

PENNSYLVANIA

# Turkey

TALK

2010-2011

Turkey Hunting

**REGULATION**

| Page 8

**CHANGES**



**2010 Summer Edition**  
Volume 35 Number 4



A Publication of the PA State Chapter of the NWTF

## Message From The President



Dale Butler, PANWTF President

**The National Wild Turkey Federation with the help of wildlife biologists have greatly improved turkey hunting over the last 30 plus years.**

Greetings,

I am sitting here thinking about the current spring gobbler season by the time you are reading this the season will be already over and I was wondering if there are others that have had the same type of season. It was a lot of fun, but with the early green foliage it seemed to be tougher than normal. I do hope everyone enjoyed the opportunity to hunt spring gobbler this season.

The wild turkey is a truly great adversary especially when you are hunting in the Pennsylvania woods. I would like to say the National Wild Turkey Federation with the help of wildlife biologists have greatly improved turkey hunting over the last 30 plus years.

I believe the PA Game Commission also deserves credit with all the habitat projects, law enforcement programs, and biologists they have in place has made turkey hunting in Pennsylvania very successful. However with that said, some of the new season dates and bag limits set at the April commissioners meeting were a little surprising. But on a positive note, the closing date for spring gobbler to be extended to May 31 creates more hunting opportunities. The all day spring gobbler for the last 2 weeks of the season in 2011 will also give more sportsmen the opportunity to harvest a gobbler.

The State Chapter is your avenue to voice your opinion, and make your voice heard, please help us to help you. If you do not like something please feel free to make it known. The same if you are satisfied, I would also like to hear about the things you like.

I will again encourage everyone to attend a Hunting Heritage Banquet as we still have many banquets scheduled for 2010.

It is now the time of the year to start doing the planting projects such as food plots that will help the turkeys during brood rearing and throughout the winter months. Many chapters across the state will be sharing with the responsibility of preparing the soil and planting crops that will benefit most wild-life species even though the projects will be geared to turkeys.

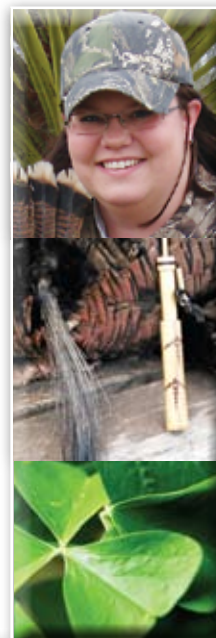
*Dale C. Butler*

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

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# Turkey TALK

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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 Fall Issue of Turkey Talk is AUGUST 17**





**THE PA STATE CHAPTER  
OF THE NWTf PRESENTS:**



## **Celebration \$5 Million and the “Grand Slam” Membership Drive**

This year, the NWTf will reach a monumental goal in Pennsylvania. Since 1985, The NWTf has raised and proudly spent \$5 million on land acquisitions, habitat improvement projects and the development of its outreach programs (JAKES, WITO & Wheelin’ Sportsmen) in the state of Pennsylvania. This is a tremendous and unprecedented accomplishment. Help us spread the word and invite others to join in the celebration by participating in the **“GRAND SLAM” MEMBERSHIP DRIVE.**

It is simple, for every new member (regular, WITO, Wheelin’) you bring to the NWTf family, you earn a chance to win one of the turkey hunts listed.

For every new Sponsor member, you will receive 3 chances. There is no limit to the amount of chances you may earn.

**LET’S INVITE OTHERS TO SHARE IN OUR SUCCESS  
AND BECOME PART OF OUR WINNING TEAM!!**

### **1st PRIZE**

**Florida - Osceola Turkey Hunt**

**3 day hunt/1 bird**

Donated by Mark Mann

Osceola Gobblers

[www.osceolagobblers.com](http://www.osceolagobblers.com)

### **2nd PRIZE**

**Wyoming - Merriam’s  
Turkey Hunt**

**3 day hunt/1 bird**

Donated by Mike Watkins

Trophies Plus Outfitters

[www.trophiesplusoutfitters.com](http://www.trophiesplusoutfitters.com)

### **3rd PRIZE**

**Ohio - Eastern Turkey Hunt**

**3 day hunt/2 birds**

Donated by Ken Fernburg

Triple “B” Outfitters

[www.TripleBOutfittersofohio.com](http://www.TripleBOutfittersofohio.com)

### **4th PRIZE**

**Kansas - Rio/Eastern/Hybrid  
Turkey Hunt**

**3 day hunt/2 birds**

Donated by Uwe Haendler

Broken Arrow Outfitters

[www.brokenarrowhunts.com](http://www.brokenarrowhunts.com)

### **ADDITIONAL PRIZES!**

- **The member who recruits the most new members will win a Remington model 700 in .270 win topped with a 3 x 9 scope.**
- **The chapter that recruits the most new members will win a Weatherby Vanguard in 7mm to be used at their next chapter fundraiser.**



# \$5 MILLION IN CONSERVATION "GRAND SLAM" Membership Drive and Raffle Form

**Referring Member:** (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

NWTF Member # \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I would like to renew/extend my membership

Regular \$30     WITO \$30     Wheelin' Sportsman \$30     Sponsor \$235

Payment Type: (circle one)    Visa                      Master Card            Check (made payable to NWTF)

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **New Member Information:**

Name: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Regular \$30     WITO \$30     Wheelin' Sportsman \$30     Sponsor \$235

Payment Type: (circle one)    Visa                      Master Card            Check (made payable to NWTF)

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Send complete applications to: Tom Bunty • 2050 Park Street • Dover, PA 17315**

*\*This form may be duplicated*

*\*\*This form, including the promotion details may also be downloaded at [www.panwtf.org](http://www.panwtf.org)*

## **rules and restrictions:**

- you must be a member of the NWTF to be eligible for the drawing and prizes.
  - there is no limit to the amount of chances you may earn.
- payment must accompany the new member application to: Tom Bunty, 2050 Park Street, Dover, PA 17315
  - there is no geographical limitation. (new members from NJ, NY, WV etc. count)
- cannot be combined with other new member/banquet related incentives. (ie: "Bring a Friend"/"Chapter Challenge")
  - Must be received by 12/20/10 to count for the drawings.
- winners will be drawn at the Pennsylvania Chapter's 36th Annual Rendezvous & Awards Banquet, January 8, 2011.  
(need not be present to win)

# All Day Spring Hunting Debuts in Pennsylvania

By: Bob Eriksen, NWTF Regional Biologist

The April Game Commission meeting held a few surprises for the audience including some for NWTF members and other turkey hunters. Not all of the regulation changes approved at the April meeting were embraced by our chapter but that is another story. One change that occurred was the action to make May 31 the closing day of spring gobbler season on an annual basis. That is a change the Pennsylvania Chapter had been requesting for a few years. This year because of calendar adjustments, the season did close on May 31. It will do so from now on unless the 31st falls on a Sunday. This change will provide a few extra days of spring hunting late in the season when hens are nesting. The later closing date will afford turkey hunters more recreational opportunity without jeopardizing the resource.

