

CORA

TWENTY-SECOND EDITION

APRIL, 2001



Promoting Outdoor Recreation

CAMPBELL OUTDOOR RECREATION ASSOCIATION

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From The President

Cora—14 Years of Service to Outdoor Recreation Lovers

by Lee Asbury

If your newsletter is late it's my fault. It may be that I can't think of anything to write about or that there are so many things I can't decide which one is most important.

Whatever! The year 2000 has come and gone and as usual CORA has been a big factor in several momentous events.

One major highlight was the Elk release on December 19th. Massengale Mountain with 4 inches of snow, a temperature of 14°, a 15 mile an hour wind and a -1° wind chill was a perfect backdrop for restoring an animal that had been missing for a century and a half from East Tennessee.

Approximately 400 hearty souls braved the elements to be a part of history and no one was disappointed. As the Elk fanned out across an open field and disappeared into the woods, the moment of silence and wonder that occurred was super special and made a deep impression on me.

Frankly, I had no idea that the interest would be so widespread and so intense. I met people from all over Tennessee as well as other states, and of course our priceless friends from Elk Island, Canada.

Dr. Winston Pannell, a member of the Wildlife Commission, in his 80's, a few weeks after knee replacement surgery, was walking around in the snow, as happy as a school boy and told me "I came from Johnson City to see this and I meant to be here if I had to hire people to carry me up here."

CORA can justly be proud of 14 years of unselfish service to the outdoor recreation lovers of Tennessee.

Yep, 14 years is how long we've been a force in Tennessee outdoor recreation politics.

During that time, we've raised more than a quarter of a million dollars, spearheaded the drive to get Royal Blue WMA in state ownership, helped pass 2 private acts, been rewarded by the knowledge that our children and grandchildren have a place to "go to the mountains" that will always be there.

While getting Royal Blue in state ownership will always be our crowning achievement, we've helped in lots of other projects and still have plenty more to do.

We've helped make the concept of "multiple use" a reality on Royal Blue; we've hosted numerous important public meetings and opened up lines of communication between hunters and fishermen and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Commission and the Tennessee Wildlife Agency; we've helped acquire more public access on Norris Lake, especially at Mattie Rudolph Hollow; we've supported every cleaner water initiative and will continue to do so; we've helped acquire additional tracts of land adjacent to Royal Blue; we've helped acquire recreation rights for the public on Cumberland Forest and Huber properties; and, perhaps of greater

Please see **PRESIDENT** on page 3

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Wild Elk in Tennessee Once Again

By Jim Shetterly

Have you ever wondered what it would have been like to see and hunt wild elk in Tennessee? They have been gone from this area for a long time. The last time a wild elk roamed Tennessee was back in the eighteen hundreds. But there has been a lot of talk about bringing them back to East Tennessee. I've been to three meetings and it looks as if a lot of people here would like to see the wild elk returned. There are other who don't.

I use the term "wild elk" because there are already elk in Tennessee, they are just inside fences. I was in Anderson County

sometime back and I had the opportunity to see some real live elk up close. Seeing the elk behind a fence made me wonder what it would have been like to see this area when the wild elk roamed free.

Some people say that a valley in this area, Elk Valley, was named because of the numerous elk that were there. Others speculate that a local creek, Stinking Creek, got its name because many elk died there when the water dried up in a drought.

The people who oppose the return of the wild elk say that the animals cause

disease in cattle and they destroy crops and fences. They believe the wild elk will cost farmers money.

The meetings I attended helped me to learn more about elk. I was surprised to learn how many eastern states have wild elk including Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Arkansas. We may never have the chance to see wild elk in Elk Valley or near Stinking Creek. I don't think there are any plans to put elk in either place anytime soon. But hopefully we will see them somewhere in the future. Maybe our children or our grandchildren will.

Some people say we will never have the opportunity to hunt wild elk in Tennessee. We may not, but there is one thing for sure . . . before you hunt for something, it is best to have something to hunt for.

I can remember when just seeing a whitetail deer was something special. Not too many years back, you never saw a wild turkey anywhere unless you went to Catoose or Chuckswain. Some said the wild turkey would never make it, when they brought them to this area. Just look at our progress with the deer and turkey thus far.

