

Turkey Talk

Constantine 6-Time Winner at NWTF Nashville Meet

Dave Constantine from Durand, Wisconsin was named "Call Maker of the Year" and received the "Earl Mickel Award" at the annual National Wild Turkey Federation's "Grand National Custom Call Competition" held in Nashville in February.

This is the sixth time that Constantine has won this prestigious honor, making him "the winningest call maker in the history of the NWTF competitions!" To date, Dave has won over 130 Grand National awards. Constantine can be contacted by email at: dcp@dconstantine.com or by phone at: 715- 875- 4546.



Dave with his awards and his prize-winning call.



Jode Hillman Turkey Decoy Works!

(Editor's note: Carver Jode Hillman sent me a photo a few months ago of a hen turkey decoy he had made. Then recently he sent me this "Report" on the success he had "in the field" with his wooden "betrayal bird.")

Stan,

Here are some hunting results from that turkey decoy I made a while back. Thought you might get a kick out of this. My first Gobbler!

After two frustrating rainy days, the weather cleared off and the morning was cold and cloudless. Earlier in the week there was very little gobbling activity; and though I knew there were birds about, it was hard to locate them and set-up effectively. I had burned a lot of shoe leather so far but had some key roosting and displaying areas staked out.

Yesterday, I had one gobbler at the far edge of the property that I hunt. Without roosting anything last night, I figured that was my best shot at filling my tag. I headed that direction at about 4:30 a.m. and gave an owl hoot as I approached. I was greeted by at least 4 gobblers, which was encouraging. The birds were roosted (I found out later) on the edge of a large grass field (that was off limits). I set out my decoy and settled in and waited for a little light.

At about 6:00 a.m. I made a couple of sleepy yelps and slapped my coveralls to sound like a hen coming off roost. Again, several gobblers not too far off. About 10 minutes later I do some soft clucks and get an immediate response. So I shut up and listen. These birds are gobbling at every crow, goose, etc., but they sound as if they have flown down and are now in the field. I decide I need to close the distance and move near the path that connects the woods (where I am) to the grass field.

I reset and give a few soft yelps. Nothing... I try a few more. Still nothing. Then I hear a loud and fast PUTT..PUTT..PUTT, very alarmed. I look up just in time to see three gobblers fly off the roost that was only 20 yards away. Can you say "Bonehead move!" (on my part)!? Big mistake! I was hearing other Toms calling from the field and wrongly assumed those were the birds I was working.

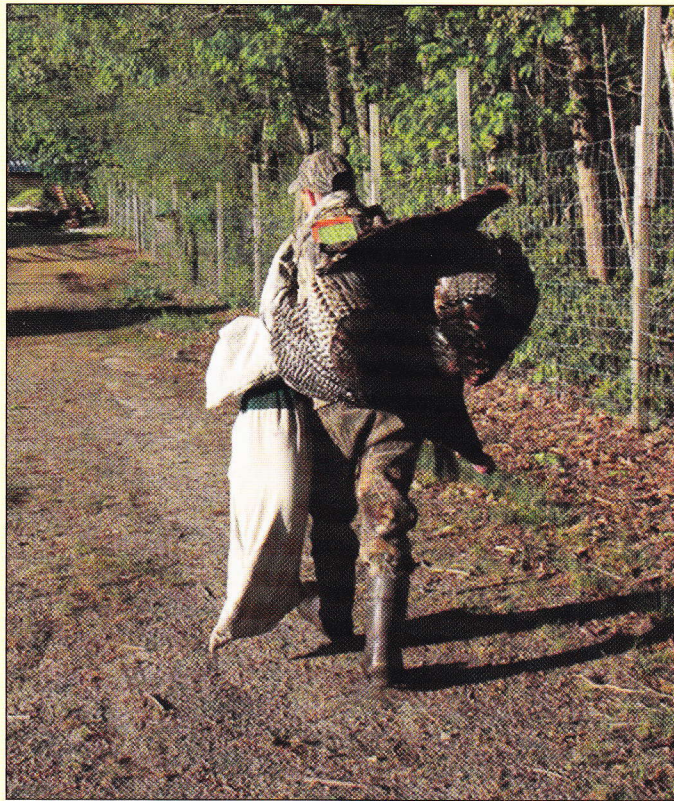
Completely disheartened, I figure game over. I decide not to totally pack it in though and head to the far other end of the property to see if there is any activity over there. It's about 6:45 now. I set up just in from a fork of two logging roads that lead off the parcel in 100 yards. I set my decoy about 15 yards in front of me and slightly back from two logs that block 4-wheelers from entering. I hear faint gobbling in the distance and figure, if nothing else, it will be sweet music to listen to before I head home.

After getting set, I let out a long string of yelps etc., and get a distant response. Not wanting to repeat my ear-

lier blunder, I just shut up and wait. 15 minutes go by and then a thunderous double gobble blasts out from about 100 yards away. I give a few very soft clucks and get an immediate response. I think he's coming my way, so I wait another 10 minutes and see TWO Toms up the logging road. They continue to close distance. At about 40 yards they see the decoy and stop and strut their stuff.



Jode Hillman with his hen turkey decoy and his prize Tom.



I could have taken a shot at this point, but the fallen logs were obstructing part of my shooting lane. I let the two do their thing and give a soft low purr. Getting excited, they both drop their tails and head for the downed log. When the first Tom ducked under the log at 25 yards, my heart was beating so fast I thought he would hear it. As he raised his head to start his strut, my load of copper-plated 4's folded him up clean at 20 yards.

The other gobbler then flew into the tree I was sitting against and continued to gobble! This was my first spring gobbler, and to say I was excited is an understatement. He weighed in at 21 pounds. Main beard was 10.25 inches with a 6-inch kicker second beard. Left spur was 1 1/16 inch; right spur was 1-inch even.

(Editor's note: Larry Lunman, *H&FC's* Special Editor for Canadian Decoys and longtime turkey hunter, sent us this "Report" of his special and sudden success on the "Turkey Trail.")

Stan,

I shot this turkey two days before my 70th birthday. I decided to embark on a mid-morning hunt about 10 miles from my home. As I reached my destination I spotted two Toms in a field with a well forested ridge just north of them. I was able to drive a quarter-mile further, park my car, and make my way along an old hay road that crossed the ridge and emptied into the field where the two Toms were located.

I set up 20 yards short of the field and threw out a few soft calls on my diaphragm (mouth) call and a couple of yelps on my slate call. For good measure, I rattled some dry leaves with my hand. One of the Toms answered with a resounding gobble. After a few more clucks and purrs, he let loose with some excited gobbles and while I couldn't see him, I knew he was coming closer along the edge of the field.

A minute later he stepped into the opening of the hay road, and I shot him at 20 yards. He was a 21-pound Tom with a typical 9-inch beard with a few strands measuring 11 1/2 inches. What was remarkable were his long curved spurs that were a shade over 1 1/4 inches long, suggesting that he was an old Tom 4 or more years old. Total time elapsed on this "turkey hunt" was less than 25 minutes. Sometimes the Turkey gods smile on us old turkey hunters.



"Elder Statesman" Tom bagged by Larry Lunman.