



# Hunting News Grafton Land Trust

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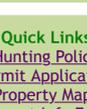
July 2015



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### Submit Your Pics!

Got a cool photo from a recent hunting trip in Grafton? Send it to [hunting@graftonland.org](mailto:hunting@graftonland.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,

### Spring Double!

Closing the deal on a wary gobbler is no easy task, but doing it twice in one spring season is nothing short of gobbling nirvana! I was very fortunate to repeat my spring double from last year, but only due to persistence, and a watchful eye.

I hunted hard opening day at the Town of Grafton's Hennessey I property, where I had seen a large flock of turkeys the week prior, but was met not with the gobblers of beard-dragging toms but instead with the chirps of frogs and songbirds. I heard one distant gobbler. The morning marched on and I left empty handed.

On day two, I shifted my focus to another turkey hot spot in town. I slipped into my calling position at zero dark thirty and began calling 1/2 hour before sunrise. Two to three gobblers responded almost immediately! We went back and forth calling for at least an hour ... then all went quiet. I scanned every inch of the forest around me, hoping to catch a glimpse of an approaching tom ... straining to hear the slightest sound, but instead, after 30-minutes of near silence ... I heard nature's call! You know, the moment you hope will never come, but it always does, and sometimes at the worst possible moment! I slowly rose and tip-toed up the hill behind my shooting position to take care of my morning business ... and wouldn't you know it ... it was, in fact, the *worse possible moment*. The wary tom had circled and crested the hill behind me. His head stuck out from the faint green early spring landscape like Old Glory. Our eyes met, and a streak of red, white and blue rocketed out of sight.



GLT Vice President and Hunting Program Coordinator Troy Gipps with one of two turkeys he harvested in Grafton this spring. This tom, which weighed 18.4 lbs, had a 9-inch beard, and 1-inch spurs, was taken over decoys at less than 15 yards. Gipps used 12 gauge, 3 1/2-inch, No. 6 Kent Ultimate Diamond Shot with an extra-full turkey choke to bag this impressive Grafton gobbler. (Photo by Troy Gipps)



Working a box call to locate gobblers. (Photo by Troy Gipps)

Day three ended in a similar fashion. Two gobblers responded to calling at dawn and one came in quiet about 15 minutes after the last gobbler. He was making a beeline to my hen decoy, but came to an abrupt halt in a stand of thick saplings about 50 yards from me, then turned around, and vanished back into the woods.

Work disrupted my hunting plans for much of the next week, but I got back in the woods on the second Saturday of the season. The set-up was similar: gobbling at dawn, followed by a "box call-gobbler" exchange for the better part of an hour, then silence returned. Ten, twenty, thirty minutes passed ... then movement! A suave, love-struck jake swaggered into view. He saw a window of opportunity and he was making his move! *Who could blame him?* In the clearing stood a lonely hen decoy and there were no toms in sight. This was his moment to shine, but wait ... this was no romance novel. No ... this was my chance to fill my first spring turkey tag. He wasn't a beard-dragging behemoth, but that didn't detract from the challenge and excitement of this hunt. I steady my shotgun, exhaled, and squeezed the trigger. The jake crashed to the forest floor and I filled my first tag.

I returned to the same piece of ground the following Friday morning and set up my tom and hen decoy in a mating position. The first gobbler came and went at 6:30am. Two hours of quiet followed. Then a loud gobble broke the silence. We exchanged calls for a few minutes and all went quiet again. After three seasons of spring turkey hunting, I had learned to remain hyper vigilant when the quiet comes. A proud tom, with a long swaying beard and a head as bright as the stars and stripes, was likely floating through the forest like a ghost. A few minutes before 9:00am, I ever-so-slowly peered around the base of the dead tree I was using for cover and I saw him! His head, canted at a 45-degree angle, was poking out from behind a small tree. I froze and avoided making eye contact, then slowly pulled my head back behind the tree and exhaled. He was good one! *Had he seen me? Would the decoys recapture his attention?* Several minutes passed, then I looked out of the corner of my eye and saw him step forward. I tightened my grip on my shotgun. *One step, two steps, three steps.* His head passed behind a small tree and I snapped into shooting position, controlled my breathing, and settled my cheek down on the stock ... *just a few more feet.* He stepped into my shooting lane ... eye, bead and target aligned ... the hammer fell, and the crushing blow of the 3 1/2-inch shell dispatched the tom in an instant.



Tempting spring toms with decoys set in a mating position. (Photo by Troy Gipps)



The beautiful plumage of a mature wild turkey. (Photo by Troy Gipps)

Persistence, patience, and a watchful eye had once again paid off. I had closed the deal on my second spring double in as many years. The gobbler tipped the scale at 18.4 lbs, had a 9-inch beard, and 1-inch spurs. When things go quiet in the turkey woods ... keep your eyes wide open and don't move! Success may be close at hand.

See you in the field.

Troy Gipps  
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Taking aim on an approaching tom. (Photo by Troy Gipps)

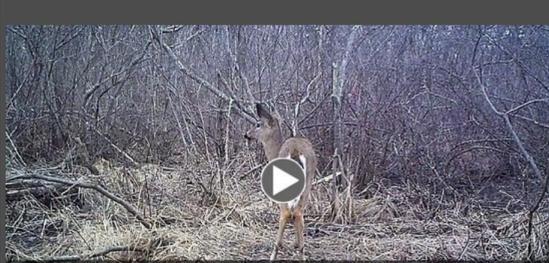
### Hunting permit issuance steadily increasing

The Grafton Land Trust began issuing permits for the 2015-2016 hunting season on July 1st. The permits are valid through June 30, 2016. We have seen a 37 percent increase in the number of permits issued over the past four seasons. The publication of our hunting policy in 2011, which included the formalization of the hunting permit process, two successful annual hunting meetings, and word-of-mouth, have contributed to the rise in permit requests. We ask all permit holders for their continued diligence while hunting on our properties to ensure we all have a safe hunt.



Hunting permit issuance 2011 - 2015

### Doe bedding behavior, Grafton, MA



A doe beds down alongside Miscoe Brook which flows through the recently preserved Churchill Meadows property in Grafton, MA. Additional wildlife videos can be found on our Vimeo site. (Video by Troy Gipps)

### Photo of the month



Approaching a downed tom. (Photo by Troy Gipps)

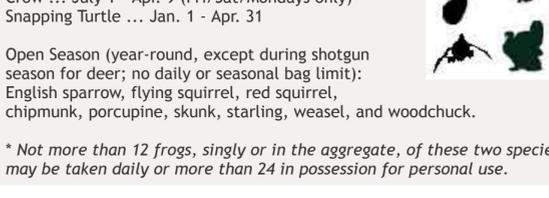
### What's in season this month?

Bullfrogs and Green Frogs \* ... July 16 - Sept. 30  
Crow ... July 1 - Apr. 9 (Fri/Sat/Mondays only)  
Snapping Turtle ... Jan. 1 - Apr. 31



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

\* Not more than 12 frogs, singly or in the aggregate, of these two species may be taken daily or more than 24 in possession for personal use.



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.

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