There has been talk of action in the legislature in recent years to extend spring hunting hours. Our chapter opposed any such legislation on the basis that any regulation changes should be initiated by Game Commission biologists and commissioners. Our chapter opposes any legislative action that would remove authority over seasons and bag limits from the commissioners. A few commissioners have contacted the chapter board of directors over the years to discuss all day hunting and determine whether there was support for a change in spring hunting hours. Informal surveys of our membership and formal surveys of turkey hunters by the Game Commission have indicated increasing support for longer spring hunting hours. White papers prepared for the commissioners by PGC Wild Turkey Biologist Mary Jo Casalena and NWTF Regional Biologist Bob Eriksen in 2005 and 2009 suggested that extending spring hunting hours was one of several ways to provide additional opportunity to hunters with minimal risk to the wild turkey population.

Though there was no mention of extending spring hunting hours at the January Commission meeting, a proposal to allow all day hunting for the last two weeks of the 2011 spring season was initiated in April. The proposal passed unanimously. From May 16 through May 31, 2011 Keystone State spring hunters will be able to hunt until ½ hour after sunset daily. This regulation change was made with literally no discussion between the commissioners and our board of directors. Had our chapter been asked for comments, it might have been suggested that hunting hours be limited to sunset or 7:00 PM. We did not have an opportunity for such input.

So how will this change affect turkeys and turkey hunting? Pennsylvania is not the first mid-Atlantic state to extend spring gobbler hunting hours later in the season. Virginia has operated under a similar season structure for more than

five years. Ohio initiated all day hunting for the last two weeks of the season in 2010. Maryland is scheduled along with Pennsylvania to extend spring hunting hours in the last two weeks of the season in 2011. Looking nationwide thirty-four states and four Canadian provinces allow all day spring gobbler hunting while fifteen states restrict hunting to the morning hours. None of the states in which all day hunting is allowed report any issues with the extended hours. Virginia biologists estimated that a 2 percent increase in the spring harvest occurred when that state changed spring hunting hours for the last two weeks of the season. Like Pennsylvania parts of Virginia have large areas of public land. The decision to extend hours only for the last two weeks in Virginia was based on hunting pressure on the public lands and the possible risk of nesting disturbance earlier in the season.

Some hunters will no doubt oppose the change in hunting hours. Most of us have come to accept a noon closing in the spring as the norm when in fact it is the exception rather than the rule. Early in the history of spring gobbler season regulations biologists approached the season with extreme caution. For instance in Pennsylvania the first season in 1968 was only a week long and the closing time was 10:00 AM. As time passed and the information regarding harvest and population impacts became clear the regulations were relaxed to the point where the spring season is now just over four weeks in length and hunting hours close at noon. The increase of hunting hours is a natural expansion of opportunity designed to allow hunters with six day a week jobs requiring them to be at work early in the morning a chance to hunt. In addition this change will provide more opportunity for young hunters to experience spring hunting without having them up at the crack of dawn and falling asleep at their desks in school.

Game Commission biologists spent a great deal of time analyzing data and estimating the potential impact of all day hunting. If all day hunting were incorporated for the whole season it was estimated that there might be a 10 percent increase in overall harvest. The recently completed gobbler banding study provided good information on current gobbler harvest rates giving biologists much needed data. That data indicated harvest levels comparable to other states and gives us some confidence that allowing extended hunting hours for the last two weeks will not significantly impact turkey populations or the gobbler age structure. Expanding the hours for the last two weeks will surely have less impact than opening the entire season to longer hours.

Properly timed spring gobbler hunting seasons have limited potential to affect nesting and subsequent wild turkey populations. The spring season in Pennsylvania opens when most of the hens have been bred and many are laying eggs. It is a properly timed season from a management point of view. Opening longer hunting hours for the last two weeks of the season will result in some increase in the spring harvest but that increase is expected to be small. Other states report that about 20 percent of spring hunters take advantage of the longer hours so the bulk of spring hunters will not be out in the woods every day. That is especially true later in the season. As far as the affect on nesting hens goes, by the final weeks of the season many hens will be incubating nests for as long as 10 to 15 days making them far less likely to abandon nests than if they were disturbed earlier in the season. In addition afternoon hunters may be less likely to “run and gun” because gobbling activity is subdued. Instead, the best hunting methods for afternoon hunting include setting up in one spot and having a relaxing afternoon calling periodically and waiting for a response. Fewer states limit hours than allow all day hunting and no state has reported excessive problems with nesting disturbance, illegal kill, reduced gobbling or impacts on turkey numbers.

The regulation change affecting spring hunting hours was discussed earlier by the chapter board and with the Game Commission but was not a change expected in this regulation cycle. It came as a surprise to our chapter members and our Board of Directors. Had the chapter been able to provide comments on the proposal it is likely that those comments would have included a suggestion for a closing time other than ½ hour after sunset. Our members have indicated support for this change, but often with the caveat of closing at sunset or an hour before sunset, perhaps at 7:00 PM. The opportunity for input was not presented.

The Ohio Division of Wildlife operates checking stations and that agency collected data during the 2010 spring season that will help Pennsylvania Game Commission biologists to better estimate how this change will affect harvest numbers. Future turkey hunter surveys will allow an evaluation of participation rates in the extended hours. The Ohio data was not yet available when this article was prepared. This regulation change does provide added recreational opportunity for Keystone State turkey hunters and we do not expect any significant issues to be associated with it. Give it a try next spring and see what you think. I may be napping instead of hunting in the afternoon. What better place than next to a tree?

# LOCAL NWTF CHAPTER PROVIDES SUPPORT FOR YOUTH TURKEY HUNT

Submitted by: Ralph Martone



Front row from left: Aaron Ambrose, Aleyna Russell, Kari Campbell, Anthony Musitano, Caleb Pierog  
Back row from left: Lilliana Scrima, Matthew Ambrose, Ryan Shaner, Cory Pierog, Jake Petronelis, Arlen VanTassel

On Saturday, April 24, a special youth spring gobbler hunt held in Bessemer, PA was successful thanks to a partnership between the Cascade Thunderin' Toms, a local chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, and Callin' the Shots Outdoor TV. The event drew eighteen boys and girls and over two dozen volunteer turkey guides.

For the hunt's contestants, whether they successfully killed a gobbler or not, there was a lot about the day's events worth celebrating. Participants experienced the thrill of hearing a distant gobble, watching the sun come up over the horizon and having a positive experience in the outdoors with mom, dad and family friends.

For the fourth consecutive year Brian Pierog and Dave Campbell, owners of Callin' The Shots Outdoor TV hosted the Youth Spring Gobbler Hunt. This year's event at-

tracted eighteen youths ranging in ages from 7 to 15 years old. And to prove that hunting is not just for the men, nearly half of this year's participants were female as well as one volunteer turkey guide.

Like a typical turkey hunt, the kids were up early, many by 4 a.m., and in the woods listening for the day's first gobble. Several teams, in preparation for the day's hunt, had already scouted their hunting spots prior to the season opener. Other groups headed to new locations in hopes of finding a lovesick gobbler.

The young hunters, accompanied by a parent and volunteer guide, spread out across several counties in search of a gobbler. In addition to participating in an exciting turkey hunt, the hunters shared stories of their outdoor adventures, received a prize bag full of turkey hunting items and even claimed trophies for the largest birds harvested.

By 1:00 p.m., despite the day's early start and a long morning's hunt, the events activities were just getting underway. A picnic and awards ceremony took place with members of the Cascade Thunderin' Toms chapter of the NWTF scoring gobblers and handing out prizes.

