

A PRETTY ROUTINE

Turkey Hunt

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #149 —

"**C**annon to right of them, / Cannon to left of them, / Cannon in front of them / Volley'd and thunder'd;" — Tennyson's words, from *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, kept coming back to me as the turkeys hammered out their gobbles from three different directions — a couple of hundred yards away.

I'd left the truck at 5:05 a.m., as last night's full moon was still high in the western sky — 48 degrees, clear and calm. It was a three quarter mile walk to my listening point, but the first gobble came at 5:20, before my arrival — game on. Then a band of coyotes opened up not far away and hoot owls chimed in from somewhere in the distance — the welcome sounds of a spring morning.

The bird continued to gobble as I walked on and finally set up on the south edge of a mostly-open five acre field — turkey still on the roost, 150 yards to my left. Cutting a few dead limbs from a fallen cedar, to provide additional cover,

I sat down behind some brush — about ten yards into the feathered edge of the tree line, with my hen decoy slightly into the disked field.

It was clear there was more than one tom, but no sooner than I had sat down another group of gobblers opened up 200 yards in front of me and at least one more to my right — a bit farther out. Doesn't get much better than that. At 5:55 I started calling lightly — every minute or so.



The classic turkey pose, happy hunter with shotgun, behind a spread out fan.

At 6:17 a hen flew into the far end of the field and started walking and feeding. The toms in front shut up for a while, but the next gobble indicated they were on the ground and headed my way. The hen caught sight of my decoy, and then the gobblers; she up and flew away. I thought that

would have spooked the gobblers, but guess not — they came on.

"It was clear there was more than one tom..."

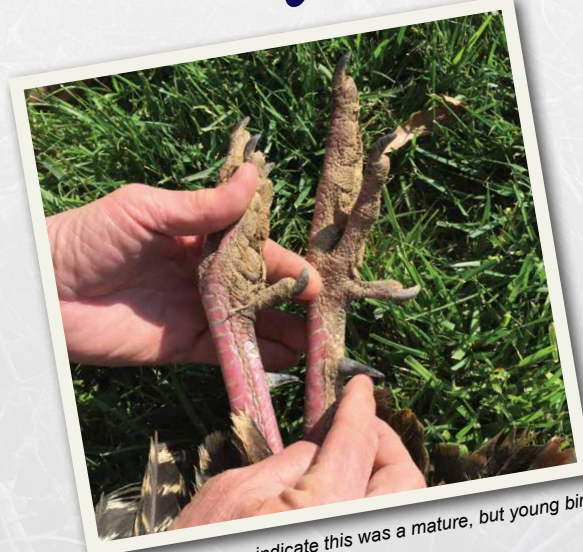
First, I saw a head at about 65 yards and heard a gobble, but obviously from a different bird. Then there was a closer bird walking toward me, and in range. At 6:45 a.m., my hammer fell, and immediately four other long beards jumped on my bird and started to beat up on him; had to stand up to scare them off. All in all, a pretty routine turkey hunt.



Larry Potterfield
Rochester Field
Prairie Creek Farm
Howard County, Missouri
23 April 2016



*The beard was pretty heavy and 10" long.
My shotgun is a Winchester Model 12.*



1" spurs indicate this was a mature, but young bird.