

LONGBEARD LESSONS

There's more to learn about turkey hunting than this brochure can describe. By becoming a member of the National Wild Turkey Federation you will be helping improve essential wildlife habitat and protect our hunting heritage. You'll also be able to fine tune your skills with a subscription to **Turkey Country** magazine. You'll get hunting advice from the experts as well as updates on products.

Check out NWTF's other membership opportunities, too.

- **YES!** I want an annual membership with the NWTF for \$35 and receive a subscription to **Turkey Country** magazine, an NWTF hat, window decal and other member-only benefits.
- **YES!** I would like to become a sponsor member for \$250 and receive all the regular member benefits as well as a special sponsor gift, sponsor decal, lapel pin and more.
- **YES!** I would like to become a Women in the Outdoors member for \$35 and receive a subscription to **Turkey Country** magazine, a stainless steel Women in the Outdoors logo mug, a WITO decal and membership card.
- **YES!** I want a JAKES membership (12 & younger) for \$10 and receive a subscription to **JAKES Country magazine**, a decal, membership card and a chance to win a hunt of a lifetime.
- **YES!** I want an Xtreme JAKES membership for \$10 and receive a subscription to **JAKES Country magazine**, a decal, membership card, and a chance to win a hunt of a lifetime and scholarship opportunities.
- **NO**, I do not want to receive news about hunting and conservation via NWTF's monthly email newsletter.

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IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AND BEYOND

SECRETS OF A GOOD SET UP While calling is important, the most important factor in turkey hunting is setting up in the right place at the right time and sitting still. Patience and a comfy, camouflaged cushion to sit on will increase your odds of success.

Select a calling location in a fairly open area because turkeys are hesitant to walk into thick brush. Before you call, sit down with your back against a tree, rock or stump that is wider than your shoulders and taller than your head. This will help break up your outline and protect you from unseen hunters who may approach your calling from behind.

CHANGE OF SCENERY There will be times when you set up and work a bird, but it just won't come into range. Sometimes it pays to be patient and wait since birds may approach your set up slowly and silently. However, there are times when you'll have more success moving and either work a bird from a new location or find another, more cooperative gobbler. If you decide to move, make sure you keep the following guidelines in mind.

- Make sure your decoy is not visible. Stash it in your vest and make sure the head is not sticking out.
- Use proper methods of carrying a firearm in the field: cradle carry, trail carry, shoulder carry, sling carry, etc.
- If you use a sling, don't accidentally point your shotgun in an unsafe direction when bending over.
- Firearms should be unloaded and actions open when traveling across steep, slippery or rough terrain.
- Use approved safety techniques for crossing fences. When you're alone, unload the firearm and place it under the fence with the muzzle pointing away. When two or more hunters are together, unload the firearm and keep the action open. Have one hunter hold the firearm while the other one crosses.
- Do not lean firearms against trees, fence posts, vehicles, etc.

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH It's the moment you've been waiting for, a gobbler has responded to your calls and is making a beeline to your location. Make sure you're ready to seal the deal. Experts agree the best and safest way to kill a turkey is using a shotgun with number 4 or smaller shot.

The following advice can help you bring that bird home.

- Positively identify your target. In spring, only gobblers, and in some states all bearded turkeys, are legal.
- Be sure you have a safe backdrop.
- Keep your shot to 40 yards or less.
- Aim for the base of the head.
- Don't shoot until the turkey's head and neck are extended.
- After firing, put your gun's safety on and approach the downed bird with your firearm pointed in a safe direction. Never run with a firearm.

TURKEY HUNTING TACTICS

- A safe turkey hunter, like a safe driver, is defensive minded whether hunting public or private land. If you suspect there's another hunter already working the same bird, leave the area.
- Resist the urge to stalk turkey sounds. It is nearly impossible to sneak up on a turkey. It is also unethical and could lead to an accident.
- Select a spot that is in open timber rather than thick brush: wearing camouflage clothing and eliminating movement is more critical to success than hiding in heavy cover.
- When calling, sit against a large stump, blow-down, tree trunk or rock that is wider than your shoulders and higher than your head.
- Be discreet when imitating the sound of a gobbling turkey.
- Never move, wave or make turkey sounds to alert another hunter of your presence. Remain still and speak in a loud, clear voice to announce your presence.

