

Of The Outdoors | Gary Howey

Late Season Bird Chasing

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

Heading north from South Whitlock, it didn't take us long before we spotted several herds of deer and antelope, but no pheasant habitat, sure, we were driving through rangeland, but in years past, when we made the drive, we had seen birds along these roads no matter what direction we drove from Gettysburg.

It was obvious, things had changed as Mother Nature and the price of corn and beans had changed the dynamics of land found throughout the upper Midwest.

Nearing the area, we planned to hunt, small parcels of habitat started to appear with a few pheasants feeding along the road.

When there was habitat, such as the area Chuck had, you were bound to see birds and we made our way into the field of Chuck's land, with excellent habitat, a combination of CRP grass, food plots, stock dams and shelterbelts providing what the birds needed to survive the long South Dakota winters.

Habitat, the way it lays and its quality are huge factors when it comes to healthy wildlife populations with a combination of several different plantings adding to the benefit the field would be to wildlife.

It was late season, off in the distance, birds were starting take wing, bursting from the cover of the grass, food plots and shelterbelts.

Approaching the first food plot, pheasants, both roosters and hens came up out of the food plots, one, two then dozens of birds as they erupted from heavy cover.

It was late January, when cameraman Andrew Zak and I made our way north to the Gettysburg, S.D. area. We would be meeting family friend, former Watertown native and successful lake Oahe and hunting guide Chuck Krause, Chuck Krause Guide Service (www.chuckkrauseguideservice.com) who we would be doing our hard water cast on Lake Oahe and a late season blast on his pheasant preserve.

Arriving after lunch, our plan was to hit the ice for some late afternoon ice fishing and then again the following day to do some ice fishing. Chuck had a group of friends from



PHOTO: OUTDOORSMEN PRODUCTIONS
Chuck Krause's two dogs with a sampling of the birds taken on a late season preserve hunt with Chuck Krause Guide Service near Gettysburg, S.D.

Watertown who would join us the end of the week for a late season pheasant hunt.

Chuck, Lewie Valentz and Duane McCullough and I would start the late afternoon fishing trip, punching holes in the ice just north of the Highway 212 Missouri River Bridge, which connected the folks on the east river side with the west river.

We were setting for forty-five to fifty foot of water, probing the depths, hoping to ice enough fish for a fish fry we were looking forward to enjoying the following evening.

It did not take long before it was obvious as to who had the hot stick, as Duane started pounding the fish before I had gotten my Vexilar Double Vision set up. He quickly set the hook and landed several eater walleyes as well as a huge catfish.

Shortly thereafter, Chuck pounded another big catfish and several walleyes, giving us a good start to the fish fry. We'd make three trips out on the ice, fishing a couple of hours each time and despite the sometime, gale force winds, where able to catch a nice bunch of fish, assuring the Saturday night fish fry would be a success.

As I mentioned earlier, we'd were scouting the area the Saturday afternoon hunt where we would be hunting, giving my cameraman and myself an idea as to how the land laid out, allowing us to formulate a plan on just how to best film the hunt.

The Watertown crew, Steve Horning, Bob Lantgen, Dick Linneman, Bob Graf, Jim Dehnert, Dennis Dev-

ille and Larry Longstreet arrived after lunch, to join up with Chuck, Lewie Valentz, Bob Truman, Rapid City and I for the afternoon hunt and after stowing their gear, we headed north.

Arriving, we laid out a plan and using late season hunting tactics, blockers, wingmen as well as both pointing and flushing dogs, we lined up for the first push through a milo food plot inside a grass planting.

Dick Linneman, two other hunters and I headed out to block the end of the field while the rest of the hunters spread out across the grass and adjoining food plots with Steve's, Bob Truman and Chuck's dogs working out front.

As with any late season hunt, if late season tactics are not employed, the birds will fly out, far in front of the walkers, out of shotgun range, escaping out the edge and the end of the field.

Blocking the end of the field is usually a good bet as pheasants, who love to run will out distance the hunters and dogs, blowing out the end of the field, ahead of the group, giving those blocking excellent shot opportunities.

When the first birds came up out ahead of the hunters, at a distance, they looked like pheasants, but something didn't seem right, as they came up slowly, chuckling as they rose, pumping hard to gain altitude, gliding and pumping again. It was obvious they were Grouse and since the season on them had closed, all we could do was to watch as they glided overhead.

The sounds of the shotgun blasts made it clear the hunters, making their way through the field were getting some shooting, with several of the birds, escaping, flying out ahead of the walkers between them and our wingmen before getting to the blockers.

On each walk, we added birds to our game bag; with very few getting away with many of the birds bagged at long range, making it obvious these boys could hunt.

These birds were educated, after being hunted during the long season, they had seen it all and were not about to hang around when they heard hunters and their dogs coming through the field.

When the hunters neared the end, several hens glided over Dick and I while one of the wingmen blocking with us, made a long shot, dropping a birds that came out the far side of the food plot.

We hunted several different fields, all made up of excellent habitat with each holding good numbers of birds, birds that flew well and were as wild as I have ever been fortunate enough to hunt.

On this hunt, we were able to spend time in the field with friends, shoot our birds, bring home our limit and have many excellent memories from a South Dakota late season pheasant hunt.

Some may say hunting preserve birds is not much of a hunt, on this; I would have to disagree, as there are excellent preserves out there, with many factors that have to be considered when we are talking about the

quality of a preserve hunt.

Number one, as I have mentioned before is habitat, not simply grass and food plots the birds can live in during the season, they need habitat they can utilize throughout the year, for nesting, raising their young, roosting, surviving the hot summers and long South Dakota winters.

