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**Lori (left) and Rob with the wild turkey she harvested in Vigo County, Ind.**

## Have a confession?

Tell us all about it. Send it snail mail or electronically. Photos are welcome, as well. We're happy to read the text you send, but we'll probably edit it for clarity and space. We also reserve the right to publish submissions on our Web site.

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### **One last time by Lori Elkins**

After 17 years of marriage to a die-hard hunter, I finally learned to shoot. Then, I decided to go turkey hunting. Rob, my husband, was so excited that he bought me a shotgun and hunting clothes.

We hunted six times with no luck. Hunting season was over for me until my brother-in-law, Eric, talked me into going “one last time.”

We set up two different times and saw jakes and hens, but didn't get close enough. So, we placed our blind on the edge of a field and waited. After a short time, a nice gobbler came in range. I shot; he ran. I was disappointed and ready to go home.

I didn't think anything else would come after hearing a shot blast, but we waited. After 45 minutes, I was ready to leave, but Rob said we'd wait a little longer. Five minutes passed, and a big gobbler came across the field headed right for us. I waited until he stopped about 25 yards away and stretched his neck out.

The bird weighed 22½ pounds, had a 10¾-inch beard and 1-inch spurs. I still can't believe I got him. My friends and family were amazed that I went hunting and got such a big bird.

## Gobblers the hard way by Stephanie Mollus St. Joseph, Mo.

On a cool spring morning, my husband woke me up early but I debated whether or not to get up. I had a feeling I wouldn't see a turkey. I had hunted the past two weekends in the pouring rain and not seen or heard a thing. As I watched my husband get ready I thought, *If I don't go he will get the bird I want.* So, I got up, put my hunting clothes on, and we headed out.

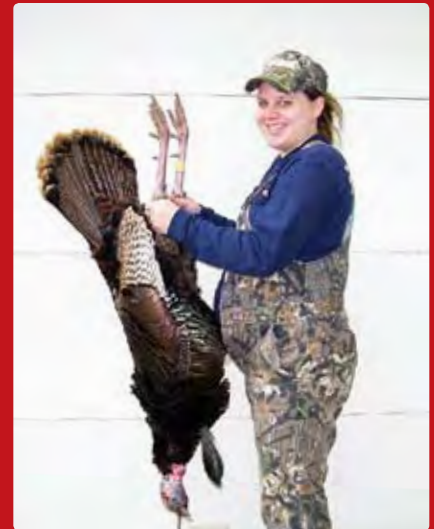
I wanted to sleep on the ride there, but the excitement of smelling the dew and feeling the cold morning breeze kept me awake. I started feeling better about the morning.

We arrived at the land we were hunting and walked up and down two small mountains. (OK, they were bluffs, but they felt like mountains!) We set up a blind, got in and got ready.

As dawn approached, we heard turkeys call from three directions. It sounded like they were coming in fast. Then, they hung up for 10 minutes. My husband called one more time, and their heads popped up over the hill. I got my 20-gauge up, and there he was.

I waited for him to get between two trees in front of me. His beard looked as though it moved the leaves on the ground. I didn't even hear the shot, but saw the turkey on the ground. We ran to him. I was so excited I almost forgot I was pregnant and carrying an extra 60 pounds. My husband carried my wonderful bird back to the truck. The gobbler had an 11-inch beard, 1 3/8-inch spurs, and weighed 18 pounds.

Weeks later, and gratefully without a beard, our daughter, Charlee, arrived. Through photos and stories, she'll soon know the role she played in Mama's first gobbler. You can bet I'll be there for hers.



**Stephanie Mollus was determined to keep her husband from getting the turkey she was after and was rewarded with an 18-pound gobbler. A few weeks later, she brought home a 7-pound daughter.**

## First archery hunt, first deer by Tina McGuire Erie, Pa.

**After hunting for five years with no success, Tina McGuire killed her first whitetail with a bow in Waterford, Pa.**



After deer hunting with no success for five years, I decided to sit out a season. I usually hunt with a Savage .243, which I love, but didn't really enjoy the actual deer hunting.

My boyfriend, Jeremy, suggested I try hunting with a bow. I borrowed one and liked it enough to buy my own. I practiced until I felt comfortable enough to go afield.

We hunted the first day and didn't see anything. The next time out, I went to the same stand and sat for an hour. I got fidgety and called Jeremy to meet me, and we moved to another area. Our stands were in aspen with plenty of cover.

Jeremy spotted three deer, but I didn't see them for another 20 minutes. They walked toward us, but hesitated and walked away. Disappointed, I sat back down.

As sundown approached, I thought my chances of a shot were gone until a doe walked up the fence line 5 feet from my stand.

I stood up and tried to pull the bow back, but nothing happened. I saw Jeremy shaking his head and saying, "Pull back and shoot." I never had trouble pulling my bow before, but, for a split second, I had no strength. I pulled again, put the sight on her and released. All I heard was *thud*, and my knees almost buckled. I thought, *I just shot a deer.*

"You hit her. It was a really good shot. Good job, babe," Jeremy said.

