

The SPOILS of SPRING

— LARRY’S SHORT STORIES #177 —

Spring is a special time of year, because there are so many exciting things to do that are only possible - or at their very best - in the springtime; and some really are “spoils of the spring.” My vote for the #1 spoil is a heavy, long bearded, long spurred eastern gobbler; though mushrooms, arrowheads and shed antlers aren't far down the list. Crappie and bass; well we must include them.

Turkey hunting can be frustrating, if your luck is bad; but if you're in the right location and the gobblers are working – it is exhilarating. Even on a bad day, going after a turkey is a satisfying way to spend a few hours in the woods, listening to the whip-poor-wills, the hoot owls, the crows – and possibly a few other birds and critters. Turkey hunting can be as relaxing or as strenuous as you like – depending on whether you run and gun or sit in a blind — and

how far you have to walk in and out.

It seems that I'm always wanting to start looking for mushrooms and antler sheds before it's time, because more often than not my first trip or two simply contributes to my

losing a few pounds and getting some of my energy back from the long winter. But I still go, because I love it.

Arrowhead hunting is another good way to shed a pound or two and regain some energy; the creeks I hunt are like obstacle courses; there's a lot of climbing in and out, and climbing over and sliding under the fallen trees. There is



A big eastern gobbler, especially in strut, is a sight to behold. Harvesting one is the greatest spoil of spring.

nothing quite like the thrill of finding a complete arrowhead or knife blade laying on a gravel bar, knowing it's been lost in that watershed for a few thousand years and was just waiting for you to find it.

Fishing is something I enjoy during most months, as the weather cooperates; but there's no better time of year than

"...thrill of finding a complete arrowhead..."

spring to get on or around the farm ponds and lakes and hook a few bass, bluegill and crappie – and then have them for dinner that evening. Catching one big enough to be a “spoil of spring” is rare and I always turn them back.

Although not spoils of spring, watching the grass green up, the trees leaf out, the flowers bloom and the redbud trees turn red make springtime even more special.

Larry Potterfield
Columbia, Missouri
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In Missouri, we can pretty much catch largemouth bass year round; but when the weather warms up in the springtime — it doesn't get much better than that. Caught this one from the pond in front of our house on a fly rod I've had for nearly 40 years.



One of my favorite parts of spring is the blooming of the redbud trees; these are at the entryway to our house.