

Early SEASON GOOSE Hunt

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #126 —

Everyone calls it the Early Goose Season; this year it started on October 3 and ended October 11, running 30 minutes before sunrise till sunset. It's sort of a 'pre-season' opportunity to shoot the local birds, before the migration starts later in the fall - and the longer season opens up.

One of the important variables to success is the timing of the corn harvest, because the geese begin feeding in the corn fields as soon as the farmers pull out. This year, because of dry weather, the corn came out right on schedule and the geese moved in. Another variable is choosing the right field to hunt; you have to pattern the geese. There's a good chance that the field they feed in tonight will be the same one they fed in last night – but there's no guarantee.

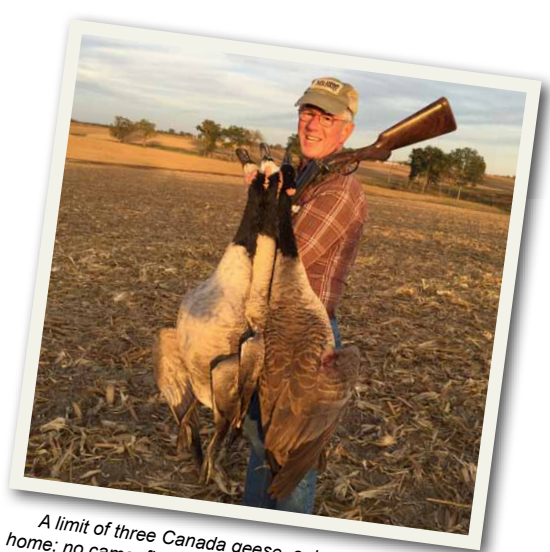


Three shots, three geese, with my L. C. Smith 12 gauge and 1-1/4 oz loads of Bismuth #5 shot. The shots were close and I used improved cylinder and modified choke tubes.

I got a text from George Wieberg, the farm manager, at 6:58 pm on Friday night "We are going to try and hunt geese

tomorrow (5pm) on Coats farm if you are interested." My response was quick "Yes, looking for my duck stamp."

George was there when I arrived, along with his grandson Jacob. Kirby Asher and his wife Kellie had also arrived early and helped set up the decoys and blinds; everything looked great. Jake Frink and his son Matthew arrived just before me. The two boys were old enough to blow goose calls, but not yet old enough to shoot.



A limit of three Canada geese, only five minutes from home; no camouflage needed when using a layout blind.

We stood around, waiting impatiently, until finally the sound of geese in the distance forced us into the layout blinds. Soon they were all over us and someone shouted "take em" — and we did. Flinging open the blind and sitting up, I focused on a pair directly in front at about 25 yards, moving left to right. It was right barrel, left barrel, two shots, and two geese. Everyone else

"Soon they were all over us..."

connected and a total of six geese hit the ground. A few minutes later, a bigger flock came in, but no one said "take em", and they flew off without a shot being fired – we all laughed. Another flock came in about 6:30 and we took six more from it – I fired only once, finishing my limit.

We were now at twelve geese, with only three hunters needing one more each. One minute before sundown Jake fired the last shot – five hunters, fifteen geese; a great early season goose hunt.

Midway USA

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This is a pretty ideal layout; harvested corn on a hilltop with a lake nearby. We had about 70 decoys around our five layout blinds.