We called family and friends. Then, we tracked the deer. Jeremy offered to field dress her, and I didn't argue.

Now, I'm ready to get a buck to go with my magnificent doe.

## Confrontation in the woods by Kelly Tarr

I was introduced to the Women in the Outdoors program a couple of years ago. I have been an avid reader of the magazine and have gained good information and insight.

I read about a fishing confrontation between some men and a woman [“Chasing Women” in the summer 2005 issue]. I haven’t read about this happening to women while hunting, but a situation happened a few years ago that I wanted to share. Even if readers only critique my actions, become outraged at what happened or discuss it with friends or family, at least they might be more prepared to handle a similar situation.



# I stood my ground, but I was getting pretty scared and nervous.

Here’s my story...

It was the first day of deer season in northwest Pennsylvania. My dad, his wife and I headed to our favorite hunting spot, a hilltop we’ve hunted for nearly 20 years, thanks to the hospitality of local farmers.

It was cold and about 2 feet of snow covered the ground. Great conditions for hunting in this neck of the woods, although a little hard to walk in when you’re only 5 feet 2 inches tall.

I got to my stand at daybreak and settled in. I said a prayer and asked for the buck of my dreams to come right under my stand first thing that morning. As I dreamed of the perfect buck, I heard a shot very close to me.

It was still early, and since we hadn’t seen any vehicles around when we arrived, I thought it must have been Dad or his wife. I knew other people hunted these farms, but usually way behind us. I didn’t hear another shot or a deer running, and no one called on the walkie-talkie for help. So, I returned to daydreaming.

The wind blew hard, and I was freezing. By 9:30 I just couldn’t take it any longer, so I walked slowly back to the truck. I saw my stepmom coming out of the woods, and

I waved her down to join me. We cleared snow off the windows, grabbed a sandwich and sat quietly while getting warm. Dad was still in the woods, but we usually take a break around 10. We figured he would join us before long.

I glanced in the rearview mirror and saw a 9-pointer with an injured hind leg. I said, “There’s a buck!”

As I fell out of the truck, the buck saw me, but didn’t seem to care and just kept walking. I wondered if this was the deer I heard shot at earlier, but I didn’t see or hear anyone. With the deer moving that slowly, I certainly wasn’t letting him go.

I got my rifle and put a bullet in the chamber. The deer continued walking

slowly, occasionally glancing my way. I worked my way into the woods as quickly as I could, but the snow was deep. When I had a good shot, I stopped, held my breath and waited with the rifle to my shoulder. I put the crosshairs on the buck’s shoulder and pulled the trigger. I’d finally bagged a nice, big buck, with a rack that was a definite keeper.

I filled out my tag as my stepmom made her way over. I called my Dad on the walkie-talkie.

I had started the cleaning process when I saw three guys coming through the woods. Only two of them ever spoke, and I referred to them as Meanguy and Niceguy. By the time they arrived, it had been at least 30 minutes since I’d shot.

As they approached, I wondered if they had wounded this deer, but they were strangers, not anyone I’d ever seen hunting that land.

Before they could see my deer clearly, I asked if they wounded a deer that morning. Meanguy said, “Yeah, my buddy took a shot, but we weren’t sure if he hit it or not.” That made me a little angry. I was taught to be careful with every shot

and try to find a wounded deer. But I didn’t say anything. I wasn’t going to let these bad sportsmen ruin my fine mood!

They came closer and Niceguy said, “Nice buck you got. It does look like the one I shot at, but you made a good kill.” I said, “Thanks.” They asked a few questions and I answered cautiously, since I didn’t know them.

That’s when Meanguy said to me, in a mildly threatening way, “You know that should be our deer. You were just road hunting anyway.” The look on his face said, *We shouldn’t be losing our buck to her!*

Niceguy jumped into the conversation, hinting that it was my deer and his buddy should calm down, but it was pretty obvious who was running the show in the group. I told him very clearly that we were NOT road hunting.

Meanguy was adamant that I broke the rules and that this should be their deer. My dad taught me that whoever took the killing shot deserved the deer.

I stood my ground, but I was getting pretty scared and nervous. My dad hadn’t made it down yet, and my stepmom, who doesn’t care

for confrontation, would have let them take the deer. We radioed Dad with a quick “Get down here, now!” I wanted these strangers to know that a man was on the way.

I continued the verbal battle with Meanguy, who got more belligerent. He inched his way closer to the deer, but I stood my ground. I saw Dad and breathed a sigh of relief. The strangers noticed him, too.

Niceguy said, “It’s her kill, let’s just get out of here.” Meanguy didn’t argue and they left. We filled Dad in on the confrontation and how I killed the deer.

I wondered if Meanguy would have done the same thing to a man? Funny, he gave up as soon as he saw a man joining us. Was Meanguy just showing off for his buddies as he tried to intimidate me?

I hope nothing like that happens again, but I learned from the experience. I am thankful that my dad taught me hunting etiquette, responsibility and laws. That knowledge gave me the confidence to stand my ground.

I admit that I’m a little more skeptical about hunting alone. Now, Dad and I typically hunt together. It’s a lot more fun for both of us. 🍄