"It was a great day for the kids and adults. In addition to the hunt, we had lessons on turkey hunting safety, wild turkey biology and even some impromptu calling lessons", said Bill Crespo, president of the Cascade Thunderin' Toms chapter.

Successful hunters included:

Kari Campbell, 12, from Greenville, harvested a 15-pound jake, while hunting with her father Dave Campbell and Todd Abraham. Todd, owner of Greenhorn Productions, videotaped Kari's hunt.

Aaron Ambrose, 10, from Bessemer, killed a 17-pound jake while hunting with his father, Randy Ambrose and Mark Werner.

Caleb Pierog, 13, from New Castle, harvested a 16-pound jake hunting with his father, Brian Pierog. Brian and Caleb had scouted several mornings during the weeks prior to the hunt.

Anthony Musitano, 13, from Bessemer harvested the largest bird of the day, a 19-pound gobbler sporting a 9" beard. Anthony partnered with his father, Mark to take his big bird. This was Anthony's fourth gobbler since entering the contest.

Aleyna Russell, 7, from Greenville, harvested a 12-pound jake while hunting with her father Mark. Aleyna was the contest's youngest participant. The young hunter did all her own calling to bring the gobbler into gun range.



The Craft family from the Muncy Creek Chapter. Dylan (age 12), Morgan (age 16) and Ethan (age 14).

The "Craft Hat Trick" occurred on April 24, 2010, with the first bird (Morgan's) killed at 6:15 a.m., Ethan's killed at 6:45 a.m., and Dylan's killed at 9:45 a.m. "Proud Dad", Dave, called all three birds. All were Longbeards weighing from 17 1/2 lbs. to 22 1/2 lbs. Dylan's had 1 1/4 in spurs. This was the last opportunity they had to accomplish this feat because Morgan turned 17 on May 11.

**Schmid Turkey** - In the picture from left to right are Jacob Schmid (12 years old), Gene Alwine (past president of PANWTF and guide/caller on this hunt), Hank Schmid (proud grandfather of Jacob).



# Turkey Hunting Regulation Changes for 2010-2011

By: Bob Eriksen, NWTF Regional Biologist

At the April 2010 Game Commission meeting the Board of Commissioners made some radical changes to turkey hunting regulations. Some of the regulation changes had been proposed and discussed at the January Board meeting. Others were brought up at the April meeting and passed in final rule making. There were a number of changes that affect other species but our interest lies primarily in those changes affecting turkey hunting and wild turkey management.

Two changes were made affecting spring gobbler hunting season. Both of the changes have been the subject of PANWTF surveys and discussions at chapter leadership workshops and PANWTF Board of Directors meetings. The first change will allow spring gobbler hunters to hunt until May 31 annually unless May 31 falls on a Sunday. The opening day will not be affected by this change. Rather, the opener will be a Saturday that will move with the calendar as it always has. Opening day will fall approximately between April 24 and May 1 depending on the date of Memorial Day Monday.

The big news for spring hunters came as a surprise to the chapter members attending

the meeting. A few years ago Virginia extended spring hunting hours until sunset instead of at noon for the last two weeks of the season. In 2010 Ohio initiated a similar season structure. It seems that the dominoes of noon closing times for spring seasons are beginning to fall. Thirty-four states allow all day spring hunting and fifteen close at noon or 1:00PM. The Board of Commissioners passed a regulation change effective for the 2011 spring season providing for all day hunting during the last two weeks of the Pennsylvania spring gobbler season (May 16-31, 2011). Support for all day hunting has increased within the PANWTF membership and within the ranks of turkey hunters at large. Both PANWTF and PGC surveys indicated support for such a change. Our board was not consulted on this change and the closing time passed at the April meeting is ½ hour after sunset. Our board would have preferred a 7:00PM closing.

The real issue for Pennsylvania Chapter members is the change in fall season structure. Some of the changes made were opposed by the chapter for a variety of reasons (see the letter to the commissioners on pages 10 & 11). In a nutshell the changes are as follows:

Wildlife Management Unit 5A: November 16-18

Wildlife Management Units 5B, 5C and 5D: closed to fall turkey hunting

Wildlife Management Units 1A, 1B, 2A, 2C, 2D, 2E, 4A, 4B & 4D: November 13-27; closed November 20-24 (Saturday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday of Thanksgiving week and on Sundays)

Wildlife Management Units 2B, 2F, 2G, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 4C & 4E: November 6-27; closed November 20-24 (Saturday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday of Thanksgiving week and on Sundays)

The fall seasons no longer open in late October, there are staggered opening dates adding to confusion and possibly impacting hunting pressure and the seasons are open over Thanksgiving weekend. These are major changes in dates and season structure with unpredictable impacts. Fall turkey hunters lost four days of hunting opportunity in both the two week and three week fall season formats. None of the changes in the two and three week season formats were recommended or supported by Game Commission biologists or the PANWTF. Take some time to read about the PANWTF position on these changes and let the commissioners know your opinion.



## Delaware County Longbeards 10th Anniversary!

The Delaware County Longbeards celebrated their 10 Anniversary working for the wild turkey on March 13, 2010 at their Hunting Heritage Banquet in Boothwyn, PA

*Pictured in the photo are:*

**Back row:** Dan Jones, Bob Smith, Bob Dolski, Mark Carroll, Joe Crossan, Tom Sutch and Bob Yoder  
**Middle Row:** Jack Penny, Marylou Smith, Fran Dagney, Christopher Schwenk, Noreen Yoder and Chuck Mathues, President  
**Kneeling:** Carrie Penny, Mike Wiciak and Anna Sutch



# Honey Hole Longbeards Chapter Receives Grant

By Bob Eriksen, NWTF Regional Biologist



The Honey Hole Longbeards Local Chapter recently received a community development grant through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. Representative Todd Eachus presented a check for \$5,000 to Honey Hole Chapter President Mark Ferdinand at a ceremony in Drums, in Luzerne County. Chapter members applied for the grant more than a year ago hoping to use the grant to purchase robotic turkey decoys for Pennsylvania Game Commission Wildlife Conservation Officers and to complete a habitat enhancement project on nearby Game Lands.

Robotic turkey decoys have been presented to the Game Commission Northeast Region for use in deterring road-hunting and have already been used successfully. A habitat improvement project is planned for this spring. The Honey Hole Longbeards Chapter is very active in Luzerne County, sponsoring habitat improvement projects on Nescopeck State Park and State Game Lands 187 in addition to hosting JAKES Days for young hunters.

## Schuylkill Spurs Hunting Heritage Banquet & Food Drive

By Kevin Titus

On March 13, 2010 the Schuylkill Spurs chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation held its annual hunting Heritage Banquet at the Landingville Fire Co. This year's banquet was an overwhelming success, with 174 attendees all enjoying a family night out. Yes, a family night! These events are not just for the good old boys, as many women and children attend and enjoy the banquet as well.

A new twist this year was a food drive in conjunction with the banquet. Anyone who purchased a Sportsman's raffle package could bring non perishable food items to donate in exchange for extra raffle tickets. A total of 78 cans of food were donated, to be distributed equally between the Salvation Army in Tamaqua, PA and the Pottsville soup kitchen, which is run by St. Patrick's church in Pottsville, PA. Hopefully even more will be donated at next year's banquet.

