

2006 Spring Turkey Season in Review

Texas always opens its "North Zone" turkey season the first Saturday in April, which this year happened to be April 1. This **early opener** combined with incredibly **dry range** conditions left early season **hunters wondering** if the birds were even workable. As the season progressed the birds began to warm up and start breeding. By the **end of April** the birds were **red hot** but by that time all of our hunters were long gone catching season openers in other states across the country. Relief finally came in late April when we had a **big storm** system sweep across Texas helping to quench the thirsty landscape. As I write this the countryside has **greened up** and all of the trees have finally leafed out. It looks like we will be **blessed** with at least a small hatch, which is far better than no hatch at all.

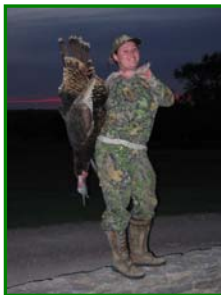
Our **opening weekend** hunters at the Jones Lodge harvested almost two birds each with the "Big Gobbler Award" going to **Jerry Harris**. Clayton McKendree's group of hunters stayed at our Main Lodge. They too did extremely well harvesting two birds each, with **Mitchell Rhodes** winning the "Big Gobbler Award." Our Finklea Lodge hunters had a tough time scoring a full limit of birds. Gobblers were hard to come by and showed little interest in hunter's calls. The "Big Gobbler Award" went to **Robert Graham Jr.**



Our next hunts, (**during the first week**) were on the Paxton, Jones, and Harrell Ranches. The Pepsi Americas group hunted our Jones Ranch and did very well harvesting full limits of birds with **Darrell Harvey** winning the "Big Gobbler Award." Hunters at the Paxton Ranch also did very well harvesting almost 2 birds each, along with a javelina. **Ralph Totty** harvested the largest Tom earning him the "Big Gobbler Award." Hunters at our Harrell Ranch harvested 11 gobblers for 8 hunters. **Bob Lowder**, aka "Bullet Bob" won the "Big Gobbler Award."



Our **second weekend** hunts took place once again out of 3 separate lodges. Hunters at the Main Lodge did very well harvesting 2 birds each. **Rodney Meneely** earned the "Big Gobbler Award" on that hunt. Hunters staying at our Jones Lodge also had fantastic success with **Jim Miller** winning the "Big Gobbler Award" on the very last morning of his hunt. Once again the Finklea Ranch was slow with only 12 birds being harvested by 12 hunters. **Griff Gleason** harvested the largest gobbler earning him the "Big Gobbler Award." After two slow hunts in a row, Finklea hunters and guides alike were left scratching their heads wondering what was going on. Most of them have hunted the Finklea for many years having tremendous success.



Our next hunt was **during the second week** of the season on our Paxton Ranch. Hunters once again did extremely well. **Emily McBride** was blessed by having a birthday during her hunt, receiving a birthday cake, harvesting her first two gobblers, and winning the "Big Gobbler Award." She had a good guide, her husband Jonathan!

Our **third weekend** hunters at the Finklea Ranch did extremely well much to the relief of everyone, especially the guides. The birds finally turned on and everyone was very happy. **Joe Shannon** harvested a 24 pounder with 1½” spurs earning him the “Big Gobbler Award.” **Joe** has harvested the **largest gobbler** on so **many hunts** it's anticlimactic. Next spring will mark his 10th hunt with Magnum! Way to go Joe! **Tim Mercer's** group of hunters at the Main Lodge also did very well harvesting many gobblers, snakes, and wounding a bobcat. **Ken Waters** harvested the big bird of the trip earning him the “Big Gobbler Award.” Hunters at the Harrell Ranch did good but not great with 7 gobblers for 6 hunters and 4 “admitted misses.” The largest gobbler was harvested by **Dennis McIlwee** winning him the “Big Gobbler Award.”



“Magnum Hunters” once again harvesting over **200 gobblers** on **126,000 acres** of land! A **good number of jakes** were seen on all of our ranches, especially later in the season promising a good hunt next spring for 2 year olds. There will be plenty of 3 year old birds along with a number of 4 year old Trophy Toms for those lucky hunters who win the head to head contest of life and death. **New for next spring** we are offering **3 bird limits** and **discounts** for hunters who book **back to back hunts!** We will have more **double bull blinds** for rent and if there is enough interest we will have real **Rio Grande turkey hens** mounted as decoys for rent. Lastly, “**Turkey Hunters**” who hunt with Magnum for 9 springs can get their 10th spring hunt for **half price!**

I fly up to **Montana** in a couple of days to help guide a small group of “semi-guided” hunters on an exploratory mission for **Merriam Gobblers**. We are working with another outfitter who has a very nice lodge with large land holdings. If this works out hunters can make back to back **Rio/Merriam's hunts!** In **May** we are guiding a very large **exotic safari** on our **new 37,000 ranch** in West Texas. There are many species of game found on this ranch including **Cape buffalo, Kudu, and Sable!** Later in the month Melony and I depart to **Argentina** for a combination **dove, duck, goose,** and fishing trip. This Argentinean Outfitter would like for us to send some groups down there to experience the **finest bird hunting in the world.** We will check it out and let you know what we find. In **June** we have several more **exotic safaris** booked then we are off to **Alaska** for **King Salmon** season. In mid **July** we are off to **South Africa** on 3 different exploratory safaris. This is in an effort to offer our “Magnum” hunters more opportunities for **plains game,** along with inexpensive “**African Predator Hunting**” and **bird hunting** along the Limpopo River! A complete report will follow.....stay tuned! Check out our internet “Specials” page for the latest hunt discounts or last minute hunt cancellations. These change almost weekly and you are sure to find great savings on your next adventure!

If you have some **good ideas** on how we can make our guide service better then please **share them with us.** If you have some **words of praise** please pass them along and we will post them on our web site. If there is a **corresponding photograph** we will include it with your **testimonial.** As always, we share our photos and hope you will share some with us for our photo albums and **web site.** Thank you once again for hunting with the “Magnum Team.” **We all truly appreciate it!**

Jim Roche
Magnum Guide Service, LLC