



Hunting News

Grafton Land Trust

Preserving Grafton's open spaces since 1958

May 2014



Quick Links
[Hunting Policy](#)
[Permit Application](#)
[Property Maps](#)
[Harvest Info Form](#)
[Join Us on Facebook](#)
[Grafton Land Trust](#)
[MassWildlife](#)
[U.S. Fish & Wildlife](#)

Submit Your Pics!

Got a cool photo from a recent hunting trip in Grafton? Send it to hunting@grafftonland.org and we'll publish it in the "Photo of the month" section of *Hunting News*.



We are a member supported organization that relies on you - *hunters* - as well as hikers, equestrians and other recreational users to manage our lands. Please [become a member](#) today!

Dear Hunter,

RE: Turkey Fever!

There are moments in one's hunting career that stand out. Like last spring, when I was busted by a wary gobbler and closed out the turkey season empty handed. Fortunately, knowledge gained from failed hunts can be applied to increase the chance for future success.

With my sights focused on success this spring, I scouted a few areas in Grafton and spotted turkeys on the edge of several fields. I slipped into position at 5:00 am on opening day, hoping to bag my first tom. Two and a half hours into the hunt, a hen passed by at only 10 yards; then a second at 15 yards. It was a cold, still morning; an additional hour passed. Doubt and a sore backside prompted me to stretch. I leaned my shotgun against a tree, then stood up. The stiffness of the long sit passed. Then, from the corner of my eye, I saw a tom walking slowly, and silently, into view. I had sufficient cover to time my movements. I reached for my shotgun, then lowered to a kneeling position. The tom took a few more steps and presented me with a clear shot through the brush at 19 yards. I fired and harvested my first wild turkey: a 21-lb tom with a 9 1/4" beard (pictured below). This year WAS the year! A moment to remember.



A hen takes to flight in Grafton. (Photo by Troy Gipps)

Following my opening day success, I developed a full-blown case of *gobbler fever* and rose at zero-dark-thirty three more times over the first two weeks of the season. I saw birds on the second and third hunts, but I couldn't close the deal. Hens yelped and toms strutted and gobbled at a distance.



Camouflage is one of many components of a successful turkey hunt. (Photo by Troy Gipps)

On May 9th, I was greeted by overcast skies with temps in the upper-40's. There was a chance of rain later in the morning, but by all accounts it promised to be a great day to hunt. I heard gobbling in distant fields, but as the hours passed my decoy looked more and more lonely as she stood quietly in the vibrant green grass of early spring. I called intermittently, hoping to spike the interest of a nearby tom. A Great Horned Owl glided across the far side of the field. Yellow warblers darted back and forth through the brush around me. A flock of five Great Blue Herons flew past in formation. The morning ticked by.

At 8:30 am, my optimism began to fade. I turned to my right and began sorting through items in my pack. I

had positioned myself behind a large circular bale of hay which provided great cover but restricted part of my view. Another bale was 20 feet in front of me and slightly to the left, which created a nice shooting lane. A few minutes passed and I turned my head back in the direction of my decoy. Much to my amazement, six turkeys were staring back at me! A strutting tom, two jakes and three hens stood beside my decoy. I froze ... with my shotgun leaning against the bale and six sets of eyes looking in my direction, I could do little more. I had one chance ... *one small chance* with a limited potential for success, but still, *a chance*.

My hopes were realized when the flock began filing, one-by-one, behind the second hay bale until they had all slipped from view. This was the window I had hoped for! I grabbed my gun and tip-toed through the grass, setting up on the left side of the second bale. As I peered down my barrel and slowly swung it around the side of the bale, my eyes were met by the curious glance of a hen. She paused for a moment, then continued walking, very slowly, to my left. The second and third hens followed. Then the jakes came into view. Finally, the tom's tail fan appeared. He was facing away from me and the distance between us grew with his every step. He turned slightly left, then away, then left again, but with his neck retracted and head resting comfortable against his feathers the target was not optimal. At 31 yards, he again turned left and outstretched his neck. My shotgun BOOMED, the flock leapt into the air, and the 19-lb tom tumbled! I had harvested my second turkey in as many weeks. Moments like these drive us to hunt.



