

Upland Idaho

Member Details - Tips From This Hunt

(In the future, this section will only be available to members and will contain much more information)

- While dove season is open leave your plug in (3 shells) so you can legally harvest any oddball chances at them while hunting other birds.
- When your dog is on point below you, quickly side-hill to a position directly above your pooch before descending to flush the birds she's holding. This gives you a chance to cut-off any birds trying to escape by running uphill and they do!
- PUSH COVER TO THE VERY END! I cannot count how many times I have harvested birds in the last 10 feet of likely cover.
- If your gun is loaded for pheasants and some quail get up, let them get out there a ways before you shoot. That heavy shot at close range can mangle a quail, not leaving much as table fare, and if you can't eat it why shoot it.
- Know how thick the thickets are! Make a judgment of yours and your dog's ability to retrieve downed birds in the middle of shrubs before you shoot birds heading into or over the dense shrub areas.

Mixed Bags

by Karl DeHart



What a start to the year. If my opening morning was any indication about what the rest of the year was going to bring, I was "in trouble". The last three opening mornings all produced limits of mourning doves, this year it was only three! Did I do something different? I don't think so. I was up before dawn, sitting in the same spot watching the sun come up, and using the same gun and shells. At the end of the day though I came out with three birds instead of my limit. This made me worry quite a bit about my goal of a Grand Slam for this season.

The season quickly turned around though. I did not limit on doves this year but I only hunted them twice and the second hunt I came close with 7 birds in the bag and a couple lost. The other thing that has happened is for three hunts in a row I ended up with an interesting mixed bag of birds.

I took Friday September 16th off of work so I could head down early to Owyhee County for some sage grouse hunting, south of Mud Flat Road. Sage grouse season didn't open until the following morning so I figured I did not need to rush down. To start my weekend I headed up a road close to home in search of blue grouse early Friday morning. I took a quick spin up along a ridgeline and then dropped down to the logging road back to the truck, less than an hour for my hunt. As you can tell from the first picture not only did I find the blue grouse that I was in search of but I also found a lone suicidal dove. All three birds had nicely developed tail fans that are drying in my loft as I write this.

Around noon I left my house to head down to set up camp for the sage grouse hunt. I had a spot on the map generously shared by an acquaintance but unfortunately after an hour or so of finding all the off

roads marked as no trespassing I moved off to find another place to hunt. I went back to a place where I had recently seen sage grouse crossing the road and camped for the night. The light rain on the tent, the cold air, and being snuggled under the warm blankets made for a wonderfully cozy evening.



I woke early to make something to eat and pack a decent lunch because, as usual, I did not have a clue how long I would be in the field. I parked the truck, loaded the backpack, strapped the e-collar on my rabbit-loving pooch, plugged three shells in the gun and then standing in the middle of the road pointed my nose up the wide ravine I had seen the birds move into. Now I waited the last minute or two for shooting hours to begin. A funny thing happened though at the very last second; something I have no real explanation for, I suddenly changed my mind and decided to do a 180 for a quick search of the uplift behind me. Less

than 15 minutes later and after flushing 20-30 sage grouse I was walking back to the truck with the weight of two birds in the hunting vest pulling on my shoulders. I did not quit hunting though, I tried to switch to likely chukar and quail habitat but I could only find a few quail the rest of Saturday and Sunday.

The next mixed bag was only a few days later and a quick stop after work on the way home. I was after California quail in a couple little draws. I knew there were birds in the area as I have seen them countless times flushing across the road on my way home but had not hunted these specific ravines before. I felt confident though about getting a few quail; easy winter, great timing for spring rains, good habitat, shrubs with dense centers for escape cover, water, and buddies that had been successful here for several years running, but only for quail.



I made a beeline for the source of the first spring, up the most northern ravine and 6-8 quail exploded out of the very last shrub at the top of the ravine. Z was on point on the backside of the shrub. Because of the height of the shrubs along the drainage, 8-10 feet, I only had one clean shot on my side and took that bird. The rest of the birds flew halfway down the ravine and dove back into the thick vegetation. I decided to let these birds settle and head up and over to the next ravine. Not 20 yards into the sagebrush Z glides into a point again. Six more birds get up and I take a sweet double of quail nearly going in opposite directions.

Over to the next ravine the hunting only got better. After a short period of no birds Z courses downhill, zigzagging in an ever-tightening pattern to lock on point at the apex, I love watching a dog do that! I start to move to her. My own pattern when a dog is on point below me is to try to come at the dog from above, not drop immediately to her level. I like to side-hill to a point above her and then drop down to the dog on point. As I was side-hilling to get above Z when I crested a small ridge to find what I hope to find by making this move, a dozen chukar, crouched low, running straight uphill from my pup on point. She had a couple pinned below but as the chukar in front of me flushed I took two of the birds I had cut-off.

The rest of the hunt produced more quail, a double with one shot, but also a couple lost in the thickets. I have not been back but maybe this week. You can't beat a spot where you can stop on the way home,

hunt for an hour and bring out a mixed bag of 7 birds...what a way to take out the frustrations of a workday.



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