

## OF THE OUTDOORS

# Late Season Hunting Yields Results

BY GARY HOWEY

Hartington, Neb.

Dressed in white camo, our group huddled in the snow as we cautiously peered through the standing corn as several waves of Canada's begin to take to the air from the field to our south, pounding their way in a direct line that should bring them right to our decoys.

It was mid January, Larry Myhre (Sioux City, Iowa), Bill Christensen (Hartington, Neb.), Kyle Nickolite (Yankton) and I were filming a late season Canada goose hunt with Steffen Brothers Outdoor Expeditions. The field we were hunting wasn't far from their lodge, located just north of Pierre.

Because of the heavy snow and cold weather the area was having, the birds were using the fields to roost in as gigantic Lake Oahe where they roosted earlier in the season had long since frozen over.

Over the years, I've hunted waterfowl in the Pierre area numerous times. With the above normal snow fall that we've experienced along with the migration occurring later in the year, the late season has been some of the best hunting available. The warmer temperatures up north early in the season allowed the birds to stay there longer. Once the accumulation of snow became so deep that the birds could no longer find food, they'd make their way south. Once arriving in the area, Canada's will generally hang out in the Pierre area late into the season, which lasts into the New Year.

Since the fields throughout the area this year were covered with a half foot or more snow, the geese were hungry and looking for a place to feed, so a couple dozen of high quality decoys as well as the excellent goose callers we were hunting with, gave us all we needed to bring these geese into range.

Prior to concealing ourselves in the deep snow of the cornfield, we'd laid out three-dozen Dakota Decoys, their Canada and Lesser full body decoys. Their 3-D appearance and side-to-side movement made them appear lifelike as we'd put them out in front of us in the open and on into the first few rows of the

standing corn. The corn and decoys looked good, but the field we were lying in didn't contain much corn as it had been picked clean by the geese and pheasants long before we arrived.

As I peered through the standing corn, it looked as if the first flight I mentioned earlier would skirt around us to the east, but the flagging being done by the Steffen Brothers drew four birds out of the flock, which headed our way. Once the first birds turned, the rest of the flock turned and lined up behind them. The first four sailed overhead a little high, when the calling by our group turned them, bringing them back around and as they set their wings, dropped their legs and begin to glide into the opening between the decoys, when Larry and Dave yelled "Take 'em." A few seconds later, our first four geese lay on the snow amongst our decoys.

Flock after flock rose from that field to the south with a few flocks sliding off to our right only to drop into another field about a half mile away. This really didn't bother us, as we knew we'd get a chance at them as they returned. Several times, as we were focused on the field to the south, several geese would slip in behind us, causing us to duck for cover. This isn't unusual, but as vocal as Canada's are it just

doesn't seem right to have them come in quietly. Our snow camo must have blended in well, as the several flocks that had come in on top of us, hadn't notice the commotion caused as several white forms dove head first into the snow when they came in behind us.

Flock after flock of geese winged their way north, then back again south, giving us the opportunity to call in numerous geese.

On this afternoon hunt, we'd spend a couple of hours in the field in order to fill our twenty-one bird limit, making it an excellent hunt as in two hours we'd put out our decoys, bagged our limit, retrieved our decoys and were on our way back to the lodge.

As we loaded to head back to the lodge, the decision was made to finish out the rest of the afternoon pheasant hunting as we'd seen dozens of birds throughout the area. Since the regular South Dakota pheasant season was closed, Paul and Dave had a preserve, giving us the opportunity to hunt pheasants during that season, which runs through the end of March.

Ernie Steffen joined us on the late afternoon hunt, driving Larry, Kyle and I to the far end of a shelterbelt where the other hunters would be pushing the birds in our direction. As we were attempting to get into position

the first wave of a hundred or more birds, the majority of them hens, burst out of the cover along the west end of the trees.

From our positions, we could see that those hunters pushing through the trees and adjacent food plots were knocking down the birds that hadn't escaped to the west. As the hunters neared the end of the trees, Larry, Ernie and I did our best to take out the high-flying birds winging our way.

Plan B would be to encircle a food plot near a bin area, putting Larry Myhre, Bill Ernie, Kyle and I along the south side while the other Steffen Brothers and their dogs pushed in from the north. As we quietly dismounted the parked vehicles, hundreds of birds burst out of the cover, frantically attempting to gain altitude and put distance between themselves and the hunters. Several made the biggest mistake of their lives by winging our way as the hunters on our side put many on the ground.

