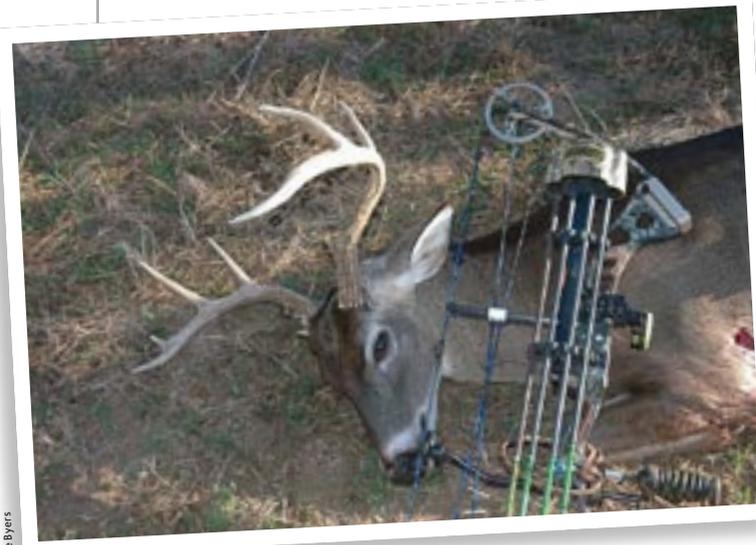


NORTHEAST



Joe Byers

that red color that kings like," he says.

As the salmon run wanes, the steelhead and brown trout show up, providing a mixed bag of trophy freshwater fish that's hard to beat anywhere in the world. "The steelies like more natural-appearing eggs, and anglers often score with tiny imitations. Brown trout also begin their spawn in October—an event that offers a strong bite well into December," says Calandrelli.

Interestingly, all three species bite in the same areas of the Niagara River, primarily the Devil's Hole and Jackson's. Anglers have the best luck

GO VERMONT FOR WHITETAILS

"Our hunters score about 90 percent during the archery season," says Nick Smith, owner of Vermont Outdoor Connections Guide Service. "We have access to 18,000 acres of private land and target food sources like apples, peaches, acorns and cultivated crops. Specific foods pinpoint deer movements, and when we put people on stands they usually see deer," Smith says. Archery season opens the first Saturday of October with a two deer limit. Unlike most states, archers can take two bucks, but only one doe, and licenses can be purchased over the counter.

Smith also guides during the firearm season, which opens the second Saturday of November. "The chase phase of the rut is over by then, but hunters often see bucks with does," he says. For information on these hunts, call Smith at (603) 359-0272.—*Joe Byers*

NIAGARA'S FALL BOUNTY

"King salmon run really strong for about four weeks, beginning in mid-September," says Ernie Calandrelli, a Niagara River captain for 21 years. "Fish will run from 12-35 pounds, but fishing pressure has moderated in recent years."

Captain Ernie recommends fishing salmon skein—salmon eggs still in the membrane. "We treat the eggs with Red Hot Procure, which helps keep the eggs together and gives them



Joe Byers

by drifting and using moderate tackle, but newcomers to the Niagara may want to charter a guide. A great mini-vacation spot, the Niagara region offers abundant accommodations. Contact Captain Ernie at (716) 609-3064 and Niagara County Tourism at www.niagara-usa.com.—*Joe Byers*

TIPS & TACTICS

Early Season's Fabulous Foursome

FROM SPRINGING TEAL AND CANADA GEESE, TO DOVES AND GROUSE, NOW IS THE BEST WINGSHOOTING OF THE YEAR

Three a.m. alarms, ice on decoys and frosty gun barrels are the norm for winter waterfowling, but why wait until conditions get nasty when incredible wingshooting action begins in early September? Many states, from east to west, offer nuisance Canada goose seasons with liberal limits (often five or more) and require only moderate gear.

"You don't need but a dozen or two decoys since early season Canadas are real pattern-able," says Teddy Carr, owner of Outdoor Action Outfitters (540/854-4271, www.fishingwithteddy.com) in central Virginia. "My most optimal set-up is a pasture around a pond. Find water and a field and you are golden," he says. "Conceal at the water's edge and use Carry-Lite floaters and standing full-body geese. This set-up really fools them."

Although Carr hunts in Virginia, the habits of early season geese are similar across the nation. In September they feed in pastures and cut corn fields and often return predictably. Savvy hunters glass from a distance to learn exact feeding locations, and once determined, set up decoys the next morning. "My biggest



Joe Byers

challenge is concealment," says Carr. "We hunt from layout blinds, and you must work on your concealment."