Now, I am not a farmer but I can see where they would be concerned about the damage elk might cause. But it seems like the farmers and almost everyone else has worked together in the past to bring the deer and the turkeys back. Shouldn't the wild elk that were once here have the same opportunity to be replenished in Tennessee?

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PRESIDENT, continued from page 1

importance, we have furnished an open forum where outdoor recreation lovers can meet, talk, search for consensus and work for the common good.

If anyone thinks our work is finished, please think again. Here's a partial list of very important matters that will keep us occupied in the future.

1. How to gain access to outdoor recreation rights for all users on public lands in Tennessee and other states?
2. How to guarantee more equitable representation for each grand division, especially East Tennessee, on the Wildlife Resources Commission?
3. How to forge the compromises that permit use of outdoor recreation areas without undue environmental damage?
4. How to balance the economic and environmental issues that are becoming more prevalent around Norris Lake?
5. How to continue providing an open forum where people with different primary interests can act for the common good?

6. How to keep the momentum going for acquisition of additional land and recreational rights on land throughout Tennessee and the nation.
7. How to reach out to other groups, such as farmers and landowners, to forge political alliances that will be necessary to fight future battles in the U.S. Congress and in state legislatures.
8. Etc., etc.?

We have an enviable record of accomplishment, but are faced with an unending list of things to do.

At this point in our existence what is our greatest need? The answer is obvious. We have a crying need for younger members in large numbers. What can we do to get them interested?

If you have any ideas please come to the meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Campbell County Courthouse.

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CORA Minutes

CORA MINUTES of June 6, 2000

The board meeting commenced at 7:20 pm at the Campbell County Court House, in Jacksboro, TN.

Invocation by Jim Shetterly

The Board's Roll Call and May minutes were read and approved.

Absence: Ray Wilson, Don Dilbeck, Pete Shelton

May Treasury Reports by Treasurer Terry Lewis were approved as read.

Committee Reports:

Publicity Chairman Mike McAfee: Absent, no report.

Activities Chairman Bill Bruce: All food plots are up and looking good at this time.

Newsletter Chairman Terry Lewis: The 21st issue is at the publisher's and should be ready for delivery at the next meeting.

Newsletter Distribution and Advertising Chairman Perry Vinsant: No report.

Roads and Trails Chairman Ted Fields: Reported that all roads and trails seem to be in good condition at this time.

Membership Chairman Robert Burden: No report.

Review Old Business: Discussions were held on the OHV traffic problems. A meeting with the VISTA trail riders is to be held on June 17, at Stan Stooksbury's offices to discuss the statewide trail problems. Lee discussed the problem that Champion and Huber might not renew their contract with TWRA allowing the release of their properties. Lee asked for direction from the group about what CORA should do about the trails issue. A group discussion followed. Lee discussed the TCL and the TWRA Commission on term limits.

New Business:

Meeting Adjourned at 8:15 pm

CORA did not meet on July 4, 2000 because of the Holiday Fourth of July.

CORA MINUTES of August 1, 2000

The board meeting commenced at 7:20 pm at the Campbell County Court House, in Jacksboro, TN.

Invocation by Jim Shetterly

The Board's Roll Call and June minutes were read and approved.

Excused Absence: Leonard Hooks
June Treasury Reports by Treasurer Terry Lewis were approved as read.

Committee Reports:

Publicity Chairman Mike McAfee: Absent, no report.

Activities Chairman Bill Bruce: Bill discussed the CORA pig roast and the schedule for the fall roast will be set at the September meeting.

Newsletter Chairman Terry Lewis: The new issues of the newsletter are here for distribution.

Newsletter Distribution and Advertising Chairman Perry Vinsant: No report.

Roads and Trails Chairman Ted Fields: No report.

Membership Chairman Robert Burden: No report.

Review Old Business: Election of the CORA officers – A motion by Jim Shetterly to re-appoint all CORA officers and board members. A vote was taken and all officers and board members were approved for another term.

