

The GREAT ARGENTINA

Dove Shoot

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #55 —



Here's my two-gun battery – Benelli Montefeltro 20 gauges.

There's more to an Argentina dove shoot than pulling the trigger and seeing puffs of feathers – though that's the best part. But answer this question: "If you take every shot in range, can you run the gun?" These Benellis hold five rounds each; can you go five-for-five on doves? If so, and if you can do it consistently, you deserve some kind of medal – because it's really, really difficult.

Let me paint a picture; you may be at the edge of standing corn rows, with a harvested field to your front, or you may be under a shade tree with your back to the roost. Your field of view is 180 degrees or so, depending on whether you rotate your hips as well as your head. But you can't watch everywhere at once, and you're constantly pivoting back and forth.



This is a typical morning's shoot – 1500 rounds.

The birds come from the left, the right and from straight ahead. And they come from behind, over your right shoulder, over your left shoulder and straight over the top of your head – some almost close enough to touch with the barrel of your gun and others completely out of range. One group may be cruising with a 20 mph tailwind and the next are flying into that same wind; while others are quartering in and out – the lead may be different on every shot. Oh, and one last thing, 'darting doves' is a fair nickname – WOW! They come in singles and pairs and handfuls and strings of 50 and – and they just keep coming. You might shoot a left to right crosser at

40 yards, flying into the wind; and one second later shoot another at 5 yards, flying with the wind.

So the doves are almost constantly everywhere -- enough to shoot 20 boxes of shells in less than an hour, easily 2-3000 rounds per day. And, that's part of the problem your brain has to deal with

-- which one(s) do you shoot? One morning I counted the time between shots – one thousand one, one thousand two. Only one time, in 20 minutes or so, did I reach the count of ten -- before engaging again.

Now, you've heard a nearly complete list of my alibis, let's go back to the original question: "Can you run the gun?" Personally, my answer is yes, but not every time; it just takes more discipline and patience than I possess.

"...can you run the gun?"

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You need to wear 'tight-fitting' gloves and bring some duct tape for hot spots.