

PHEASANTS in the HEARTLAND



A limit of Kansas Pheasants, taken with my 20 gauge Purdey.

— LARRY’S SHORT STORIES #237 —

Greensburg, Kansas (population 777) has lots of history. It was first a stagecoach stop in 1885, and shortly thereafter it also became a railroad stop. Needing water for the steam locomotives, the railroad folks dug the world’s largest “hand-dug” well. It’s 109 feet deep and 32 feet wide at the top. A big tornado roared through in 2007, pretty much destroying everything. It’s all rebuilt now as a modern community.

But, we had come for pheasants, not history; and for good reason. Kansas has a 4-bird daily limit, and acres and acres of warm season grass CRP fields. There are plenty of natural wild birds in this area, but to run a commercial pheasant hunting operation, they enhance the population with what is called a Surrogator®. This is a small piece of equipment that provides food, water and heat to 65

one-day-old chicks through

their first five or six weeks. After, they move into the warm season grass and feed into milo strips, as another batch of chicks is introduced to the Surrogator®. By

the time fall comes, the fields are literally full of nearly-wild adult pheasants that hide, run, flush and fly just like their wild cousins.

This is windy, big sky country – with wind turbines dotting the landscape. Interestingly, there apparently aren’t many airline flight patterns over this part of the world; during two days of hunting, we never saw a Jetstream. It reminded me of the three days after 9/11, when all commercial planes were grounded.

We were on a two-day hunt and I took a 12 and a 20 gauge, not knowing what to expect in terms of shooting conditions. Pheasant hunting variables typically include the cover, the wind, the dogs and your luck. Close-range shots, over solid points, were often encountered; but so were wild flushes and impossible shots on roosters with the wind at their tails. This hunt was a mixture of everything that is pheasant hunting.

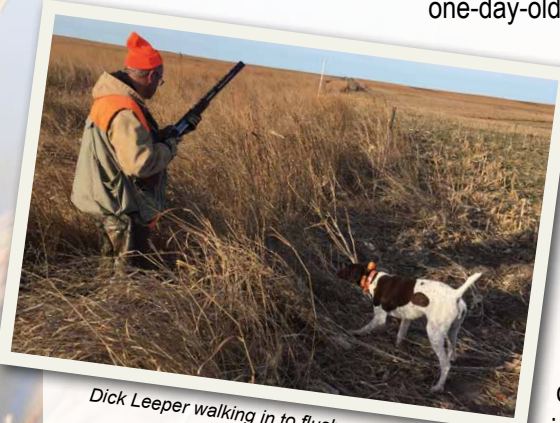
“...wild flushes and impossible shots...”

Ours was a group of five and we were joined by two gentlemen from Texas, so as to provide a line of seven pushing across the fields. We walked with the wind in our faces across a quarter section (1/2 mile square), then loaded into a truck that took us back to the beginning, where we spaced off and covered another strip of the quarter section. The end of each drive provided most of the shooting. A hunt worth repeating!



Larry Potterfield

Upland Inn Hunts
Greensburg, KS
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Dick Leeper walking in to flush a bird, with his young dog Sky holding a perfect point.



Our group of long-time friends and pheasant hunters, with our day’s limit of birds: Greg Kreutzer, Don Martin, Dick Leeper, Jim Joy and myself.