

VFC2023-0001 - Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife Turkey Project

2024-1002 - Interview with John and Reba Hathaway

Interviewers: Andy Kolovos (VT Folklife), Joshua Morse (VT Department of Fish and Wildlife)

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Location: West Winfield, NY

Andy Kolovos [00:00:03] I gotta put on glasses to make sure. Yeah. Um, so this is Andy Kolovos from Vermont Folklife. Uh, today is the 15th of January, 2024. I'm in West Windfield, New York, and I'm here with.

John Hathaway [00:00:15] John Hathaway. Better known in Vermont as Butch Hathaway.

Andy Kolovos [00:00:21] Thank you. Butch. Who else is here?

John Hathaway [00:00:24] Reeba.

Reeba Hathaway [00:00:24] Do I--?

Andy Kolovos [00:00:27] If you can say it. Yeah.

Reeba Hathaway [00:00:28] Reeba Hathaway, his wife.

Andy Kolovos [00:00:30] Okay. Thank you, Reeba.

Josh Morse [00:00:31] Josh Morse from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

Andy Kolovos [00:00:34] Okay, great. So, Butch, since we're time traveling, um, tell me a little bit about growing up--where you grew up, what your family was like.

John Hathaway [00:00:44] Okay. I grew up, uh, half in the town of Pittsford and the rest in the town of Manchester. Uh, my mother died when I was a little boy, about 10 or 11. And, uh, then I a couple of years later, I went on my own, working my way, you know, for room and board and whatever, and to go to school. And I graduated from Burr and Burton Seminary, at the time, in Manchester.

Andy Kolovos [00:01:17] And what kind of work did you do?

John Hathaway [00:01:20] Farm work. You know, up in the morning at four and off to the races, ha? Yeah, yeah. Get cleaned up. Go to school now. And. Oh.

Andy Kolovos [00:01:33] So when you finished high school, what were you up to?

John Hathaway [00:01:38] I was farming at Dime. And then I tried a stint in the Marines. That didn't go because I had bad knee, and they gave me a honorable discharge, medical purpose. Then after that, I went to work on farms, you know, herd managers, and wound up going into artificial insemination, and got the bug. There was this big farm, you know it was it was big in acres, but very small in usable acres, so I decided to rent that, and started a herd and sold the other business. And so I was dairying at that time we had that opening of the season.

Andy Kolovos [00:02:40] And, uh, what town was that in.

John Hathaway [00:02:42] That it was down to Pawlet. North, north end of Pawlet. on Route 133 and uh. I live down the road a ways and I used to have to travel back and forth to get the farm. And, yeah, that's basically it. I was busy most of the time because the old farmer was run down and trying to pick it up. There's quite a lot of work But, you know, I had brothers around if I needed help, we could get help. My wife's twin brother, he come down and help me some. And so, you know, I'd get help, but. I think they let the turkeys out somewhere in the area of the farm that I was renting. Like I say, it's pretty good size. Maybe not 500 acres, but close to it. Is was a long way from across the road all the way down the out back of the barn. Long ways. And it was around almost exactly a half mile on the road on both sides.

Andy Kolovos [00:04:09] How big was the herd?

John Hathaway [00:04:11] Uh, at the time, I probably had 25 gals and building bigger all the time. I may have been up--I probably, by then, I probably had--well, we had 35. Yeah. Oh, you want to go into the hunting or no?

Andy Kolovos [00:04:32] Yeah. Tell me about hunting.

John Hathaway [00:04:34] Well, of course, I was an avid deer hunter all of my life since about 11 years old. I started hunting down in Manchester. I never had a gun big enough to shoot a deer anyways until I got a little older, then I borrowed a gun and go hunt deer. I got pretty proficient in shooting deer, but, uh, never tried a turkey. And fortunately for a biologist, he gave me some pointers, and, of course, I didn't use them (laughs). Well, you need to practice calling in turkeys. You need to practice. Uh, you can't be out plowing ground or milking cows and calling turkeys at the same time. You can't do two at once. Even though, you know. But around my barn all the time, there used to be 25, 30 turkeys hanging around there, in the barn yard, sometimes in the haybarn where I spilled some oats. They'd come in there--they love oats, by the way. And, uh, uh, so that's where that went. And that's where I was when I heard the old Big Boy gobbling, and had to get the cows in the barn, fed, cared for, and [unclear] all set. So I said, "well I'll see if I hear a out Turkey back." Well I didn't. I heard him over across the road pushing a half mile away-- probably six, seven hundred yards. Seven hundred, anyway. And, uh, but I could see him. He was in an open meadow. It was a steep bank, and it was on, uh, uh, bank. And, I mean, he'd fluff up--of course, he's as big as a moose, it seemed like. I said, "aw hell, bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. I know where he is. I know how to get there quick." And you know, I was young, I could run. So I grabbed my borrowed shotgun and my turkey call, and away I went! I figured, "aw, this is going to be pretty much duck soup." There's, there's a, I thought a hedgerow that would cover me going up into the meadow and I'd probably gotta call him up hill not along the hill. To my surprise there's only one pine tree that I could actually get behind. He's out there gobbling. And so I thought from there he didn't come to me, he ended up the bank a ways, he'd fluff up and gobble. Kept doing that till he went over the edge of the crown of the hill. And then there's a low spot and then big, high brush up there. So when he was out of sight, I run towards him and stopped. And I heard him gobble and he'd stick his heap up, look all around. And it had to go down and I'd run up the hill some more. And that went on for, oh, probably close to 100 yards. And the last time I popped up, he was just getting ready to head into the brush. And he was going sideways, fortunately not away, because you can't shoot a turkey going away from you. You know, you don't do any damage--I mean, the recoil on your shoulder, but. He was going kind of, from my right to my left. And so I pulled onto his head and neck and brought him down. Then I have a big surprise. I went over because he was floundering around--big turkey, Uh, 21.6 I guess he was, I call it 21.5 <unclear> but. Put my foot on his head, to hold him from flopping around, you know, and, uh, no beard. Couldn't see a beard. I said, "Oh my God, we're supposed to shoot a bearded turkey!" No beard. But I know it was the