President Asbury discussed the problems at the Royal Blue WMA caused by among other things the over use of the trails.

VISTA officer Mr. Steve Shaffer who is on the governors advisory board on OHV's talked about how the use of OHV's has escalated during the past few years. It seems that there is very little control over the use of these vehicles. The result being that areas of use are simply being closed. Mr. Shaffer stated that the University of Tennessee is presently studying the environmental impact. That study should be concluded in June of 2001. Mr. Shaffer suggested that the preliminary objective is to relieve the pressure on the Royal Blue WMA and the long term objective is to open other public areas across the state.

Several people from the audience spoke in support of opening other areas for OHV uses.

Mr. Stan Stooksbury explained that OHV use is a new problem that TWRA has not yet been able to reach a satisfactory solution. He spoke of the number of riders coming into this area. He stated he had calls in one day from

four different states asking about the OHV opportunities here at Royal Blue WMA. He also mentioned the amount of time and expense in maintaining the 450 miles of roads and trails on this area. Stan also told us that TWRA is looking at a fee system for OHV use.

On other issues President Asbury reported that the \$500.00 for the purchase of the property located on Hwy 63 adjoining RBWMA should be either donated or returned. A motion was made by Terry Lewis that we request that the money be returned to CORA. Motioned was voted on by the board and approved.

New Business: Elk restoration program.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm

CORA MINUTES of September 5, 2000

The board meeting commenced at 7:02 pm at the Campbell County Court House, in Jacksboro, TN.

Invocation by Don Dilbeck

The Board's Roll Call and August minutes were read and approved.

Excused Absence: Leonard Hooks, Jim Shetterly, Perry Vinsant

Absent: Pete Shelton

August Treasury Reports by Treasurer Terry Lewis were approved as read.

Committee Reports:

Publicity Chairman Mike McAfee: No report.

Activities Chairman Bill Bruce: Bill discussed the CORA pig roast. Motion by Lee Asbury and 2nd by Terry Lewis to spend whatever is necessary to fix the meal.

Newsletter Chairman Terry Lewis: No report.

Newsletter Distribution and Advertising Chairman Perry Vinsant: Absent, no report.

Roads and Trails Chairman Ted Fields: No report.

Membership Chairman Robert Burden: No report.

Review Old Business: Mr. Stooksbury discussed the construction of the Rifle range as the work is still going on. He said he had been called off for other

projects outside the area and he has not been able to work on it as much as he would like to.

Mr. Stooksbury also discussed the OHV roads around the Olives Creek area. He attempted to restore some of the areas to be used as a model to show other area managers that roads can be successfully managed.

Terry Lewis discussed the formation of the Royal Blue Pilot Program designed to restore and maintain some of the damaged areas due to OHV use.

Lee Asbury stated that the state of Tennessee has recently declared all state forest lands off limits to all Off Road Vehicles.

Mr. Stooksbury discussed a few details of the proposed user fees. This fee would more than likely be based upon a comparable hunter legal fee.

New Business: Terry Lewis discussed the Elk Restoration Program as he had attended the TWRC meeting at Paris Landing. Terry read to the commissioners the CORA Resolution supporting the Elk restoration for the State. A motion to continue the total support of the program was made by Hubert Rollins and seconded by Don Dilbeck.

A motion was made by Don Dilbeck and passed to reimburse Terry Lewis for expenses involved in attending the TWRA meetings.

Terry Lewis advised that TWRA has approved the purchase of the Alread property.

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm

CORA MINUTES of October 3, 2000

The board meeting commenced at 7:02 pm at the Campbell County Court House, in Jacksboro, TN.

Invocation by Don Dilbeck

The Board's Roll Call and September minutes were read and approved.

Excused Absence: Jim Shetterly, Perry Vinsant, Galen Wiseman

Absent: Harry Burden, Robert Burden
Sept. Treasury Reports by Treasurer Terry Lewis were approved as read.

Committee Reports:

Publicity Chairman Mike McAfee: No report.

Activities Chairman Bill Bruce: Said that we had pretty well broke even at the

Pig Roast, everyone enjoyed it and it was a huge success. A motion was made that Bill put some good tires on the grill.

