

RUNNING TOMS

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #108 —

The classic turkey hunt has the hunter locating a roosting gobbler and getting close — well before light; then calling him down into an open field or woods. The turkey struts and gobbles (as if for the camera) and slowly closes the distance to the decoys. The moment of truth is when the bird comes out of strut and stretches his neck to look around. Bang! The shotgun fires and it's time for pictures.

To be sure, I've enjoyed many classic turkey hunts; but most haven't been classic at all. Hurry up and shoot (and by the way he's running), describes many of my hunts. Sometimes I use a blind, but not always; sometimes I use decoys — but other times I don't.

For my first bird this year, I walked into a large food plot at 5:45 a.m. In short order, a bird gobbled about 350 yards northwest. Moving closer, I sat down in a small strip of woods between the food plot and

a trail — and began to call. He was just 100 yards away, and there was a second gobbler from the right. Twenty minutes later, two hens came down the trail, from the right — and then the tom showed up at about 80 yards. He strutted and gobbled for ten minutes or so, while the hens walked past me at about 30 yards. Finally, the tom stopped talking, came out of strut and started running after them. As the tom ran down the trail and past an opening between two trees, I blasted him — on the run.



This is the classic turkey picture — hunter behind the bird, with tail feathers spread into a fan. Daughter Sara is behind the camera.

The second bird was no more classic than the first. I had a 20 minute walk through the woods ahead of me and didn't want to spook anything on the way in, so I left home 30 minutes earlier than usual. This time I sat in a blind, as the woods are very thin — no decoys. Several gobblers and some hens sounded off in the direction I was facing, so I began calling. Next thing you know, a turkey came running into the bottom of the food plot, about 100 yards downhill. Shortly thereafter another followed, also running. It was clear they were toms, by the color, but the front one was within 50 yards before the beard was visible. I stuck my shotgun barrel out of the blind and blasted him as he ran by at 25 yards. So, that's my 2015 turkey season — running toms.

"Hurry up and shoot..."

Midway^{USA}

Larry Potterfield
Moniteau Creek Drainage
Harrisburg, Missouri
3 May 2015



This is an adult bird, the spurs are about 1" long. That's my Winchester Model 12 turkey gun.



A beautiful food plot, it sits on top of a ridge and is surrounded by white oak timber.