Another highlight of the evening was a special presentation to John Corbin of McAdoo, PA. John is 93 years young and has been a life member of the National Wild Turkey Federation since 1978. A United States Marine Corp veteran, John was presented with both a United States flag and Pennsylvania State flag, which were donated by State Representative Jerry Knowles. The Schuylkill Spurs also presented John with an NWTF knife and NWTF cap in honor of his years of service to this fine organization.



### About the cover:

**Grand Prize Winner Brian Cassium of Slatington Pennsylvania strutted his trophy bird for the Spring Gobbler Turkey Hunting Photo Contest featured in The Morning Call Newspaper in Allentown, PA. The contest was sponsored by Ron Kistler, owner of Frames Unlimited and co sponsored by the Jerry Zimmerman Memorial, Walking Purchase and Pocono Mountain Chapters.**

## 2nd Chance Tom's Donate 34 Turkeys to Local Food Pantries



L to R: Chapter committee members Brandon Short, Don Short, Pastor Ed Baily, Linda & Don Flemming from the Baden United Methodist Church's We Care Food Pantry.

L to R: Chapter committee members Dan Syrko, Don and Brandon Short. Lisa Murray and Aida Dugan from The Ladle.



# Pennsylvania NWTF Addresses the Pennsylvania Game Commission

Submitted by Dale Butler, PA NWTF President



## PENNSYLVANIA State Chapter

Since 1975

*Dedicated to the Conservation of the Wild Turkey  
and the Preservation of Our Hunting Heritage*

Mr. Jay Delaney, President  
Pennsylvania Game Commission  
2001 Elmerton Avenue  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17110-9797

Dear Commissioner Delaney:

Our chapter members support wildlife management decisions based on sound science following recommendations of species management plans. The recent work on gobble harvest rates and the new study originally designed to determine fall harvest rates are examples of the dedication of the Pennsylvania Game Commission to collecting good data and developing management strategies based on science. Our members sincerely appreciate the professionalism of the commission employees with whom we interact and the outstanding working relationship we have with this agency. The background and experience of the wildlife biologists working on various projects within the commission is widely recognized and respected outside of the agency. Agency regulation proposals are grounded in good science as every regulation affecting our wildlife resources should be. That said we must express our disappointment in the process that resulted in substantial changes to the fall turkey hunting season and undermined the design of a study meant to produce the type of data required to better manage wild turkeys and provide a foundation for future decision making.

Decisions on managing our wildlife resources should not depend on the volume of mail or number of telephone calls received. Comments were heard at the April Commission meeting concerning the small number of letters received opposing the fall turkey hunting season proposals from the January meeting. When an agency and its biological staff does not support a proposal made by the commissioners and when one of the agency's leading supporting organizations representing a large block of hunters opposes regulation proposals on the basis of science, letters and emails should count for precious little in the decision.

The concern over declining fall turkey hunter numbers expressed by the commissioners who voted in favor of the regulation change is valid and we appreciate the interest of the commissioners in this issue. However the commissioners may not be aware that the decline in fall hunting interest is not unique to Pennsylvania. Fall turkey hunting participation has declined in all the traditional fall hunting states (Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia). The reasons for the decline have little to do with season dates and holidays. Rather they reflect social changes that have occurred within this group of hunters. Turkey hunters have shifted gears. Interest in spring hunting has replaced fall hunting interest. Surveys repeatedly show that the average turkey hunter prefers to hunt gobblers in the spring and pursue other opportunities such as muzzleloader and archery deer hunting in the fall. Furthermore, turkey hunters today are savvy about turkey population management. They understand that a conservative approach to fall hunting opportunity will provide for more quality hunting in the spring and that is their desire. Therefore changing season dates and providing additional holiday hunting options are not likely to reverse the decline.

Prior to initiating a change in season structure it is wise to conduct surveys to determine hunter preferences. The Game Commission has done this consistently in determining support for all day spring hunting and other options for increasing recreational opportunity for turkey hunters. That work set the stage for acceptance of lengthening the spring season and the proposal to allow all day hunting in part of the spring season. Our members understood and supported those changes because there was a scientific basis for them. No such groundwork was done for the fall regulation change. Not once did the commissioners indicate that they had hard data predicting that these changes would reverse the decline in fall turkey hunting popularity. As far as our members are concerned no turkey hunters were requesting any change in season dates. Our members were content with the seasons as they were structured previously and were willing to allow good science to determine whether additional recreational opportunity could be provided in the fall. It is for that reason that our chapter was willing to invest financially in the hen survival and harvest rate study.

Our chapter members remain opposed to the changes in fall turkey hunting seasons proposed in January and incorporated at the April commission meeting. The primary reasons for our chapter position on the changes are listed as follows:

- The impact of the loss of hunting opportunity for a large number of turkey hunters (4 hunting days including one Saturday were lost in both the two week and three week WMUs)
- Adding the Thanksgiving holiday and the following two days cannot make up for the loss of 4 days of recreational opportunity
- Our belief that fall turkey hunting has great potential to recruit and maintain young hunters
- The recent initiation of the fall harvest rate and hen survival study, a study called for in the Management Plan for Wild Turkeys in Pennsylvania since 1999 and designed to develop good data on which to base future fall harvest strategy decisions
- The reduced ability to accurately assess the impact of traditional fall season length on fall harvest rates (sample sizes for the study were designed specifically to examine harvest rates in traditional seasons structured as they have been since 1981 with season lengths of 13 or 19 days)
- The study design has been compromised. Therefore the ability of the Game Commission to provide additional fall turkey hunting opportunity could be impacted affecting hunter recruitment and retention potential in the future
- The initiation of staggered opening days that could shift hunting pressure into three week WMUs with open public land and lead to subsequent harvest increases
- Concern about over-harvest based on late November snow and increased use of rifles for taking turkeys

One of the most disconcerting things about the recent decision was some of the comments made during the meeting. Comments such as "If this doesn't work we can change it next year" and "Our biologists are good, they can simply tweak the research proposal" were noted by many in the audience. These comments represent precisely the type of annual "flip-flop" biologists and species management plans recommend against. The commissioners appear to be willing to risk over-harvest under the impression that it can be corrected for in the future. The cumulative impacts of wild turkey recruitment, spring weather, mast crop availability and snow cover could easily lead to a fall harvest greater than the 10 percent limit recommended in much of the literature. The impact of over-harvest might not be apparent for several years until the population is far below desired levels leading to reduced hunting opportunity in future years.

The commissioners made a decision unsupported by science that this change would not have a negative impact on turkey numbers and would result in increased hunter interest. We are entering a markedly changed season structure that is not comparable to anything in the past with blinders on. Our members are disappointed with the decision and the process. We strongly request that the commissioners more carefully review science in considering future decisions. The Management Plan for Wild Turkeys in Pennsylvania clearly sets forth goals and objectives for managing recreational opportunity and the wild turkey resource. Included within the plan are guidelines for setting fall seasons and recommendations for further research to provide biologists with better tools for predicting the impact of regulation changes. Our members urge the commissioners to become familiar with the plan and to follow it closely. The plan has resulted in additional recreational opportunity for turkey hunters while providing adequate protection for the resource. In addition, the fall season structure in place for nearly thirty years allowed wild turkeys to flourish producing not only record turkey numbers but record harvests and increased opportunity.