Newsletter Chairman Terry Lewis: Said he needed articles for the publication.

Roads and Trails Chairman Ted Fields: No report.

Membership Chairman Robert Burden: Absent, no report.

Review Old Business: Mr. Stooksbury discussed the construction of the Rifle range as the work is still going on and should be completed by Oct. 14. Plans after construction is to keep it open seven days a week.

Mr. Stooksbury also discussed the property lines on Montgomery Creek and that he is trying to establish the county line location.

President Asbury said public hearings are to be held at the Campbell County Court House and in the County Office Building at Huntsville in Scott Co. on the elk restoration program. CORA has been asked to talk to the Farm Bureau People for the restoration program.

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm

CORA MINUTES of November 7, 2000

The board meeting commenced at 7:15 pm at the Campbell County Court House, in Jacksboro, TN.

Invocation by Jim Shetterly

The Board's Roll Call and October minutes were read and approved.

Excused Absence: Perry Vinsant

Absent: Lee Asbury, Ted Fields, Leonard Hooks, Ray Ivey, Hubert Rollins and Mike McAfee

October Treasury Reports by Treasurer Terry Lewis were approved as read.

Committee Reports:

Activities Chairman Bill Bruce: Absent, no report.

Newsletter Chairman Terry Lewis: No report.

Newsletter Distribution and Advertising Chairman Perry Vinsant: Absent, no report.

Roads and Trails Chairman Ted Fields: No report.

Membership Chairman Robert Burden: No report.

Review Old Business: Rifle range opening schedule. A motion was made by Bill Bruce and seconded by Terry Lewis to pay for the elk print presented to President Lee Asbury at the public

hearing on the Elk restoration program. All board members voted yes.

Treasurer Terry Lewis brought us up to date on the TWRA Commission meeting held in Chattanooga, and especially the part which dealt with the elk restoration program. Lewis explained that there was some opposition from the Tennessee Farm Bureau and the cattleman's association. The TWRA Commissioners voted unanimously to proceed with the restoration program and the first release is scheduled for December 19, 2000.

A motion was made by Don Dillbeck seconded by Jim Shetterly to reimburse Asbury and Lewis for expenses incurred on the Chattanooga trip. All voted yes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm

CORA MINUTES of December 5, 2000

The board meeting commenced at 7:17 pm at the Campbell County Court House, in Jacksboro, TN.

Invocation by Jim Shetterly

The Board's Roll Call and November minutes were read and approved.

Excused Absence:

Absent: Ray Ivey

Nov. Treasury Reports by Treasurer Terry Lewis were approved as read.

Committee Reports:

Publicity Chairman Mike McAfee: No report.

Activities Chairman Bill Bruce: No report.

Newsletter Chairman Terry Lewis: Said he needed articles for the next publication.

Newsletter Distribution and Advertising Chairman Perry Vinsant: Mentioned that some advertisers have not paid their bill on the last issue.

Roads and Trails Chairman Ted Fields: No report.

Membership Chairman Robert Burden: No report.

Review Old Business: Lee asked Danny Akins to tell CORA what they need us to do during the elk release, Danny indicated Stan would need volunteers to park cars. TWRA wants all spectators to ride buses to the site from two locations, one at Jacksboro and the other in Scott Co. Akins said many local dignitaries were invited as is the governor, senators, mayors and county executives.

Steve Bennett is to be the elk coordinator for this program. Larry Frazer

TCL Sponsored Legislation Seeks to Reform The TWRA Commission

by Bob Hodge

Real honest to goodness reform might be coming to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Commission. Or the commission's status will remain quo. We'll all know pretty soon.

Bills introduced by Rep. H.E. Bittle of Knoxville and Sen. Ben Atchley of Knoxville would change the commission, not just numerically. If S-1865 and HB-1840 are passed and signed by the governor, the commission still will have 13 members. What will change is how long they can stay and from where they can come.

The bills would:

Provide that no wildlife commissioner serve a second consecutive term.

Make the lieutenant governor and speaker of the House give preference to previously under-represented grand divisions of the state.

