

Hunting THE BOBWHITE Quail

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #143 —



This is splendid quail habitat and I'm waiting for the flush.

My first recollection of quail hunting was with Dad when I was big enough to tag along, but not old enough to carry my own gun. A favorite memory was when a big covey flushed, Dad fired twice with his old 12 gauge hammer double — and three birds dropped. Growing up on the farm, we always had at least one or two coon hounds and one quail dog — normally a setter.

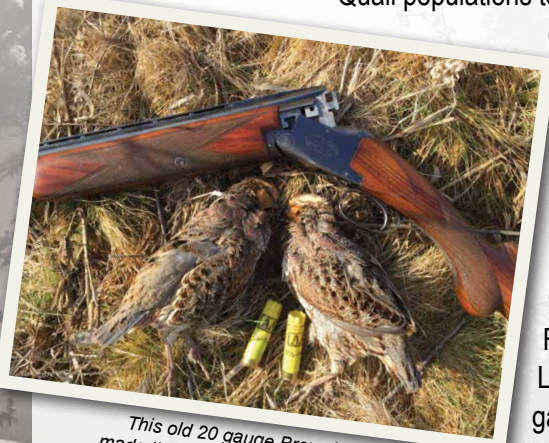
A few years later, with my own shotgun, a single shot Stevens 16 gauge, I shot my first quail — at age 13. Funny how the memory lingers, three of us were walking up an open hillside with light cover when a single bird flushed from the left and quartered to the right. I was the only one that fired; it was my first quail and quail hunting has been part of my life ever since.

combination of terrain, ground cover and brush to provide food and cover for quail — frankly the best I had ever seen. Three of us, with two dogs, covered the farm in a few hours one afternoon — the last day of the year. We jumped four coveys and left the singles alone. It was a spectacular quail hunt, for this part of Missouri, and a great way to end the year.

"It was a spectacular quail hunt..."

The first order of business, after the hunt, was to call in the quail specialists from Missouri Department of Conservation and Pheasants/Quail Forever. With permission/cooperation of the landowner, we're investing in some serious habitat improvement. Hopefully we'll jump ten coveys there next year and create a quail population to support the surrounding area.

Quail populations took a real dive, all over the country, beginning in the early 1990s. My last quail hunt had been in 1995 or 96 on Midway Farms, using an L.C. Smith 12 gauge that had been restocked, but was still in the



This old 20 gauge Browning Superposed was made the year I was born. It's an ideal quail gun.

white — waiting for time with the engraver. As I recall, we only jumped two coveys that morning and shot three or four birds, nothing to talk about.

Since then, there have always been a few coveys around, a covey on this farm and another a few miles away — small coveys, not big ones; nothing a man should be hunting. Finally, late in the 2015 season, I hunted a 240 acre farm that had been in CRP for 25 years. This farm had the right



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Rolled in flour, salt and pepper then into a frying pan with vegetable oil; that's my favorite recipe.