

Using alternative locator calls like owl hoots, crow calls, coyote calls, or even something odd sounding like a peacock call can make a Tom sound off. I have a variety of locator calls, and try them all at some point during my turkey hunt. I've had birds respond to crows, owls, and oddly enough, the peacock call; even though I've never heard or seen a live peacock, for some reason gobblers respond to the odd noise it puts out. Another great turkey locator call is simple hen clucks, although it's best to not overuse these, just a simple cluck or two, a couple times a minute and see if you get a response. For this, my go to turkeys call is my Gobblestalker slate call, it makes great turkey sounds, has great volume and pitch, is relatively simple to make great turkey noises on, and is perfect for roosting birds.

I've had plenty of evenings with no responses, this happens, and you just need to setup with your best guess, or where you've been seeing or hearing birds, and hope they are roosting. This is where knowing your hunting areas can help, as you should have a general idea what birds typically do.

Other things to look for when hunting and scouting, along with signs under the roost, are tracks in fields, on trails, or even if snow if you happen to have any. With a winter like we've been experiencing across some parts of Ontario, this may be something we will see this spring. Last spring I hunted in snow on opening morning, and actually had a really good idea where birds were roosting thanks to the snow. After dark I found a beaten path from a large flock of turkeys going down a trail into a cedar forest along a creek. The birds had all funneled across a bridge and the bridge was covered in turkey tracks. This happened after I walked out of the field across the same bridge, indicating they had crossed shortly before dark. The next morning I setup about a hundred yards from this bridge and ended up killing a beauty

Tom that morning, after it flew down with about twenty other birds.

Once you've found roosted birds, or are hopefully setup near a roosting area, setting up within a couple hundred yards is usually ideal, but not so close you will spook birds while in the tree. I like to be in the woods and setup well before first light, usually setup at least an hour or more prior, giving me a chance to setup decoys, seats or blinds, and get good and settled well before light. I like to limit the use of flashlights in the dark; I have no idea how much they will affect birds on the roost, but as cagy as turkeys are, it can't help. I have a small light with a red and green filter on the lens, allowing me to setup without lighting up the whole area. Once settled I'll usually sit and listen for awhile, and often you will start hearing birds on the roost starting to call. I'll often start with some soft hen clucks in the morning, letting the birds know I'm there, hoping they will come my way after flying down. Even with the best setup with roosted birds nearby, there are always mornings where you won't hear a peep, or the birds will fly down and travel straight away from you, adding to the frustration or challenge of turkey hunting.

Now you can have the perfect setup, and be sitting a hundred yards from a tree full of roosted turkeys, with the perfect site and decoy setup, and still come up empty, but these are hopefully some tips that give you some ideas when you're in the turkey woods this spring.