right turkey. But, uh, I found out real quick he was the one I was after because he had big, long spurs an inch and an eighth long. Big spurs, and I reached down grabbed him by the leg and, "it's going to go through my hands!" Oh, they're sharp they a sharp. Oh, I could tell you, turkey spurs are really sharp. Of course then, back to the barn, milk the cows--well they'd already waited the time it took me to go do it, about a half hour late on the milking. And so, I went down, showed it to my wife and said "<unclear> is supposed to be having a thing down there. I'll go down and see how many guys come in with turkeys." I get down into Pawlet and there's a state vehicle coming around the other way. I think it was a state trooper, but I'm not sure. But I stopped because I had to stop to wait turn to through bridge. I said, "You get a lot of turkeys?" "No", he says, "haven't got any yet. You got one?" I said, "yes I do!" So he hauled it over, and I went over and reported my turkey. Of course, whoever was there taking them in says "<unclear> you know, you get him mounted and we'll put up state capital, I said, "well, if they want him up state capital they can--I'll give them the turkey and they can have it mounted." Because we haven't got any money. I used a borrowed shot gun... No, no. Uh uh, well, in a stall when you got to where? Yeah. Okay. I'm on top. I'm wearing barn clothes. Just very much like I am now. Literally, yea. I got, him so I call it the "Dumb Luck Turkey Hunt". Then I started figuring out how to use a turkey call, call 'em in. And that's a pretty good trick in itself because, you know, you hear them coming, they'll come a ways, they'll gobble, they'll come aways, gobble. And you better know about when they're at least 50 yards out, quit calling. Otherwise they ain't coming in. By that time, you know, they're staying and waiting and waiting. And they give up before you do. If you call, quite often you spook them, see? Because he might be right there looking at you and, you not knowing it, you know? So you want to just wait till he comes out, you know? But, I was told this, but I had to learn it for myself anyway. It's pretty much done luck turkey hunt. But it paid off. I was number one (laughs), right?

Andy Kolovos [00:12:58] Absolutely. So just a question about--was there class in how to do this? Was it just a conversation? How did you learn how to shoot, how to hunt turkeys?

John Hathaway [00:13:08] Oh yeah, I learned how to hunt turkeys, and finally I bought a--for myself, I had it when I come from Vermont, I bought a single shot, 12 gauge. Mule. Oh, that thing like to kick. I let my brother shoot it, he says, grabbed it by the barrel, "you want me to wrap it around that post or are you gonna do it?" Oh, God, it kicked awful. Then I got out here, I--of course, had to have a shotgun to hunt. So say here, out here, I bought a

Ithaca Deerslayer with both barrels. Yeah, the rifled--or not. The short, sighted barrel and a long barrel for shooting turkeys. And a few years, couple or three years later, everybody in southern Vermont was wired. Hey, you out there? There aren't that are, uh. That's why I had all these good deer. Not because of hunting in Vermont. But, I had a lot of antlers I had to give away because out there in the garage, that you guys did see.

Josh Morse [00:14:29] Uh huh.

John Hathaway [00:14:31] Yeah, I got me a ten gauge three and a half inch Magnum. I thought, "Man, I don't know, I know if I dare even shoot it," but it didn't ever kick much, it'd just push you right backwards. In fact, two or three times I'd get down on, you know, one knee and one leg out, and the next thing I get off my back, (laughs) I go get my turkey (laughs) .

Reeba Hathaway [00:15:00] Uh, you've mentioned, was there any class or something?

Andy Kolovos [00:15:01] Yeah--

Reeba Hathaway [00:15:04] Didn't they have some meeting set up around Pawlet, where the biologist that--you went to, a group of them met?

John Hathaway [00:15:14] Yeah. But I don't think many people came out around there like I thought they would. I thought there would be all sorts of turkeys, yeah. Of course, there was a lot of them at the farm I was at. Just up the road, I don't know Ed Cleveland got one that year or not. He and I usually was pestering the guy from--"give them a season. You got to have a season," you know?

Andy Kolovos [00:15:43] Yeah, it was a one bird limit.

John Hathaway [00:15:46] One bird limit. Yeah.

Andy Kolovos [00:15:49] So I mean, before turkeys were brought back to Vermont. Did you even think about turkeys?

John Hathaway [00:15:56] No. Didn't know a think about them. No. Only turkey I thought about was Thanksgiving turkey--and these are not Thanksgiving turkeys. Drumstick? You can't eat one. You just can't, it's all tendons and-- Then the thigh isn't particularly good either. The best meat's good, but turkey's not, not top shelf when they're in the wild. Especially when they're running up and down the hills of Vermont, you know? But, no, I thought it wouldn't be any job at all. just to sneak up on one like I do a deer. But then it dawned on me, you sneak up, you're still only going to see the wrong end of the turkey. You got to see the head end of that turkey if you're going to shoot one. No. Otherwise you just don't, you don't get anything. Might knock him down, that'd be it. Get right up and run. Definitely you gotta see the head. Head, neck, usually I look for about that much.

Andy Kolovos [00:17:14] That first bird. What time of day?

