

Protecting Our Rights
Preserving Our Heritage
Promoting Our Future
Supporting Our Youth



SCI, Leader in defending the
freedom to hunt and promoting
wildlife conservation worldwide

*Officers: Dave Stokes, President
Mark Johnson, Vice President
Susan Nelson, Secretary
Jody Wilkerson, Treasurer*

*Board Members: Neal Feazel, Director
John Wilkerson, Director
Dr. Steven Crawford, Director
Tom Williams, Director
Anthony Thebeau, Director*

July 2024, 3rd Quarter Newsletter

Note from our President - Dave Stokes

As we head into the second half of this year, it is never too early to start thinking about all the fall activities coming up and why we need to start preparing now. On the horizon is our second biggest event for our chapter “Shoot For The Vets”. This is a time when we honor and show our appreciation for our veterans as well as support for Camp Hope. This year’s event will be held September 28, 2024 .

The Department of Missouri Conservation will be accepting applications for their managed deer hunts 7/1/24 – 7/31/24. Visit their website for further information.

<https://mdc12.mdc.mo.gov/Applications/ManagedHunts/Main/ShowHunts>

If you have young children interested in hunting this fall season, don’t forget about the Hunter-Education Certificate. Missouri’s hunter education course is required for any hunter born on or after January 1, 1967. This class provides a foundation in hunting safety and ethics. It instills responsibility, improves skills and knowledge and encourages interaction between beginner and veteran hunters.



Archery Season is in sight

Turkey: Archery

- September 15, 2024 - November 15, 2024
- November 27, 2024 - January 15, 2025

Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset

Limits: Two turkeys of either sex, both may be taken on the same day

Deer: Archery

- September 15, 2024 – November 15, 2024
- November 27, 2024 – January 15, 2025

Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to half an hour after sunset

TURKEY CHANGES

- Turkey permits will no longer be included with an archery permit.
- A new fall turkey-hunting permit has been created. Both fall firearms turkey hunters and fall archery turkey hunters must purchase this permit to be able to take turkeys during fall.
- The fall turkey season is now divided into archery and firearms portions, and the harvest limit has been reduced from four to two birds of either sex (both portions combined).

Note from our Membership Director - Tom Williams

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer in spite of the heat. We have great news to share; our chapter membership has grown to a total of 149 members. We are getting closer to our goal of 250 members. The breakdown of membership include: (53) 1-year membership, (54) three-year memberships and (42) life memberships. We are excited to welcome all new members and we thank you for your support.

We are working on developing a new and exciting membership program and I hope to have more news for you in the coming months. I can give you a sneak preview; basically, we are working on offering a three-year membership at a discounted rate for both new and existing members. Those of you that have one-year memberships should seriously consider participating in this program. Stay tuned for more information on this as we develop it. That's all I have for the moment. Please be sure to look at our calendar of events for the year below and hopefully we will see you at one of the exciting events.

Upcoming Events



Fun/Trivia Night

Frailey's Southtown Grill - July 18, 2024

We invite you to spend your Thursday evening on July 18th with the Gateway Area Chapter for a fun night of conversation and trivia games (prizes to the winners). This event will be held at Frailey's Southtown Grill starting at 6:30 pm.

Appetizers and drinks will be provided!

RSVP to Dave Stokes at 314-882-6199 or email your RSVP to stokesd50@outlook.com



Frailey's Southtown Grill

4329 Bulter Hill Rd

St Louis, Mo 63128

2nd Annual Gateway Area Chapter Measuring Event

Saturday, August 24, 2024 -Moolah Shrine Center

The Gateway Area Chapter of SCI is hosting a Trophy Measuring event for North American and African mounts. If you have ever wanted to have your mounts officially scored, now is your chance! This is our 2nd annual event of this type. Bring your mount, get an opportunity to see other mounts and share stories of your hunt. The event will take place on Saturday, August 24, 2024 at the Moolah Shrine Center, 10 AM – 2:00 PM. Hope to see you there.



