

The 2014 waterfowl season is upon us and once again we rounded up the dogs, gear and friends Tyler Mcrae and Jarrod Scharber for a late October trip to the duck factory.

When you live in Florida the anticipation of an opportunity to duck hunt 1 month before the Florida season opens is great. When we reviewed the weather forecast as the trip approached what had been an unseasonably warm October looked to be turning in our favor as below freezing weather and a snow storm were predicted. We were ready to go see the migration!

When we landed in Saskatchewan we quickly gathered our gear in time to make it to our hotel and scout the last few hours of the day and were pretty disappointed with what we saw in some of our go to places. We ran into **Fred Zink** in the restaurant that night and he shared similar frustration with what they were seeing so we kept everything packed up and jumped back in the truck and headed east at 1st light. We made it over 300 miles the next day and still hadn't found what we were looking for. As we returned back to home base, the snow began to fall and we stopped in a field where we had seen about 200-300 mallards that morning. We scratched out a few greenheads and gadwalls and were all happy to pull the trigger. The greenheads were beautiful in the snow!

New birds showed up back in the usual places with the snow but still not in sufficient quantities to get you excited but we stuck it out and put together a limit of mallards the next afternoon on a beautiful hilltop cut barley field between 5-6 sloughs that were holding about 1,000 mallards between them. With 2 days to go we wandered back into our favorite restaurant a little weary from all the truck riding and ready for the World Series and a steak! Just then, Fred rolls in and says he just received a call that birds are stacked up in Moose Jaw and we need to get there quick. Here we go again.... We had to deliberate a full 9 innings before considering another major power-move but we mustered the energy to consider it

and when the next mornings' hunt yielded 5 greenwing teal, 4 mallards, and 1 Canadian goose the deal was sealed and we were headed south by 9am. When we arrived we had not been misled and the sloughs were full of a variety of different kinds of ducks and within a short time we found a recently cut pea field that had the numbers of ducks and geese in it that make stories to tell your kids and their kids. We knew the morning hunt would probably be best but we couldn't resist the afternoon hunt. The afternoon was a big learning curve as our setup just wasn't right and even with non stop flights of mallards circling over our spread for 3 straight hours they just didn't finish well and we barely scratched out a limit. That goes to show how important set up and scouting is to field hunting.



However, for the 1st time all week our anticipation was truly off the chart as we had finally found a big concentration of waterfowl. At 1st light the next morning we were ready with a new setup and within 1 hour we had a 3-man limit of ducks, primarily greenheads along with 2 drake pintail and a drake widgeon thrown in, all

on dry land. Only in Saskatchewan. We were tired but not without 1 more memory of why 3 boys from 'Ol Florida saddle up the horses for the big adventure on the prairie every year. You can certainly appreciate greenheads right over the spread after a week like that, it is always worth the wait. We watched for the next 2 hours as thousands of mallards, pintails and snow geese poured into our pea field and the surrounding areas, this was truly part of the great North American migration.



Back in the South we are waiting anxiously as ever for the birds to arrive and opening day is just 2 days away. A truly epic early season front has just arrived, the corn fields are flooded and blinds are brushed in and once again anticipation is off the chart! Good luck to everyone this season.

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