We have always been pleased with our relationship with the Game Commission and with the commissioners. Our members appreciate the changes designed to make May 31 the closing date for spring gobbler season. The chapter supports the extension of hunting hours for the last two weeks of the spring season though more discussion on the closing time would have been preferred. While we still strongly disagree with the decisions regarding fall hunting and recommend that they be rescinded we will continue to work with the commissioners and are open to discussions concerning this and other issues affecting our wild turkey resource.

Sincerely,  
Dale C. Butler  
President, Pennsylvania Chapter NWTf

Cc: Executive Director Carl Roe, Pennsylvania Game Commission  
Director Cal Dubrock, Bureau of Wildlife Management  
Dr. James Earl Kenamer

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## Annual President's Leadership Workshop August 1, 2010

Each of the 86 local chapter presidents in PA has been sent an invitation to attend the 2010 Chapter President's Leadership Workshop. The workshop will be held this year on Sun., Aug. 1st at the Ramada Inn in State College. This annual meeting provides the opportunity for chapter leaders to be brought up to date on NWTf happenings, new programs, current issues and exchange ideas with other leaders from across the state. Two members from each local chapter are permitted to attend. This meeting runs from 9 am to 3 pm.

In addition to Sunday's meeting there will be a BBQ as well as a trap and block shoot on Sat. July 31 at 2 pm at the Tyrone Sportsman's Club in Blair Co. The NWTf and the PA NWTf will cover all expenses for Sat. & Sun. except for travel costs and the cost of the clay birds and shells for the trap and block shoot. It is hoped that all chapters will be represented at the workshop. Chapter presidents who can not attend should contact an alternate who can. Reservations should be made to Carl Mowry at 724.283.5708 or [cmowry@nwtf.net](mailto:cmowry@nwtf.net). Reservation forms are included in the mailing sent to the local chapter presidents.

# A father's *thank you* to the NWTf

by Jeff Keiffer, White Deer Jake's committee member

This story starts on New Year's Eve 1984 when our first child was born. A little girl entered our life, and we named her Kristi. Eventually she ended up dealing with two younger brothers. Growing up, Kris didn't show as much enthusiasm for the outdoors as her brothers did. When she started college, she majored in criminal justice, only to change her major after one year to outdoor recreational management. That's when the interest began. She started camping, kayaking and hiking. Eventually, she took her hunter's safety course and started doing some shooting. The outdoor ball was rolling and gathering no moss on its way.

Fast forward to 2008. Kristi was working for Gander Mountain in Muncy, PA. She was engaged to be married to Josh, who was an avid hunter and outdoorsman. A fellow worker, Scott Letterman, invited her to help get a new chapter of NWTf started. The committee for the White Deer Jakes Chapter was mostly made up of employees of Gander Mountain and a few local turkey hunters. When it got close to the banquet, Kristi told Scott that her dad would probably help with the banquet, because he had a lot of experience with banquets that raised money for other outdoor related organizations. I jumped at the chance to spend more time with my daughter.

As we prepared for the 2009 banquet, our NWTf representative, Phil Ferrare, told us about the Chapter Challenge. All of the committee members saw this as a great way to increase the attendance at our banquet, while also giving away a chance to go on a hunting trip to Wyoming. Kristi worked hard trying to get family and friends to attend the banquet. That night, her name was drawn for the hunt. She was so happy because she and Josh were planning on a unique honeymoon trip after their June 2009 wedding. They planned to go on the hunt and then spend some extra time in Wyoming. About six months later, Josh had an opportunity to change his career. His new work schedule would not allow them to go on the dates available in Wyoming. They were crushed when they thought they would have to cancel their plans. After some conversations with the outfitter, they found out that they could plan a hunt with an outfitter in Texas. The hunt was back on and so was their excitement.

A hunt was scheduled with Sunset Outfitters in Big Lake, Texas. Butch Scarborough took extremely good care of them and helped them with their preparations. A few months before the hunt, Kristi bought a slate call from Russ Wagner at Top Calls. Russ is a White Deer Jakes committee member and co-owner with Top Calls. Russ had made some engraved calls with our chapter name on them, and Kristi bought her first turkey call. She kept it close to her and practiced when she could. I thought that it might be similar to someone just beginning music lessons and hitting all of the wrong notes. It wasn't that way, Kris was striking up some good turkey talk right away.

Mid April 2010, they were on their way for Texas. I started getting text messages from her about what was happening. Texts like, "We landed in Detroit, think I will see Ted Nugent." "I keep looking for an armadillo." "Everything is flat and looks the same." On the second day, I noticed that her messages were shorter and had a different tone. I tried to convince her to focus on the experience, enjoy the Texas charm and put her phone away. Her reply to the phone comment, "It's camo." They saw some hens but could not get close to any gobblers. She told me that because all plant life seemed to be about 6 - 7 feet tall, it was hard to see very far, especially when you are only about 5 foot tall. The birds seemed to just roam great distances and use no patterns. It was not easy to locate them. They roost on the telephone poles to get away from predators and that was the way they would locate them for the next morning's hunt. On day 3, their outfitter took them to a neighboring ranch. Kristi and Josh decided to split up and try locating birds on their own. They would text back and forth to be certain everything was alright. I got several texts from her that morning, and now my father instinct was turned to concerned. She will always be my little girl, and now she was hunting alone in Texas. I got a text about seeing a rattle snake mid morning and long horn cattle and llamas just out roaming. They decided to stay out all day and try their best to get a bird on the last day.

About 2:30pm, my cell phone rang and I saw it was Kristi. She was crying and I was trying to calm her so I could understand her. All I thought about was the rattlesnake, and I couldn't help her. Finally, she managed to choke out, "I shot a turkey!" Once she calmed down a little more, I could tell that she was just so excited that she was crying. Three young birds starting working their way towards her, and she worked her Top Call a few times and they came right in. She knew they were younger birds, but she picked out the largest and shot. Her first turkey was down and it was a Rio Grande. I remember putting the phone down and crying a little bit myself. I was very proud of my little girl. The two of them worked hard in finding birds on their last day of the hunt and she scored.

Some of their luggage got misplaced on the flight home. The bag





that included their dressed and frozen bird was one of them. They received the bag approximately 24 hours after arriving home. Their taxidermist told them the hide would still be useable and they are waiting patiently for its return home. Kristi is patiently waiting to include it with several of Josh's trophies as well as her first buck from last fall.

I think it was ironic that while I was finishing this story, I received a text as she was leaving the woods on her pursuit of her first Eastern Turkey. My thanks go out to the hard working people that are involved in the NWTF. To Scott Letterman, Chairman of the White Deer Jakes, for asking me to help with the committee. Thanks go out to the other committee members, many of them fellow employees with Kristi, who have helped her and supported her. Special thanks to our Creator, for giving us a very magnificent bird. I have found, as we prepare for this year's banquet, I feel privileged to be a part of a great organization.

**“Nothing great in the world has been accomplished without passion”**



If you have a passion for the wild turkey, we invite you to join the  
**PA NWTF**  
Board of Directors.

