

# Turkey Hunting Tactics



The above photo and the smaller photo on the opposite page were taken by S. Michael Giblin of sMG Images. Mr. Giblin is a true "Photographic Craftsman".



The above turkeys were just two of about a dozen that visited a northeast Coke County ranch house's yard earlier this year.

(Reprinted from the Texas Outdoor Digest)

Fall turkey hunting is different than the pursuit in the spring, when revved-up gobblers readily come to imitations made by hunters as the breeding season is in full swing from the top of Texas to the bottom.

Hunters are able to take either sex of birds in most places. However, in some counties hunters may only harvest gobblers, jakes or bearded hens during the fall months. Check the Outdoor Annual produced by Texas Parks & Wildlife to make sure you're legal on all accounts. The annual bag limit for Rio Grande turkey hunters in the aggregate

is four. The aggregate also applies to spring seasons so hunters should be cautious of using up all their tags in the fall if they anticipate wanting to chase after the birds in March, April and May.

The main thing to consider when fall turkey hunting is safety. There are many more hunters in the field, at least a half-million or more people hunt deer in Texas even in below-average seasons, according to TPWD estimates, and rifles carry much more destructive force over longer ranges than shotguns. Hunter safety instructors and game wardens urge hunters to not wear anything with blue, red or black hues during the spring as

the colorations could cause confusion for hunters in low light or who are too quick with pulling the trigger before identifying a target. That is doubly reinforced in the fall, especially if you're hunting on public tracts of land.

Fall turkey hunting can be done in much the same fashion

as during the spring, when hunters position themselves along likely travel routes or near roost sites with their back squarely against a wide-based tree. Don't forget to use head-to-toe camo as the birds have excellent eyesight. You also can implement decoys in the pursuit, tailoring your setup to whatever you're seeing from the birds. The fall certainly is a time when multiple decoys should be used if you're taking a more traditional approach.

Rio Grande turkeys typically hang out in flocks once the spring breeding season has passed. Much like other wildlife, turkeys will form into groups consisting of gobblers, jakes,

hens or all of the above. During early spring hunts I've personally witnessed what I would have called large flocks of birds — 20 or more — hanging out with regularity in the same vicinity. However, I quickly learned that was nothing compared with fall and winter grouping, which can include 50 to 100 birds in many locales.

As with spring turkey hunting, the fall version of the pursuit typically calls for advance scouting to locate the best areas to set up should you seek out the birds the way most hunters do in the spring — by setting up near roost sites or food sources and then calling and running and gunning should you have to in

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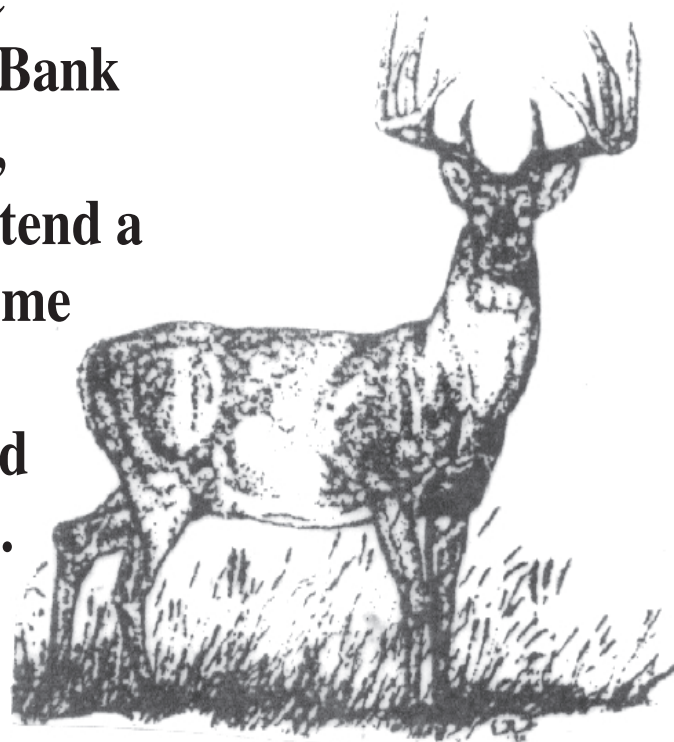
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