

Quail Hunting with Roger Ward

Notes from my Journal

David McNeal



Roger Ward with his dog Heidi

November 17, 2011 for the past two days I have had the pleasure of hunting with Roger Ward a quail enthusiast from Lee Summit, Missouri. The two of us hit it off immediately first impressions being such and at our age lots of experience I immediately knew I was going to like him and he me.

After getting all of Roger's paperwork in order, guns registered and him properly signed in we headed for the numbered areas and a morning of frustration. The area we chose had not been planted this year and though it had yielded plenty of birds in seasons past surrendered no coveys on this particular morning.

After lunch it was decided that we would try a close soy bean field. This proved to be a wise choice. Our dogs, his pointer Heidi and my wirehair Mattie were successful in locating a nice covey of birds. At last twenty and twelve gauges recoiled and barked; birds folded, and good dog work provided retrieves to hand.



Mr. Bob White or as we like to call them Little Brown Bombers

Encouraged by our success we moved to the closest lettered area which contained beans and made several stops where we either found a covey or remnants of coveys. We also found plenty of other bird and deer hunters; all competing for the same spots and literally stepping over each other. Even so, Roger and I hunted until legal shooting light was gone, cleaned our birds and headed for home.

After attending to the dogs and getting them bedded it was in to town for beers, burgers, and pork chops. Full stomachs and showers later it was time to call it a night and hit the sack as 5:00 a.m. comes early and Roger and I wanted to beat the birds out of their roost. No one had any trouble falling asleep including the dogs bone weary from their exhausting and lengthy day busting heavy cover.

The next morning stopping only long enough to fill our gas tanks, grab some coffee, and a quick breakfast of biscuits and gravy we arrived at our chosen destination. The sun had barely been up twenty minutes. The morning was perfect with frost on the ground and the temperature in the middle thirties; excellent scenting conditions.

In front of us lay a huge soy bean field which stretched for miles in either direction but the best part was the roosting grass that border it and that's where we headed. As planned we caught the birds in the roost and found at least two coveys and maybe three (we are still not sure). One thing Roger and I are sure of is that there were plenty of birds and I became a little anxious that I had not brought along enough shells.

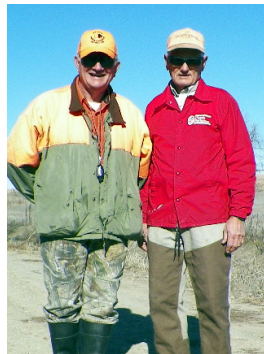


Mattie on point

This area is a little difficult to get to and unless you know how to get to it you won't find it. This meant that we had it to ourselves and as far as we could tell the birds had not been pressured. They flew only short distances and were slow to get up but patience on our part and persistent dog work had them rising one, two and three at a time. This is a quail hunters dream come true.

After lunch we gave it one more turn and then packed it in. Roger still had a two and half hour drive back to Lee Summit and though he and I would have liked to think we could have gone all day, our backs, hips, joints and bones reminded us of our respective ages and it was definitely the moment to head for the house.

Speaking for myself I had a blast and Roger was a real gentleman and a pleasure to hunt alongside. One of the things I like most about guiding hunters and introducing them to Fort Riley is meeting fine people like Roger. I introduce myself a total stranger in the beginning but by hunts end, I almost always end up saying good bye to a new friend.



Left to right myself and Roger
