

Hunting the Local CANADA GEESE

— LARRY’S SHORT STORIES #277 —

Both the local Canada geese, and those migrating through in the fall, spend their nights on the water – as a defense against ground-based predators. The preferred water is almost always a lake (medium or large), with brush-free edges that allow the birds to rest or spend their time feeding on harvested crops or grass during the daylight hours.

The geese begin gathering in and around the lake in late afternoon, hopping over from another lake, or returning from feeding fields some distance away. Driving by these lakes, just before dark, confirms which lake will be their preferred resting place for the night, and how many birds there are. Once a lake is chosen by the geese, they will likely stay there for a few days, before moving on to another, unless disturbed.

Now the hunt can be planned. In our area, we have access to two medium-sized lakes that the geese frequent regularly – and that work well for decoys and

blinds. Some lakes are simply more conducive to hunting than others.

An hour or so before first light the next morning, we arrive at the lake with a trailer full of decoys – full-size, shells and flags; and begin setting up. Geese land “into the wind”, so we want the wind to our back as we choose the location for our decoy spread and blinds. Of course, on occasions the wind changes, so knowing the forecast winds for the morning is an important consideration.



This old Purdey 10 gauge, made in 1879, still brings home the geese.

If it’s a dark night, the geese don’t always flush from the lake when we first arrive and begin to set up. About the time the set-up is complete, it’s light enough that they begin to see what’s going on and all take off. Shortly thereafter, we settle into our blinds and wait for them to return, and the legal shooting time to arrive.

“This is usually a ‘one and done’ event...”

Almost always they come back, mostly in small flocks of two to a dozen.

The decoys are there, the hunters are well hidden in their blinds, and the wind is right. That’s the way we hunt the local Canada geese here in Missouri. This is usually a “one and done” event; the decoys are gathered up when the hunt is over, and the geese won’t be back tomorrow. But when the season is at its peak, and there are lots of new birds coming in, it can work multiple days in a row.



Larry Potterfield

Cypress Lake
Coats Place Farm
Boone County Missouri
January 5, 2021



Our typical decoy spread, when hunting local Canada geese.



Another day, a different gun – same lake. Brenda and I hunted together on this day. I’m holding my Winchester Model 12, 12 gauge.