Limit any grand division to no more than four commissioners at one time. That would mean the lieutenant governor and speaker could not choose their candidates from the same grand division.

Limit the amount of time any grand division would be under-represented to a maximum of four years.

Increase the terms of the commissioners appointed by the lieutenant governor and speaker from two to six years, making those seats "equal" to those held by the governor's appointees.

I think you should run, don't walk, to the nearest telephone, computer or Western Union office and let your legislators know how much you want this bill. And if you can't think of any reason to like it, try this one: No more commissioners for life.

The Tennessee Conservation League has spent two years to come up with a reform package palatable to everyone involved and the results aren't bad. Granted, it would have been nice to have pared down the size of the commission and ensured no section of the state is ever under-represented. It would have been nice for both speakers to give up their appointments. But the bills introduced by Re. Bittle and Sen. Atchley will

make things better than what we have now.

Give Speaker Jimmy Naifeh and Lt. Gov. John Wilder credit. They—especially Wilder—wanted to keep their appointments, but they also wanted to do something constructive to make the commission better. Allowing their appointees to serve six years means those two commissioners get to sit at the grownup table with the others.

More importantly, the legislation means—for the first time—east Tennesseans will be appointed to those positions. The law says "the speakers shall give preference to appointing a member from the grand division that has only three members prior to the effective date of the new appointment."

Does that mean east Tennesseans will be in the minority at some point in the future? Yes. But on a rotating basis middle and west Tennessee will get the same treatment.

The legislation is by no means a slam dunk. And it's not popular with all of the outdoor community.

Working hard against it is Tom Hensley, who's celebrating his 12th anniversary as a wildlife resources commissioner. A liquor lobbyist by trade, Hensley has had no kind words for the bills that would make it impossible for anyone to serve consecutive terms as a commissioner.

Some hunters and fisherman have called the compromise bill a copout. They don't like that the speaker-appointed commissioners remain, and those critics believe increasing those two-year terms to six only makes things worse. Those are the feelings of some people I respect. But I respectfully disagree.

Both the House and Senate are trying to clear the decks of all legislation by March 31 to concentrate on the budget. It's likely the fate of the TCL reform campaign will be decided by then. That's not long and the clock is ticking.

In other words, speak to your legislators now or forever hold your peace. Politics, it is said, is the art of compromise. This one isn't bad.

TURKEY TIPS

Birds By The Numbers

- \$60 million: Amount spent by the National Wild Turkey Federation over the past 20 years to restore "America's bird."
- 5 million: Turkey hunters in the United States early in the next millennium, according to some industry analysts.
- 87.6875: NWTF score of world-record typical gobbler (25 lbs, 3 oz.; 2-and 2 2/16-in. spurs; 10 10/16-in. beard).
- 16: Major turkey call companies in the United States.
- 28: Calls in the wild turkey's vocabulary.
- 42: States that permit the use of turkey decoys.
- 10 to 12: Eggs in a hen's average clutch.

How Fast Can A Turkey Fly?

There is no absolute answer. However, an old hunting adage runs "you can't outdraw a turkey," and there is a lot of truth to this. A turkey can take flight and board the airway express to the next county in amazingly short order. The turkey does have an excellent wing area to weight ratio, and the tremendous noise they make going to and from the roost, often hitting limbs in the process, should not mislead anyone into believing they are poor flyers. There have been wing speeds of upwards of 50 miles per hour recorded in wild turkeys.

Turkey Tips were taken from *Turkey Hunting Strategies*. Additional tips found on pages 7 and 9.

MINUTES, continued from page 5

with the elk foundation said they would be paying for the travel expenses. The REMF will do an article in their magazine. Mr. Frazier thanked everyone involved in the restoration. He said it would take the backing of everyone in the community to protect the elk from poaching.

Leonard Hooks is to go to pick up the Elk with TWRA in Canada and bring them back to the release site.

Danny Akins said the Elk are for everyone and the public is invited.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

CORA MINUTES of January 2, 2001

The board meeting commenced at 7:07 pm at the Campbell County Court House, in Jacksboro, TN.