John Hathaway [00:17:21] Well after six, because it was at six when I heard him, so it was after six. Right quarter after. Okay. Uh, Not half past, I don't think. Season was open. I take my watch on that one (laughs). But it wasn't very open. It just opened and I heard him and figured, "why not?", yup. At least I get brag--have bragging rights to shoot the turkey. I never thought it'd be the bragging rights to shooting the first one in over 100 years, but that's the way it worked.

Andy Kolovos [00:18:04] You know, like, after that, right--

John Hathaway [00:18:06] And if I'd a had money, I would have had him mounted and sent him up in mind and sent him up to the state.

Andy Kolovos [00:18:12] What happened to the bird, though? Yeah, yeah. I mean, so.

John Hathaway [00:18:18] We ate it.

Andy Kolovos [00:18:18] How'd you learn how to dress a turkey? Clean it.

John Hathaway [00:18:22] Like chicken.

Andy Kolovos [00:18:24] Okay.

John Hathaway [00:18:26] Just like a chicken. Pluck it.

Reeba Hathaway [00:18:28] I don't do that. I cook. I don't clean (laughs)

John Hathaway [00:18:31] Yeah, yeah. Clean a turkey like you clean a chicken. Not as easy, but really <unclear>.

Reeba Hathaway [00:18:40] Oh.

John Hathaway [00:18:40] Yeah. Pretty well put together all the way around, inside and out. But, you know. But if I had the money. But I didn't have money enough to drive back to the farm about, you know? Everything's goin back into the farm and back into the farm. And my wife. I'm sure I'll agree to that. Right.

Reeba Hathaway [00:19:10] Yeah. That's. That's how you start.

John Hathaway [00:19:13] Yep. That's how you start. You work hard. Cut every corner you can. Not very well environment, actually.

Reeba Hathaway [00:19:24] And then in 1976 we moved out here. Bought a farm. Bought a farm and moved out.

John Hathaway [00:19:32] Yeah. And our first year they did have turkey hunting in Herkimer County. That year I listened, I listened, I couldn't find any turkeys around. Finally I heard one, but it was way, way, way off. My friend that loaned me the shotgun to start with, was out here on a farm by then and he said that had them over there. So I went over there and I got one. Started right off getting turkeys out here, then one--not, two, three years after I moved out here, we had turkeys all over out here. And that's--what's plaguing me now, see that meadow there? Usually there's turkeys in there at least two, three times a week. Haven't been for--since I got it mowed off I haven't seen turkey out there, I haven't seen a deer out there, you know? And up on the hill and all I can find is one old deer track where you walk up and wound up near an orchard to at top of the hill there. Small orchard. You'd see deer there. I've seen times when you just look out, and there's a big oak tree out there, deer'll be out there picking up acorns. Don't have them now. Don't know where they are.

Andy Kolovos [00:21:08] What do you think's going on?

John Hathaway [00:21:12] I don't know if they're alive, they say they got Covid and died, I don't know what did for all of them. No, you really don't know. I've heard rumors of mountain lions about anyway. I'd do this as <unclear>. Couldn't kill that many deer. There'd have to be four or five of them anyway, because, I mean, I'm talking a big area where you used to always say deer now you don't see them. Or don't see them this year. Now maybe they went into winter area and not coming out for--I don't know why, because we don't have snow, but not like it used to be when I moved out here. You'd have to pick your spot. Get across the road with a snowmobile or otherwise you're gonna drop about 12 or 14ft to the road. It's be chopped right off, where they take--go up through up there with big snow blowers and blow it back. We never get those kinds of winters. Haven't been.

Andy Kolovos [00:22:17] When you when you moved here, you were hunting on your own land. Yeah.

John Hathaway [00:22:21] Oh, yeah.

Andy Kolovos [00:22:23] And back in Vermont in the 70s? Yeah. When you were deer hunting, where were you deer hunting?

John Hathaway [00:22:30] Oh, a lot up in Chittenden. Like going up on the mountain. Like going up and down the mountains. Jump them up and shoot them when they jump up, yeah. That was my style of hunting. Yeah. Probably never need that scope on the rifle anyway. Yeah. There's a, you gonna jump one out, you only got two bounds. And he can find something to hide behind--you'd swear there's nothing, but he'd disappear behind something and--maybe three bounds and you be, have him nailed by then for sure. And I found out turkeys are a little more shy, especially in the mating season. They are very shy. Because you ain't going to see hens anyway, nesting somewhere. All these years, I've only run on to one turkey nest, and that was it. Dumb hen put her nest right in the middle of a hay field. I was going down through the hay binding. Out flies this turkey. And so is. Yeah, I went ahead and stopped, and sure enough, 13 eggs. Oh, anyway. [indicates turkey call]. So that's the call. [indicates photograph] and that's me and my turkey and

[indicates photograph] that's me and my turkey. And my ten gauge three and half inch Magnum is still here. The crowbar. Heavy is a crowbar. Oh, my God, that thing's heavy.

Josh Morse [00:24:31] I would love to hear you use that turkey call. Show us what you learned for calling the birds.

John Hathaway [00:24:35] Well, it's really not work quite as good as it should. Needs having some chalk on it [demonstrates turkey call] that's about it anyway [demonstrates turkey call]. And if you screw up like on that last one, it doesn't seem to bother a gobbler at all. In fact, I tried--you take a ball point pen. Remember the old ball point pens you used to unscrew in the middle? Take the tip of it toward you mouth and you can call a turkey with that, really good! Sounds real good. A lot better than I ever could with a mouth call. There was a lot of years I couldn't have used mouth call anyways because I've got false teeth!(laughs). But that was real good.

Josh Morse [00:25:45] No. I talked some to your son when I was getting ready for this story. Did you ever hunt with him? Did he take up hunting?

