

The CAST and BLAST

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #230 —

There are a few places on earth where one can enjoy fishing and bird hunting during a single visit. They call this "cast and blast", and it makes for quite a wonderful experience. I had the opportunity to participate in one of these in Alaska a few years back – quite by accident, when Brenda and I were hunting brown bear in September. We shot our bears with a couple days left in the hunt and returned to base camp. The silver salmon were running and we had great fun with them. One of the guides asked if I would like to shoot some ptarmigan; yes I did! It was just a short hunt, without dogs but we shot a half dozen birds. Altogether, it was a wonderful, successful trip.

Now, the idea of a real, planned cast and blast opportunity has been on my mind ever since. It was just a

coincidence that my good friends, the Collingwood brothers of Smithers, British Columbia, put such a trip in the Saturday night auction at Safari Club International in January 2018.

Ray Collingwood was at the auction, just a few tables away, so I spoke with him about the details, then won the auction bid.

In due time, Matt Fleming and I packed our fly rods for the rainbows and our shotguns for the ptarmigan and headed north. Getting into camp is always quite a deal; we flew to Chicago, then Vancouver, then Smithers, BC – where we overnighted. Next day, an Otter float plane flew us to the lodge on LasLui lake, where we overnighted again.



The willow ptarmigan is just beginning the change from brown to white, as the season opens in August. That's my Winchester Model 42, 410 bore, with checkered stocks and straight grip.

The following day, we rode five hours on horseback to a caribou camp, which served for our ptarmigan hunting. Arriving about 4:00 pm, we shot eight birds in a couple of hours. Each of the next two days, we rode out on horseback into ptarmigan habitat, then dismounted and walked –

"...we rode five hours on horseback..."

shooting our limits both days; then riding back to base camp the last afternoon. We also hunted another area two days later, shooting both willow and white-tail ptarmigan.

Now, it was time for some fishing. The water was low and the water temperature high, so the fishing was not up to standards of previous years. Nonetheless, we flew out each of the next two days to different fisheries and had a wonderful time with our fly rods. It was a memorable cast and blast experience and I'm anxious to do it again.



Pretty nice rainbow, with my five-weight rod.



Larry Potterfield

Collingwood Brothers Concession
Spatsizi Park
British Columbia, Canada
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Matt Fleming (President of MidwayUSA) and I pause for lunch break, short just a couple of birds from our limits.