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5-year-old from Autaugaville wins ALBBAA's 2023 Big Gobbler Photo Contest

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (May 18, 2023) – Owen Nichols and his 5-year-old son, Clint, wasted no time harvesting a turkey in 2023.

It was opening day of the season during the special youth hunt. After father and son hunted in the morning without success, they returned in the afternoon and spotted a flock of turkeys.

To be in place for the shot, Clint remembered having to “belly crawl” the last 50 yards down a deer trail.

“We had found these birds out in the field, and we looped around and got behind them,” Owen said. “It was a gobbler. How many hens did he have, Clint?”

“Twelve,” Clint replied.

“With 12 hens, we called the lead hen to us,” Owen continued. “All the others followed behind. He came strutting and spitting and drumming in.”

Clint then took the shot and harvested his first turkey from private land owned by a family friend in Dallas County. The turkey boasted a 10-inch beard and its spurs measured 1 3/8 inches.

The Nichols family lives in Autaugaville, and Clint is finishing kindergarten at Autauga Academy.

A snapshot of Clint with his first turkey was entered into the Alabama Black Belt Adventures Association's 11th annual Big Gobbler Photo Contest, and it received the most online votes out of nearly three dozen entries. This year's contest garnered thousands of online votes.

As the winner, Clint will receive a collectible trumpet call hand-turned, numbered (only 200 made) and signed by five-time world champion turkey caller Preston Pittman and a co-founder of Turkeys for Tomorrow Ron Jolly.

"We thank everyone who participated in this year's Big Gobbler Photo Contest, and we congratulate Clint as our winner," said Pam Swanner, Executive Director of the Alabama Black Belt Adventures Association. "We know Alabama's Black Belt has some of the best outdoor recreation found anywhere in America, and that's what our contest is designed to celebrate. To know this year's winner came from a father-and-son hunt is especially gratifying, because we know hunting can create lifelong memories."



Owen Nichols said he and Clint can be found in the woods on most weekends. Clint harvested his first deer when he was only 4 and the father-and-son team has also hunted squirrel, hogs and ducks.

Clint's first turkey turned into a hearty meal for the family, as Owen prepared the bird both fried and grilled. "I ate it," Clint said.

Owen and Clint returned to the woods on the final weekend of turkey season, and Clint harvested another bird.

The Black Belt includes the following counties: Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Crenshaw, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Monroe, Montgomery, Perry, Pickens, Pike, Russell, Sumter, Tuscaloosa and Wilcox.

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***The Alabama Black Belt Adventures Association** is committed to promoting and enhancing outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities in the Black Belt in a manner that provides economic and ecological benefits to the region and its citizens. For information, go to www.alabamablackbeltadventures.org.*