John Hathaway [00:25:53] Oh, yeah. He was a good deer hunter. You know, a good shot. A very good shot. And, he don't hunt now, but he never, as he said it, he just couldn't get the hang of (laughs) turkey hunting. You know, I did. I know how to do it pretty good after a few years, you know? Sometimes you have to call in four or five turkeys before you got one in the gun, but I didn't matter, you know? At least you knew they were there. With deer, of course, you don't know he's until he's moving (laughs).

Josh Morse [00:26:36] With turkey hunting. Did you end up ever hunting with friends or other people, or is it something you did by yourself?

John Hathaway [00:26:44] Tried it a few times with friends out in Vermont. And I could <unclear> on a Vermont hunting license after enough years. But they always wanted to do it like deer, to have a drive-- Yeah. So a guy driving them, he's not going to get a shot, you know? All he's got's tail feathers looking at him. They don't drive very good either. They don't have a trail or nothing to go off like deer go, you know? Well, you know he's going to be coming, say through there. It's not that way with turkey (laughs). Turkey has a mind of its own and goes where it wants to go. But they will move in a flock. If there happens to be

somebody in front of it, then I could get one. But, I don't know, it didn't appeal to me near as much as go out there--and I'm not a sitter, but when it comes to turkey hunting I learned to be a sitter. (laughs) Sometimes I'd move at the wrong time. I never even wore camouflage until probably ten years after I moved out here. Then I started wearing camo. I never see helped a lot, but I did anyway. Yeah. Found <unclear> old barn clothes and went out. Maybe, I don't think turkey can smell, but maybe he thought I was a cow out there, I don't know (laughs) I don't think they smell. That's why they hang with the deer a lot. The deer smell, turkeys see and hear unbelievable good. Yeah, they could hear (lightly taps table top once) that all the way up that shed. Just that much noise, they can hear it.

Reeba Hathaway [00:28:47] Are they supposed to be color blind, turkeys? Aren't they color blind?

John Hathaway [00:28:50] No, I don't know if they are, but I don't know.

Reeba Hathaway [00:28:53] Maybe it's deer,

[00:28:59] Deer are supposed to be. Uh, yeah. I know deer <unclear> they're supposed to be color blind, but when I wear my orange hunting coat. I don't have near as good of a success. I think its, frankly, because they can spot the movement. They can tell white from black or whatever, you know? Where I don't know with turkey. I think turkey can probably see color. They see a lot more than you think that they can see, but, of course--you know, I can see that 380 degrees just by turning their heads. I've made some very...and I tell you--deer like to be around near turkeys. I don't know, turkeys spook. Deer will go. In a hurry. They don't look to see what was spooking it, they just beat Pete! Yeah, turkey'll run a--fun thing to hunt. Of course, I haven't hunt in quite a few years now because, you know, macular degeneration. I did it bothered much, and. I went to shoot a deer about 30 yards away. Missed it. And, uh, you know, the scope was all like this, and, uh, and, uh, I said, "uhp, I guess probably a good place for me not to be with a rifle is out in the woods. Now, if I can't shoot a deer standing, it literally standing a little bit further from here to that red shed, that ain't very far, you know? There's about 20 yards there. That's the other thing with turkey hunting. I never--wouldn't have shot at 40 yards, 50 yards. Maybe we ought to convert that back to feet. (laughs) You don't see 50 yards in cover. You just can't. 50 yards--especially something the size of turkey's head. You aren't going to see it at that. You aren't gonna see it there. No, most, most turkeys are shot 30, to 50 feet probably.

Andy Kolovos [00:31:30] What's the effective range of the shotgun you use?

John Hathaway [00:31:34] Well, that depends on the shotgun you use.

Andy Kolovos [00:31:36] The one you, the one you--the Magnum for example.

John Hathaway [00:31:38] Oh, the--that one's got a good range. Effective on a turkey, that would get you out toward 40 yards pretty good. If you could see it. But that's the other trick, see--they're liable to spot you and you won't even know there's a turkey there. They're going to just leave. You know he should be right there, but he's not. They're, they're very alert. Very alert. More so than deer.

Andy Kolovos [00:32:21] Yeah. It's--I'm fascinated by the differences you're describing between hunting deer and hunting turkey. Um.

John Hathaway [00:32:30] Big difference. Big, big difference. Turkey's a lot harder. A lot harder. Takes a lot more patience. Yeah. Well, because a lot of people, they call it hunting, they go up, sit on a stump, sit there all day. But I don't call that hunting. They're just waiting. (laughs) Well, you're not hunting, the deer could be right over that knob all day and wouldn't see it, see? Where I would. (laughs). I might not, I might not see it good enough to shoot it, but I'd <unclear> (laughs). It's just the way it is <unclear>. But turkey hunting is quite interesting, really.

Andy Kolovos [00:33:27] You know, the way you describe it, you make it sound almost like fishing, you know? You're, you're sitting, paying attention and trying to attract something.

John Hathaway [00:33:34] Right.

Andy Kolovos [00:33:36] The difference is you can tell it's there.

John Hathaway [00:33:40] Uh, turkey is always out there because you hear him gobbling! But how far is he? Is he in close enough so I better keep still, or is he--? Now I'm gonna go and give him another call!

Reeba Hathaway [00:33:58] Can you tell the difference if it's a hen or a male with the <unclear>?

John Hathaway [00:34:03] Oh, yeah. Yeah. Gobblers gobble, hens don't. Hens sound like that box there--when it's not gobbling (briefly demonstrates turkey call). This one here will gobble, but it's not gobbling, but it don't gobble because no <unclear> (demonstrates turkey call) But if it had the rubber bands that are made to go on there. You know, they go from here to here (indicates location on turkey call), and that'll make it.

