living to be a two year old, but an older gobbler has less than 50:50 odds of making it to his next birthday. Will that jake you pass up in the spring be there next year? The answer is: maybe with a capital "M". Some old gobblers make it through four, five and even six spring seasons. Some jakes make it through that first spring to grow old. Others make it through that first spring only to become dinner for a coyote or break the windshield on a Lexus.

Is it ethical to take a jake in the spring? In 48 of 49 states with spring seasons, jakes are legal game. From a biological perspective, taking a jake is not an issue; that is why they are not protected by regulation. A major part of ethics is obeying regulations- whether or not someone is watching. Shooting a young gobbler is not a question of ethics. It is a personal choice made by the hunter when he asks himself (or herself) a series of questions. A hunter who chooses to take a jake he calls up in an exciting scenario should not be subject to criticism by his peers. If that bird came to call, approached within range and presented a good shot it is legal game. Certainly most of us would prefer to take a grizzled old longbeard with sharp spurs, but there is little biological justification for frowning on harvesting jakes.



More than 40 ladies attended Southern End Strutters' first-ever WITO event held at Southern Lancaster Co Farmers-Sportsmen Association on July 18. The women, who arrived from PA, MD, DE and NJ, enjoyed a day of fun, food and a lot of firsts with hands-on workshops including antler shed hunting, archery, black powder, cowboy action shooting, fly fishing, handgun safety, outdoor photography, self defense, trap shooting and more.

Think Safety Hunt Safely

By Bob Eriksen,
NWTF Regional Biologist

The morning had been less than productive. Though I noted some old scratchings in the leaves as I eased through the woods, I did not encounter anything I would classify as fresh. When I stopped by our camp for lunch, my brother indicated that he wanted to turkey hunt in the afternoon. He is disabled as the result of a turkey hunting related shooting incident (HRSI) more than twenty years ago. His difficulty in getting around would mean that I would have to choose a spot and stick with it rather than walking through the woods trying to find a flock of turkeys. My brother is patient and I knew that he would be willing to sit quietly for a long period of time. Therefore I decided to set up in a location that has treated me well both spring and fall in the past.

It was the third week of the fall season and the weather was turning. The leaves were mostly down so visibility was very good- both for hunters and wild turkeys. The afternoon promised to be cool and calm. Conditions were right for sitting quietly and calling. We drove to his place and walked slowly into the woods.

We chose a flat spot with large trees for us to set up against. As we walked in to set up, I noticed some relatively fresh turkey sign. There was a limited amount of sign, indicating a small number of birds. Mast was in short supply so the birds were using hop hornbeam and the few grapes that were available. I warned Ray that we might be anchored there for a long time, made sure he had an apple and water and set up ten yards from him. Before sitting down I folded up my orange vest, put it in my turkey vest and placed an orange hunter alert marker around a tree near my location.

The hours passed as did several deer and what seemed like a dozen or more squirrels. I started out calling using clucks and purrs on a slate call followed by kee-kees on my mouth call. I began each series of calls quietly and in-

creased the volume. My calling sequences lasted five minutes or so. In between, I sat quietly and listened to the sounds of the woods. Every so often I would try a couple of coarse gobbler yelps and clucks.

About three hours later I heard a deep cluck. There was just one cluck and though I thought it came from in front of me, I wasn't sure. Ray hadn't heard the sound judging by the way he was facing. I waited five minutes and made one loud cluck on the slate. The cluck was answered with two coarse yelps that sounded like they were made on a longbox. I scanned the woods looking for movement and listening for something or someone walking in the leaves. Ten or fifteen minutes passed and I began to be concerned that there might be another hunter out there calling back to me. The calls I heard were good and sounded like the real thing, but you never know. I decided to wait ten or fifteen minutes before calling again. This time I stroked out three yelps on a boxcall. A single yelp came back in response.

I whispered to Ray, "Keep your eyes open- watch in front of us." Few minutes later I caught movement out about 70 yards and slightly to the right. A nice longbeard was walking slowly in our direction. I whispered again to Ray, "One o'clock, longbeard." When the bird went behind a tree he eased his gun into position. The bird kept coming. At 50 yards the gobbler stopped, stretched his neck and looked straight at the orange band around the tree. After that he began to walk again, but started to circle our set-up staying at 45-50 yards. Ray had been easing his gun around whenever the bird was behind a tree, but now the bird was off to my right and he had no shot. The gobbler turned and began to walk back in the direction from which he came. He began to flick his wings (never a good sign) and picked up speed. Before long he was out of sight.

It is always best to err on the side of safety. If you think there might be an hunter working his way toward you, it is best to call very little and keep alert. If a hunter appears, let that person know you are there by talking to him loudly. Always set up with a large tree or other object behind you. Rely on your camouflage to hide you.