6th Annual “Shoot For The Vets”

Sporting Clays Shoot

Saturday, September 28, 2024 (Rain or Shine)

NILO Farms, 15025 IL-111, Brighton, IL www.nilofarms.com

“SHOOT FOR THE VETS”

Sporting Clays Shoot

Saturday, September 28, 2024 (Rain or Shine)

NILO Farms, 15025 IL-111, Brighton, IL www.nilofarms.com

Hosted by the St. Louis Gateway Area Chapter of Safari Club International

to show our appreciation to our veterans and to benefit the veterans at Camp Hope

Camp Hope’s mission is to provide all-expenses-paid hunting trips for veterans wounded in the global war on terror.

Come join us in honoring our veterans Saturday, September 28, 2024 at NILO Hunting & Shooting Preserve for a full day of sporting clays and lunch.

Cost:

Veterans shoot for \$15 (100 clays, ammo and lunch included)

Non-Veterans: \$100 (100 clays, ammo and lunch included)

Four shooters per team

- Morning Flight – Registration begins at 7:30 AM, Morning Shoot begins at 8:30 AM (shotgun start)
 - Lunch 11:30 – 1:00 PM Lunch and Meet & Greet
- Afternoon Flight – Registration and Afternoon Shoot begins after lunch approximately at 1:00 PM (shotgun start)

RSVP Early – Only 200 available spots

Please visit our website www.gatewaysci.org or Facebook [gatewayareasci](https://www.facebook.com/gatewayareasci) for information on how to register

For additional help with registration or sponsorship opportunities, please contact

Dave Stokes 314 882 6199 or Neal Feazel 618 372 3156

Register online at www.purplepass.com/2024shootforthevets



Visit our website for more detailed information on each event:

www.gatewaysci.org

October TBD – Busch Conservation Event

December 3, 2024 – Holiday Party

The Heart, Soul of SCI Is Its Members

By John McLaurin, SCI President

Originally published in the May/June 2024 Issue of Safari Magazine

Safari Club International needs you, the individual member, to help preserve hunting and wildlife! Yes, SCI has a great staff, but the staff can't do it all. SCI members, chapters, exhibitors and friends carry a huge load in assuring SCI's successes.

What SCI does or doesn't do today will determine the future of hunting around the world. As daunting a challenge as that might seem, we can meet that challenge successfully if we act decisively, both individually and collectively.

If you want to be personally involved in saving hunting and preserving wildlife, then you can volunteer your time, effort and resources to the cause — to SCI. After all, SCI is much more than the small club that was created over 50 years ago. It truly is the largest professionally staffed, volunteer-led, pro-hunting and conservation organization the world has ever known.

At the core of SCI, its heart and soul are members who make SCI what it is. Structurally, SCI is comprised of members, Chapters, staff and institutional governing bodies. Together, these elements cover everything from local concerns and efforts to matters of global importance.

Members need to understand how SCI is configured so they can better see where they fit into the big picture. Importantly, SCI is governed by and led by volunteers.

Yes, SCI has a professional staff that takes care of the day-to-day business of SCI. But when it comes to the vision for the future and where SCI wants to go while realizing its mission, it is up to volunteer leaders.

Both SCI and hunting are under constant attack from anti-hunters. At the same time as we defend the freedom to hunt from those who strive to end all hunting everywhere in the world, SCI must do everything it can to constantly further the interests of hunting and wildlife conservation around the world.

This calls for a lot of effort by a lot of people, all pulling in the same direction. It is volunteers who carry much of this load. In local communities in the U.S. and abroad, members and Chapters are the tip of the spear – the first to engage challenges.

To accomplish our strategic goals and realize our mission of protecting the freedom to hunt and promoting sustainable use wildlife conservation worldwide, we need volunteers to enlist in the cause.

SCI has many ways for members to volunteer. It starts at the Chapter level. I encourage all members to join at least one SCI Chapter and to volunteer to help that Chapter succeed.

