

January 30, 1991

Dear Datus,

I am glad your hunt down here was reasonably successful. I enjoyed it. I am sorry about that second day that didn't pan out for us. I went back to the Ruby road area a week ago with Sam Radan and we hunted around Yank Springs without finding a bird. We then ran into the rancher (Bear Valley Ranch) who suggested we try further east toward the freeway. We moved half way back to where you and I hunted and in a very rugged and steep area did manage to find a few coveys. Sam and I split up, he and his Drathour(?) found three coveys and he dropped six birds and recovered five. Rocky found four coveys and I brought three birds back, losing one we couldn't find.

I just came back from another one day trip with Jim Simpson, a Credit Union Manager down here, who ran a six or seven month old pointer. We went to the canyon in the San Rafeal Valley you and I hunted. Jim's dog ran well, but like Rocky on his first two Hun hunts, didn't understand what to do or what he was hunting. Rocky pinned a single just after we started and I dropped it. THAT WAS THE ONLY BIRD WE SAW ALL DAY. We tried two other places, but didn't move a thing and never ran into any fresh scratch anywhere.

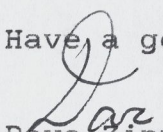
But wait till you hear this, I checked the wing barrel (check in) at Sonoita after our hunt and found the usual one to four or five wings per bag, except for a large plastic bag full of wings and a note saying in one day, 37 hunters dropped 114 Mearns, 6 or 8 scallies and 6 Gambels, incredible. I sure wish I knew where they hunted. We did see forty pointers and one setter on a chain and six or eight vans, trucks and campers at one area down there. Maybe they came back two weeks later. Only four birds a hunter, but it still looked obscene.

The Gambel season was bad, the scaled season worst, only the Mearns season offered even a chance for birds, but really not enough for you or anyone else to come down for it.

I have to go again tomorrow with Steve Kush, a physical therapist, brother of Frank, the ex- ASU and Colts football coach; plus a pitcher with the Philadelphia Phillies and his father. It will be my last time down there I guess, we are going to Park City for a week of skiing (my brother Don has a condo there) and the season ends the 11th, so I may get one day in after I get back.

Still writing, I think I just sold a fishing story to Outdoor Life, my first "Big Three" sale. I signed and returned the contract last week, after revising the story per Vin Sparano's suggestions, so all that is left is the return check. The story, "Burn your Waders?", covers shallow water fishing techniques and should show up in the April or May issue. I also have an article coming out in this month's Gun Dog called "Patience with Puppies". But I have to get back to work, have nothing lined up after that. I may try on a book for size this spring, even if it is just for the exercise and experience.

Have a good winter,


Dave Zinn - Scottsdale, AZ

February 13, 1991

Datus Proper
1085 Hamilton
Belgrade, MT 59715

Dear Datus,

Speak of the devil, enclosed is a year old article on Arizona's generous bird limit. I tried to get the AZG&F to drop the limit to 8 or 10, but failed to convince them, as the article illustrates. I still believe we don't need more than ten to shoot for, but it is a moot point. Just pray for rain this year.

Speaking of rain, I hunted Rocky on Monday, the last day of the season on Mearns, down on the south side of the Canelo Hills, in an area I hadn't hunted this season but visit each year. Sam Radan had called and planned to hunt the same day, but I wanted that last day with Rocky alone (I am sure you understand) and didn't mention I was coming down.

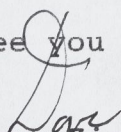
It was threatening rain in the morning and the scenting conditions were pretty good. Rocky found two coveys and a couple of singles and I dropped two birds. Both coveys flushed wildly before I got to Rocky, they must have been hunted either Sat. or Sunday. Then it started to rain heavily and we never put up another bird despite walking another three hours. I was soaked by the time I got back to the truck, but it was still a great day with a great dog.

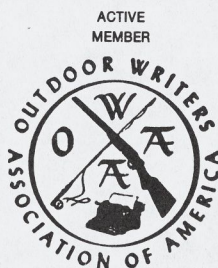
I saw your recent article on Irish fishing in Grays. Good job. What is the secret to being published there? I have yet to break the code. I recognize they screen for quality writing and name authors, and offbeat themes. I also saw a recent article of Dave Carty's in Sports Afield. Good to see Dave selling to the top.

I am also enclosing a copy of my beeper article, in case you never saw it. It covers the Sonic Collar you were interested in from Orvis. I still favor the Tritronic model for range, tone and recharging capability.

Expect to hit the Lee's Ferry section of the Colorado now that the hunting season is over. Mixed bag up there, large healthy fish mixed with slim, starving snakes. Combination of slot limits, and low water exposing the weed beds and shrimp.

See you next summer,


Dave Zinn - Scottsdale, AZ



DAVID E. ZINN

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August 8, 1990

Dale Spartas
1120 Nelson Rd.
Bozeman, MT 59715

Dear Dale,

I have spent a little time on finding us a spot to hunt Huns and pheasant, but I am not making much progress. My interest dropped a little last Saturday, I was out fishing the Big Hole and my wife, Nancy was walking our three dogs, when Bandit, my seven year old English Setter ran out in front of a car and was killed. This leaves Rocky, my five year old Setter my only bird dog for the coming season. Rocky averaged eight coveys on Mearns quail the last two months of the season so I am not too worried, but obviously I was counting on Bandit to share the hunting.

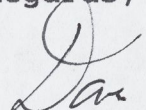
Only you responded to my proposal. I have heard nothing from Barsness, Carty or Proper. I did research the deal a friend of mine (and Al Troth's) Sam Radan, a West Yellowstone resident proposed a couple of years ago, four guys splitting a \$1000 fee for a large ranch, east of Lewistown. Sam tells me he has been hunting the ranch for three years, without having to pay anything. The first two years were great, particularly for Huns, but last year he couldn't find a Hun. The rancher has found Huns in quantity this summer, so things may be back to normal this fall.

I also had another prospect, Bob Rice, a rancher over near Harrison that owns land "as far as you can see". I hunted there free three years ago, but he has since leased hunting rights to somebody. I had in mind to inquire about subleasing small game rights for the season, but this is marginal Hun and pheasant country and might not be worth the money. I also plan to visit with Charley Waterman this month and might get some leads there.

Meanwhile the fishing has been pretty good on the Big Hole. Yesterday I had my best day ever, getting some nice fish from 13 to 17 inches, nothing big but very nice fish. I have caught and released seven fish, 20 inches or over, this year - vs. five a season the past two years. The water is holding up and the fish are healthy. Of course, the Big Hole is notorious for being either on or off, and when it is off, you can't buy a fish. Lucky for us it has been on more often this year, but it is still a crap shoot, with more off days than on.

Enclosed is a copy of a recent article on Mearns, so you can get a better handle on what you are getting into this winter.

Regards,


Dave Zinn - Wise River, MT