The Pennsylvania Chapter of the NWTF is committed to turkey hunting safety. For more than 30 years, the chapter has encouraged safe, ethical hunting tactics and obeying hunting regulations. The chapter has supplied turkey hunting safety materials, published articles and placed billboards reminding hunters to be sure of their targets. Our members also have conducted seminars and taught hunter education courses. Educational efforts and media attention on turkey hunting safety have helped reduce the number of turkey-hunting related shooting incidents dramatically in Pennsylvania. ALL turkey hunters need to ensure this continues. Remember that safety is ultimately the responsibility of the hunter. Once you squeeze the trigger there is no calling back the shot. Be sure of your target before you ease the safety off or touch the trigger. **Think Safety-Hunt Safely!** For more information visit nwtf.org.

TURKEY HUNTING SUCCESS AND SAFETY





The best and safest way to kill a turkey is using a shotgun with number 4 or smaller shot to place a shot in the head and neck at 40 yards or less.

SPORTING ARMS SAVVY

- Treat all firearms as if loaded.
- Always point the firearm in a safe direction.
- Never put your finger on the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Know your target and what is behind it.
- Know the firearm and its mechanical characteristics.
- Never rely on the firearm's safety.
- Use the correct gauge or caliber ammunition.
- Be sure the barrel is not obstructed before shooting.

W THINK SAFETY - HUNT SAFELY

Wild turkey hunting is one of the most exciting ways you can spend time with your family and friends outdoors. It's also one of the safest outdoor activities, whether you're talking about team sports, other types of hunting or hobbies such as mountain biking.

Following you'll find tips to help you become a more successful wild turkey hunter as well as guidelines to help make a safe sport even safer.

PRESEASON PREP

The first step is to find a place to hunt. Your state or provincial wildlife agency can help you identify public hunting land. Visit the National Wild Turkey Federation's website at www.nwtf.org/AllAgencies.html to find wildlife agency contact information. If you plan to hunt private land, make sure you get the landowner's permission before hunting or scouting.

Wherever you decide to hunt, make the most of your time afield by spending time before the season learning the lay of the land and where the birds like to be. Once you pinpoint where the birds roost and where they head during the day to feed, plan a strategy that puts you along their travel routes.

TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT

Prior to the start of hunting season, wild turkey hunters need to head to the range and test their shotgun to ensure they're shooting a tight, dense pattern. Learning how to accurately judge number of yards and ensuring your load performs well at different distances can mean the difference in bagging a bird and watching one sail off into the woods.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

The secret to successful and safe turkey hunting is making sure you're wearing the right clothes. Wild turkeys have excellent vision so head-to-toe camouflage is recommended to help keep you concealed. Camo clothes provide a secondary safety benefit as well.

DECoy DECEPTIONS

Fields and planted wildlife openings figure prominently into any turkey hunter's strategy. Birds will often head to fields to feed and toms prefer to strut in open areas where it's easier to be seen. Set up just inside the woods where you can remain concealed, but have a good field of view to spot approaching birds. If using decoys, establish a clear line of vision for at least 100 yards and then place them at a set distance—about 20 yards from your position—so that you can tell when the bird is in shotgun range.

While not every hunter swears by decoys, they can be an asset in many situations. Today's decoys are real enough looking that from a distance they could fool hunters. However, you'll stay safe by following some common sense guidelines on decoy use.

Decoy Safety Strategies

- Never transport decoys uncovered. Many of the new decoys fold up for easy storage in turkey vests. Make sure the decoy head is not sticking out of your vest.
- Always set up against a tree that is taller than your head and wider than your shoulders.
- Establish a clear line of vision for at least 100 yards and then set up the decoys 20 yards from your position on the line.
- If you see another hunter, call out in a loud, clear voice to alert them to your position. Never wave or make turkey sounds to alert another hunter.
- Always check carefully that no one is stalking your decoys before leaving your position.

CALLING BASICS

Communicating with a wild turkey to work it to the gun is a thrilling experience. And today's market offers a variety of calls—everything from mouth calls to box calls to pot and peg calls and more. Regardless of the type of call you choose, set aside some time to practice so you become a proficient caller. You can listen to recordings of real wild turkeys and get some calling tips by visiting the NWTF's website at www.nwtf.org/hunting_tactics.html.



CONCENTRATE ON CAMOUFLAGE

- Never wear bright colors, especially not red, white, blue or black because these are the colors of a wild turkey gobbler. Watch out for red, white or blue on your socks, T-shirts, hooded sweatshirts, hats, bandanas, etc.
- Wear dark undershirts and socks, and pants long enough to be tucked into boots.
- Keep your hands and head camouflaged when calling.
- When using a camouflage blind or netting, maintain a clear field of view.
- Camouflage your gun.

Eliminate the colors white, red, black and blue from hunting clothes because these are the colors of a wild turkey gobbler.