Invocation by Jim Shetterly

The Board's Roll Call and December minutes were read and approved.

Excused Absence: Ray Ivey

Dec. Treasury Reports by Treasurer Terry Lewis were approved as read.

Committee Reports:

Publicity Chairman Mike McAfee: No report.

Activities Chairman Bill Bruce: No report.

Newsletter Chairman Terry Lewis: Said he needed articles for the next publication.

Newsletter Distribution and Advertising Chairman Perry Vinsant: No report.

Roads and Trails Chairman Ted Fields: No report.

Membership Chairman Robert Burden: No report.

Review Old Business: Steve Bennett with TWRA as the elk program coordinator gave an update on the elk program. He thanked CORA members for their help at the release site. All of the elk were located and accounted for on the second day. Forty-five elk were accounted for on the fifth day. Steve explained that with their tracking system it was difficult to locate all of the elk at one time. Elk have been located on Red Oak Mountain to the extreme south. They are staying pretty much in the area. They are ranging around on the area and then returning to an area close to the release site. So far they are staying where we had hoped they will stay and are pleased with their progress.

Stan Stooksbury said two elk had been seen close to Hwy 63 near the Campbell/Scott County line. They are returning to rough areas to bed, which is good. Stan also expressed his appreciation to everyone who helped with the traffic and parking. Stan said that TWRA was very well pleased with the program.

Mr. Lee Kribbs and Mr. John Meckler of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation were present and spoke about their program. Mr. Kribbs said that the REMF were for elk restoration and they work for the preservation of the land for future generations to enjoy. Mr. Kribbs gave all CORA members a special invitation to attend the elk foundation meeting at the Park Vista Hotel in Gatlinburg on March 31, 2001.

Mr. John Meckler expressed his thanks for the part that CORA played in bringing the elk back to this area. He said that he knew of no other restoration project that moved as fast as this one had. It was less than sixty days from the time TWRA approved this project until the elk were on the ground. John also mentioned that everyone was proud to participate at the release site. Even Gary Meyers, Director of the TWRA was helping to park cars. John said that REMF has committed over \$700,000.00 to the elk program.

CORA President Lee Asbury mentioned that TWRA was in general agreement to purchase additional property for the public's use. Both Lee and John agreed that the REMF would help in any way they can.

TWRA officer Akins said he wanted the cooperation of everyone to see that the elk are protected and that this program would continue to be a success.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

CORA MINUTES of February 6, 2001

The board meeting commenced at 7:00 pm at the Campbell County Court House, in Jacksboro, TN.

Invocation by Jim Shetterly

The Board's Roll Call and January minutes were read and approved.

Excused Absence: Ray Ivey

January Treasury Reports by Treasurer Terry Lewis were approved as read.

Committee Reports

Publicity Chairman Mike McAfee: No report.

Activities Chairman Bill Bruce: No report.

Newsletter Chairman Terry Lewis: No report.

Newsletter Distribution and

Advertising Chairman Perry Vinsant: No report.

Roads and Trails Chairman Ted Fields: No report.

Membership Chairman Robert Burden: No report.

Review Old Business:

New Business: Several TWRA personnel were at our meeting; President Asbury introduced Mr. Bill Reeves, fisheries biologist with TWRA who had come to discuss with a standing room only crowd the slot limit on bass on Norris Lake.

Mr. Reeves explained how TWRA and the 25 person committee had arrived at the slot numbers. He asked for public comments from the audience and stated that a committee meeting would be held here following the CORA hosted meeting.

Mr. Reeves explained that they wanted to know what each person considered to be a good fishing trip. A general discussion followed with different views expressed. The group was very orderly and informative.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Turkey Tips

Can Hens Lay More Than One Clutch of Eggs?

Yes, although the subject has not been thoroughly studied, biologists believe that hens can lay fertile eggs for a period of several weeks after mating. Certainly this is true for domestic turkeys. There are numerous recorded instances of a hen making a new nest and laying a second clutch of eggs after her original nest was destroyed by predation. What is less certain is whether these hens bred a second time (or maybe copulated several times) or relied on semen from the original breeding.

