

April 2009

VP's Message

Bill Blotney - Vice President

The club pond has been stocked, the state's rivers are stocked for the beginning of trout season, turkeys are gobbling, stripers are in the larger river systems, what a great time of year !! From what I saw, and what I was told, the opening of the pond was a pretty good day for those who fished. I saw a couple of nice fish that were taken that day. John Dow's son Zach had a brook trout that was almost 4 lbs.

If you look at the club's web site there are several photos of members with fish. There is even a picture of Ed Coppertite with a trout. You know it was good day fishing if Ed can catch a fish . I don't know why Ed was enjoying himself, when I know that there was plenty of time for Ed to be doing some form of work on club grounds. Ed, I really think you should be worrying about making sure your work hours are done before you take advantage of any recreational activities. For those who don't know Ed, he is always at the club involved in some sort of project working his butt off. Thanks Ed.

On Friday May 15th there is a Ziti dinner being held at the club to benefit the Children's Trout Derby. For tickets contact Fish Chairman John Stevens or Eric who is the club bartender. The trout derby will be held on Sunday May 24th. We will also be hosting a fishing day for veterans from the VA hospital in West Haven on June 14th. John Wolcheski will overseeing this very special event. I know that there is plenty of help needed on both of those days. For those needing work hours, what a great way to get your hours, being outdoors and assisting people having fun.

As I have stated previously there are many opportunities to fulfill work hour requirements at this time if year. Sporting clays events are being held regularly. There is always the need by various chairmen to work on some kind of work party that is taking place on club grounds. There are always sign-up sheets in the clubhouse.

The Nominating Committee will present to the mem-

bership it's slate of officers for the upcoming year at the May meeting. Nominations will also be accepted from the membership at that meeting. Voting will take place at the regular monthly meeting in June.

The dinner for the May Meeting will be Chicken Marsala prepared by club member Frank Sorrentino from Zio Franco's restaurant in Hamden.

When I sat down to write this piece I promised myself to keep it short, so with that being said, keep your lines tight, turkey hunters shoot straight, and everyone be safe. Also enjoy the spring, I know I will.

New World Record Elk

Missoula, MT- The Boone and Crockett Club's (B&C) recent announcement of a new world record elk has generated unprecedented news coverage, as well as public craving for details about the giant bull. Taken in 2008 by Denny Austad on public land in Utah, it's the only elk on record with a gross antler score approaching the 500-inch mark, at 499 3/8 inches.

People across North America, including many non-hunters, are flooding the B&C headquarters with request for more information about the new record book elk, the habitat that produced it and the B&C record-keeping system.

The B&C confirmed at least 55 other hunters were hunting in the area where the record bull was taken, that local law enforcement personnel investigated but found no evidence that the bull was pen-raised or escaped from a pen, nor evidence of illegal conduct (such investigations are routine when world records are involved), and that many hunter-based conservation groups contributed to the quality of the area's habitat.

Next Meeting

May 12th - 7:30 p.m.

Ziti Dinner

May 15th - 7:00 p.m.

Special

Turkey

Section

Inside

Nomination Committee Named

In accordance with the Club By-laws a Nomination Committee was named at the March meeting. The committee's job is to recommend a slate of officers to the membership. If you would like to nominate another member or have an interest in running for an office yourself, please contact one of the committee members listed below. Candidates for office must be a voting member of the club and must have expressed a willingness to carry out the duties of the respective offices.

Bill Holyrod
Ray Ericson
Jim Shadish
Bob Bennett
Ernie Trowbridge

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Ray Ericson
Mike Schewokis
Doug Stender
Steve Szypulski
John Wolcheski

Contact information for Club Officers and Committee Chairmen is posted in the Club and on the Club website:
www.wallingfordrodandgunclub.org

Help our Veterans

There is a large "Drop Box" in the Club House where you can donate Socks; Toiletries; T-Shirts; Underwear; Gloves; Hats for homeless and needy Veterans. All items donated will go to the South Park Inn shelter in Hartford. Thank you for your help. For more information, contact Skip Koch, 203 213-4146

Sporting Clays

Our first sporting clays shoot was held on Sunday April 19, 2009. After expenses, the club netted \$ 1,175.00 profit. I would like to thank Hal Becker, Louis Czaja for working the registration table; Jr and Mark Hacku and their kitchen help, for breakfast, and lunch. The first shoot was very successful.