Chapter Presidents comprise most seats on the SCI Board of Directors. Hence, Chapter involvement also can lead to larger roles in the highest levels of SCI leadership. At the SCI national Board of Directors level are also the Regional Representatives and the Directors-At-Large, as well as the corporate officers and vice presidents.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors is comprised of 11 volunteer leaders: President, President-Elect, Corporate Secretary, Corporate Treasurer, six Vice Presidents and the Sables President. Many of these are elected at the SCI Board meeting in May in Washington, D.C.

Additionally, there are other volunteer positions each year on SCI committees and at our Convention in Nashville. These volunteers help make SCI and the SCI Convention the preeminent leader in the world today, preserving our hunting heritage and wildlife conservation.

The point is that members who want to become involved have many ways to do so. Again, I encourage all members to consider ways you can volunteer to help SCI and to help protect hunting and wildlife.

Volunteer positions necessarily require time and effort for sure. But every minute of volunteer time really does matter to the future of hunting.

I ask all members to think about how you can volunteer and contribute to the success of SCI. Remember, you can contact your local Chapter to volunteer there. You can contact SCI Headquarters to be considered for open spots in committees by use of the Committee Request Form, which can be found on the SCI website.

There are already a lot of great volunteers who have served selflessly for many years. They have helped raise SCI to its current level of the best pro-hunting, pro-wildlife conservation organization in the world.

I want to call them out at all levels of SCI to thank them for their dedicated service. They are SCI and SCI is them. They live and breathe SCI every day, 24/7. They always ask what they can do for SCI, not the opposite.

I said it at the beginning of this article. They are the heart and soul of SCI! Join them! Be part of SCI as it rises to new heights every day on behalf of hunters and wildlife everywhere.

Following are brief recaps of our events held during the second quarter of 2024



Where do I start? What should I plant? When do I plant?

On Tuesday, April 16th our chapter held a presentation on Flood Plots by John Gibbs. John gave a lot of information on where to start, what to plant, and when to plant based on his many years of experience and what has worked for him. Many factors need to be considered when making your plans for food plots, some obvious and others more complex. What to do first to get a bench mark was discussed and how to move forward from there. Items such as soil reports, quality seed, fertilizing, chemicals and what mixtures to use are a sampling of the many things discussed.

There were 15 attendees to hear what John had to say and ask their questions, leaving with thoughts of how they would put all this knowledge to use! During this meeting we welcomed (2) new members who joined during this event.

Please visit our website to view the entire presentation on Food Plots!

Sporting Clays Shoot



Our chapter hosted a Sporting Clays Shoot at Strathalbyn Farm Club on Saturday June 29th with weather fully cooperating. We had a great turnout with 27 shooters participating in the event as well as others who joined some of the participants for the lunch. An excellent fried chicken buffet with all the fixins including mashed potatoes, green beans, biscuits and gravy and chocolate chip cookies was served. Everyone had a wonderful time and appreciated the opportunity to shoot at Strathalbyn.

Awards were given out to the top three teams Ranking were as follows:



Tom Williams, Greg Aholt, Harry Knollhoff and Todd Wilkinson with a score of 95 winning \$200



Mark Johnson, John Wilkerson, Jim Hollis and Dr. Adrian Di Bisceglie with a score of 93 winning \$120



Dave Dillow, John Evans, Sandy Evans and Dale Yankey with a 92 winning \$80

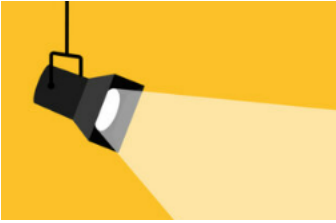


Chapter Activity:

During June, two of our Board Members (Susan Nelson and Tom Williams) attended the SCI Leadership Training at G2 Ranch in Texas. This training was a two-day class which brought members of various chapters together to network, learn about chapter fundraising, compliance and lessons learned from previous activities. SCI's commitment to leadership training and helping us enhance chapter growth was apparent as SCI's president was on hand to talk and answer questions from the attendees. As we continue to grow our chapter, we want to enhance the benefits of our members. This class focused on how to accomplish this.



