

GREYWING PARTRIDGE

in South Africa

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #222 —



The local name is "Greywing Partridge." They are bigger than a bobwhite quail, but smaller than a ring neck pheasant; fun to shoot and good eating.

Bird hunting is not something you normally think about on a big game safari in Africa, as the economic engine of a safari is usually trophy fees — and there aren't any on game birds. Nevertheless, on the morning of our last day in the mountain camp, our outfitter brought in a guide and three English pointers, so we could also feel the joy of bird hunting on his ranch; after breakfast we headed into the high country to hunt the greywing partridge.

It was aerobic hunting, as there's a lot of exercise in hunting this bird. During the hunting season, they migrate from the creek bottoms to the 4-6000 foot range, and seem to prefer the sides of the hills rather than the flats on top. It was a heap of exercise to locate the coveys and then get up to the points; and even more exercise following up the singles. We would form



This is a well-made, well-worn Spanish double barrel from the Eibar region. An old gun that has seen lots of use, but is still in perfect working order.

a line on a promising hillside, turn loose the dogs and advance with them, moving up quickly when they went on point.

The greywing partridge is from the francolin family, of which there are many different species in Africa. They are covey birds and hold reasonably well for the dogs. Although not as fast as a bobwhite quail, they were challenging targets as they often flushed at 15-20 yards from the dog, while we were walking in — without the benefit of having planted our feet.

Charles Price, the outfitter, loaned me his dad's Spanish made side-by-side 12 bore. Great, I prefer two triggers and two chokes for this type of shooting. His dad had obviously used this gun a great deal, as the finish was

mostly gone and the action was just showing evidence of getting "off the face." Nonetheless, it seemed to be a fitting gun for the game and it shot very well. I never did figure out the chokes, but they were a bit tighter than I would have preferred; another of my excuses for missed birds.

Although having been on many safaris, this was my introduction to bird shooting in Africa. In talking with our guide,

"...another of my excuses for missed birds."

James Bell, South Africa offers over twenty different species of birds, including rock pigeons, doves, quail, Guinea fowl, snipe, ducks and geese; and there are many outfitters who specialize in bird shooting. Likely my next safari to Africa will be exclusively for birds.



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Back Row (L-R) Tracy Lawson, Neil Lawson, Sara Potterfield, Nick Cahill, Brenda, Larry. Front row (L-R) Jay Zara, Eliza Zara (with baby lamb), James Bell and Grant Price. Charles Price took the picture.