Special thanks to the sporting clays committee: Ed Copperthite, Sr and Jr, Mike Shewokis, Darcy Shewokis, for all the hours they worked getting the sporting clays field ready for the first shoot. Also, thanks to Joe Conti for the maintenance of all the automatic trap machines and making all the monthly sporting clay reports at the club meetings. Sporting Clay Shoot couldn't happen without the support of our trappers and safety official, thanks to all of you who came out to make this successful.

Reminder: Trappers are need for all our shoots.

Mike Falcigno Sporting Clays
Chairman.

Range Hours

Range hours have returned to non-hunting hours.

9:00 AM to 1/2 hour before sunset.

Please be sure to sign in before and out after using the range.

***Remember Safety First
Steel target are prohibited***

Wallingford Rod & Gun Club Jackets

Black, 3 Season, Fleece lined jackets are available for order.

The prices are as follows:

Jacket with Pheasant logo on back, Same (smaller) logo on chest, sizes small to XL \$89.95

For 2XL and 3XL add \$ 3.00

4XL add \$ 4.00

Embroidered name on front \$ 3.85

As always 6% CT Sales Tax on total

Contact Jim Greenwood

203-269-0740 or 203-213-4735

jegreenwood@comcast.net

Fishing



The fishing has been good. We stocked 400 trout and close to 200 have been caught. The second stocking occurred on April 23rd and fishing reopened on Saturday April 25th.

New members, please remember to sign your fish out. The limit is 2 trout a day, 6 trout per week. Bass limit is the same.

A Ziti Dinner will be held on Friday, May 15th. Tickets are \$8.00 per person, children under 12 are free. Tickets can be purchased from Eric the bartender or John Stevens. The proceeds will benefit the Children's Fishing Derby.

The Children's Fishing Derby will be held on Sunday May 24th. A Pancake breakfast will be served from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Lunch will be served at noon. Please make sure all children are signed in before 9:00 a.m.

Attention Members: Please be careful with your hooks, several have been found on the benches and we don't want an accident.

Pre-season Turkey Scouting

By: T.R. Michels

As with all other hunting, the best strategy in turkey hunting is to be in the right place at the right time. The number one key to successful hunting is “location, location, location.” Locating game animals consists of two primary techniques, scouting and observing. The more time and effort you spend scouting and observing the animals, and recording what you have learned, the less time you will have to be spend patterning and hunting the animals. Once you know where the animals are through scouting; and know the sex, size, and time to expect them in certain areas (based on observing and recording in a journal and marking on a map), it’s a matter of determining the right spot to hunt at the right time.

Scouting

When you are scouting for turkeys you should learn the lay of the land. You want to know where the ravines, gullies, streams and fences are; obstacles that a turkey may detour around or may not cross. You also want to know the topography of the land; the elevation of hills and valleys, so you know if the birds are above or below you when you hear them. When you are calling turkeys try to be above the birds; turkeys prefer to come uphill to a call rather than down.

You want to know where the food sources are, and what time of the year they are used. You should also look for the roosting areas, watering sites, breeding areas and travel routes of the birds. If you know where the openings and feeding areas are, you will be able to choose the best places to set up, and you will be able to estimate how long it will take a bird to come to your call.

You should know the land as thoroughly as the animals do, so you know where to find them under the current conditions and time of year. If you know the land, you will know where the birds are when you hear them,

even if you can’t see them. If you see them you will know the route either you or the birds will probably travel, and approximately how long it will take for you or them to get to specific areas. But, you won’t know the number of birds, their size and sex, interesting characteristics, or when they use specific areas unless you observe them.