Left to right: Sean Jackson - East Region CSS, Jordan Wisecup – Midwest Region CSS, Ron Stolkin – Executive Vice President/General Council, John McLaurin - SCI President, Susan Nelson Gateway Chapter, Tom Williams Gateway Chapter, Joe Pedersen – Vice President/Treasurer, Jason St. Michael – Member & Chapter Services Director and Carson Keys – West Region CSS.



Spotlight on your Officers & Board Members

Vice President, Mark Johnson

I currently hold the position of the Vice-President of the Gateway Area Chapter of SCI, as well as the SCI Regional Representative for Eastern Missouri. I originally became a member of SCI in 2008.

I grew up in rural East Central Minnesota and started hunting, trapping and fishing at a young age. Whitetail deer, migratory birds, grouse, pheasant, and other upland game like rabbits were plentiful.

In 1994 I relocated to the St. Louis area and enjoy deer hunting and upland game hunting my wife Lisa and our three labradors. My other interests include target shooting and especially sporting clays.

I am also a member of the local group of Suburban Bowhunters. Suburban Bowhunters helps suburban property owners and subdivisions manage their deer populations.

I have a long bucket list of North American and international hunts I still want to experience. Until I can start working more aggressively on my bucket list, I enjoy learning from other SCI members who have experienced more big game and international hunting experiences and sharing their stories.

I work as a wealth advisor and my wife Lisa, a nurse, live in Chesterfield, Missouri. We have five children, with their our youngest heading off to college in the fall.



Membership Activity

Hunts Upcoming or Past “Connect with Others”

Alaska, The Great Land. I absolutely agree!

Submitted by: Fred Burd

Three years ago, within a week of retiring, I called and had a lengthy conversation with Luke Tyrrell of Tyrrell's Trails in Fairbanks, Alaska. We spoke about his available openings, how he and his guides hunt, recommended gear, and general things about his area and operation. For me, it was mostly to get a sense of the person in charge, how well he communicates and whether we might be compatible for a 10-day hunting trip.

I've been to Alaska several times, but never to the Chandalar Lake region where Luke and his team operate. Chandalar is 200 miles north of Fairbanks, 65 miles north of the Arctic Circle in GMU25A. There are no roads leading to Chandalar, and his base camp can only be reached by charter air services capable of using a single dirt/gravel strip.

When booking this trip, I selected Alaskan-Yukon Moose as my primary animal, with additional tags purchased for Arctic Grizzly and Barren Ground Caribou. This allowed the initial cost outlay to be limited to Moose, with Grizzly and Caribou to be trophy fee based. Any wolves taken would be at no cost with no tags required. For those unaware, a tag may be used either for the designated animal or a lower tier animal. For instance, with a Grizzly tag, if a Grizzly isn't taken the tag can be used for Caribou or Black Bear. With a Caribou tag, if a Caribou isn't taken the tag can be used for Black Bear (but not Grizzly as it is a higher tier animal).

I used Alaska Airlines to travel from St. Louis to Fairbanks, with a single stop in Seattle. Arriving in Fairbanks, I stayed at Pike's Waterfront Lodge, which had free airport shuttle service. Pike's is a very nice, well known vacationer's hotel on the Chena River, ideally suited for viewing the Aurora Borealis. Their prices are comparable to other area hotels and the stay was very comfortable. I planned my arrival to give myself an extra 24 hours (minimum) prior to catching the air charter (Wright's Air Service) to Chandalar. I like to do this as a precaution against delays and misdirected gear. Forty hours later I once again utilized the free airport shuttle to take me to Wright's, which acts as a charter travel vehicle for the North. My aircraft was a

Cessna Caravan with removable seats (it was quite clear that freight was the typical and more common cargo). With five other passengers, all hunters, we took off and commenced our sub two-hour flight to Chandalar.

