

Monday, February 5, 2024  
Somewhere north of Saint George, Kansas

I've had some strange things happen in the turkey woods. I've had decoys stalked by coyotes and bob cats. Once in the wee hours just before dawn I felt hot breath on my face only to turn and find myself eyeball to eyeball with a young buck and I even had a raccoon inform me with ire, that putting my butt down against a log he called home was not tolerated.

Any turkey hunter who has been at it for long, can tell you that there isn't a one of us that hasn't been busted by the birds we've been waiting on. Usually it's a matter of being out waited. Just when we're sure they're not coming, we stand up only to see them bolting for the underbrush. Swearing, "if I had just stayed put another five minutes."

My story begins on a beautiful Friday morning in April of 2011. I was looking forward to the area I planned to hunt that morning, because a friend had bagged a nice hybrid just that past week.

On this morning, I worked my way down a tank trail to an old wood cutting road. My thought was that if I could locate a bird, I might be able to close the distance thus encouraging him to meet me half way.

This tactic had been successful for me in the pass.

I picked a nice area near a food plot but far enough inside the tree line that the bird would have to come looking. Settling with my back against a Cottonwood tree; slate in hand I started my yelp.

Not long after the first yelp sequence, there was a gobble. He was at a distance (about a hundred and fifty yards) but I could tell he was interested.

After a few cuts his gobbles got louder and closer confirming that he was on his way.

I waited five minutes, and then did another cut.

It was like thunder!

I dared not call again.

His last response had been to my right at what I guess would be thirty yards, but because of thick underbrush I could not spot him.

All I could do was lean forward peering; hoping to catch a glance of movement.

That movement never came.

I was just about to lay my slate aside and pick up my shotgun; still wondering what had happened to him, expecting him to appear at any moment, when from my left side, right in my ear, from behind the tree I was sitting against, a howitzer went off, causing me a near cardiac condition and a dropped slate and primer.

That old bird had somehow, without me hearing him, come up behind the very tree I had chosen to sit against.

The whole incident had me checking my pants for contamination and Mr. Tom doing a NASCAR ninety back in the direction from which he had come.

I was BUSTED! It was GAME OVER!

That's all from my neck of the woods. Make it a great day!

