



Turkey Session Outline

For the Outdoor Skills Program

- I. Welcome students and ask group what they remember or learned in the last session.

- II. Turkey Lessons
 - A. Activity: Calling All Turkeys
 - B. Activity: Turkey Hunting (includes journal activity)
 - C. Finish Calling All Turkeys activities by using slate calls (if glue is dry) – we may not have enough slates for all counties and kids. Call prior to lesson to check.

- III. Wrap up: Ask the students what they enjoyed most about today’s session and what they enjoyed the least. (Another way to ask is “what was your high today, and what was your low? As the weeks progress this can be called “Time for Highs & Lows”.)

The Outdoor Skills program is a partnership with Nebraska Games & Parks and the UNL Extension/4-H Youth Development Program to provide hands-on lessons for youth during their afterschool time and school days off. It provides the opportunity to master skills in the areas of hunting, fishing, and exploring the outdoors. This educational program is part of the 20 year plan to recruit, develop and retain hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts in Nebraska.

Inventory

Session: Turkey

Kit Materials & Equipment

- (1) ground blind in carrying bag
- (12) double sided box calls
- (1) box of 12 slate calls, 12 strikers, 12 green pads
- Box of body parts
- (1) bag of: 15 rulers, Wild about Turkey CD/DVD, turkey facts
- (2) Hen decoys each with their own metal stand
- (1) Tom decoy with a stand
- Laminated turkey posters for turkey identification
- Straws
- Yarn/string,
- Feathers
- Beads

Session: Turkeys

Activity: Hunting the Wild Turkey



Objectives: Participants will:

- 1). Identify the wild turkey,
 - a. characteristics of a turkey
 1. body parts
 2. color
 3. age
 - b. how to tell male/female
- 2). Set up an area for calling in turkeys
 - a. ground blind
 - b. use decoys
 - c. calls to lure in turkeys for
 1. hunting,
 2. judge distance.

Method: Students look at a chart and body parts to identify wild turkeys and discuss differences. Then students set up a blind and decoys.

Duration: 60 Minutes

Group Size: 7-12

Setting: Outdoors/Indoors

Key Terms: Tail feathers, head crown, snood, caruncles, beard, breast feathers, spurs, hunter ethics, safe hunting skills, decoy, ground blind, maximum distance

SET Ability:

Categorize/Order/Classify

Materials Contained in Activity Tub:

Jake and turkey NWTF kits (turkey posters, trivia feathers), ground blind, decoys, turkey parts (legs, scat, head), turkey calls.

Materials Needed to Conduct Activity:

Activity #1

Turkey body parts

Box or slate calls, ground blind, decoys, NWTF kits, posters

Background:

The wild turkey is abundant throughout Nebraska and is our states largest game bird. They represent one of the best outdoor experiences for young hunters because their populations have increased dramatically in Nebraska and the spring hunting season is an excellent time of year to introduce a youth to the turkey woods.

Adult males are called toms and young males are referred to as Jakes. Adult females or hens are referred to as jennies. Their spring mating ritual, during the months of late march – May, fill the spring woods with many sounds including turkey gobbles (made by males), along with clucks, yelps, purrs that help turkeys communicate with each other as they fight for breeding rights. The display of the male turkey to attract females is one of the most awesome sights in nature, enjoyed by sportsmen and women each year.

Although thousands of hunters flock to the turkey woods each spring, such hunting represents its own dangers to participants. Generally, hunters are trying to imitate the sound of the very bird that other hunters are listening for.

During this season, all hunters are usually dressed in full camouflage making them difficult to identify in the field.

Journal time!

Several safety elements for turkey hunting include:

- 1). Never wear red, white or blue (colors found on the wild turkey)*
- 2). Never stalk a turkey you hear gobble. It may be another hunter so you should yell out your name so they know you are a person.*
- 3). Never shoot at a target you can not fully identify by sight*
- 4). Always have some form of blaze orange with you to display while moving or using decoys (so others can see you).*

These safety tips will go a long way in making turkey hunting a safe and exciting sport for families.

Activity:

Before the activity

1. Set up ground blind and decoys in separate portion of room or best yet outside.
2. Place hen decoys at 10 and 30 yards, and the strutting decoy at 50 yards from the ground blind.
3. Open the Turkey Parts kit and set on table next to calls

Procedure

1. Start the class in one group and introduce the wild turkey distribution chart and wild turkey ID charts. Discuss the characteristics of the wild turkey, including differences between sexes and age classes and ask the students to list reasons for these differences.

Instructor Tip: Have students compare differences between males and females and provide reasons for each difference. Answers should include: **Tail feathers** for displaying

Coloration differences between males and females – females have feathers tipped with a light color giving them a drab or dull appearance to allow them better protection from predators to help raise their clutch of 8-10 chicks each year.

Spurs on males – used for fighting for breeding rights.

Now have students list the differences between mature males and yearling jakes. This should include:

Spur length – younger jakes have a short nub for a spur compared to the longer sharper spur of an adult tom.

Tail Fan – the jake tail fan has elongated feathers in the center making the tail fan seem more pointed in the middle (the jake will lose these after it molts) where the tail feathers on the adult male are all an even length.

Beard – the wiry feathers protruding from the breast of an adult male are often six inches or longer where that of the jake are often much shorter.

Field Activity

2. Take the students to the gymnasium or field where your ground blind and decoys are set up. Allow each student to view the decoys from the ground blind. Now have each student guess the distance to each decoy. Explain the distances and how far is considered too far to shoot at a turkey.