Reeba Hathaway [00:34:32] They call that a what, a Lynch Call? No, what did they call it?

John Hathaway [00:34:36] Not, it's not a Lynch.

Josh Morse [00:34:37] John, you are in luck! (laughs)

John Hathaway [00:34:40] You have two of them?

Josh Morse [00:34:41] I only have one, but I think you can make that work with one.

John Hathaway [00:34:46] I don't know. I don't think so. (Josh sets up turkey call with rubber band). Well, there's a way--not too tight. Put it on different way. You learn all sorts of tricks when you're out in the--out and about. (Josh demonstrates turkey call) Sound like you got a gobbler? (Josh demonstrates turkey call, then sets it down) <unclear> get that thing back?

Josh Morse [00:35:23] I'll get that back at the end.

John Hathaway [00:35:24] Oh, okay.

Josh Morse [00:35:25] Yeah.

John Hathaway [00:35:26] Well, no. Like I said, does it give it a better sound as well here <unclear> (demonstrates turkey call). One side's always sounded better, calling this way. But I gotta say, I listened a lot of different turkey things through the years, oh, "you gotta

use this sequence, don't change the sequence or you won't get him" I never bothered to sequence (laughs) at all! First thing I did though, "I'm going make that sound like a hen turkey," and I went in the hen house. A little Rhode Island Red taught me how to cluck (laughs) turkey! Yeah, Like a hen turkey. Yeah. And of course you don't want to give it-- you don't wanna do that (demonstrates turkey call) or you don't have no more turkey. (laughs) He's gone. (laughs) And that's fall or spring, that's a worry call. Yep.

Andy Kolovos [00:36:45] So I'm curious about learning how to do this from a hen. A chicken. Would you--can you talk, like, were you just hanging out in the henhouse like--?

John Hathaway [00:36:53] No. Just listened to them "cluck, cluck, cluck"--you ever hear a hen?--"cluck, cluck, cluck". Yeah. Big hens, usually "cluck, cluck, cluck." A lot of the newer ones, I don't know if they do too much, but. Well, listened to that, listened to that, okay, well I'll do that first--try it. Started getting success? So I never changed my, never changed my system. I found the one side the box worked better than the other. Why, I don't know. I don't know who made this box. It's got writing on it, but I don't think it tells who it is, does it? As.

Reeba Hathaway [00:37:33] It was <unclear> Texas.

[00:37:38] It was made in Texas, yeah.

Reeba Hathaway [00:37:39] Yeah.

Andy Kolovos [00:37:41] Burnham Brothers.

John Hathaway [00:37:43] Burnam Brothers.

Andy Kolovos [00:37:45] The model T-12.

John Hathaway [00:37:46] Yep. And I'm pretty sure it was after Lindholm's Diner <unclear> became a sport shop, and I went in there and they happened to have that. Well, that's what you gotta to have, you got to have box call. Well that's what he says works the best because <unclear>. Well you've got sunlight hitting... Sunlight hitting the gobblers. You get all the sounds you ever want. Only trouble it is, it ties up both hands. That's why

they use a mouth call a lot. I gotta tell you a little story if you ever wan to shut that off. You know, I told you about the uh, that's, uh.

Andy Kolovos [00:38:28] Do you want me to keep it running or do you want me to turn it off?

John Hathaway [00:38:29] Oh, I don't care, you can leave it on. You've, you got it.

Andy Kolovos [00:38:32] Okay.

[00:38:33] I'm just, uh. You take a ball point pen, the old style where they unscrew in the middle? You take the small end of it, put that here (demonstrates, makes clucking sound) and you can sound like turkey. I go, "Oh, I gotta try this. So I was driving up into the gorge and out in the field there is a bunch of jakes, you know, gobblers. And I roll the window down and cluck on that. I never see such a reaction. And they told me there's some mean ones down there. They come at a car like--I mean putting their spurs to the headlights, and I had to roll the window up otherwise they'd come in the--I didn't want them coming after me! (laughs) <unclear>. Well, I guess it works. I never tried out in the field on a real hunt. But, you know, with a lot of times you learn a lot of this stuff side the road <unclear>. Clucking a little bit and see if you can get him to come in. And you can get out of car, hear one gobbling a couple hundred yards out. You get out, leave the vehicle, even though you already closed the door, and you call him right in. If you're lucky. (laughs) But they come in, they. Yeah. that other background sound, they don't associate it with a cluck it. Either that or they're over eager. (laughs) I don't know which, but. Because that's how you locate a turkey. You can go around last part of April and gobble and they'd gobble back. I had a owl hoot, they say they'd gobble to that, but I never had any much luck with it. Homemade, of course, but. You know, a piece of PVC about that long (demonstrates length) with a small piece into it and a hole and a (sighs) sounds an owl hooting, but I never could get a turkey to be confused with it. (laughs) Though I never carried it much. But, that's my favorite right there (indicates turkey call), and it served me well all the years I was turkey hunting, so, yup.

Andy Kolovos [00:41:25] Typical hunt.

John Hathaway [00:41:28] Typical hunt?

Andy Kolovos [00:41:28] Can you describe a typical hunt me?