Never wear red, blue, white or black- colors that could be mistaken for a turkey. **Always positively identify your target before pointing your gun or bow sights in the direction of a sound.** Never take the safety off until you have identified the target as a legal turkey and are ready to shoot. Always assume that the turkey you heard could be another hunter. Be careful to plan safely when using decoys. Always follow all turkey hunting regulations, including those requiring the use of orange for fall hunting.

Ray relaxed when the bird was out of sight. He turned to me and said, "What did I do wrong?" My reply was, "Nothing. He saw the orange and it worried him enough to make him wary. I don't think he saw you move at all." By then the temperature had dropped and we decided to call it a day.

Are turkeys innately afraid of orange? Definitely not. I do think that in this case, the gobbler knew exactly where the calls were coming from (as turkeys have the uncanny ability to do) and there was a bright orange band on a tree nearby. He wasn't afraid of the orange, but his experience told him something was out of place; not quite right. Based on that and not seeing the other turkey he had heard, he decided to avoid getting any closer. We had a good afternoon and almost had a shot at a fall longbeard.

Had I not been somewhat concerned about another hunter approaching our set-up, I might have conversed a little more with the gobbler. That might have made him more comfortable and brought him in close enough for a shot.

A few years ago Don Heckman of our Pennsylvania Chapter Board of Directors coined the phrase, "Think Safety- Hunt Safely". That phrase has a great deal of significance to turkey hunters and to hunters in general. Each time any of us picks up a firearm or bow and heads for the woods, safety should be foremost in our minds. Our chapter has used this phrase as part of our safety message. The Pennsylvania State Chapter has invested heavily in safety, printing articles in this magazine and others, placing billboards and sponsoring public safety announcements. This year in a cooperative effort, the Game Commission placed the PANWTF safety brochure in the envelope with every special spring gobbler license mailed out before the season. We will continue to talk about safe hunting and do our best to reach hunters throughout the Commonwealth.

Fall turkey hunters in Pennsylvania have had a great safety record since 2003. Back in the late 1980's and early 1990's there were a great many fall turkey hunting related shooting incidents (HRSIs). In the fall turkey season of 2008 there were only two HRSIs. The previous fall there was only one. No one knows the reason for this decline in injuries, but it is a trend all of us want to see continue. Let's make sure that this fall is another good one with few hunting related shooting incidents among turkey hunters. Think Safety- Hunt Safely!

PENNSYLVANIA HUNTING HERITAGE JANUARY BANQUETS

January 16 • Sherman's Valley Strutters

Newport Firehall, Newport

Perry Smith 717-728-4480

January 16 • Muncy Creek

Muncy Creek Fire Hall, Muncy Valley

Nancy Craft 570-482-4364

January 23 • Wilhelm

Nick's Place, Edinboro

Robert McNabb 814-734-5066

January 23 • Lower Lackawanna Long Spurs

Greenwood Fire Hall, Moosic

Ed Skoranski 570-457-8188

January 30 • Blue Mountain

Kutztown Fire Hall, Myerstown

Mike Hartman 717-866-7539

January 30 • Foothill Spurs

Rimersburg Community Center, Rimersburg

Bill Coradi 814-473-3571

**Want an easy way to
reach thousands
of wild turkey and
outdoor enthusiasts?**

**Advertise in
PENNSYLVANIA
TURKEY TALK**

Contact Marixa Ali at 610 820 6571 or
marixsa.ali@mcall.com for more information!

WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE NWTF IN PENNSYLVANIA? LOG ON TO: WWW.PANWTF.ORG

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INVEST ^{IN} OUR FUTURE Hunt. Conserve. Share.



YES!

I'd like to join the National Wild Turkey Federation, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of the wild turkey and the preservation of the hunting tradition. This membership also enrolls me in my state and local chapters.

Member Benefits

Join the NWTF and enjoy exclusive membership benefits, including:

- Subscriptions to the NWTF's magazines
- Networking opportunities with hunting and conservation-minded people at NWTF banquets.
- Exclusive merchandise opportunities
- Access to articles and helpful hunting and conservation tips.
- Members-only message board access.
- Outreach programs for youth, women and people with disabilities.
- Exclusive online deals.
- Scholarships for students.
- Free or discounted seed through Project HELP and the Conservation Seed Program. (in participating states)
- Discounted land enhancement materials including tree seedlings, grass seeds, oat hay, netting and more through the NWTF's regional and national habitat programs. (in participating states)
- Land management advice from certified biologists.
- Habitat field days and workshops.
- Turkey records registration.
- The opportunity to vote in Board of Directors elections.
- NWTF decal.

- Regular Member: \$30
- Sponsor Member: \$235
- Women in the Outdoors: \$30
- JAKES Member (ages 12 & under): \$7
- Extreme JAKES Member (ages 13 - 17): \$10
- Wheelin' Sportsmen Member: \$30

Name: *(please print)* _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Master Card Visa

Credit Card #: _____

Exp. Date: _____

(Make checks payable to NWTF)

Send complete application to:

Carl Mowry • 288 Crisswell Rd • Butler, PA 16602

www.panwtf.org