

Most Asked Questions about Fall Gobbler Hunting

I've hunted autumn gobblers now for some twenty-five plus years, many of those hunts have appeared in numerous national magazines, yet autumn gobblers continue to be the most misunderstood tactic in turkey hunting.

The how and why of gobbler hunting in the fall seems to elude so many turkey hunters.

My number one love in turkey hunting is fall gobbler hunting. I believe many hunters are missing out on the thrill and excitement of the most prestigious of all hunting trophies, calling in and taking an adult Tom in the fall of the year.

During interviews with outdoor media, fall gobbler questions are always first and foremost on their mind.

As I travel and present turkey hunting seminars all across America there are always more questions ask at the end of the program in relation to fall gobblers than anything else.

I have compiled some of those most ask questions from the media, turkey hunters, seminars, hunting shows and e-mails.

Q: *If you roost a flock of gobblers, how do you call to them at daylight?*

Eye: Roosted fall gobblers . . . It's real important to note the direction from which they flew up to the roost, and to set up on the same side they flew up from. Get in there as tight as possible early the next morning, say 50-60 yards if you can. After I hear that first cluck on the roost, I call back. After that, I work to get them into frenzy. I work them up with gobbler yelps and clucking, and then I get more aggressive when they fly down. Sometimes if I'm tight enough, they'll hop right down into gun range.

Q: *How do you call to gobblers that you have not seen or heard?*

Eye: I use the mouth call a lot. You can yelp real good on a box or slate of course, and I like aggressive diaphragm yelping in conjunction with a box, which sounds real good. And by yelping, I mean 15 to 20 times in a row, with popping sounds in there. Gobbling works well too. My moving call tactic in ridge country is to work along and call—I've killed lots of gobblers in new areas that way. I'll gobbler yelp and listen; scratch leaves; pause; cluck; all of a sudden sometimes I'll see swinging beards and red bobbing heads coming my way fast. I've had them cutting; purring; they come in close, right in your face with that stuff sometimes. Some gobble all the way in, which is them testing the pecking order. The dominant gobbler will be displaying.

Q: *If you locate a group of gobblers feeding in an open field. What do you do?*

Eye: Watch to see what direction they're traveling. Challenge the birds with your calling.

Gobbler yelp, and cluck. If you yelp, the dominant bird may come right in and challenge you. Don't call them to where they've been either; go where they seem to want to be. If that doesn't work, watch where they roost and be there the next morning before flydown

Q: *When do you use a scatter for fall gobblers?*

Eye: I don't scatter gobblers. The only time I use a scatter for Gobblers is when a set-up has been busted, and I want to salvage something. After a shot, I'll stand, run at them, and flush birds to complete the scatter on other gobblers, and to hunt later that day. I only scatter as a secondary method and back-up plan.

Q: *How do you identify the pecking order in a gobbler flock, and call them to you?*

Eye: You can get fall gobblers worked up. Check out their posturing, how they act with each other—watch who is chasing whom. You can definitely get 'em worked up, and it can change from season to season. I've shot off-season video and identified a dominant bird in summer—one with a missing tail feather and some bars missing on wing feathers in this case—then seen him lose his place by fall. I spend a lot of time with individual turkeys and get to know how they act; other hunters can do that too.

Q: *Do you ever call aggressively or gobble to locate silent toms?*

Eye: Absolutely.

Q: *Is there ever a time you'd keep your calls in your pocket while hunting fall gobblers?*

Eye: Never. I see no reason for that. That's how I make it happen. I called in and killed my first fall gobbler with a bow way back in 1975, and haven't stopped yelping and clucking at fall Gobblers since that time.

Q: *What's one of the biggest mistake hunters make in calling fall gobblers?*

Eye: They just don't call to them. They don't seem to believe they can call them. They have heard you can't call fall gobblers or they won't regroup for a month after the flush, so they don't target or go after fall gobblers. And that's sad because they're missing out on the most fun turkey hunting in the world. It's real turkey hunting. It's the greatest challenge in turkey hunting. It's real simple though: I've always just called to the gobblers the way they call to each other, but I just do it a little more aggressively.

