

GOBBLE, GOBBLE, GOBBLE!

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #107 —

There are probably a couple of dozen reasons that I go turkey hunting each spring. It's hard to say which is most important, some likely more than others, but they're all special to me. Most are very reliable, like first light and the sound of the birds waking up. The most unpredictable, of course, is getting a mature tom turkey close enough for me to pull the trigger – and then holding true.

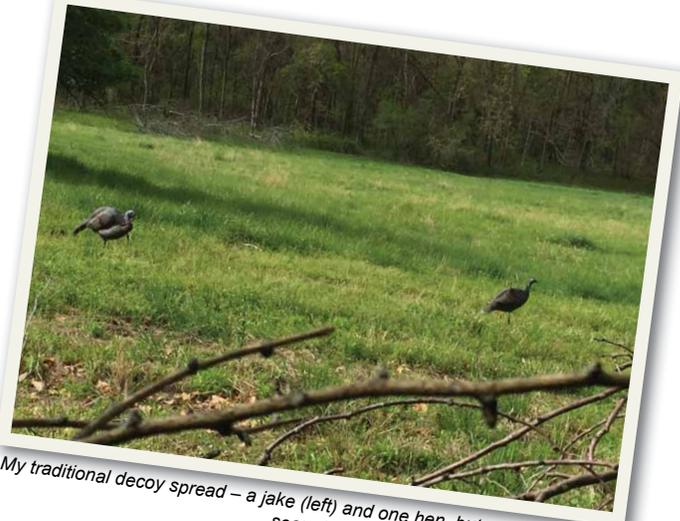
The eyes are usually the strongest of the senses and from the time I get out of my pickup truck until climbing back in, they're working overtime, and not disappointed. The whitetail deer, the turkeys, the wood ducks, the sunrise and the magnificent colors of spring; no, it's not a dream. A man can drive down the interstate highway and enjoy the colors of fall, but turkey hunting provides a unique,

close up perspective of spring, that nothing else quite matches.

Starting about first light the gobblers begin to gobble, the song birds sing, the hoot owls hoot and the crows caw. Alas,

I don't hear any bobwhite quail. But all of these sounds are magic to the ears and one of the rewards of getting up after only six hours of sleep and heading for the turkey woods.

There's a side benefit also, based on the way I like to hunt – exercise. Some days are like boot camp – fifteen minute double time walks before daylight to get to the perfect place, crossing ditches forty feet deep, up hills and down hills, and taking the long way, rather than the shortcut. After an endless, often inactive winter, I always get my legs



My traditional decoy spread – a jake (left) and one hen, but sometimes they seem to be a liability rather than an asset.

and lungs back during spring turkey season and feel fit and confident after three weeks of this unusual routine.

Probably the most important benefit is not even one of the reasons I go turkey hunting in the first place – it's the time to think. You see, turkey hunting isn't fast paced – except sometimes the last minute or so before you pull the trigger.

"...these sounds are magic to the ears..."

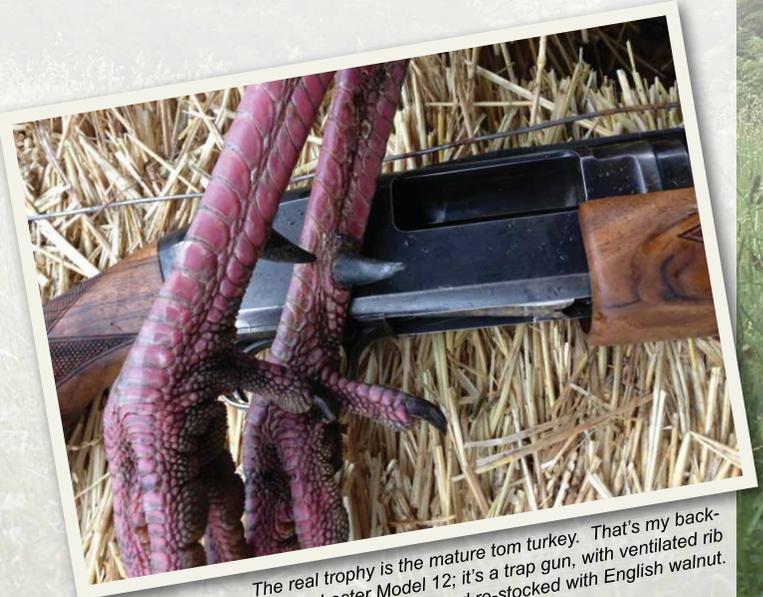
Turkey hunting gives your mind lots of time to consider things; time to think about people, projects, work — and about life. It is multiple iterations of critical thinking; my mind playing chess with itself. Even though I'm always a little tired during most of turkey season and sometimes I don't shoot a single bird, my enthusiasm for life is always renewed.

**USA
Midway**

Larry Potterfield
Moniteau Creek
Harrisburg, MO
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Knee boots are always in order for turkey hunting, as the grass (or in this case clover), is always wet with the morning dew.



The real trophy is the mature tom turkey. That's my back-up Winchester Model 12; it's a trap gun, with ventilated rib and re-stocked with English walnut.