A hen decoy tempts wary toms. (Photo by Troy Gipps)

Even with this season's success, I'm not sure if I can "officially" refer to myself as a turkey hunter. I am confident, however, to say *I'm a guy who hunts turkey*.

In the coming years, I hope to master the art of turkey hunting, and, more importantly, continue to enjoy the unique experience of a springtime hunt. You can watch video excerpts from my second successful turkey hunt below.

See you in the field,

Troy Gipps
Vice President & Hunting Program Coordinator
Grafton Land Trust
hunting@grafftonland.org



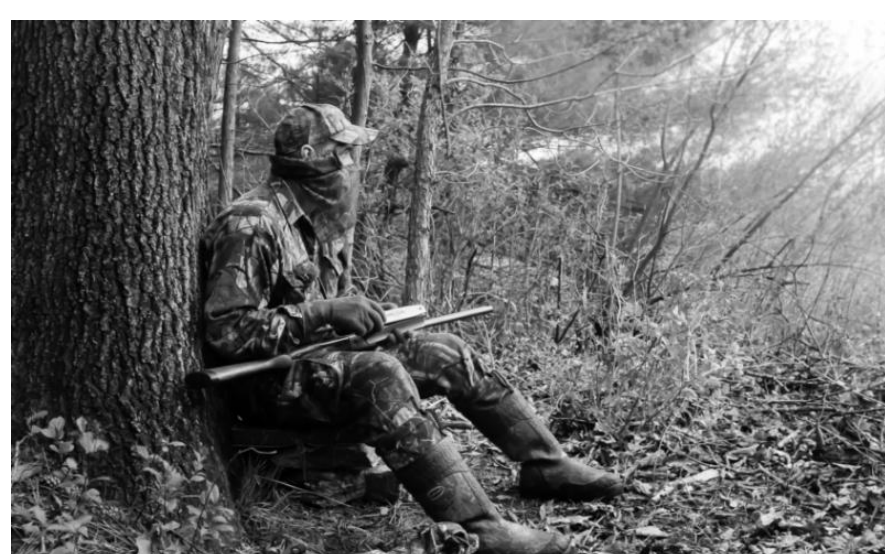
Grafton Land Trust Hunting Program Coordinator Troy Gipps harvested this 21-lb tom on opening day of the spring wild turkey season in Grafton. The gobbler, which had a 9-1/4" beard and attained a [NWTF score](#) of 57.125 points, was taken at 19 yards with a 12 gauge 2-3/4" shell loaded with copper plated No. 6 shot.

A successful spring turkey hunt in Grafton, MA



This video contains footage from a successful turkey hunt in Grafton, Massachusetts on May 9, 2014. The tom harvested weighed 19-lbs and had a 6-inch beard. Additional wildlife videos can be found on our [Vimeo](#) site. (Video by Troy Gipps)

Photo of the month



A turkey hunter waits patiently on the edge of a field in Grafton. (Photo by Troy Gipps / Image Processing by Dean Cerrati)

What's in season this month?

Wild Turkey ... Apr. 28 - May 24, 2014 (Zones 1-13)
Crow ... (Fri./Sat./Mon. only) Jan. 1 - April 10, 2014
Snapping Turtle ... Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2013



Open Season (year-round, except during shotgun season for deer; no daily or seasonal bag limit):
English sparrow, flying squirrel, red squirrel, chipmunk, porcupine, skunk, starling, weasel, and woodchuck.



The Grafton Land Trust is a private, non-profit, member-supported organization that preserves, maintains, and advocates for open space in Grafton, and promotes environmental education and stewardship.

[Forward email](#)



This email was sent to hunting@grafftonland.org by hunting@grafftonland.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe](#)™ | [Privacy Policy](#).