Observing

One of the best ways to understand an animal is to observe it under natural conditions. Observing is watching, undetected, to learn more about the animals and have a better understanding of them. Observing is not accidentally running into or spooking animals. The only way to know the numbers, size, sex, characteristics, and the time to expect the animals in particular locations is by spending some time and effort observing them. Scouting is learning the land and finding areas used frequently by the animals.

An observation site should be a high point with a good view of much of the land, far enough away that you will not disturb the animals during their normal routine. A tree stand at the edge of field, or a hill, is a good site. By choosing the right spot to watch from you are able to see how the animals react to weather, light, hunting pressure, and other predators. You may also have a chance to hear the animals calling and see the body posture and movement associated with the call.

Recording

While you are scouting and observing you should also put your findings in a journal. Mark the places where you see the animals on a map, and mark the trails, resting, feeding, breeding and watering areas. The more information you keep in a journal, and the more information you have on your map, the easier it will be to understand the animals and pattern them. Keep notes on date, day, time, sky conditions (amount of light), wind direction and

SPRING TURKEY



speed, temperature, dewpoint, wind-chill, precipitation, breeding phase, food availability, number of animals, sex, direction of travel, activity, size and any other factors that might help you better understand the animals.

Patterning

While observing the animals you may be able to determine regular travel routes and times they use, which will help you pattern the animals and make it easier to choose the right time and place to hunt them. Patterning cannot be done in a few hours, it may take days or even weeks. The more time and effort you spend observing the animals, the clearer the pattern will become, and the more you will learn and understand the animals.

High Use Areas

To locate turkeys it is helpful to have a good topographical map of the area, or a good aerial photo. These visual aids will help determine where the “high use areas” of security cover, roosting sites, water, food, strutting, and travel areas are before you are even on the property. Then it’s time to get on the property and scout for sign left by turkeys. Two prime areas you want to locate are the food sources, which often serve as strutting areas, and the roosting sites. These are the areas where turkeys spend a majority of their time and leave the most sign. They are also the areas where turkeys are the most predictable, where you have the best chance of ambushing or getting them to come to you. Find these areas and you will find the birds.

Don’t Scout Too Early

The dates of the turkey season where you plan to hunt, and the dates you actually plan to hunt, dictate why and when you scout. If your reason for scouting is to learn more about turkeys (to understand them), or more about the numbers, sex and physical characteristics of the birds (their size, beard length/number, body color), you can scout anytime of the year. But, if your reason for scouting is to pattern the

birds in preparation for a hunt, you should plan on a final scouting session not more than a week before the hunt.

The reason I say this is because turkeys often migrate from winter to spring home ranges, and this migration may occur just before or during your hunt. If you scout too far in advance of your hunt, and locate the birds on their winter range, and then hunt after they have moved to their spring home range, you may find fewer birds in the area than you expected, or no birds at all.

When there is a late spring I’ve watched turkeys migrate as late as the last week of April in southern Minnesota. I’ve also watched turkeys leave their wintering area, and then return to their wintering grounds a couple of days later if conditions weren’t right on their spring home ranges. If the birds aren’t where you expect to find them during your hunt when you hunt, the best thing to do is spend the first few days of the hunt scouting to find out where they went.



Lots of Hens Don’t Mean Fewer Gobblers

Large numbers of hens in the woods can mean lots of hung-up gobblers in the spring, but an abundance of female turkeys only helps gobbler populations, say wild turkey biologists.

With lots of hens breeding in the

spring, turkey populations can rise quickly. But turkeys aren’t like deer, which can overpopulate a given area and strip it of available food. Because turkeys eat a variety of foods, large populations won’t damage their habitat.

“The wild turkey feeds primarily on acorns, waste grain, insects and grasses, which are unlikely to be depleted at the same time,” said Dr. Darren Miller, the southern wildlife program manager for Weyerhaeuser. “A turkey’s ability to forage from a variety of sources enables large populations to thrive in small areas.”

