



# Geese and duck hunting on the Big Sandy River



Kentucky Goose Hunting (courtesy of Kentucky Fish & Wildlife Resources)

First of all, a shout out to the staff of the Estill County Tribune, for their outstanding layout of my last week's *Just Hunting*. I am not a new comer to this business, and I must say, the work put into the story from your end was awesome. Tip of my hat, to you, for a job well done.

Next, I would like to send roses to Betty A. Young. I was always taught to give people roses while they are alive, it means more to them. I have never met Ms. Young, but I hope that will happen some time soon. Her stories, although happening today, take me back to the days of my childhood and growing up in a Union coal mining town, McRoberts, in southeast Kentucky. Job well done, Ms. Young, I will keep reading if you keep writing.

Now to our hunting story of the week. The year was 1965. I tried to hunt everything that was in season, except I had never goose or duck hunted. Some of my friends were big time hunters of both, and kept putting the pressure on me to go to Ashland, Kentucky, to hunt with them for ducks, or geese, whichever flew over. They had a blind lease on the Big Sandy River and assured me it was something to behold.

When I started getting ready for the hunt, after I gave in to their demands, I found how much I never knew about duck hunting, and that I never had what I needed to actually do the hunt. Although the owner of several shotguns, I never had a "Goose Gun" that had a 34 inch barrel, and a modified choke. The choke you twisted from outside the barrel. I ordered me one from Wards, and when it arrived, I was shocked to learn it was a bolt action, the release on the right side, and I am left handed. I also needed to order wool everything, wool shirt, wool pants, wool socks, a wool hat, wool gloves, I mean everything. The boots I had would do fine, so no need to order those.

We arrived outside of Ashland just after dark at a motel, I now looking back on, should have and

would be shut down by the State. We never went to check the blind, them telling me they had gotten a report that day, and all was fine. I never slept one wink all night. We left the motel well before daylight; it was really cold, and I was thankful for the new wool things I had purchased. The wind and snow was blinding.

After a short ten-minute drive, in a 1953 Willys 4x4 truck that was never built for a trip from McRoberts to Ashland; but we were thankful for such a truck. As we got into the Jon Boat to ferry us across, it was still not breaking light. The sound of the little 9-horse-power motor was the only sound, although I could hear several up and down the river. We stepped into the blind, I was amazed. There was hot coffee, snacks, and a sense this was going to be a good hunt. I was froze to death, the wind, snow, and rough waters had beaten me to death, before the first duck appeared.

I would have bet the farm, (that my parents owned) there wasn't another hunter within miles. WRONG!!! the sky lit up when the ducks started showing up, you could hear the shot falling all around you; I hunkered down and never shot once during the first ten minutes or so. They got me out of hiding, and I downed my first two ducks; and I might add, my only ducks ever. I sold one of my buddies, the old Wards shotgun, and sold my wool clothing to some of the other fellows. I have never duck hunted ever again. For

the Wildlife Women to go back for a second year, is beyond my pay grade. The ones of you that enjoy duck and goose hunting, my hat's off to you.

*Editor's Note: Here's a goose recipe courtesy of Kentucky Fish & Wildlife Resources*

### Bubba's Gourmet Goose

- 1 Large Canada goose
- 1/4 Cup Cognac
- 2 Tbsp dry mustard
- 1/4 Pound butter
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Dash thyme
- 6 Medium apples with peel, coarsely cut
- Bay leaves
- Fruit juice of your choice

In a large bowl, mix by hand the apples, salt, pepper, and half the Cognac. Stuff the bird with 1/2 of this mixture. Place the bird in a pan and surround it with the remainder of the stuffing. Make a paste with butter and mustard and coat the goose. Add bay leaves, salt, pepper, and thyme. Roast in a 350 degree oven for 3 1/2 hours. Check the goose frequently. If the goose becomes dry, turn it over and add fruit juice of any type. Baste regularly with remaining Cognac and equal parts water until goose is done to taste.

from Mrs. Kevin L. Chaffins, Mount Sterling

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## Times Remembered Betty A. Young

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As I have mentioned before, we have critters where we live. Mainly, because our log house is situated at the edge of the woods; we are practically in the woods, therefore, we have visitors from possums from time to time.

It seems to come in spurts. One year we saw ten to twelve raccoons that summer; then we didn't see any this past season. But lately, we have been seeing numerous possums. There are three that visit every night. A huge one, middle-sized one,

and a smaller one. They are not as pretty as raccoons but they are more behaved.

They come up from the creek area to eat under the bird feeders and search for any other scraps I have put out for the critters. Usually, the possums stay on the ground near the back decks, but occasionally they venture upon the porch.

Late the other night we were watching TV when I heard a loud crunching noise coming from the back porch. I wondered, which one of the stray cats was eating dinner at this hour? I got up to check, and there was a large possum feeding at the cat bowl. He was brave and had marched right upon the porch and helped himself. Our cat, Si, was just sitting there watching the possum eat his food. It was like, Oh! help yourself there's plenty more in the bag!

The funniest thing happened a few years back. We heard the same noise on the back porch and just figured it was some animal getting into mischief. Bob gets up from his chair and walks out to the back porch and begins looking for something when he heard a loud growling noise. It sounded like it was coming from the grill. He lifted the grill cover up, and there sat the

# Possum Visitors



possum; immediately he showed his razor sharp teeth. He jumped right down at Bob's feet, scared, and running as fast as he could. Meanwhile, Bob yelled Whoa! And stepped back; he practically fell over the wicker chair sitting behind him. The possum was as frightened as Bob! I thought it was funny!

All in all, possums are good to have around.

• They eat ticks: they consume thousands a day along with many other insects

- Possums are incredibly agile and they are smart critters
- Are the only known North American Marsupial outside of Mexico
- They are all thumbs, just like humans and other primates
- They aren't aggressive, but when threatened or harmed they will play possum
- They rarely have rabies
- Many large possums are immune to the venom of rattle snakes and pit vipers and regularly prey upon these snakes.

### Out on a Limb



by Gary Kopervas

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