

The BIRD HUNTER

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #234 —

For a variety of reasons, this was my greatest year of bird hunting! It started in May and continued through December, beginning in South Africa and ending in Missouri — with additional hunting in Illinois, Kansas, Spain, England and British Columbia. Partridge, pheasants, doves and quail were the game; but this year, not a duck or a goose, or a trip to Argentina. There were driven birds and walk-up birds; some high, some low — most were fast, but a few were slow. It was an interesting and challenging year for bird hunting!

Our family Safari in South Africa, in May, provided the first bird shooting — a brief opportunity to shoot the local grey wing partridge. There are many other partridges around the world, including the red-legged partridge of Spain and the willow ptarmigan of British Columbia. These three, plus the red grouse of England, are similar

and about the same size, but their habits and flying characteristics vary greatly.

I've been hunting doves in Missouri for 50 years; opening

day is always exciting, because the population is at its peak and they haven't been shot at since last year. As the season progresses, there are fewer birds in the sky, they are a bit farther out, are more wary and fly faster. On the contrary, doves in Argentina seem to be unlimited; by picking only the easy birds — or shooting at every bird in range, you can make it as easy or as difficult as you like. Many people have asked me: "Doesn't Argentina shooting



Dove hunting in Missouri is completely different than in Argentina. In Missouri it's a joy to take 15 doves with a box of shells; in Argentina it can be a thousand birds with sixty boxes. (Browning Superposed 20 gauge — Made 1949)

spoil you?" The answer is "No; I look forward to both with equal passion."

Hunting red grouse of northern England is the most unique and exclusive of my bird hunting experiences. These are driven birds that fly at you, not overhead — and veer to the left or right as they come into range and see the shooting butt. It's a real privilege to be invited to a line of shooters for driven grouse as it has historically been a sport of Kings or other well-to-dos.

"It was an interesting and challenging year..."

Finally, we are seeing a limited comeback of bobwhite quail in Missouri and that is how I finished up. It was a very interesting year of bird shooting. Argentina is on the schedule for next year, and a few other bird hunts; but likely, 2018 will always be the year to compare against.



Larry Potterfield
My Office
MidwayUSA
Columbia, Missouri
December 31, 2018



These are driven grouse in the north of England. Ten or fifteen birds per peg, over five pegs, makes for a very good day. (Pair of Purdey 12 gauge guns)



Of all the birds I hunted this year, bobwhite quail in Missouri were the most challenging — for three reasons: first, finding them — second, getting a shot — and finally, hitting them on the flush. (Purdey 20 gauge)