John Hathaway [00:41:34] Typical hunt would be to locate a gobbler. No sense in setting in empty woods clucking at the trees. They don't, they don't respond. But you go out in the woods and then right back to my barn where you hear the turkeys going out in there. You hear one gobble. If he's a long ways, you're trying to get a lot closer. But if he's, you know, say we're halfway up that meadow. You can gently bring him in, even in the woods. So you just set, set down. Make sure you got as much cover as you can find in that particular area, and you start clucking. Call him, call him. And then if he gobbles some more, you wait a little bit, and you keep doing it. And then, you know, eventually he'll either come in or you'll get wise to you and he'll take off! <laughs> And remember, 50% of time they get wise to you because they are very sharp. On all that. But now, for me that's been the best luck. And you want to--huh, last time I didn't get one, uh, I was in a--behind my place there's a, like a swamp. And that's up in where those big spruces were. And. I called him in, called him in he was that ridge head away. Twenty yards away. Right out in the open. By golly, I couldn't pick that ten gauge up and--I didn't even get it up off the ground, only about here and <demonstrates position of gun> and chooo! <laughs> He's gone! And it don't take em long, either. They can get gone as good as any white tail can! Maybe better. They ain't as big, don't take as much to cover them, I guess. When the seem to know to get something between 'em, them and us--you, and it don't matter which way you look, you ain't gonna see him. You just aren't.

Reeba Hathaway [00:44:19] Have they continued to put them in other states as years went on with their successful "transplants," I'll call it.

Josh Morse [00:44:29] Yeah, Vermont was, Vermont was really successful. The turkeys did well there. So we ended up giving turkeys to other states.

John Hathaway [00:44:36] Oh, good.

Josh Morse [00:44:38] In the years that followed...

John Hathaway [00:44:39] Good.

Josh Morse [00:44:40] ...we even gave turkeys overseas in some cases.

John Hathaway [00:44:43] Really?

Josh Morse [00:44:44] Yeah. Those Vermont turkeys, they were. They did great..-

John Hathaway [00:44:47] Right.

Josh Morse [00:44:48] ...and they were really tough because we had cold winters.

John Hathaway [00:44:48] Yeah.

Josh Morse [00:44:49] Yeah, they, they were amazing to me that they could multiply so fast.

Josh Morse [00:44:56] Mhm.

John Hathaway [00:44:57] Do you know where they put them out?

Josh Morse [00:44:59] You know I don't know off the top of my head.

Josh Morse [00:45:02] You don't know the spot. You don't know the spot.

Andy Kolovos [00:45:05] Germany I know they sent some--.

Josh Morse [00:45:08] No, no Vermont.

Andy Kolovos [00:45:10] Oh! In Vermont. where did they release them in Vermont.

Josh Morse [00:45:10] When they seeded them.

Josh Morse [00:45:11] Couple places in Rutland County.

Reeba Hathaway [00:45:14] Yeah.

John Hathaway [00:45:14] Oh we know that, but I, I've wondered.

Josh Morse [00:45:18] I can look this up for you.

John Hathaway [00:45:20] My brother said they put them just up there on to my farm--the farm I was renting. Right near the house where he lives. And right across the road where his brother-in-law--I mean, it wasn't no house there, but that'd mean, running north into Pawlet.

Reeba Hathaway [00:45:44] Was that biologist raising them and he sent them out or how?

John Hathaway [00:45:48] No, no. Other. He'd trap them. He trap them. That's why I told this guy to take and set his traps up behind my barn, I'd get them to come right to him. They loved them oats that I spilled. <laughs> When they trapped some down on Cleveland's.

Reeba Hathaway [00:46:18] I thought they did some in Pawlet valley, I'm not sure.

John Hathaway [00:46:20] Well, he may have <crosstalk>. But, you know, the biggest congregation early on was right there at the Ames' farm and Cleveland's farm where--there's a hill there at Cleveland's farm. It's called a 'cobble' to me. Likely up on that hill. I think probably there's probably some oak and beech up in there. You know, <unclear> miles on behind the barn is a big sugar orchard which also had oak and beech and hickory. And I don't know if they'd eat a hickory nut or not, but I assume they can crush them, I don't know. Deer do. So I assume turkey eat just about everything, you know? Everything--great foragers. But they loved being out in my barn yard with corn that go through the cow. They'd peck that. We had a hole in the double doors on the end of the bar. A hole about yea big <demonstrates size> where I think there used to be a hinge, and a cow backed through it and broke it. I want to guess <unclear> I'd go in, you know. I could see they're in there when I went up by the barn to go to work, so I'd go up in the manger so I wouldn't be seen in that hole, and sneak over that hole and look. Immediately, away they'd go. So quick, I mean how they know I?--you know, from now to now and they'd be, not flying or running or anything, they would start walking out. Be 25 or 30. Not uncommon. Oh, it's a lot 'a turkey.

Andy Kolovos [00:48:34] How often when you were, like, were you working and you'd hear a turkey, and then as opposed to saying, you know--how often was it you were doing something else and you heard a turkey and decided to go after it? Compared to--

John Hathaway [00:48:47] Not very often. Once I got to working, I was working and my guns was at home or somewhere a long ways away. And the turkey call too, you know? Because, you know, if you're on a tractor you're not going to hear 'em. And most of the work would be on tractor. Once in a while you'd be out driving fence posts, then you hear them, but, no. They seemed to respond to that some, when you whap that fence post, and get there and they would come and see what was going on, I guess. Still don't know why they came around, but I say, oh, April and May, <unclear> in front of the jug, <unclear> <song beings to play in background> you didn't see many turkeys at all, even though you knew there's probably 100 on that one farm. Literally on that one farm. You wouldn't seem 'em. But then there'd be turkeys here and turkeys over in that field. Well, we had a lot of turkeys.

Josh Morse [00:49:56] So I found where they reintroduced them. I pulled up, um, a little bit from John Hall's journal from the day that he released the first turkeys in Vermont. So in his journal, he wrote, "February 28th, 1969, Bill met me in West Pawlet with two gobblers that he had canon-netted the day before. So those were the first two birds we released that afternoon, around 2:00. And then on March 4th, I went back down there and met Bill, and we put out five turkey hens in the same location." So that was West Pawlet, right in your neck of the woods.