The Pennsylvania State Chapter seeks nominations for the State Chapter Board of Directors. Interested candidates must submit a written nomination signed by no fewer than fifteen NWTF members and include a resume which outlines their background, qualification and contributions to the wild turkey on the state and local levels. Written nominations must be submitted by **AUGUST 17, 2010** to: Chairman of the Board Tom Bunty, 2050 Park Street, Dover, PA 17315

# 2010 Pennsylvania NWTF's Annual Jakes Hunt of a Lifetime

Submitted by Phil Ferrare, Regional Director

This year the annual Pennsylvania JAKES (Juniors, Acquiring Knowledge, Ethics, and Sportsmanship) hunt of a lifetime was hosted by the Armenia Mountain Spurs Chapter of Troy, PA. The Pennsylvania Chapter has a wonderful tradition of having this hunt on an annual basis. A local chapter every year volunteers to host and coordinate the hunt with the Regional Directors. Every year two JAKE members are drawn from each of the 87 PA Hunting Heritage Banquets as a semi-finalist and entered into a final drawing at the annual Pennsylvania NWTF

The Hunt is held the weekend of Pennsylvania youth season, this year the Youth Spring Gobbler Day was Saturday April 24, 2010. Joseph and Todd arrived at Pine Lodge on and were greeted by Tom Calkins of Troy, PA and Banquet Chairman of the Armenia Mountain Spurs Chapter. Later that Evening Mark Mathews of Armenia Mountain Spurs greeted Joseph and Todd to acquaint himself with them because he and Devin Boor also of Armenia Mountain Spurs would be guiding Joseph and Todd for the next day's hunt. Once at Pine Lodge

Longbeards. It's important to note that Todd is a veteran turkey hunter and he could not say enough of the 4 different longbeards that Mark and Devin were able to produce for Joseph's first opportunity to hunt our beloved bird. Although Joseph was unable to pull the trigger on any of these monarchs, its safe to say he was introduced to our sport with the utmost class, integrity and passion by Mark, Devin and Todd to get any youngster off to a wonderful career in hunting turkeys.

You would think that this is where the weekend ended at noon on Saturday but fortunately not just for Joseph but several other JAKE and Adult NWTF members of Armenia Mountain Spurs the experience of the weekend was just getting started.

Once all were back at Pine Lodge after a fulfilling day in the field. We were met by Pennsylvania Game Commission Wildlife Conservation Officer Harold Cole, Jr. and Wildlife Conservation Officer Robert Minnich. They had a pretty unique co-worker with them as well. We all know this co-worker as a Pennsylvania Black Bear. WCO Cole and WCO Minnich had trapped a 173 pound male black bear that same morning and were kind enough to share the wonderful experience of processing the black bear for research purposes. Officer Cole and Officer Minnich had an instruction session for safety for all involved with specific instructions to all on what was going to happen and what to do as the session was conducted. After that they explained very thoroughly the procedure for processing the bear, they then proceeded to tranquilize the bear and then continued to share the once in a lifetime experience of handling a black bear. All involved were able to help place ear tags on the bear, witness of the fine professionalism of our PGC officers teach and instruct all the reasoning behind the processing of the magnificent animal. This truly was an experience of a lifetime for all involved but especially for Joseph and the other children involved. A special thanks to Officer Cole and Officer Minnich for sharing one of Pennsyl-



Rendezvous and Awards Banquet held each January in State College, PA. One winner is drawn from each of the semi-finalist winners. The other JAKE member is decided in our Live Auction held at the Rendezvous and Awards Banquet.

This year the winner of the hunt was ten year old Joseph Daniels of Forksville, PA. Joseph is a JAKE member through the Muncy Creek Chapter and was accompanied by his mentor Todd Fry also of Forksville, PA and member of the Muncy Creek Chapter. The other JAKE member who won the hunt through the auction was unable to make the hunt due to some personal family matters.

all were greeted by Pine Lodge members Harold "Jug" Cole and Bernie Betke. Jug and Bernie know how to entertain guests. They had a huge meal waiting for all that evening and really rolled out the red carpet for Joseph and Todd. After some story telling and some fishing on the pond stocked full of trout we all went to bed for the next day's Hunt.

4:30am the next morning Joseph and Todd were met by Mark Mathews and Devin Boor for the JAKES hunt. We have to give hats off to Mark and Devin they met Joseph and Todd with passion and relentless pursuit for Joseph's first experience in the spring woods pursuing a good Ole Longbeard or should I say



# Southern End Strutters Longbeards For Jakes

Written by John Groff

vania's true treasures and especially for the experience of a lifetime that will forever burn a wonderful memory in the minds and hearts of the children involved.

After this great day fulfilled with hunting, fishing and black bear handling it left the participants hungry and it was a good thing we were in the hands of Jug and Bernie because they prepared a feast fit for a king. Prime rib with all the fixings, Cheese cake and Ice-cream for desert.....I'm still full. More importantly the meal was shared by the great committee of the Armenia Mountain Spurs Chapter and their family members and loved ones.

I can not end this article without thanking all involved. Jug Cole and Bernie Betke of Pine lodge for the wonderful accommodations and hospitality. The Armenia Mountain Spurs Chapter, especially Mark Mathews and Devin Boor for giving their time and effort to pass on our hunting heritage to Joseph; and last but certainly not least Tommy Calkins for if it were not for him and his relentless requests to host this event this wonderful experience would not have happened. This truly was an honor to be a part of and a great example of what the NWTF is all about. God Bless all..... Safe Hunting.



On Saturday, April 24, 2010 the Southern End Strutters hosted our first JAKES hunt in Tioga County, PA. The hunt was ran and organized out of the cabin of one of our members Darrell Roten. At our 2009 banquet, our chapter decided to give every JAKES member that signed up at the banquet a chance to win one of five hunts that we would host for the 2010 youth day hunt. This turned out to be the best hunt that any of us have ever been a part of.

We had a total of 30 volunteers and five different camps in the area take time out of their busy lives for this one day hunt. It proved to be a decision that would make memories that will last a lifetime. Everyone that I talked to that day said that it was the best day they ever spent in the woods. All the people involved exposed themselves and those kids to what the NWTF is about, Conserve, Hunt, Share and Hunting Heritage.

We had hunters that ranged from the age of 6 years old to the age of 13. The total number of hunters on this day in Tioga Co. was eight. We harvested four longbeards that day. It was the first turkey for all the hunters who harvested birds. All of the hunters got to share this memory with a parent or guardian. After the hunt, all the participants gathered back at Darrell Roten's camp and enjoyed a great picnic and got to share all the stories and made a lot of new friends. At the picnic, the Southern End Strutters presented each one of the hunt winners with a new gun, a custom made Scott Bashore scratch box call that Scott himself presented to them, ammunition for the guns, trigger locks for the guns

and a memory that will last a lifetime. Mike Crouse, of Crouse's Taxidermy in Quarryville, PA, donated a full mount to one of the kids that harvested a turkey.

When I was 6 years old, my grandfather introduced me into turkey calling, hunting and fishing. When he did that he hooked me into the outdoors. I want to give him special thanks for doing that. Through that, I got interested in turkey hunting which in turn got me in the NWTF. This allowed me to be involved with this special day that we had for all of these kids, parents and volunteers. I hope that every one of the people involved in this hunt and hunts like this all around get involved as much as I am to hopefully pass it on the way I was able to.

Thank you Pap!