A high hen-to-gobbler ratio is not a problem for turkey populations. Male turkeys will mate with multiple hens in a given breeding season or even in a single day. This allows many hens to be bred, even when a much lower number of gobblers than hens exists, ensuring an adequate hatch to sustain the population.

Because the success of a seasons’ offspring can be directly affected by poor weather in the spring, an abundance of hens can make it easier for a population to recover from poor hatch years. Populations with an abundance of hens have rebounded from poor hatch years in as few as two years, producing more gobblers than areas without an abundance of hens.

“The gobbler population in a given area is directly related to the reproductive success of hens in the population,” said James Earl Kennamer Ph.D., the NWTf’s Chief Conservation Officer. “Simply put, the more hens there are to be bred, the more gobblers a hunter can expect to see in future seasons.”

Wild Turkeys and Predators

From death comes life in the scheme of nature. It is eat or be eaten. This food web begins with microscopic plants, extends through various levels of animals, depending on the ecosystem, and results in a series of predator-prey relationships. A predator lives by killing and eating other species, which are called prey. Wild turkeys eat insects and other small animals, so they are predators, in a sense, but they become the prey of other birds, reptiles or mammals.

Predator-Prey Relationships

Predator-prey relationships have evolved over thousands of years. Predators are usually opportunistic feeders, looking for the easiest meal. Normally, they have target species they prefer, but will take other species if given the opportunity. Prey species must produce many more offspring than will survive, to offset the multitude of predators that use them for food.

Populations of a prey species maintain themselves because of the collective interests of the group, not by the survival of specific individuals. Individuals who are less suited to survive are cropped from the breeding population as well as those that are old, sick or diseased, assuring the population survives. Fit individuals maintain a healthy breeding population, which is the result of selection pressure by predators.

Where Do Turkeys Fit?

From the time an egg is laid, there is a predator looking for a ready-made omelet. Snakes of all descriptions, skunks, crows, ravens, opossums, raccoons, rodents, dogs and coyotes, to name a few, are on the lookout for a nest and an easy lunch. About half of the turkey nests make it to hatching.

Life is no easier for a turkey poult either. The above listed predators, along with hawks, owls, foxes, and other large predators like cougars and eagles in some parts of the country, will grab a young unsuspecting poult. The point to remember is that all of these predators will take turkey eggs, poult or, under the right circumstances, adults; but most of their diet consists of small birds, rodents and rabbits.

Role of Habitat

Habitat quality is also an important part of how a species survives pressure from predators. Early successional plant stages, or those that follow a habitat disturbance and need full sunlight, provide shelters for high numbers of small mammals, including rats and mice, which are the normal diet of many predators. This benefits wild turkeys, too.

The location of these habitats, and their plant diversity, can mean life or death to individual wild turkeys. Case in point: If the ground-level vegetation is sparse, the hen and poults become vulnerable to predators. On the other hand, if suitable habitat with good cover is available to the brood group, the poults have a better chance of living. This is the essence of what Aldo Leopold realized in the 1930s when he wrote that game management was “the art of making land produce sustained annual crops of wild game for recreational use.” How we manage the plant communities, and where they are located, is critical to wildlife populations — and it doesn’t matter whether you are dealing with songbirds or wild turkeys. Habitat quality and its distribution are more important than the number of predators.

Predator Management

Controlling predator populations has always been a controversial

issue. There are situations where it may have a place, such as an area with a newly established population of a rare species. However, making an impact on a predator population is very expensive and labor intensive. Even after going to the trouble of removing hundreds of wild turkey predators from an area over several years, it is doubtful that you would see a significant increase in the numbers of wild turkeys. This is due in part to the movement of more predators from surrounding habitats into the area.

Predators are important components of the ecosystem and really benefit the prey species in the long run. Wild turkey numbers have increased dramatically over the last two decades, while at the same time predator populations have also increased. While certain predators may need to be controlled in specific instances, the long-term solution to maintaining wild turkey populations at huntable levels will be dependent not on the predator control, but on man’s activities and good habitat management.