Josh Morse [00:50:31] Well, no, that's quite a ways away. How did you get all the way over north of Pawlet? Toward to Middletown. That's right. That's were we'd see them all, you know. See them other places, but not in the numbers. But of course they was there on the farm. Obviously I'd see more on the farm then I would driving by, you know? I've seen people drive right by and never ever even know they drove by a flock of them out in an open field. How you miss them, wouldn't know, but. All and all those fun days are gone. No deer hunting, no turkey hunting. I suppose I could try and shoot a turkey because you point a shot gun, you don't aim it. Or I could get the scope off my deer gun and shoot deer with that one. Oh God, that hurts. Kick--that 12 gauge kicks like a mule. I tell you, it's brutal.

Reeba Hathaway [00:51:39] He still has his lifetime hunting license and fishing.

[00:51:45] Oh yeah.

[00:51:45] We keep the fishing because it was fun to go with the grandkids.

John Hathaway [00:51:52] Well, now they're grown up.

Andy Kolovos [00:51:55] Where, where are you grandkids live?

John Hathaway [00:51:58] Tucson, Arizona for three. And, well of them actually, the Arizona girl, oldest one, is in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. She just finished graduating from college, and she's gonna move back to Tucson. And the other two are down in Hopkinton, Mass, which is where they start the Boston Marathon. Yep.

Reeba Hathaway [00:52:31] We've got two going to college that want to become pilots. Commercial pilots. So one has got his personal license now, but he's, he's going to Florida Tech for, for the flight school. The other one, she just graduated from Michigan Tech, but she's going to start a flight program, so.

John Hathaway [00:52:54] Yep.

John Hathaway [00:52:55] Maybe they'll give us a ride? <laughter>

John Hathaway [00:52:58] Should be able to get a cheaper ride, right? Trouble is, they wouldn't be going anywhere I wanted to go. <laughter>

Josh Morse [00:53:05] You said your son--

John Hathaway [00:53:06] Is that on or off?

Andy Kolovos [00:53:08] We're on. I can turn off now if you want?

John Hathaway [00:53:11] Oh well, I guess. No matter.

Andy Kolovos [00:53:12] Oh, okay. Okay

Josh Morse [00:53:13] <crosstalk>I had a couple of details I wanted to make sure to get. So, um, that first hunt, how close did you have to get to that turkey? Because it sounded like you were chasing him up the field.

John Hathaway [00:53:22] Well and the land went over--you know, dipped down...

Josh Morse [00:53:27] Yeah.

Josh Morse [00:53:28] ...before it get up the brush line. And he stayed in that dip most of the time I was going up the field.

Josh Morse [00:53:35] Mhm.

[00:53:35] And, uh, so when I straightened up he was, width of this house.

Josh Morse [00:53:44] That's amazing.

Josh Morse [00:53:45] That's ten yards. 30ft.

Josh Morse [00:53:49] I would say ten yards.

John Hathaway [00:53:49] Yeah.

Josh Morse [00:53:51] And you had borrowed that shotgun from a friend?

John Hathaway [00:53:54] Yes.

Josh Morse [00:53:54] Do you remember what that was?

John Hathaway [00:53:56] Yeah, it was, the gun was a Savage automatic 12 gauge with a recoil barrel.

John Hathaway [00:54:06] Do you know what the choke was on that?

John Hathaway [00:54:09] Full.

John Hathaway [00:54:10] Gotcha. That's good shooting with the full choke, so close.

John Hathaway [00:54:16] I thought we had a picture of me holding the gun. I guess we don't. <looking at photographs, clothes rustling> Well I'm not holding the gun there. Got to be it. Can't really tell. Well, I know it had a recoil barrel, and it was the, you know, the only one I seen like it. But, it done the job.

Andy Kolovos [00:54:49] One thing, one last thing for me that I'm curious about is, how would you prepare the meat?

Reeba Hathaway [00:54:57] What?

Andy Kolovos [00:54:58] How would you cook them?

Reeba Hathaway [00:54:59] Oh. The meat?

Andy Kolovos [00:55:00] Yeah.

Reeba Hathaway [00:55:00] We roasted it like you would a regular turkey. Yeah, we picked the feathers and, and it's a job. <laughter> It's a job. And we laid strips of bacon over it to kind of hope it would be a little more moist and, but, uh, they're tougher. They're not like a domestic bird. And stronger flavor too, I would....

John Hathaway [00:55:31] But I say, a drumstick is a just not even possible, really <laughter>. You get a little meat out of it, but, you know--

Reeba Hathaway [00:55:39] It was exciting. Very exciting to, to cook your own, first turkey that you'd gotten yourself. So we were excited.

Josh Morse [00:55:52] Reeba, did you ever go out hunting with them?

Reeba Hathaway [00:55:55] I have, yeah.

Josh Morse [00:55:57] Not turkey hunting.

Reeba Hathaway [00:55:58] I've never shot a deer. I've only shot woodchuck.

John Hathaway [00:56:04] Never went turkey hunting with me.

Reeba Hathaway [00:56:05] No. Not turkey hunting.

John Hathaway [00:56:10] Yeah--

Reeba Hathaway [00:56:12] If the animals destroy my flowers to make holes and stuff like that, I'm on revenge to get even with them. But I enjoy seeing the wildlife.

John Hathaway [00:56:23] Found out too that--.

Reeba Hathaway [00:56:24] Fishing is different. That's fun.

John Hathaway [00:56:28] A 250 Savage and a pile of wood out there, at the end of that second shed--.