We almost immediately passed over the Alaskan Pipeline, which was interesting to see from the air. The weather was blue sky (gratefully) and we had a non-eventful flight into the bush, where we ultimately reached our (short) gravel strip destination.

All the gear was removed from the belly pod along with half a dozen 55 gallon drums of fuel from the aircraft interior (stowed behind the passengers and strapped down). There was definitely more freight on this flight than passengers.

Present along the strip were several guides employed by Luke with ATVs to take us to the lodge (not the final stop, float planes awaited). The lodge was a few hundred yards from the airstrip and allowed us to meet our assigned guides, get organized, get fed and overnight if necessary. But with weather being uncharacteristically good, I found myself at the lake edge getting into a float plane 2 hours later. At 6'1", 210lbs, (and 64 years old), squeezing into the cabin of the float plane was a challenge. Allow me to say that there was no extra room available.

The flight to the camp took 15 minutes. There are multiple camps set up, with some being much further from the lodge, but my tent, which I shared with my guide, was quite close. Camp was along the edge of a beautiful alpine lake, very long within a valley of snow-capped mountains (mid-September). There were two tents actually, mine as mentioned, and one additional one for a very hardworking packer who accompanied us (and looked after me!). My shared tent was an 8'x8' Arctic Oven, weather proof and quite warm. My guide and I had a Mr. Buddy heater that kept the interior comfortable with just the pilot light active. The tent was large enough for two cots, all our gear and food. Yes, the food was inside the tent. It seems counterintuitive with large bears in the area but it would appear that our scent plus animals not acclimated to people acted as a solid deterrent.

We (my guide, packer and myself) were in the Brooks Range north of the arctic circle. It was magnificent. The weather (for the entire trip) was simply too good to be believed. Blue sky, no bugs, very little wind, cold nights, chilly days. The scenery was tremendous; colors of the muskeg, the mountains with snow, and the blue water of the lake. I had waited 3 years to get here and it was worth it. I have rarely been anywhere as beautiful.

Having arrived, I unpacked, got my gear situated in the tent, got to know my guide Jason and packer Matthew, and them, me. Meals were cooked on a single burner

propane stove and eaten inside the tent. The only freeze-dried meal eaten was several days later while we were away from camp and a cow moose had us spotted. We didn't want to spook her so we remained in place until it was quite dark. As a result, that night dinner was eaten among the trees.

The moose hunt began the next morning.

Waking up in a sleeping bag, ice on the tent, and struggling into cold clothes, it doesn't get any better! Breakfast cooked by my packer Matthew was typically pancakes, bacon and coffee. As much as I could eat. We sat on the cots, ate, and spoke in whispers. Moose have incredible hearing so noise, especially across the lake, had to be minimized.

Each day had a similar schedule. Get up, eat, grab your gear, and head to a lookout to glass. Regardless of whether we traveled across the lake (Matthew used twin oars) or simply hiked, each day involved miles of muskeg. Beautiful to look at, horrible to walk on. Wet, mushy, tussock filled ground that sapped your energy so quickly you were exhausted within a quarter of a mile. We did miles of this torment every day. The preponderance of wolves in the area had pushed the moose away from the lowlands and nearly up into sheep country. My guide and packer heard them howling every day. So not only did we have to contend with muskeg that caused each step to post hole 6", we climbed too; a lot. And it seemed that the muskeg followed us up each ridge; never could seem to get on consistently solid ground. Rocks were good because they meant easier walking. But once on a lookout, we could rest, eat snacks and glass for moose. And look at where we were. Miles and miles of incredible views. I cannot say it often enough; possibly the most beautiful place I've ever been. And the weather stayed perfect. Did I mention the aurora borealis? More nights than not we got to see the northern lights.

Each day was quite similar until day 6. That was the day I shot my grizzly.