Instructor Tip: Generally for most youth, 30 yards is considered a sensible maximum effective range. Keep in mind that #6 shot runs out of lethal killing energy around 32 yards!

3. Allow the group to begin setting up a hunting situation using the ground blind and turkey decoys. Using what they have learned about turkeys, allow students to identify their preferred location to set up the blind, and how to arrange the decoys. After the hands-on activity,

discuss with the students how decoys are best used for optimizing your hunt.

Instructor Tip: Generally place decoys so they are facing toward your blind and not looking toward the direction the turkey will come from. When turkeys can make eye contact but do not respond the tom will often “hang up” and not come in.

4. While using the ground blind, ask the students to list potential hunting safety factors that are obvious and how they would make sure their hunt was safe.

Instructor Tip: This should include:

Turkey colors not to wear – turkeys have red, white and blue colors in their head that hunters should avoid wearing.

Positively ID your target before shooting

Know what lies beyond your target
Always having blaze orange with them – especially when moving around in the woods between calling sites

5. Ask students what safety concerns they should have when it comes to hunting the wild turkey. Address each and help them understand how a few simple safety rules can and do keep hunters safe each season. Show them blaze orange and ask them to visualize how blaze orange can be used while turkey hunting...it can!

Session: Turkeys

Activity: Calling All Turkeys

Objectives: Participants will:

- 1) Identify different calls.
- 2) Identify sounds made by the wild turkey;
- 3) Use a call device to imitate the different types of calls used by a turkey to communicate.

Method: Students will construct a slate call. They will also practice turkey sounds using a box call.

Materials Contained in Activity Tub:

Box Turkey Calls, Slate Turkey Calls, and Materials for Straw Turkey Calls (yarn, feathers, bead and straws)

Duration: 30-45 minutes

Group Size: Up to 25

Setting: Outdoors/Indoors

Key Terms: Yelp, Cluck, Purr, Gobble, Cackle, Putt, box call, slate call, striker, push button call, diaphragm call, wing-bone yelper, chalk

SET Ability: Use Tool, Compare

Background:

Wild turkeys communicate using body language and a variety of sounds. While adult male turkeys called “toms” or “gobblers” are most famous for their gobble, hens are best known for their yelps and clucks. In fact, turkeys make roughly 28 different sounds, each conveying a different message. Some of the more popular sounds that benefit hunters most include:

Yelp – sound most commonly associate with turkeys. Made by both males and females but most associated with females; best done in a 2-5 note series.

Cluck – a short, soft, single syllable, used to evoke an answer cluck from other turkeys. Use by: “cluck”, pause briefly, “cluck”, “cluck”, pause briefly, “cluck”, pause briefly, “cluck”, pause, “cluck”, “cluck”.

Purr – used as a content call when feeding, loafing, etc. use with cluck with gobblers are within 75 yards.

Gobble – used by toms or jakes to call to hens during mating season. Best avoided during spring season for safety reasons.

Cackle – used by excited hens or hens flying down from roost. A series of 8 or more yelps rising in cadence and then tapering off. Can get a tom or hen excited and help them advance toward the caller.

Activity:

Before the activity

1. Prepare materials for the straw turkey calls (straw, string, feathers & beads)

Procedure

Turkey Talk

1. When you want to communicate with your friends, how do you? (take answers: text, talk, write). When turkeys want to talk to their turkey friends, they do this (Instructor demonstrates how to make a sound with a box call). "What do you think the turkey would be saying when they make this type of sound called a "call"?"

Instructor Tip: The box call must be chalked in order to accurately make turkey sounds. Start with the call in hand and slide the lid of the box to the right to open the box. Gently, with little pressure, slide the lid back toward the box while letting the lid scrape across the edge of the box to make the sound. Yelps are just a longer slide than clucks which are best made by tapping the lid across the box.

1. Discuss the parts of the box call with the students (lid, handle, rubberband, lip, the box).
2. Students watch and practice with video.

Instructor Tip: Allow students to try each call and help them make the basic "cluck" or "yelp" with each

Styles of turkey call devices

Teacher (or video) demonstrates different types of calls.

Slate Call

Diaphragm Call

Wingbone Yelper

Push Button Call

Box Call

Use the "turkey call worksheet" to teach about other calls. Discuss with each student the manner in which each call works, how they function, how the sound is generated, pros and cons of each call, etc.

Instructor Tip: For slate calls, you must first rough the surface using a scratchy pad in all directions. Now take the striker and hold like a pen with tip down on slate surface. Hold the striker at a 45 degree angle to the slate and gently scratch downward. This will make the cluck. To yelp, slide the striker down and back up in the form of a "J" each time.

Making Straw Turkey Calls.

- Refer to the "Straw Turkey Calls" directions.



Straw Turkey Calls

Supplies per person:

Yarn or String

1-3 feathers

4 beads

3 inch piece of a drinking straw

1. Cut a string that stretches from your belly button around the back of your neck and back to your belly button



2. Fold the string in half. Tie a couple knots to make one large knot at the end of the strings.



3. Run the loop-end of the string through all four beads. Move the beads down to the knotted end.



4. In between the 2nd and 3rd bead, slide the straw in with a string on each side.



5. Then secure the straw by running feathers down through the beads, along one side of the straw.



Making your call work

- Put the tip of the straw in the corner of your mouth, keeping it on your lip (not in your mouth).
- Close your lips. Then make a kissing sound by sucking in on the straw. It should tickle your lip if you are doing it right.
- This is the sound a young Jake or Jenny make when they are lost from the flock, and want another turkey to come rescue them.

(Note: the finished call is not in this picture, but you see how the straw is placed, and the lips pucker when producing the call)