Early September is also the traditional launch of dove season, and Jon Carr makes these speedy fliers his specialty. Like geese, food is the key ingredient, and hunters should

seek out freshly cut corn and sunflower fields. In addition, he suggests a four-point plan to identify the best dove property— forage crops, grit (like a gravel lane), water and a power line. Find these four elements anywhere in the country and you'll likely have doves.

By mid-September, the blue wing teal season opens in many states. "We set up decoys in back slues for a combination shoot," says Carr, who puts out mallard, teal and Canada decoys, plus a Mojo (motorized attractants are not legal in all states). "The teal fly first thing in the morning. You have a brief lull and then the Canada geese begin flying around 8:00 or 8:30, followed by another lull in which we snack on coffee and donuts, then the geese fly back to their water roost around 10:00." What a morning!

Carr describes blue wing teal as rocket ships, and often decoy so fast that you hardly have a chance to shoot. In addition, they change direction in mid-air and make 90-degree turns effortlessly.

Loads for ducks and geese depend upon your hunting style. Carr specializes in tolling birds so that client shots are 20-30 yards. He likes Federal Black Cloud steel in BB or BBB for geese and #2s for teal. He's also a fan of heavy alloy pellets, and uses a correspondingly smaller shot size.

Grouse make up the final-foursome of early season. A dog is ideal in the thick cover of early fall, yet you may jump family coveys. You'll want your widest choke, #8 shot and a little luck. OK, maybe a lot of luck.—*Joe Byers*



Joe Byers

HUSA TIP

When hiking for long distances always wear two pairs of socks; one thin pair next to the skin and a thicker outer pair. The thin pair will keep moisture away from your feet while the outer pair cushions your feet and prevents hotspots and blisters from forming.

HUSA TIP

Placing a small piece of electricians' tape over the tip of a gun barrel can keep out dirt, ice and debris. Such objects can rob guns of accuracy or cause a barrel to mushroom upon firing. The tape is inexpensive insurance.

SOUTH



Soc Clay

Crawfish and Heddon's Tiny Torpedoes. Always fish upstream.—*Soc Clay*

GRAY GHOSTS OF AUTUMN

U.S. Fish and Wildlife officials estimate there are more than 500 million dove in the country, and millions more migrating from Canada each fall. In the South, these gray ghost of autumn provide historical hunting value.

Most state wildlife management areas program their management for maximum dove hunting benefit throughout the split season that starts around the first of September (check state regulations for exact dates).

Doves are plentiful in and around grain and wheat fields and near ponds that provide landing areas on the bank. On private lands, look for large numbers of dove perched on utility lines, especially during mid-

to late-afternoon. That means a feeding field is nearby. Easy to bring down, #6 light loads are recommended.

Throughout Dixie, large groups of hunters often converge on farms that sponsor huge dove barbecues that are traditional on the first day or first weekend of the season.—*Soc Clay*

SMALL STREAM FURY

Across the South, the dry weather of autumn provides an exciting time for anglers searching for wild fishing action and solitude at the same time.

Small streams that are more than 25-30 miles in length carry enough water to support good numbers of bass, panfish and other species. During autumn, when stream flows are reduced, larger fish congregate in deeper spots. These small pools can harbor smallmouth, largemouth and spotted bass weighing upwards of three pounds. Throw in hand-size rock bass and sundads (trout in higher elevations), and a smorgasbord of hungry fish await the first lure or bait to enter the water. Ultra-light spinning tackle with light lines (4-6 lb. test.) is ideal for tossing Crème Angle worms in black or purple, Rebel Wee



Soc Clay

MIDWEST

PLAINS COYOTES

The western fringe of the Midwest, notably Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota and North Dakota, is the ideal place to hunt coyotes. In this semi-open country you can see and shoot predators at long distances, improving your odds for success. The open cover also reduces the chances that a coyote will sneak up on you and pop from the cover at close range. The Great Plains is also home to a high population of these high plains drifters, which are used to covering lots of ground in search of a meal. They come readily to a long-range call and provide great sport.

Look for open country and then set up on a knob in front of a bush to break up your outline.