CORA, it's Publishers or Editors are not responsible for the accuracy of facts surrounding the articles published in this Newsletter.

Outsmarting Turkeys With Ph.D.s

Hunting Tough Toms—Tips From The Pros On Bagging Yours

by Kathy Butt

Many a wily gobbler has been outsmarted by hunters who know a whole lot more about turkey hunting than just being able to “talk turkey.” Diehard turkey hunters match wits each spring season with many a smart old spring monarch. It is those 3 ½-year-old toms that always seem to stay just out of range, out of sight, or sneak in silently and then thumb their beak at you as they waltz out of view.

This situation calls for some advanced hunting tactics. It's time to dig deep in our bag of tricks and play hardball with those seemingly indestructible gobblers.

For quite awhile, I've been gathering tidbits of turkey hunting strategy from a few seasoned turkey hunting professionals and I thought I'd share a few of their most productive calling and hunting strategies with TVO readers. I believe it's important that each turkey hunter become adequately skilled with a variety of turkey calls, but it's not imperative to being successful.

It certainly helps to know how to call, but I feel it's even more important to gain an understanding of when to call, and when not to.

Outsmarting turkey Ph.D.s

With that last statement in mind, let me offer a few turkey-hunting strategies using calling tactics, starting with one from Robby Rohm. Rohm is a custom call manufacturer who spends a great deal of his spring season matching wits with Pennsylvania longbeards, where turkeys receive Ph.D.s in “outsmarting spring turkey hunters.”

Rohm shared a favorite method for hunting highly pressured gobblers. He believes that gobblers never really become call shy, but that they simply respond differently as the season progresses. They might not gobble as energetically or they might not come in as enthusiastically.

Rohm has developed his own method of working late season longbeards — spitting and drumming. If you've never considered incorporating spitting and drumming into your calling routine, give it a try.

Rohm has found this to be quite successful in hunting gobblers during the late season. You can do this with your own voice, or by using any variety of spitting and drumming type calls sold at most sporting goods stores.

Set up and scratch

Buddy Duke, another seasoned turkey-hunting veteran and longtime member of the National Wild Turkey Federation, takes a different approach to calling (or perhaps I should say “not calling”). When Duke is working a mature longbeard that seems a little reluctant and won't respond to traditional calling methods, he'll set up and scratch leaves.

This is a killer method for working wary toms. But, be warned, a longbeard may come running in or he may take his own sweet time. Are you a patient hunter? Duke says, “I'm a patient hunter and I've killed many birds by waiting them out. I'm willing to wait as long as it takes, and as long as a gobbler gives me any indication that he's even slightly workable, I'll wait him out.”

When scratching leaves to lure a gobbler into range, try to mimic the sounds of a hen, or hens, scratching leaves, in a series of three scratches. Pause a moment, and then repeat the series.

You can use your hand or a branch, but don't get too aggressive. Keep the scratching soft and subtle and you'll be surprised at how effective this calling strategy can be.

The disrupter

Gary Sefton, known by many for his turkey hunting expertise, has discovered an interesting way to outsmart a gobbler who seems too tough to tag. “I like to disrupt gobblers,” Sefton says, “especially when I find they routinely do the same things.”

“I'll locate them on the roost the evening before and flush them into another area. It's important to keep up with the gobbler's location and know approximately where he relocated. I'll set up on him the next morning before fly-down. He'll be out of his normal

surroundings and will be seeking his hens with more of an urgency and he'll respond better to my calling.”

Have you had trouble locating a gobbler during the midday lull, the time when all gobbling seems to have stopped? Try adding some enthusiasm to your locator calls.

“Avoid being repetitious,” says Ed Sweet, an old hunting buddy of well-known hunter Ben Lee. “I think hunters get into the same old routine of calling. Hunters can increase the effectiveness of their crow calls by varying their sequence and pitch. Really jar down on that call.

“Sometimes you've got to be really close to a gobbler, practically even right on top of him, before it will make him respond. So call loud, call often, and vary the sequence and you'll be surprised at the results.”

