

First Turkey

Who says turkey hunting is difficult! Thirty minutes into the first hour of the first day of the Wisconsin Youth Opener for turkey hunting my grandson, Noah, bagged his first turkey ever.

At 4:00 a.m. a wake up call at the Boyd's Nest (our cabin) started us on our quest for the elusive wild turkey. After a short drive and a quiet walk into the woods, Noah and his dad Dan secluded themselves in a tent blind. Predawn gobbling alerted Noah with Dan sitting next to him that at least one tom was nearby. A couple of Barred Owls talking to each other had shocked the toms into gobbling. Just after dawn the turkeys left their roost flew to ground and started to walk around.

Dan commenced serenading them on his slate call as they moved closer in. Four young toms came into gun range as Noah tried to untangle the window netting that was snagged on the end of his shotgun. Easing the shotgun through another window and getting caught in the netting for a second time he took a bead on one of the toms and fired. The startled and somewhat wounded bird was walking a fast retreat when Noah found another window in the blind and dropped the tom for good - another first on Noah's bucket list! Dan said that the turkeys were starting to get nervous with the gun barrel going in and out of the windows on the blind!



Dan and Noah with his first turkey

Nothing to it, now Dan, Dave and I can get our turkeys. (WRONG!!)

We had the first week of the season after the youth hunt and Noah left plenty of turkeys for us. After the first couple of days we had located an area where a large tom was roosting. Dave set up near the roosting bird and I positioned myself so if he got by Dave I might get a shot.

Just after dawn the tom flew down from his roost and disappeared. Later that day he appeared from a fence line and proceeded to just stare at my hen decoy, strutting when he heard me call. 150 yards away and never getting any closer, Dave tried belly crawling through the wood-tic infested grass hoping to get a shot. No luck, that tom had him made the minute that he started to crawl.

We decided that evening after a little more strategizing that we needed a tom decoy to bring in this worthy advisory. Dave headed off to "Wally World" and bought the last tom decoy at the store. I know! I know! All you wise old turkey hunters already knew this but I'm on a steep learning curve here and only in my second year of turkey hunting. Noah is one up on me and won't let me forget it!

At 4 a.m. I nudged Noah awake from his spot on the couch and plugged in the coffee. "I'm going to take a shower to wake up," he announced. "Why don't you wait until we get back?" I said. "Naw, I'm, doing it now," he responded.

There was a steady rain coming down outside so Dan, Dave and I decided to head back to bed and go out hunting later. By the time Noah finally got out of the shower all the lights were off and everybody was back in bed. He had spent so much time in the shower that when he came out to a darkened cabin he thought that we had left without him. Noah sent a text to his dad, "Where did you go?" "Back to bed," Dan answered from his bedroom. Noah, now wide awake, watched television the rest of the morning.

We went back after that big old tom and he dodged us again. Like the movie "The Ghost in the Darkness" - he would just vanish. That's how the first week of the season ended for us, no turkeys were shot and the kid is one ahead of us.

The early mornings were nice in the woods with the owls talking to each other and the wood ducks skimming over the trees headed for their woodland pond. We haven't given up yet though with a couple more weeks left on our season we are determined to succeed.

Geezer Bob