

First Turkey Hunt

By Jeff Murphy

This spring during the PA Youth Hunt, Dave & I took my 11 year old son, Jake on his first turkey hunt. It was nothing short of exciting. The Friday night before the youth hunt, the Call Outdoors did a turkey hunting seminar at a church in NY. So we didn't get the opportunity to roost the birds, but Dave was familiar with the property we were going to hunt. Dave knew birds would roost in one of two places. Either, near the lower part of the field or in the upper corner of the field. We decided to set up for the upper corner roosting spot.

We put the decoys out and got settled, Jake was sitting right in front of me and Dave was off to the right with the video camera. We sat in silence for a half hour while the woods came to life. Suddenly some hens started talking, but not where we thought they would be. Dave hit the call and gobblers let loose to our back right. That wasn't great but we thought it would still work out. We sat and called and watched. We could hear the birds leave the roost and make their way into the field below us. Unfortunately there was a rise in the field they would have to get above to see our decoys. Several times we could see tail fans just slightly above the crest, but they stayed on the lower side for 2 hours.

Dave & I decided it was time to make a move, and Jake was glad to move after listening to these birds for so long. We slowly and cautiously started army crawling across the field toward the birds. Every so often we would see a head and have to stop. We got half way there and suddenly I heard Jake scream, he had hit his knee on a rock. We stopped, I consoled him and we thought the hunt was over for sure after his crying. I looked over the rise and the turkeys were still there and actually headed our way. I got Jake together and we started crawling again. Suddenly, I could see heads coming. I sat up and got Jake situated beside me. There they were, 2 gobblers popping their heads up at us. Apparently Jake's crying made a good turkey call. I told Jake to stay calm, aim low on the neck, and pull the trigger when he was ready. Of course the 2 birds kept crisscrossing making it tough to decide which one to aim and shoot at. Then the shot, I watched as the one bird's head flipped back and was sure Jake killed his first turkey. We got up and ran toward them and there were birds flying everywhere. Disappointment set in as we realized Jake must have shot just over its head. It was a long tough morning but it was great to share this moment with my best buddy and a good friend. Spring will be here again sooner than later. Jake, I am very proud of you.