Take the high road

Do you sometimes have difficulty determining the exact location of a gobbler? Wayne Carleon, a seasoned turkey hunting professional, suggests hunters stay high when trying to locate lovesick longbeards. Carlton explains, “It doesn't do you a bit of good to hear those gobblers if you can't tell where they are. Staying high on a ridge will help you zero in on their exact location and you can move in quickly for the setup.”

Mark Koehler, a Missouri outfitter and successful turkey hunter I once interviewed, suggest this successful tactic for outwitting tough toms. “Use two or three different types of calls when trying to work wary longbeards.” This can be done by using various types of calls or by incorporating Koehler's method of placing two different types of mouth diaphragms in his mouth at once, alternating calls with each one.

Keeping two mouth diaphragms is not an easy tactic to master, but it has been the undoing of many a gobbler throughout Koehler's turkey-hunting career.

Once you have a longbeard gobbling to your calling sequence, you may discover

Please see **TURKEYS** on page 12

CORA

The Campbell Outdoor Recreation Association (CORA) is a group of hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts dedicated to keeping lands open and available to the public for multiple use outdoor activities.

From its beginnings in 1987 CORA has stood for the public at large and as a result has enjoyed broad-based public support from hunters, fisherman, hikers, ATV riders, cyclists and many others.

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If you have similar interests, annual membership dues are \$10.00. Meetings are open to the public and are held the first Tuesday of each month, 7:00 pm, at the Campbell County Courthouse. Everyone is encouraged to attend and get involved. If you can't join us at the next meeting, but have questions or need additional information call Lee Asbury at 423-562-5886 or Harry Burden at 423-562-2171.

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TURKEY TIPS

How Long Do Turkeys Live?

Obviously a variety of factors influence the life expectancy of wild turkeys. Even if a hen manages to hatch all her eggs, which is by no means predictable, significant number of poults never make it beyond the first fortnight of life. An indication of this is provided by the fact that while the normal hen lays a clutch of 10 to 14 eggs (there are recorded instances of nests with as many as 20 eggs), a survival rate of poults reaching adult status in the range of 3.5 to 4.5 per hen is considered a good to excellent number. For those birds which reach adulthood and manage to avoid hunters (human and otherwise), disease, natural disasters, and the like, prospects for a long life are still anything but good. The average annual death rate of mature turkeys is around 40 percent, and few indeed are the birds which die of old age. Any turkey living beyond five years in the wild can be said to be especially long-lived. There is a record of a banded hen, trapped in Florida and transported to Texas, living into at least her 12th year.

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Turkeys, continued from page 8

one call in particular will jerk his chain. If you find he responds more to a certain call, by all means use that call.

Let his response determine how often and energetically you call. If the gobbler answers your call every time but doesn't appear to be coming any closer, try giving him the silent treatment.

The silent treatment

I'll give you an example of how effective this can be. One spring season here in Tennessee I matched wits with a group of longbeards for almost an entire week before I finally figured out how effective the silent treatment can really be. I found myself smack in the middle of a regular gobble opera one morning and no matter how energetically I called or how softly, the birds stood their ground.

Out of frustration, I went totally silent. I placed my mouth diaphragm in my shirt pocket and pushed my box and slate calls out of reach and fought all impulses to call, no matter how much those longbeards gobbled. Almost an hour went by before I decided it was time to issue one excited cut.

It was the gobbler's undoing and he came running in, almost tripping over his own feet. He couldn't decide whether he wanted to run or strut and I'm convinced the silent treatment was the most important factor in my walking out of the woods that morning with a tom in my turkey vest.

There's no substitute for personal experience in the turkey woods, but why not benefit from hunters who've been successful in outwitting spring monarch year after year? Got a gobbler that's been giving you the slip? Try any of these tips for hunting tough toms. And always know your target before pulling that trigger!

Kathy Butt, a freelance outdoor writer/photographer from Portland, Tenn., has been involved in the outdoors for more than 18 years. Much of her writing focuses on her passion for archery and blackpowder hunting, as well as encouraging more women and youngsters to become involved in the outdoors.

Turkey Facts
See pages 6, 7 and 9

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