Hiking to a lookout we had used earlier, my guide spotted a large grizzly eating blueberries on the flats below us. So as not to spook the bear, we continued uphill to our destination knob. Once there we dropped our packs, glassed him a bit to observe his behavior, then proceeded to conduct our stalk. In a tight single-file we wove our way back down towards the blueberry field hoping to intercept the bear as he fed. For most of the stalk we were out of his line of sight and unexpectedly intercepted the bear a lot closer than anticipated. He was moving; we were moving. Surprise. While my guide was glassing trying to reacquire the bear, my packer excitedly tugged on my parka. I turned my head to see my packer, with eyes as large as saucers, mouth "The bear is right there!". Reading his lips was not a problem! In seconds my bog pod

shooting sticks were up, my Leupold scope had him centered, and a 225 grain Barnes TSX from my .338wm was on its way. Done. Both shoulders, both lungs, top of heart. From where we sat, we ranged him at 69 yards. When my packer first saw him, we estimated that he was 60 yards away quartering uphill away from us. My guide said maybe 8 seconds elapsed from the tug on my jacket to the shot. He was enormous. My packer, who skinned him for a full body mount, was a taxidermist in Montana. He took measurements of my bear and said that he was a legitimate 8-footer, about as large as an Arctic Grizzly gets. This bear also had a badly broken jaw with several missing teeth (healed). My guide postulated that at some point in the past an encounter with a moose went badly. Life in the arctic is undoubtedly tough.

Still searching for moose (and possibly caribou), day 7 eclipsed with me still thinking about my giant grizzly. Let me say that my guide and packer were unbeatable. Simply powerhouses. Always glassing, always checking on my welfare; but driving, driving, driving. I trained hard for this hunt; daily pushups, situps, body squats, 5 mile runs and hikes with a loaded pack. There were days on this trip that took me well past my limits, and one day in particular that practically hobbled me. Even with knee compression straps my knees were screaming. But I got an Arctic Grizzly!

Then came day 8. I was ready for a "tent day". My guide said no problem, he could glass from our camp. Forty-five minutes later he comes back into the tent, says let's go I've found a moose. Behind the tent, two miles uphill, my guide watched a big bull bed down. He was brilliantly positioned; facing downhill so that he could watch in that direction, while the downhill wind direction would alert him to threats from above.

So, gear hastily grabbed, off we went. Strangely enough, this uphill stalk seemed to be the easiest hike of the trip. I don't know if I was toughening up or the slower, more methodical pace (staying out of sight) allowed me the needed recovery time mixed in with the exertion of the climb. Up, up, up we went. Through that damned muskeg. A couple of times we set up trying to spot the moose nestled in the 10' buckbrush.

And let me describe "buckbrush"... It grows tall, thin and branches grow at all angles from the ground up. It grabs everything as you try to get through it and always manages to whip back and hit you in the face too. And wherever it grows, it grows a lot. Can be acres of it. But pleasant memories aside...

To continue, finally at the very top of the draw my guide Jason spotted a single antler palm. 131 yards away, same elevation, but almost 100% concealed. VERY quietly we set up my shooting sticks and waited. Jason tried raking to get the bull to stand. No dice. Sitting, with the rifle stable on the sticks, I had the antler in my scope. Jason then tried a cow call, but instead of casually standing, the bull jumped to his feet already

running, and I shot. Down goes the bull, literally all four feet in the air. After a couple more shots into the downed bull, we call him anchored. I got a Moose!

After the handshaking we drop down into the draw amongst the 8'-12' buckbrush and struggle to get to the moose on the other side. 131 yards straight line, but more like 250 yards travel distance. We see his bed, grass all mashed down, and 15 yards further on just out of the concealing brush, the moose. Pictures, smiles, then the breakdown. Try to roll a bull moose on to its side sometime. My packer Matthew had been called away the previous evening to help pack another hunter's downed moose, so it was just my guide Jason and myself. We spent in my estimate 4 hours working on that moose, just the two of us, before other packers could be brought in to help. And was I glad to see them! Moose are big, moose are heavy, and all meat has to be removed from the field. My guide Jason, packer Matthew, and another young guide brought all the meat plus the antlers down the mountain to the edge of the lake where the float plane could take everything back to the lodge. Five round trips each, 2 miles each way, days 8 and 9 complete.