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE KIDS THAT HARVESTED AND ALL THE VOLUNTEERS THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE!**

#### Hunters:

**Kyla Groff** age 6  
**Logan Eshelman** age 6  
**Kristopher Leed** age 7  
**Justin Crouse** age 9  
**Autumn Aukamp** age 10  
**Abby Schlegelmilch** age 13  
**Dustin Herr** age 13

#### Hunters Who Harvested:

**Kristopher Leed** - 22lbs, 9 ¼" beard, 1 1/8" spurs  
**Justin Crouse** - 19lbs, 10" beard, 1" spurs  
**Autumn Aukamp** - 21lbs, 9 ½" beard, 1" spurs  
**Abby Schlegelmilch** - 20lbs, 9 ½" beard, 1" spurs

# Weed Free Food Plots

By Bob Schmid  
NWTF Habitat Pro Staff

Many food plots fail within a year or two of planting because of lack of weed control. With just a minimal amount of time and effort perennial food plots like clover plantings can be maintained for five to seven years before replanting. In this edition of Habitat Corner we'll explore several ways to control weeds. Follow them and you'll get more years out of your clover plantings before you have to start over and replant your food plot.

## *Mowing:*

One effective way to help control weeds is periodic mowing of your clover. Mowing not only knocks down some weeds but also recharges the clover planting with a burst of fresh growth. Turkeys and deer like the tender clover that results after mowing. Timing the mowing procedure prior to weeds producing seeds is critical. If the weeds are producing seeds then mowing is probably too late to be effective. Timing is also crucial from the aspect of not damaging the clover too. Mowing too low or just prior to an extended dry spell will stress the clover and actually allow some weeds an opportunity to prosper.

## *Chemicals:*

Although many wildlife enthusiasts are reluctant to use any type of chemicals on the environment I've found several that are effective at controlling weeds in clover plots. Before choosing a herbicide to control weeds it is absolutely critical that you identify the weed you need to control. If your predominate problem is grasses within your clover plot then a product like Poast or Vantage will effectively control that grass. I've used Poast in the past with good results. As always remember to follow label instructions.

The second most common types of weed that you'll encounter are broadleaf weeds. This type of weed is more difficult to control simply because clover is also a broadleaf plant. Common herbicides that control all broadleaf weeds will also kill clover. I have used two products over the years that control broadleaf weeds in clover plots but don't kill the clover. They are Slay and Butyrac and are both available without a pesticide license. Again it is important to follow label instructions.

## *Nutrition:*

The third weapon in our arsenal for combating weeds is a good nutritional program. Keeping the clover plot healthy and thick with good nutrition will help the clover win the battle against weeds. Stressed, unhealthy, undernourished, clover can't stay thick and lush enough to compete against the weeds. Taking periodic soil samples will tell you which nutrients are lacking. Lime is always a good addition to the soil to keep the pH at an appropriate level for good clover growth. When selecting a fertilizer remember to pick one with no or very low nitrogen content. Clovers fix nitrogen from the air and do not require supplemental nitrogen in the fertilizer you spread. Look for fertilizers with a 0 or very low first number on the fertilizer bag. Something like a 0-26-26 or 2-10-40 are good choices for nourishing clover plots. Putting lots of nitrogen on a clover plots simply feeds the weeds so stay away from the traditional 10-10-10 or 19-19-19 fertilizers.

## *Replanting:*

Sometimes despite our best efforts the practical solution to controlling weeds in a clover plot is to simply start over. It doesn't make sense to spend time and money trying to save a clover plot that is past its prime or was not properly prepared in the first place. Knowing when to give in to the weeds is important too and even with my best efforts I find after 5 to 7 years that it's time to start over and replant. Sometimes I want to try a different type of forage in a particular location so replanting is something I regularly do as I cycle through my many food plots.

## *Conclusion:*

Using these techniques to control weeds may give your clover plot a few extra years of productivity before it requires replanting. Another important thing to remember is that the wildlife we are planting clover for are very tolerant of a few weeds. Although the food plot may not look like a picture from one of the outdoor magazines with thick, lush clover, your food plot, with a few weeds mixed in, will attract the turkeys and deer that you want frequenting your property.





Twelve year old **Zoe Rupert** harvest is pending PGC review for the sixth overall Gobbler in PA and could be the biggest bird harvested by a female in Pennsylvania. The bird weighed 19 lb. 12 oz. and has 5 beards the longest beard is 10.5". Spurs are 1 1/8 & 1 3/8.

**Thomas Nelson**, 16 years old from Enola PA. His Gobbler was harvested during the Youth Hunt. It had a 9 1/2" beard, with 1" spurs and was harvested in Susquehanna County.



**Nolen Zeigler**, age 5 of Loysville shot the most elusive turkey in the woods. A Perry County, PA Gobbler. at 27 yds with a 410 shotgun, 5" beard and weight 15 lb. 14 oz.



**Britton Simmons** tom weighed 20 lb with an 8" beard.



**Jadyne Healis**, age 9, mentored by her father Bill Healis harvested her first ever turkey, a 12 lb. jake in Schuylkill County.



# STRUT ZONE



**Maddie Planinsek's** 1st turkey was taken at 7:20 on her cousins farm in Morris Twp. Greene County. Shot at approx 20 yards. 10 in. beard, 1" spurs, weight 18 lbs.



Nine year old **Leo Estrada**, of the Tuscarora Longbeards Chapter, and his first turkey with a 3" beard taken in Fulton County, PA.



**Brandon Short** and his 2010 harvest.

# one Great week in pennsylvania

By: Bob Smith

Monday 5/3/10, it had rained all evening and into the morning. I decided to wait until it slowed down or stop before heading across the field from the cabin to a spot along the edge of the woods. The day before, I had watched a total of twelve different gobblers; jakes and longbeards walk the property line. So when Monday came around I knew about where I wanted to go. The rain stopped at about 5:30AM and I made my way to my set up spot. Soon after I set up, two hens came out into the field to my left. I was hoping that one of the many gobblers that I observed the day before would follow but didn't. A few minutes later a bird gobbled over my right shoulder about 100 yards. I sent out some soft calls and he responded. I waited about 10 more minutes and called again. This time, no answer. I don't know what made me shoulder my gun and get set but I did, then as if by magic, a hen was in front of me. Then I saw one red head, then another and another followed by a fourth turkey that had the classic red, white and blue head. As the first three gobblers passed me I could see they were jakes and I was not interested in taking any of them however; the fourth gobbler stepped into clear view and had a longbeard. I made on final cheek to gun adjustment and took the shot. The gobbler had a 10 inch beard with one spur going a 1 1/16" and was a respectable 19 pounds.

Then on Wednesday 5/5/10, Cinco de Mayo. Jim Ennis was staying at his camp across the valley and had ask me if I would go on a hunt with him since he wanted to see how I hunted and what I would do in certain situations. I made it to his camp by 4:45 AM. Jim wanted to try and take a turkey on his property. He had seen plenty of gobblers there in the pre-season and wanted to give it a try. We headed to a location in the corner of his property and waited for the first light to break and the morning song birds to start. We used a crow call to try and get a response and we heard one gobbler across the valley respond and then one responded behind his cabin. That gobbler gave a mighty roar and you could tell it was no youngster. Quickly I became concerned when he only gobbled twice and then went silent. To me, it was a clear indication he had the company of hens and just broadcasted his presence to the hens and us.