Excellent habitat is hard to find, the areas with good stands of grass, tree belts and food plots will not only hold the preserve birds, they will also attract wild birds as excellent habitat, is becoming hard to find.

Another factor when it comes to having a good hunting preserves hunt is the quality of the released birds, the way they are raised has a lot to do with the way they react once they hit the ground, birds with less human contact are more apt to better adapt to the wild.

It was not too long ago, when we drove, anywhere in the upper Midwest including Nebraska and South Dakota, when you would see birds everywhere, over the last year, seeing a pheasant in many parts of these states is a thing of the past.

Pheasants are tough birds; originally from China, survived the upper Midwest wet springs and winters since the early 1900, are prey for every predator on the planet, with the habitat they need to survive shrinking at an alarming rate.

In many areas, the only place to see and hunt pheasants may be those, where hunting preserves have created habitat and stocked birds.

With larger tracts of good quality year around habitat, predator control and good quality birds, some of these birds will survive to produce a brood next year, adding their numbers to those of the South Dakota's State bird, the Ringneck Pheasants numbers in the state.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former tournament angler, fishing and hunting guide. He is the Producer-Host of the award winning *Outdoorsmen Adventures television series*, seen on Fox affiliates throughout the upper Midwest. In the Yankton area, it airs on local channels 2 & 98 Saturday at 6:30 pm and Sunday at 7:00 am. It is also available on KTTW/KTTM-TV (Fox) Sioux Falls/Huron, S.D. Saturdays at 7:00 am as well as on MIDCO Sports Network Thursday at 5:30 pm and Sunday at 10:00 am. He and Simon Fuller are the hosts of the *Outdoor Adventures radio program Monday-Saturday at 6:45 am on Classic Hits 106.3 and ESPN Sports Radio 1570*. If you are looking for more outdoor information, check out www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.



Gary HOWEY

Olympics

Canada Beats USA Hockey 1-0

SOCHI, Russia (AP) — For the rematch, Canada skipped the overtime and shelved the theatrics.

One slick goal and 60 minutes of stifling defensive hockey kept the Canadians firmly on top of the U.S. and moved them to the brink of gold again.

Jamie Benn scored in the second period, Carey Price made 31 saves, and Canada beat the United States 1-0 Friday night in the semifinals of the Olympic men's hockey tournament.

Canada advanced to the gold-medal match Sunday against Sweden, which beat Finland 2-1 in the earlier semifinal at Bolshoy Ice Dome.

With an unbeaten run through Sochi, the Canadians are a win away from their third gold medal in four Olympics, and they're guaranteed their first medals outside North America in 20 years.

Although it was fast-paced and well-played, this win had none of the flair of Sidney Crosby's overtime goal to beat the U.S. four years ago. The Canadians didn't care.

"We didn't score a lot of goals, but we didn't have to," Canada forward Jonathan Toews said. "The next game will follow that work ethic. We can check, we can work our tails off, and we can make things real tough for the other team."

After its first loss in Sochi, the U.S. will face Finland for bronze on Saturday. The Americans were hoping for redemption from their gut-wrenching defeat in 2010, but they only got a businesslike reminder of Canada's clout.

"We didn't show up to play," U.S. defenseman Ryan Suter said. "It's too bad. ... We sat back. We were passive. You can't play scared. I thought we sat on our heels and just didn't take it to them at all."

Indeed, the defending Olympic champions left little

doubt about their North American hockey dominance in a rematch of the finale of the Vancouver Games. Although the Canadians had no signature moments and never pulled away, they also never appeared seriously threatened.

From faceoff to final buzzer, Canada was in control thanks to Price, Benn and defenseman Jay Bouwmeester, whose pass created Benn's goal. All three players weren't on the Canadian team in Vancouver, but they're a win away from earning their own gold medals.

"Obviously we knew it was going to be a tight match going in," Benn said. "We found a way to get one, our team played great team defense, and our goalie shut the

door."

The Canadians haven't even trailed in the Sochi Olympics, and they coolly maintained border supremacy on the U.S. by defending their blue line with authority.

Their stifling defense has allowed just three goals in five games, and they clamped down on an American offense that had scored 19 goals in Sochi for every minute of a slightly anti-climactic evening.

"We didn't really create much offense," U.S. forward Patrick Kane said. "It's a little disappointing. ... I think everyone expected a tight-checking game, but to say we would have gotten shut out, I don't think anyone would have thought that."

Former USD Standout Dies Suddenly

FROM P&D STAFF REPORTS

BLAIR, Neb. — A former two-sport star at the University of South Dakota died unexpectedly this week.

Jeff Nannen, 55, who was an educator at Loveland and Sunset Hills elementary schools, was found dead Wednesday morning, according to Omaha television station WOWT.

He died of an apparent heart attack, according to reports. The Omaha World Herald reported that Nannen had just undergone a severe bout with the flu recently.

Nannen, a native of Syracuse, Neb., was a three-time

all-North Central Conference forward with the Coyotes, and was a two-time NCC high jump champion. He played at USD from 1976-1980.

He is ranked fourth on USD's all-time scoring list with 1,782 points after graduating as the school's all-time scoring leader.

He is eighth all-time in rebounds with 744.

He later played profes-

sional basketball in England, Germany, Australia and Sweden, according to the World Herald.

Nannen is survived by his parents, a sister and brother, and several nieces and nephews. His funeral services are today (Saturday) in Blair.

SIGN ON BONUS

BETHESDA HOME, WEBSTER, SD is now hiring a LTC Director of Nursing. The DON Plans, coordinates, and manages, and evaluates the nursing department and care to residents. Must be graduate of an accredited school of nursing and obtains a SD license. Please email resume to Mike Ewalt michael.ewalt@sanfordhealth.org

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