The articles in this Spring Turkey Section are provided by the National Wild Turkey Federation. The NWTf is a national nonprofit conservation and hunting organization that, along with its volunteers, partners and sponsors, has worked for the conservation of the wild turkey and preservation of the hunting tradition. To find out more about wild turkeys or to join visit <http://www.nwtf.org>.

7 Tips for Pattern Perfection

Every year, more than three million hunters flock to the hardwoods, bottomlands, rolling hills, pine forests and numerous other landscapes in pursuit of the wild turkey. And, every year, some of them walk out of the hunt with a hollow feeling of disgust, because they missed their turkey.

Though there's nothing these folks can do about the past, they can do something to keep from missing their shot in the future. Being prepared, knowing their firearms, and spending a little time on the shooting range can, and will, remedy shooting problems that have humbled many turkey hunters.

This year, try these helpful hints from the experts at the NWTf to help make sure the next time the opportunity presents itself, you walk out of the woods with a turkey over your shoulder.

1. Does size matter?

When choosing a shotgun for turkey hunting, choose a gun that's comfortable to shoot and one that you have confidence in. Shooting magnum turkey load can lead to a bad case of "the flinches." More than one longbeard has lived to gobble another day because of "the flinches."

2. Chokes and such

A key element to a good turkey gun is a good turkey choke. A turkey choke has more constriction than a Full choke, and are often labeled Extra Full or XX Full. Tighter chokes are designed for smaller pellets such

as No. 6 or No. 5 shot. The more open constrictions are better suited for larger pellets such as No. 4s.

Can you have too much constriction? Yes, you can. Depending on your gun and the ammunition you've selected, you can over constrict the shot to the point where the pattern diminishes. It is possible for the pellets to bounce off each other or become deformed, leaving large holes in your pattern. The solution for this is to go to a more open constriction or to a smaller shot size.

3. Ammunition

The ammunition you choose can drastically affect your pattern. Each gun-choke combination will shoot a specific round better than the others. The only way to determine which it likes, is to shoot a variety of ammunition. Vary your shot sizes and brands from several distances and stick with the one that gives you the most consistent pattern.

4. What's in a pattern?

The ideal pattern for turkey hunting is 100 pellets in a 10-inch circle at 40 yards. This density means that there should be plenty of pellets in the small vital area of the turkey's head and neck to kill it ethically.

If you prefer No. 6 turkey loads (approx. 222 pellets/oz.), then a two-ounce load of No. 6s should pattern about 25 percent of its shot in the 10-inch circle. Two ounces of No. 5s (approx. 171 pellets/oz.) should give you a pattern of about 30 percent. Two ounces of No. 4s (approx. 135 pellets/oz.) should result in a 37 percent pattern. These numbers are based on lead pellets, so

heavier-than-lead alloy pellets will have fewer pellets per ounce and the percentage will differ slightly.

5. What's so magical about 40 yards?

Turkey guns are often patterned at 40 yards because that is the maximum distance promoted by the Turkey Hunting Safety Task Force as the proper range to ethically and cleanly kill a turkey with a shotgun. However, knowing how your shotgun patterns at distances less than 40 yards is also very important.