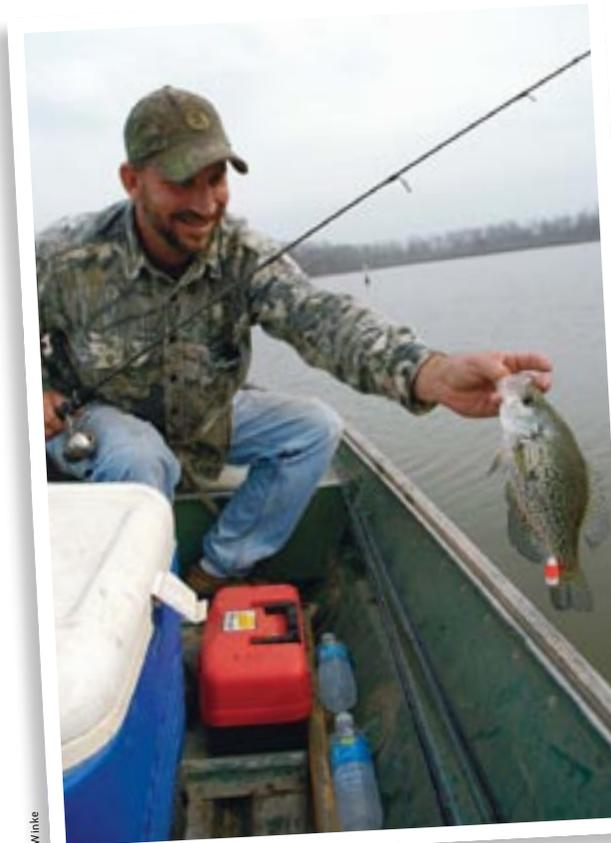
Bill Winke

Be sure to wear full camouflage, including camo tape on your gun. The standard wounded rabbit predator call has been in service for decades and still produces the lion's share of the coyotes shot each fall and winter.—*Bill Winke*

RATHBUN RESERVOIR CRAPPIE

Iowa's Rathbun Reservoir is one of the top crappie fisheries in the Midwest. I know people who travel from every surrounding state to fish the lake each year. Typically, Rathbun's crappie anglers focus on the spring spawn, but there is also good, overlooked fishing in late summer and early fall when the water cools and the fish again come up shallow—this time to feed heavily before winter.

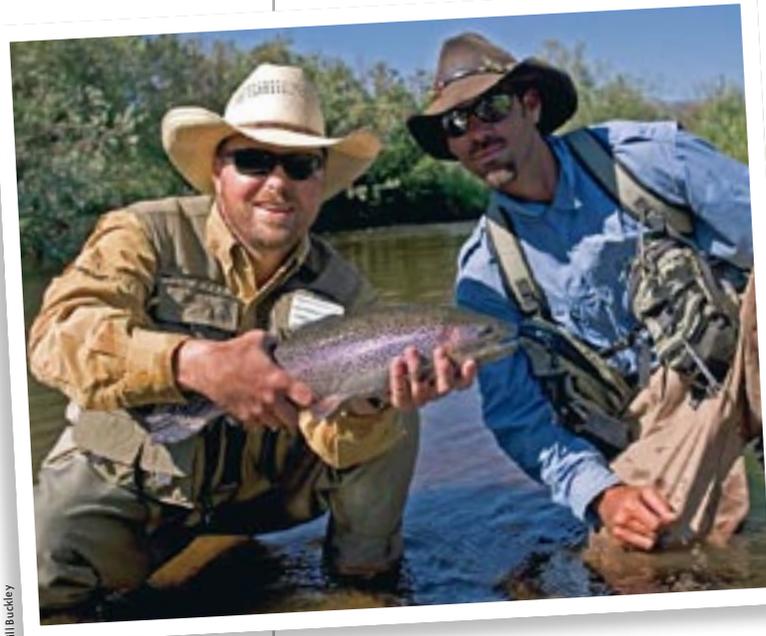
Look for the fish near shallow water structure such as rock piles, points, stumps, treetops, wooded stream channels and weed lines. The best baits are super small 1/16-ounce Roadrunners and ultra-light spinnerbaits. Keep moving until you find fish, but when the action lets up, move on. Fall crappies don't hole up like they do in the spring. September and October may not be quite as good as May, but it is not far behind, and you will have the coves and rocky points to yourself.—*Bill Winke*



Bill Winke

HUSA TIP

To simulate the pressure and increased heart rate that accompanies buck fever, do a few push-ups or run in place for a minute before you practice shooting. Learning to shoot while tired and out of breath can prepare you for the moment of truth.



TRI-CITIES CANADAS

The vast Columbia River, near the tri-cities of Pasco, Kennewick and Richland, is home to thousands of migrating Canadas each fall.

Alex Langbell (alex1@averyoutdoors.com), is a guide and a student of goose psychology. Typically, he says, he'll set out 8- to 12-dozen full-bodied decoys in a field set. But later in the season, when the birds have been hunted hard, he may change tactics.

