

# The Ten Minute Gobbler

By: David McNeal



Major Dan Sessions was having a pretty frustrating Spring Turkey season. He had been hunting them hard since the season came in and had plenty of big Toms calling to him but refusing to come in.

It was down right wearisome and he was beginning to doubt that he had what it takes to fool a big bird into coming in. He had taken several birds in this his fourth year of becoming a turkey hunter and was starting to consider himself, with no small amount of pride, somewhat proficient.

It was at this low point that he decided to shoot me an email; after all it was I who had gotten him (a die hard deer enthusiast) into this game.

I was supposed to be the EXPERT so maybe I could tell him what he was doing wrong.

What Dan didn't know was that I and a whole lot of other good turkey hunters I know were having the same problem. Unlike Dan however, we all knew that the problem wasn't necessarily us but a multitude of other conditions. For one our weather has been so strange this year that the mating season was a little behind and so all the gobblers were with hens and didn't want to leave their harem, and in those conditions it is natural for a gobbler to expect the hen to come to him. The situation changes of course as the hens have been bred and the males are forced to go looking for any available hens that are left.

A hunt was scheduled and we met at Casey's General Store in Ogden, Kansas on a stormy morning. It certainly looked as if our hunt was going to be fated before it even got started but since the weatherman's forecast call for isolated showers we decide to press on.

Now locating where turkeys are on Fort Riley is pretty easy. You just get a map of the Post, put one hand over your eyes and place your finger on any spot. If the area is open for that day then there are probably turkeys there. Ah! But getting those keen eyes and ears to come in close enough for a shot THAT is an entirely different matter.

Setting up just off a food plot along an old road in some trees we placed my strutting gobbler B-Mobile, two hens, and a Jake decoy where they could be seen from either avenue of approached. We found a nice BIG comfortable tree about fourteen yards from the decoys and got settled in. The time was 7:00 a.m.

Three hours later with me doing intermittent calling we suddenly heard a very loud and distinct CLUCK off to my left. Thinking that would be the lane of approached I swung my gun in that direction. It would prove to be a mistake.

That bird turned out to be four gobblers and they had circled around and came in behind the decoys straight to our front. It was impossible for me to move my gun without spooking the birds so I whispered to Dan that I couldn't shoot and that as soon as he had a shot to take it. He did just that and I saw the big bird fall like a rock but to our surprise he got up and FLEW off leaving us with our mouths wide open in utter disbelief. Turkeys are TOUGH birds and you had better hit a vital spot or its bird gone.

There was nothing to do but move to a new spot but with three hours to get those birds in and me running out of time the prospects didn't look promising. My hunt would have to end at noon.

We moved to a similar type location several miles south of our first location and put out the same set up. By the time we were in place it was 11:40 a.m. and it was decided that if I had to leave Dan would stay and bring the decoys to me later that evening. That however wouldn't be necessary.

I told Dan that I wanted to hear him call since he was concerned about his calling and it turned out that his calling was perfect. He had no sooner started than he was met with a close gobble.

At 11:50 a.m. just ten minutes after his first call the twenty-one and a half pound gobbler came in and Dan took his first bird of the season. He was to be congratulated for his precipitate delivery of a fine harvest. The bird was a loner and after a close examination it was easy to see why, he had NO spurs not even buttons. He had nothing to defend himself with but he did have a full fan and a ten inch beard. I placed him at least a two year old.

The old poet/hunter/educator from South Carolina Archibald Rutledge is quoted as saying, “Some men are merely hunters while others are Turkey hunters. I won’t apologize for being a turkey hunter. “

Needless to say but I’m going to anyway, Dan is now a more educated turkey hunter and both his spirits and confidence has been renewed.



It never gets old.