

My Favorite Shotgun

for Rabbit Hunting

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #95 —

Rabbit hunting is something I never give much thought to, until after the first of the year. For me, it's just a matter of priorities; you see, deer season and the holidays take up most of my spare time as the year winds down. Come January, there isn't much else to do outside -- except cut firewood and go rabbit hunting.

From my experience, there are two ways to hunt rabbits -- with beagles and without. I'm good for either one, but the hunting process varies considerably depending on which way you hunt. If there isn't any snow on the ground, then beagles are usually my preference -- as they root around and push a lot of rabbits out of the thick cover that you just can't kick out on foot; but when there's good fresh snow, rabbit hunting can be great, with or without the little dogs.



The Model 42 is lightweight, easy to carry and holds three rounds of ammo -- perfect when the action is fast.

Shotgun, .22 rifle or .22 handgun is always a decision to be made; which gun should I take? When I'm hunting with beagles, or if there's no snow

on the ground, almost always I grab my favorite shotgun for rabbit hunting -- a 410 pump. But when walking up rabbits, after a fresh snowfall, a .22 rifle or handgun just can't be beat; I try to spot rabbits sitting tight in the cover, then make a clean shot to the head.

A man doesn't have to pay quite as much attention, when hunting with beagles; mostly there's a lot of standing around waiting and watching. On this particular morning, there were four of us and one of the guys brought along three beagles -- a veteran and a couple of pups. I was drinking the last of my coffee, prepared to drop the cup at



My favorite shotgun for rabbit hunting is this original, pre-war Winchester Model 42, in 410 gauge/bore.

the sight of a rabbit; but then my phone rang and I just had to take the call. So there I was with the cell phone in one hand, a coffee cup in the other and the shotgun in the crook of my arm -- when out came two rabbits, only about twenty feet apart. I didn't get a shot!

We finished the hunt with nine rabbits that morning

"...there are two ways to hunt rabbits..."

and were entertained the entire time by the three beagles, one or more of which was almost always baying on a track. Rabbit hunting will always have a special place in my heart, especially when I'm carrying my favorite shotgun.



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L-R Jerod Smothers, Dennis Holdmeier and I, with a few of the morning's rabbits. (Picture courtesy of Nate Hill)