The largest concentration of birds were making their way out between the bins, on the side where we hadn't placed any blockers, this didn't concern us a whole lot as once they crossed the highway, as many of them dropped into the heavy cover that would be the next area we'd be hunting.

After counting our birds, we headed out across the road where Larry Myhre, Bill, Ernie, Kyle and Larry Steffen posted on the south end of the field, Dave and his dog had the privilege or should I say punishment of pushing the field through the heavy cover and deep snow. Once again dozens upon dozens came our way and when the birds came flying over the tall dike on the south end of the field, we didn't have a lot of time to get a bead on the escaping birds. Our shooting wasn't bad, but not the best, but good enough to easily fill our limits before the sun set.

The following day we were on Lake Oahe with Dave's son Paul spearfishing through the ice for walleyes, back to the lodge for a quick lunch, then a quick change of clothes into our snow camo and

back into the field to decoy and shoot another seventeen geese.

What a trip, we had the opportunity to go after walleyes, pheasants and geese; it was an awful lot to work into such a short trip, but what a trip it was.

If you're looking for a great trip no matter what the season, Steffen Brothers Outdoor Expeditions ([www.huntpierre.com](http://www.huntpierre.com)) offers everything from open water guiding to late season hunting making their operation a one stop operation for those of us who truly enjoy the outdoors.

*Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is the producer/host of the award winning Outdoorsmen Adventures television series, which can be seen on Fox throughout the upper Midwest. For more information on the outdoors go to [www.outdoorsmenadventures.com](http://www.outdoorsmenadventures.com).*

**WANTED**  
Buying all types of SCRAP IRON  
Farm Machinery • Cars & Trucks  
References Available • Top Market Prices Paid  
Home: 402-945-1512 • Cell: 402-533-3640

**CASE IH**  
*Mark's Machinery, Inc.*  
TWO LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU  
Yankton, SD • 605-665-4540 • Toll Free: 1-800-526-8095  
Wagner, SD • 605-384-3681 • Toll Free: 1-800-693-1990  
E-mail: [marksinc@willinet.net](mailto:marksinc@willinet.net) • Web site: [www.marksinc.com](http://www.marksinc.com)

CNH Capital  
© 2006 CNH America LLC. All rights reserved. Case IH is a registered trademark of CNH America LLC. CNH Capital is a trademark of CNH America LLC. [www.caseih.com](http://www.caseih.com)

**February Sale!**  
Men & Women  
WOLVERINE RED WING SHOES SAS JUSTIN  
Boston Shoes to Boots  
312 W. 3rd • Yankton • 665-9092

**Estate Coin Auction**  
Thursday, February 10, 2011 6:00 pm  
City Auditorium, Osmond, Nebraska

This is a fabulous opportunity to invest in rare coins, gold and silver!

Gold Liberty Coins, Carson City Dollars, Peace and Morgan Silver Dollars, plus more. The Kohl Estate contains many Key Date Coins. You will also have the opportunity to purchase a variety of silver rolls of dimes and halves. This session will also include a nice selection of early currency for your consideration.



VERNON KOHL ESTATE & OTHERS — OWNERS

Doors open at 4:00 pm. Table Seating.

Download a complete catalog at [www.northeastauctioneers.com](http://www.northeastauctioneers.com)

**NORTHEAST AUCTIONEERS**

Osmond, Nebraska 68765 Phone 402-748-3985

**Name Brands for Less**  
plus Our Weekly In-Store Specials

Miller High Life 30 pk. \$15.49  
Burnetts Vodka 1.75 ltr. \$11.99  
Windsor 1.75 ltr. \$14.99

Happy Valentine's Day • Feb. 14, 2011

Flip Flop Wines 750 mL \$6.99  
Tequila Rose Gift Set \$19.99  
Barefoot Wines 750 mL \$5.99

Price Effective February 9<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, 2011



**Liquor Shop**

109 W 3rd St., Yankton  
FREE Customer Parking  
Phone: 605-665-7865

Hours  
Monday-Friday 8:30-6:00  
Saturday, 8:30-5:00