

Persistence Pays Off!

My turkey hunting story began in April way back in 2012 on Grandmother's land in Arkansas. The first two days turned up nothing but turkey tracks. Midmorning on the third day Dad and I were driving around in our golf cart, stopping frequently to call, trying to locate a turkey. Finally we heard a gobbler sound off in an old field across a very thick creek bottom. My dad asked if I wanted to wade the creek and try to cross the briar patch quietly or go back to the camp, get my older brother and circle around the creek bottom. I decided to go and get my brother. After picking up my brother, we made a large loop around to where we thought the turkey had been and set up. Using box and slate calls Dad called and after about twenty minutes the turkey showed up without making a sound. As I slowly turned to shoot the turkey spotted me. Turkeys have awesome vision. The turkey spooked a little bit but Dad called him back with a diaphragm call. Then the turkey saw the jake and hen decoys and he was all ready for a fight. I was super excited but I was able to aim and slowly squeeze the trigger of Dad's gun. Instead of boom I heard click - nothing happened. The gun had failed to fire. The turkey was getting closer and closer to the decoys and out of my safe firing range and into my brother's safe firing range. The next thing I knew my brother had squeezed his trigger and killed his first turkey. Even though I was disappointed for me - I was glad for my brother.

2013 hunting season was tough. We never even heard a gobble!

2014 hunting season rolled around. Our friend had permission to hunt on a property in Louisiana where he had seen several turkeys strutting in open fields. Dad and my older brother said I was first up this year. This year we had a new plan. We would try Louisiana and use

ground blinds in the fields where the gobblers strutted. We started early by scouting and putting out blinds in two locations. The youth hunt weekend came around. We were hunting with a friend who had never hunted turkeys before. We let him and his dad have the spot that we thought was the better blind set up. Before daylight Dad, my brother, and I headed out to our blind. Dad was the caller, my brother was the camera man, and I was the shooter. My brother was nearly as excited as I was because he had a new camera he was anxious to try out. We set up the decoys and as we entered the blind I wondered if today would be my day. As the sky brightened my dad called once or twice to locate a turkey. Turkeys gobbled on the roost but stopped when they flew down. The roosted turkeys were across a big creek and dad has always told us it is hard to get a turkey to cross a creek. Several calling hours, one sausage-egg biscuit, and two granola bars later we were having a calling contest in the blind when my brother said "There is a turkey coming - get ready"! The turkey ran in toward the decoys in half strut while we frantically tried to get camera and gun ready. My brother, with camera ready, videoed the incoming tom while I prepared to take the shot with my new Remington 870 Youth Model 20 gauge. The gobbler strutted around our jake decoy and I had to wait until he was clear of the decoys to shoot. When he finally presented a clear shot he was only about 8 yards away. I squeezed the trigger on my new turkey gun and after two years of trying had my first turkey. My friend hunting in the other blind also got his first turkey on the first morning he had ever hunted turkeys. We had a great hunt and ended up with fresh turkey meat, a mounted turkey, and family memories that will last a lifetime.