6. Dial it in

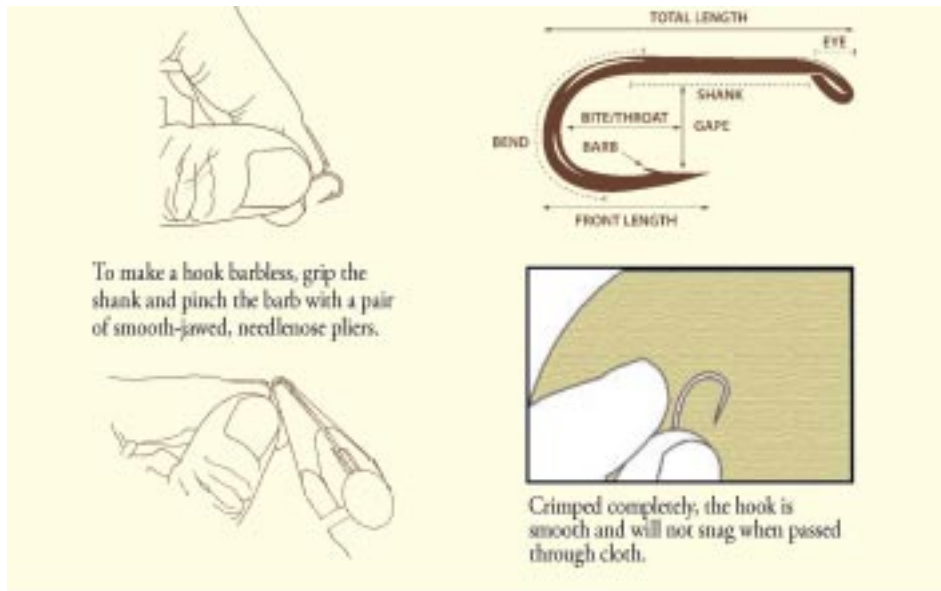
Initial pattern tests should be on a 30-inch target. Sheets of butcher paper or craft paper work great. Draw a small two-inch circle in the middle and color it in with a marker, then draw a 10-inch circle centered on that. Pace off 40 yards or use a laser range finder to mark your distance. Use a shooting brace/bench to reduce human error and shoot a single round at each target. Shoot a few different types of ammo through different choke tubes, record the information and then compare the results. Pick the round that gives you the densest pattern.

Using the [NWTf's patterning targets](#) — the official target of the Outdoor Connection Inc., World Wild Turkey Still Target Championships — also allows you to make sure your pattern is perfect by practicing on realistic turkey targets.

7. Be ready to shoot

After a few trips to the range, you'll have the confidence that your gun can produce the needed results when a gobbler struts to within 40 yards.

How to Make a Hook Barbless



Catch-and-Release Pointers

- Use bronze hooks whenever possible. If the fish swallows the hook, cut the leader instead of trying to remove it. Bronze dissolves more rapidly than steel or shiny gold hooks.
- If possible, avoid touching the fish with your hands. Skin contains salts and oils that may destroy the fish's protective slime coat. If you must hold the fish, wet your hands before attempting to land it.
- Use nets made of soft materials such as cotton or soft nylon and wet the netting before landing your fish.
- Keep the fish out of the water only long enough to remove the hook and take a photo.
- Fish can run out of energy while being caught. When releasing the fish, hold it in the water to stimulate its gills. Allow the fish to swim away on its own.

Brine Wild Turkey

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups kosher salt
- 1 gallon of water
- 1 wild turkey, cleaned
- 2 Granny Smith apples
- 1 large onion
- 3 celery stalks
- Fresh ground pepper to taste

Dissolve the salt in the water in a container large enough to hold the turkey. Lower the turkey into the water. Refrigerate for eight to 12 hours.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Remove the turkey from the brine and discard the brine. Rinse the turkey and pat dry. Cut the apples and onion into slices and the celery into three-inch pieces. Place these in the cavity of the turkey and around it. Season the turkey with pepper. Arrange in a large roasting pan.

Roast, breast side up for 30 minutes. Lower the heat to 325 degrees and turkey the turkey breast side down and bake for 1 1/2 hours. Turn again and bake until cooked through, about 25 minutes per pound. Let stand until slightly cooled before carving.

Use apples, cut into wedges, to brace the turkey when it is roasting breast side down.

Yield: 10 servings

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**KIDS FISHING
DERBY**
All You Can Eat
PASTA DINNER

*to support the Fishing
Derby*

May 15, 2009
7:00 pm

*Tickets \$8.00 per person
See Eric, the bartender;
or John Stevens for your
tickets.*

Dates to remember

Opening Day
Spring Turkey
in Connecticut

May 6th

**Upcoming Sporting
Clays**

May 3rd & May 17th

*Trappers are needed for all
shoots!*

*Kids
Fishing Derby*



May 24th

Pancake Breakfast
7-9 am

Lunch
Noon

Fun....All day!