Reeba Hathaway [00:56:29] He had a <unclear>

John Hathaway [00:56:33] So my wife sticks it out the window. That window over there--

Reeba Hathaway [00:56:40] --so <unclear> much better like the <unclear>

John Hathaway [00:56:40] And, he sat right up on top, a woodchuck sitting on top of that. My brother Fred was sitting over there over, he says "thought it was going to blow my eardrums!"<laughs>. [When] a gun inside goes off, it makes a lot of noise. <laughter>

Reeba Hathaway [00:57:02] (To Andy) You cut that out. <laughter>

John Hathaway [00:57:03] Alright?

Reeba Hathaway [00:57:03] I said, he cuts that out. <laughter>

John Hathaway [00:57:05] What do you mean? You got the woodchuck!

Reeba Hathaway [00:57:08] Well, that's beside the point.

John Hathaway [00:57:10] Yeah.

Josh Morse [00:57:11] Um, I, I had one other thing I wanted to make sure to ask, which is, all the years that you were turkey hunting, was there, was there ever a favorite hunt or a hunt that was just your best hunt?

John Hathaway [00:57:27] My best hunt was not successful. <laughs> I'm not joking! That's where the turkey come out at about 30, 40 yards out, and I had ten gauge. There he was, you know? I called him, I called him, called him. Then, you know, quite a ways out, out in the open which. But I still couldn't get the gun up to shoot him. That's really the best. Best calling job I ever done, everything. And I didn't get the fool turkey. And my milk inspector--not milk inspector, milk tester, had to write on the dirt on my, back of my truck that I missed the turkey. <laughs> Made me wash my truck. <laughter> I would say that, probably. Not a lot of those up here on the farm, <unclear> I had the farm, which is about five, six miles <unclear> that direction. Pretty much east of here. And, uh, I was over on a, I did get that turkey. That was one where I was down, squatting down when he come walking through. And I, you know, I just <unclear> hit a little burst anyways. I knew he had to come out somewhere I'd see him. He did. Then I had to pick myself up off the ground. Clear my head. Oh, is that big gun and it, the kick hurt. Never hurt. But it can push hard. Push her backwards. You ought to be leaning on it when you don't shake. I got the one with the 36 inch barrel. The guy who was here the other day, he used a 32 inch barrel. He said that kicked. But mine didn't kick. That 12 gauge deer shooter kicks like a mule. <slaps hands together> It hits you. I don't care I how tight you get it <slaps hands together> still hit you, you know. Hard. [00:59:52]

Reeba Hathaway [00:59:55] (To Andy and Josh) Do the two of you hunt?

Andy Kolovos [00:59:57] I don't.

Josh Morse [00:59:57] I do.

Reeba Hathaway [00:59:58] (To Josh) You do hunt?

Josh Morse [00:59:59] Yeah.

Reeba Hathaway [00:59:59] Yeah.

John Hathaway [00:59:59] Huh.

[01:00:01] The turkey?

Josh Morse [01:00:02] I do hunt turkey.

[01:00:03] And deer?

[01:00:03] Mhm.

Reeba Hathaway [01:00:05] <unclear>.

Josh Morse [01:00:05] (To John) Your story of calling that turkey in your best calling job ever and--

John Hathaway [01:00:13] Yeah that's--

Josh Morse [01:00:14] --just moving a little bit--

John Hathaway [01:00:16] Yeah.

Josh Morse [01:00:16] And seeing him run away--

John Hathaway [01:00:17] Right.

John Hathaway [01:00:18] --is very similar to the first time I went turkey hunting. My uncle and I called a turkey right across the field. And I just shifted, and he saw it and was gone like that.

John Hathaway [01:00:29] Yep.

Josh Morse [01:00:30] Yep.

John Hathaway [01:00:32] Don't have to shift much. <laughs> Yeah. <unclear> my friend, Peter, over the hill, I've forgotten who he was hunting with. But he got one called in and the other guy didn't shoot it. I guess Peter thought the other guy was gonna, so when he got ready to shoot it, it'd already disappeared, you know. Which they do. They just disappear.

Reeba Hathaway [01:00:59] When we was still on that farm in Pawlet, I went out one time with this, with the movie camera and the box call. And I was going to see if I could call them in. And I, I was able to, and I got it on the movie camera. But when I went to play the film back it, it did one of these things where it all crimped up the film, and so I didn't have it on film any more. But that darn cam--that darn projector would do that. It was Bell and Howell <unclear>. If you didn't thread it just right it would do that.

John Hathaway [01:01:38] Yeah.

Reeba Hathaway [01:01:42] Crimp all up my film.

John Hathaway [01:01:42] So much for the--

Reeba Hathaway [01:01:43] But it's not impossible. If I can do it, it's not impossible. It's pretty--

John Hathaway [01:01:47] Well yeah, but you can <crosstalk> sit for an hour waiting for to a chipmunk come out--

John Hathaway [01:01:56] --so she can put a BB through it. <laughs> Yeah, but. Oh dear. Yeah. Anybody want a cup of coffee?

Andy Kolovos [01:02:07] I'm good. But if you're, I mean.

Josh Morse [01:02:10] Well, I want to make sure, if you're okay with it, that a take a couple pictures of you--

Andy Kolovos [01:02:13] I'm going to shut off now, okay?

John Hathaway [01:02:16] Of who.

Josh Morse [01:02:17] Of you.

Andy Kolovos [01:02:17] Yeah.

John Hathaway [01:02:17] (indicates Josh's camera) Well I thought that's what that was doing.

Josh Morse [01:02:18] Just took a video during the story of your first hunt, but I want to get some still photos--you and the call especially. And make sure to take some photos of those magazines.

Andy Kolovos [01:02:27] And I'm going to turn this off now.

End of Interview