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What Should I Be Doing This Month?

THE SUN is showing itself earlier and earlier each morning and that can only mean one thing to a Pennsylvania hunter—spring gobbler season is almost here. Now is the time for figuring out where those longbeards are hanging out, and here are a few tips on how to pinpoint where you will hunt come opening day.

Start by getting up a little before dawn each day and take a drive before work. Don't forget to throw those binoculars in the truck, and keep them there for the next few weeks. A topo map of your area and a marker should be in the glove box, as well as a notebook, as you don't want to forget where you saw gobblers. Keep the radio off so you can hear those far-off gobbles in the early morning darkness. Also, park at good listening locations on high ground where you can hear multiple points.

In the big woods country, steep hills with open timber and east-facing slopes seem to be favorite roost sites where turkeys can capture the first early morning rays of sun and scan the woods below before flying down. In farm country you can focus on corners in blocks of timber or stream corridors that have suitable roost trees. Try to provoke a gobble with an owl hoot, crow call, coyote howl or other locator call. Stay away from using turkey calls, so as not to educate the birds too much.

After daylight drive routes that give you a look at fields. Even if you spot only hens right now, pretty soon you can bet gobblers will show up.

After you get home from work you can pattern that shotgun. Start organizing your vest with the essentials—calls, extra shells, GPS and/or a compass, insect repellent, and a flashlight with fresh batteries. Get your camo clothes out and get them treated with a good tick repellent.

Practice your calling techniques and then record them. Concentrate on the cadence of your yelps, cuts and purrs. Use multiple types of calls and play back the tape to hear what you really sound like. I bet you'll be surprised.

And one last thing before the season gets here. Take your significant other out for a nice dinner and a movie. You'll be early to bed and early to rise for the next month as you try to get the best of a wary gobbler.