

Strange Things Happen

All of us that spend time in the woods marvel at the wonders that Mother Nature provides. We learn how all the different types wildlife act and relate to each other. We learn their patterns and how that can be affected by the moon stage, the amount of daylight, the temperature and, of course, by man. But if you have spent as much time as I have through the years, you may have seen a few things that are really strange. Things that you just can't figure out, but clearly seem to have some reason and purpose for happening.

One such example occurred about 15 years ago at my hunting club in Dallas County, Arkansas. While deer hunting, if you walked the old fire breaks very much, it would not unusual to jump a covey of quail. You could expect that to happen to you every 2 or 3 days, but there was nothing unusual about the covey size and each covey would only be about 6 or 8 birds.

One afternoon, I was slipping up a little creek bottom, hoping to see a large buck I had seen crossing a field next to our club. The deer had come from this direction and I thought he might be bedding along this creek bottom. I took a folding stool with me and had just found a tree to lean back on with a good view of the bottom. I had only sat there for a few minutes when I heard a sound coming up the bottom. I did not sound like a deer or any other animal walking, but the sound did grow louder and louder. I finally could see what was causing all the noise. It was quail, literally hundreds and hundreds of them, rustling through the leaves. They passed only 5 or 10 yards in front of me, moving from right to left. The wad of quail, I hesitate to call them a covey, was several yards wide and it took several minutes for them all to pass. I couldn't help but wonder what would cause so many quail to bunch together, or where they came from or might have been going. No one else at the club seen them and to this day I have no idea what caused this to happen.

Another strange thing happened while deer hunting at my present club in Drew county. I was on my favorite box stand when, once again, I heard noise coming from my left side. I slid around where I could see in that direction. Finally, I saw turkeys coming in my direction. A large number of turkeys were marching through the woods in single file. One turkey was leading the way and the other turkeys were following one after another, head to tail, never breaking the single line and never slowing down or stopping until they passed by me and continued on until they were out of sight. I counted 43 of them in all. Now seeing turkey was not unusual, but seeing this many turkeys acting like this was. To this day, I have no idea what was going on, but that lead turkey clearly had a purpose.

I offer one more example of strange behavior of animals that I had observed while deer hunting. This involved deer on the same hunting club about 8 or 10 years ago. The paper

company we lease from had no restrictions about hunting along the timber access roads in our club at that time. I ran into my buddy Todd one morning and we decided to hunt the road. This was behind our gates and had no traffic. He stopped before the curve in the road and I went around and on down about a quarter of a mile. We did have enough sense to hunt on the same side of the road so we would not shoot each other.

We sat down and it wasn't long before the show started. We had walkie-talkies and could talk to each other and it wasn't long before Todd was asking if I was seeing the same thing. Deer were coming out all along the road and crossing to the other side. I counted 23 in the next hour and a half and he saw about the same number. The thing was, from where we were sitting they were not the same deer and except for one, all were crossing the road in the same direction. One or two at a time, over 40 deer between us, all headed North across the road. Now you are thinking this was nothing but the rut in full form, but I don't think so. All of the deer, except for the last one, was a doe. It all ended when a nice 5 point buck came out to cross the road. I raised the gun quickly to my shoulder and dropped him as he reached the ditch on the other side of the road. Todd came up and we loaded the buck and headed back to camp.

Had I not shot the buck when I did, I am not sure how much longer this could have went on. Surely we would have run out of does on the South side of the road sooner or later. But this did provide for one very unusual morning that I will never forget.

Now, I am sure that many of you have had strange and unusual things happen that you cannot explain. I look forward to seeing your stories in The Campfire News or in TalkHunting. I also hope some of you can shed a light as to what I may have seen. Until then, I will continue to enjoy with amazement all of the wonders that Mother Nature brings.

By Arthur "Hog Hunter" Kendall

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