

## Close Call Turkey

Noise! Nothing but it. The crackling of sticks and brush. The only thing I cannot hear is the adrenaline trampling through my nerves and veins. Whoosh! Whoosh! The sound of wrinkled grass in the side of my knee-high rubber Lacrosse boots. The hills of St. Francisville will put hair on your chest. Huffing and puffing that cold white smoke. Mask and gloves ready for the moment. The moment of true skill!

The gobbles started at the crest of dawn. Who knew a body pounding vibration could come out of a bird. The feathered creature was strutting his stuff on a ridge about 100 yards away, in no time we were army crawling through dead leaves and popping sticks. Each crunch of a leaf dimmed my chance of encountering my season's goal. It is all on me at this point. Everything was zoned out. Only the turkey and I were left!

That day was the season's final, last chance of all Louisiana sportsmen to tag out. The night before I stayed up thinking of the sound of the screech owls. What a magnificent animal! 5:00 a.m., my eyes snapped open. In a second, my turkey hunting uniform was equipped. Before riding off on my Honda 420, my brother and I wished each other good luck. It is what we do; it gives each of us some inspiration. I left with awesome spirit and high hopes.

All my experience down to one day. Tensions were high; everything was on my shoulders. I thought to myself, "Everything is gonna be fine. Calm down!" Leaving my negative thoughts behind, I set off in search of my bearded trophy.

The long ridge! We always start at this checkpoint during turkey season. While sitting on an ancient insect infested log, we started to speak the language. The first gobble came from the gravel road. This leads to my camp. It was an instinct; we took off in a fast walk towards the bird. My heart rate increased as our distance decreased. Mask time! Hidden – a word no one knows until they have been hunting. Blending in with the surroundings. Do not let him see YOU! Stalking him one-step after another. Then BOOM! The one gobble that turns your adrenaline on like a switch. It is a feeling you cannot describe. Everything was focused on one thing. You feel the fluid coursing through your nervously shaking arms.

The only thing between you is a giant ridge. Control breathing, army crawl, and watch your surroundings. These three small steps can guarantee a true kill. Crunch by crunch, I was halfway there. Sweat was beading off my head like syrup on waffles. Reaching the top gave me a big relief.

I took aim ahead of time. Every hunter knows this because turkeys have one of the best eyesights. Here he comes...30 yards, 25, 20, 15 then 10, the sight of this animal stunned me. He grew in size from his feathers together to strutting boldly. I saw it! The hip-high grass. NO! Would you know it? Right after I saw the grass, it entered it and disappeared from sight suddenly. It was all lost.

There was a gut feeling you cannot describe. Sorrow, regret, worthlessness. All of these words contribute to that feeling. This event will stay with me forever. It was the hunt that taught me a lesson. If you fall, get back up and try again until you reach your goal.