Never did see any caribou. This was extremely unusual for Luke's camps as they regularly went straight through these valleys. I didn't see any wolves, but both Jason and Matthew heard them nearly every day. Black bears were seen, but I have 5 already so I elected to pass on using my caribou tag for that purpose.

On day 10, Luke came back with his float plane to return me to the lodge. I overnighted there in a very nice cabin (wood stove), with access to a much appreciated hot shower. What an experience!

I used a Western Mountaineering sleeping bag, very high quality with a temperature rating of 0 deg. Definitely recommended as the nights were in the teens. Hiking was extremely strenuous so layers are key. Go light until the lookout is reached, then layer up with high quality insulated gear. I also used an Eberlestock X2 daypack. Alaska will test you; not the place to try to save money on equipment or clothing.

After spending a comfortable overnight at the lodge, Wright's Air Service came and transported me and all the remaining hunters back to Fairbanks. This happened to be the last week of the season, so after we all left Luke and his guys proceeded to close down the lodge and camps for the winter.

Trophies were later shipped by Monarch Expeditors to their various destinations. Luke took care of the delivery to Monarch as they all left the lodge at one time.

In Fairbanks I spent another night at Pike's Waterfront Lodge before heading home to St. Louis the next day. I can safely say that this trip was the highlight of 55 years of hunting. Everything went perfectly and it was a tremendous adventure.

Jason and Matthew were great. They got me to where I needed to be to take great animals. Luke Tyrrell's operation (Tyrrell's Trails) is first rate; I have never experienced one better.

My Arctic Grizzly will be a full body mount and my Alaska-Yukon Moose will be a euro mount.



If anyone would like to know more, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Fred Burd, fpburd@gmail.com

Missouri Spring Turkey

(submitted by Susan Nelson)

April had finally arrived, which means spring turkey season in Missouri. I had missed the last couple of years of turkey hunting so I was more than ready to get back out there. I have to confess I am not your conventional turkey hunter. I usually climb in my deer stand so that I have a better arial view; as well as to avoid ticks, snakes or any other ground pests. I have a slate turkey call but hardly ever use it; as I am afraid I will do more harm than good when trying to call one in.

This year, after seeing a lot of videos on my phone on using turkey decoys, I decided I would try that route. I visited the local Bass Pro store and purchased a hen and jake decoy to increase my odds of bringing home a gobbler.

Season opened on April 15th. However, I didn't get to go until the 20th. My husband and I have hunting land but it is approximately 3 hours from home. One good change this year with turkey season was being able to hunt all day on private land as opposed to quitting at 1:00 PM.

On the 20th we traveled to our property for a day of hunting. In preparation, my Remington 870 had been patterned and I felt comfortable with a range of 40 feet. Upon arrival at my deer stand I placed the decoys about 25 yards out from my stand in the food plot area.

In the morning, I had several hens visit the area, but no gobblers. As hard as I tried to imagine seeing a big beard, the hens just didn't have any. Noon came and it was also time to get a little exercise. So back to the vehicle for a sandwich and a cold drink. It felt good to get some steps in after sitting all morning.

After a brief lunch break it was time to get back to the stand. Before climbing back into the stand I thought maybe I should rearrange the decoys a little. What could it hurt and who knows maybe it would make something happen. Upon getting settled in the stand, here came another hen walking down the side of the food plot toward me. "Why couldn't that be a gobbler?", I mumbled. At least it was fun watching it. Then, another hen appeared and was walking down the opposite side of the food plot. Again, I was disappointed it didn't have a long beard, but it was more to watch. Neither of them seemed to care about the decoys. **Then it happened!** Stepping out of the tall grass at the end of the food plot 150 yards away stood what I had been waiting for. All puffed out and fanned out there to take command was **my** gobbler. My heart started racing.