We walked his property and called and only got one more response from the ole gobbler and that was it. We headed back to where we started at day break. Jim had three jakes going on Tuesday morning but could not seal the deal on them. So we stepped in to the woods about 50 yards and I took out my paddle call and let it rip. Immediately, a bird gobbled off in the distance where I heard one at day break. I turned to Jim and noted that I know just about where that bird is and that we had permission

to hunt that property for years. We made our way and I called occasionally to make sure that he was still interested and had not gone quit or moved on, he always answered my call. We got to the location where I thought he might be and made another call on my custom paddle call and heard another gobbler. I told Jim that we were going to move to a little more open area so that we could see him more clearly if he made his approach. I gave one more call and he cut the distance. I pointed to Jim where I wanted him to set up and that I was going to be several yards behind him and would be doing the calling. After seats, face masks and guns were in the ready position I called, he gobbled right back and then I saw the full fan coming through the woods about 90 yards out and he was closing the distance and double and triple gobbled at everything on the way. At about 50 yards he hung up and just strutted back and forth gobbling all the way. He wanted me to close the distance or what he thought was the hen to close the distance. I even went silent and just scratched in the leaves and he would respond. I gave on more call and then off to my right I heard noise in the leaves. I saw four longbeards crest the bench. They were no more than 20 feet from me. They gobbled all at once and I knew that Jim was now aware we had additional company. I was hoping they would cut across in front of me towards Jim and that maybe we could get a double this day. They started to do exactly that when they saw something they didn't like or knew that maybe they were too close to the old boy in front of us. They began clucking, turned and started to leave. I heard the shot and saw that one of the gobblers was down for good. My friend Jim just had taken his first turkey. The bird was 18 pounds had a 9 1/4" beard and 7/8' spurs. We celebrated and headed back to the cabin where his wife Linda was waiting with camera in hand. After all of the picture taking we had one more stop and that was in town to the local paper, The Sullivan Review, to have our picture for publication in the paper. It was a great day indeed. Jim had to go home that afternoon on business and before he left, he asked where I was going to hunt in the morning. With a gleam in my eye and a smile on my face I said right back to where we took your longbeard.

The next day was Thursday 5/6/10. It was overcast and warm. I got to the same area in the dark and waited for the first bird to gobble. The first thing that greeted me that morning was pouring rain. I didn't have any rain gear

on and I was in for a wet morning. Soon the old boy that wouldn't come closer than 50 yards the day before sounded off at about 80 yards away. I moved in a little closer and called. He answered me immediately. I called several more times and he always answered but never made a move closer. Two hens came within feet of my set up location and clucked and purred for about 45 minutes. Each time the ole gobbler answered. I had my gun up in anticipation of seeing that full fan approach but he never did. The rain continued to pour all the while. I stopped calling and he continued to gobble on his own for a while longer. Around 7:10AM the rain stopped and the sky began to clear. I gave out one more call and he gobbled and then I heard another bird gobble out in the field that I walked to get to this location. I called again and both birds answered but the one in the field had turned and sounded like he was making a move to come in the woods. I moved to cut the distance and took my cane yelper and called, now three birds answered me in the field. I looked the area over and noticed that I only had one lane in which the birds could come to and make an approach. I set up facing that direction and gave one last call. This time the birds were real close. Suddenly, I saw a longbeard come running into the lane I had picked and was running directly towards me. At about 25 yards he stopped to look for the hen he knew was there however, he was greeted by my Remington 870 and he was mine. The hunt was over and I had just filled my second tag. The gobbler sported a 10 1/2 inch beard; one spur measured 1 1/8" and was 18.5 pounds. I did take him into town for another picture for the paper. All I can say is it was one great week of spring turkey hunting in PA. I took two longbeards in the rain and called another longbeard for a friend that never took a turkey before. His smile in the picture tells the real story. Now is the time to think fall turkey, it will be here before we know it.



# PENNSYLVANIA HUNTING HERITAGE BANQUETS JULY THROUGH SEPTEMBER

## July 10 • Southern End Strutters

Fireside Tavern, Strasburg  
John Groff 717-786-3774

## July 10 • White Deer Jakes

Warrior Run Social Hall, Allenwood  
Bob Izer 570-742-4959

## August 7 • Kit-Han-Ne

Kittanning Twp Fire Hall, Kittanning  
Don Smail 724-545-9585

## August 7 • Lenni Lanape

Dingman Township Fire Hall, Milford  
Carol Welsh 570-296-2691

## August 14 • Sun Area

Grace Covenant Community Church, Middleburg  
Glenn Dressler 570-374-1059

## August 14 • Walking Purchase

Lehigh Twp Country Garden, Cherryville  
Katrina Skrapits 610-760-1689

## August 20 • Mehoopany Creek

Dotti-Lou Grove, Tunkannock  
Don Ogin 570-833-0795

## August 21 • East Coast Thunderin' Toms

Comfort Suites, Bethlehem  
Kelly Cameron 610-515-1041

## August 21 • Allegheny Mountain

Bavarian Hall, Altoona  
Kevin Kunsman 814-317-7535

## Sept 11 • Adams Co. Longbeards

Biglerville Fire Hall, Biglerville  
Pat Reeve 717-677-9529

## Sept 11 • Ben Stimaker Memorial

Pine Creek Inn, Galeton  
Tim Holtz 814-647-5429

## Sept 18 • Michaux Yellow Breeches

Holly Inn, Mt Holly Springs  
Mike Henry 717-226-2949



## Sept 26 • Lykens Valley Fall Hunting Classic

Erdman Sportsmen's Assoc., Lykens  
Jeff Bordner 717-453-7313

## Sept 29 • Philadelphia County Fightin' Spurs

Canstatter's, Philadelphia  
Larry Derosé 215-336-1710

## Sept 29 • Lakeland Longbeards

Hempfield Fire Hall, Greenville  
Dave McConnell 814-382-5679

## 2010 WHEELIN' SPORTSMEN BENEFITS



### Blue Mountain Chapter's Wheelin' Sportsmen Gun Bash July 15, 2010

Kuffman's BBQ Restaurant, Bethel  
Mike Hartman 717-866-7539

### Penn's Woods Spurs Gun Blast July 24, 2010

Italina American Club Export Club, Export  
Jason Straley 412-798-2965

### Moraine Chapter's 5th Annual Wing Night August 21, 2010

Butler City Hunting & Fishing Club, East Butler  
Brandon Mowry 724-496-1849

## 2010 Women in the Outdoors Events in Pennsylvania

### Aug 6 & 7 • Muncy Creek

Nancy Craft 570-482-4364  
North Mountain Sportsman Club  
Muncy Valley (Sullivan County)

### Aug 7 • Whitehorse Mtn. Longbeards

Tammy Wiseman 814-662-4321  
Meyersdale Rod & Gun Club,  
Meyersdale (Somerset County)

### Aug 21 • Southern End Strutters

Stacy Padlionie 717-419-7127  
Southern Lancaster Farmer-Sportsmen  
Assoc. (Lancaster County)

### Sept 11 • South East Silver Spurs

Kathy Michener 215-249-9367  
Branch Valley Fish, Game & Forestry Asso.  
Perkasie (Bucks County)



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