"That's when you may use just 17 of your best decoys, make a pull string out of one, get some action in there," he says. "The geese are seeing 8- to 12-dozen decoys on a regular basis. So if you throw something different at them, it can help."

Another tip: Poor concealment, he says, is one of biggest reasons newcomers fail. "A goose up in the air can pick you apart. If you're not completely hidden, you're done." So, brush up your ground blinds, and then...brush them again.—*Dave Carty*

A BIG WOOD AUTUMN

In September, Sun Valley skiers know that some of the best fishing of the year is just around the corner. That includes the Big Wood River, especially the stretch from Magic Reservoir upstream to the Ketchum/Sun Valley area. Thanks to farsighted land-use policies, much of that water is open to the public.

That's good news. "We get this really unique hatch called the red quill, which usually happens around mid- to late-September," Dave Glasscock says. Glasscock (www.anglingservices.com) is a photographer and local fishing guide. "It's fairly interesting," he explains. "You can catch fish off all sizes in that river—from 3 to 4 inches all the way up to 19 inches."

Knowing where the fish are holding is important. "You see a lot of people making those mistakes—not casting a line into a productive area," he says. But taking the time to learn the river pays off with feisty, hard-fighting rainbows.—*Dave Carty*



HUSA TIP

To see more wildlife on your property, just add water. Biologists say that adding a watering hole will increase the wild game that frequent the property. Dig a small depression or place half of a plastic drum in the woods and let rain water fill it.

TIPS & TACTICS

Wild West Pick-Up Hunts

ACT FAST AND YOU CAN STILL GET IN ON INCREDIBLE WESTERN HUNTING

The Carter's had one heck of a hunting year in 2007. Garth (the father) bagged a 7x7 bull elk in New Mexico, a 7x7 bull in Utah and a 30-plus-inch mule deer. His son, Jason, took a 6x6 bull elk and two muley bucks over 30 inches. Excellent hunters each, western hunting is the family business, and father and son take their own advice, with obviously productive results.

"Western hunting has become complicated, like taxes, such that most people hire others to help," says Garth, President of Carter's Hunter Services. "We give them advice and they can go on their own self-guided, landowner tag or draw unit hunts, or with an outfitter."

Even in September it's not too late to plan a western hunt, although the playing field has been narrowed since most western states require license applications in the spring. A few states offer licenses and tags over the counter (OTC), and all you have to do is show up before opening day. "Colorado has the best OTC elk opportunities," says Carter, "followed by Idaho, which offers licenses for elk and deer. Oregon offers tags for their archery elk season."

By late summer all of the Western states have concluded their lottery license drawings, yet one often-overlooked option exists.

"If fellows want to hunt after the application period, we help them with the potential to pick up a landowners tag—an option many hunters have totally forgotten about because they think they have to draw," Carter says. "The most popular states are New Mexico and Colorado. In Colorado, the Division of Wildlife issues 15 percent of all draw tags for elk, deer and antelope to landowners, with deer tags numbering about 3,000. Colorado is the easiest and best state to get a landowner tag for mule deer and whitetail, while New Mexico is the best for elk."

Nevada, Utah, Idaho and Oregon have

transferable landowner tags, but the numbers are so small that the competition (price) is keen. A prime Utah elk tag may run \$20,000, a good Nevada mule deer tag \$5,000, while in Colorado you can pick up a deer tag for \$500-\$2,000, with some going much higher.

"These tags are good for the entire unit, not just the landowner's property. They are no different than a state lottery system tag," he says. "Although these tags are in high demand, we are the largest broker of landowner tags in North America. We have hunters who want a better-than-public-land experience, which means not dealing with unlimited hunting pressure. We believe these tags provide a good middle-ground between an expensive guided hunt and a chancy on-your-own adventure."

"If you are content with a two year-old bull—a 4- to 5-point—Colorado is a great state to hunt with an OTC tag, yet such hunts are becoming a thing of the past," says Carter. "There are few areas that offer OTC tags with a reasonable opportunity to harvest a mule deer 4-6 years old, or an elk that's 5-8 years old. If a hunter hasn't drawn a public land lottery license, before he fills up with \$4-plus gas and drives across the country it may be worth investigating and investing in a landowner tag," concludes Carter. "For a couple of hundred dollars, he can greatly increase the opportunity for a mature animal."

Carter's Hunter Services employs four full-time consultants that work with trip planning. Contact them at www.huntinfool.com or call (435) 865-1020.—*Joe Byers*



HUSA TIP

If you fish in muddy water conditions, add an aftermarket rattle to your favorite lure. Fish use their sense of hearing more readily when they can't see in murky water.