He was interested in both ladies that were on opposite sides as well as the decoys which were directly out in front of me, 25 yards away. I very quietly positioned my gun and waited for him to come in closer. With each step he took, my heartbeat was a little stronger. It seemed like forever for him to get closer. He was fanned out the entire time as he majestically came toward me. I had to make this happen as I was only there for the day. He intensified his attention on the decoys directly in front of me as he got closer. At 30 yards out, I pulled the trigger which resulted in a big flutter with my gobbler there in front of me in a heap! How exciting was that. . . I had to take a minute to just relax. Days like that is what keeps you coming back. Over the years I have come to enjoy turkey hunting as much as any other species, even if I do it unconventionally. Now I want to be better at it. I will definitely continue using decoys but my new goal is to learn to use the mouth calls. I'm sure being able to call them in would add a whole new element to the hunt.

My gobbler's beard was 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ " long. Unfortunately, I had forgot to bring the scale for weighing, but it was a big bird. Nothing better than wild turkey on the dinner table!



BLUE BELL BAGS

“Pay It Forward”



Giving back to the communities in which we like to hunt is an SCI/F value with a long tradition and highlighted by the Safari Care Bell Family Blue Bags. Several years ago, the Bell family, motivated to continue the legacy their daughter Amy Bell created by promoting her “Pay It Forward” spirit, began financially supporting the Blue Bag effort with annual major gifts. Their support covers the costs of the production and shipping of the Blue Bags to join in this humanitarian effort. Blue Bags are filled by chapters, individual members, and other various groups.

Are you getting ready to go on a hunting safari?

SCI members, fellow hunters and their friends, who are traveling to the hunting and safari destinations of the world, will take these Blue Bags and distribute much needed items to children and families all over the globe. These “humanitarians”, with the support of their outfitters and friends, will deliver the contents of these bags directly to schools, clinics, churches, orphanages as well as to teachers, doctors, caregivers and mission workers to use in support of all those in need.

Most of the time, waived excess baggage fees are easily attainable, but you must contact your airline about a month in advance of travel, with each airline having varying policies. The airline will need to attach a note to your reservation, stating the fees will not be collected at the time of departure due to the humanitarian and not-for-resale contents of the bag. When traveling with a Blue Bag, it is always a good idea to include a printed inventory of the contents, intended destination and a letter from SCIF describing the Blue Bag program and its contents.



For a list of supplies, to order Bell Family Blue Bags, or receive information on delivering humanitarian aid to those in need, contact Todd Roggenkamp at troggenkamp@SCIFirstForHunters.org or (520) 954-0664.

"We all know that hunters are some of the most caring and giving souls on earth. They care about people, they care about the conservation of animals and they care about leaving the world a better place than they found it. Hunters throughout the world make a special effort to give back to the communities they are visiting and hunting on a regular basis. We hope that by spreading the word about this Blue Bag program in a more deliberate way we can bring attention to this pattern of giving.

We encourage all hunters to check with their PH before the hunt to see if there is a local community in need nearby. Contact the Safari Club International Foundation, which will mail you Blue Bags so you can fill them up with goodies or buy the goodies there to support the local economy. These experiences are truly life changing, not only for the people receiving your generous gifts but also for you as a hunter and humanitarian.



Deer Poppers

Ingredients

- 1 pound venison steaks, cubed
- ½ teaspoon Greek seasoning, or to taste
- ¼ teaspoon steak seasoning, or to taste
- 1 (16 ounce) bottle Italian salad dressing
- ½ cup jalapeno pepper slices
- 10 slices bacon, cut in half
- toothpicks, soaked in water

Directions

Step 1

Season the venison meat with Greek seasoning and steak seasoning. Place in a bowl, and pour in enough Italian dressing to cover. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours to marinate, but preferably overnight.

Step 2

Preheat the grill for medium heat. Drain the marinade from the meat, and discard the marinade. Place a slice of jalapeno on top of a piece of meat, then wrap with a slice of bacon. Secure with a soaked toothpick. Repeat with remaining meat.

Step 3

Grill the deer poppers for 15 to 20 minutes, turning occasionally to brown the bacon. Serve and enjoy!