

A fly rod for **EVERY OCCASION**



BRAD TRUMBO
UPLAND PURSUITS

The night before my first desert rainbow trip of the year, I stared into my fly rod cabinet at the impressive lineup that had accumulated over the years. I sought two rods, approximately five-weight, one for a floating line to cast nymphs and the other for stripping streamers on a sinking line.

The trouble was that the number of rods and non-descript casing made it difficult to decipher which were the five-weights among them or which of the five-weights I was looking for. I would be casting from inflatable watercraft, which puts the angler right down on the water. A fast-action rod with some length would be important for handling long leaders and heavy flies.

The year prior, I made the boneheaded mistake of leaning my Sage streamer rod against the passenger side of the truck upon returning from the lake. Upon arriving home, I realized the rod case was empty. I had left the rod standing against the truck, hidden from view, as I packed up and drove away, leaving it for some lucky angler to later stumble upon.

Selecting a remotely comparable backup among the tubes and sleeves scattered about the cabinet proved challenging. Wiggling a rod from the stack was like plucking the wrong block from the Jenga tower. Rod tubes toppled out as I scrambled to keep them from hitting the floor. How many rods is too many, I pondered?

The elephant in the room was my emotional attachment to the collection. I had hand-built almost all of them, and each was unique. There was the midnight-blue Batson two-weight with a deer antler reel seat built for Appalachian brook trout.

Then there was a black cherry-finished switch rod with cock pheasant feather inlays that has landed all of my steelhead on the fly.

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Brad Trumbo/Contributed Photo

A black laser dubbing bugger delivered on a sinking line and eleven-foot, six-weight rod and stripped quickly is a rainbow's kryptonite when the conditions are right.



Brad Trumbo/Contributed Photo

Having a variety of rod lengths, weights, and actions covers all the bases, like casting streamers from inflatable watercraft.



Tom Claycomb/Contributed Photo

A one-dimensional Montana Decoy. They're lightweight and collapsible.

Turkey hunting a tempting spring hobby



TOM CLAYCOMB
BASE CAMP

Turkey hunting has gotten wildly popular the last 15 to 20 years, and there is no sign of it slowing down. Many people look down their nose at the intelligence of turkeys. It is even derogatory to call someone a turkey. For you, come see me in a couple of years after you've tried to out-smart an old gobbler.

Why is turkey hunting so popular? After thinking on that question for a minute, I'd have to list multiple reasons. First, many people compare it to elk hunting. Many people hunt turkeys in the mountains. You're setting up and trying to call them in just like when elk hunting.

Secondly, even if you set in a blind, you're using decoys and calling. So you're interacting with them which makes it fun. In some ways it's like a chess game. The old lead hen starts talking and you start calling over the top of her. She comes prissing over to set straight what she thinks is a mouthy little hen. And of course the gobbler is following right behind her. So, there's a lot of angles that you play.

I've hunted with people that have access to farmland where there are a lot of turkeys. In those scenarios it works to set up a blind. You'll want a chair and a tripod to shoot off of. You'll want to throw out a few decoys. There's some realistic 3-D decoys now.

But if I'm hunting up in the mountains, I'm running gunning, so you can't lug around a heavy 3D decoy up there. The best decoys I've found for this type of hunting are made by Montana Decoys. They're a one-dimensional lightweight cloth decoy. It has a rod in it that you stick in the ground to hold it up.

Montana Decoys has one that pops up in a square type of shape. I was up bear hunting a few years ago, and set one up where I was baiting for bears. I figured I might as well multi-task. I put a rock in it so it'd stay up on a stump that I had set it on.

The next morning my decoy was AWOL. If you picked it up due to the rock bouncing around in it, I guess it would have felt like a real turkey being felled around trying to get away. I can only assume that a wolf did a drive-by on my decoy. With the rock bouncing in the decoy, he probably thought he had hold of a struggling decoy. I never

did find that decoy.

Turkeys have unbelievable eyesight, so you'll want to camo to the max. Wear a facemask to cover your face and gloves since your hands will be the major source of your movement. I don't worry about wearing all one pattern. I may wear one pattern for my cap/facemask, a different one for my jacket and a third one for my pants. Nature is not all one pattern, is it? No, it's a splash of green, a splash of this and a splash of that.

If you're using shooting sticks try to set up so the birds will be coming in from your left and set up with your shooting sticks slightly to your left. Have your gun leaning on the shooting sticks ready so you don't have to move excessively when they come in. But they don't always cooperate. I've had to shoot them at all positions. I shot one a long time ago leaning upside down out of the window of a blind left-handed with my rifle. So don't expect them to act according to your playbook.

CALLING

You've got to learn how to call. When I was a kid, you learned on your own, but now there are a million YouTubes, tapes and seminars to help you learn how to call. Ed Sweet, who was an Idaho state champion turkey caller and one of the best callers that I know, makes fun of calling unmercifully. He used to always give me grief. But despite my horrible calling (according to him), I've called in a lot of birds.

So here's my philosophy. Don't worry about doing perfect textbook calling. People talk different, don't they? So do animals. I've called in I don't know how many totally weird sounding elk that I thought was some California hunter, but it turned up to actually be an elk. So here's my advice: learn how to gobble, cluck, purr etc. Learn how to make the various sounds and when to use them. Don't worry about sounding perfect.

There are a lot of calls out there. Which one should you use? Sixty years ago all we had were box calls. They're old school, and I still favor them. You have to chalk them up, and if it was raining you had to keep them in a bread sack so they wouldn't get wet or they'd quit working, but now some of them have a coating on them so they'll work even when wet. For instance, the Quaker Boys Hurricane or the 4-Play call

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