

# November Is Prime Time For Pheasants

BY RICK PETREKOVIC

Openers are a very big deal on deer, elk, trout, duck, bass, turkey and walleye. Much hoopla is made over the pheasant openers across their range as well. Many years a tradition has been established where the same group of family and friends assemble every year and hunt the same fields together. Often times shooting roosters is secondary to the socializing associated with the events. It is customary for locals to hit the private land they have access to hard on the opener and the first few weeks of the season. More often than not, landowners have reserved their land for family and close friends the first few weeks of the season. Pheasant openers vary from the second Saturday of October to the last Saturday of October. If you enjoy the socializing, tradition, and crowds associated with hunting the pheasant opener, then enjoy it. There are those among us though who appreciate November even more.

October can be very warm on dogs and hunters alike. If you do not hunt your own dogs you might not appreciate this. Dogs work ten times as hard as we do. October temperatures can be dangerously hot for our hard working dogs. Dogs do not know when to rest. Unless it is raining my labs cannot effectively hunt when temperatures are even above 50 for very long. A hot dog does not pick up scent, track, or hunt well.

November typically offers much cooler temperatures for dogs and hunters. Highs in the 30s and 40s are much more common than the 60s and 70s experienced in October. Dogs and hunters alike

can hunt more effectively when comfortable. We can hunt longer as well. With little chance of heat stroke influencing your dogs, it makes for a much more enjoyable and productive hunt. You can wait till December but you are rolling the dice on the weather. In the northern reaches of the pheasant range, weather may be challenging at best in December. Many years in northern states, the snow by December has made hunting close to impossible.

As we get into November the crops are harvested and this concentrates the birds in the remaining cover. Knowing where the birds are stacks the odds in our favor. Large groups of hunters no longer have the advantage they had in October. If you hunt in small groups of two hunters and only a few dogs November is your time to shine. Working cover toward the edges of harvested crops leaves the pheasants with fewer options. They no longer have the option of running helter-skelter into huge corn and soybean fields.

Good dogs and patient hunters have a real shot at flushing the birds in range. My experience has been the good hunting starts when the crops are in and the birds can be patterned effectively. Small pockets of cover with water and grain close by but somewhat isolated can hold a surprising number of pheasant. Early season pressure in cover pushes the birds into standing crops where the pheasant are difficult at best to hunt. The public land will start to hold a lot of birds once the crops are in. Public land in many cases is the only cover remaining after the crops are in.



The author on November hunt with his labs, Zach and Bella.

Like most outdoor activities, the pressure on the resource subsides after a few weeks. Duck, grouse, goose, and deer seasons are all going strong by early November. These activities will spread the hunting pressure out in November and make it easier for you to obtain permission to hunt private land once family and friends are finished for the year. Crowded public lands in October are now holding birds and hunting pressure is now reduced significantly. Un-crowded access to public and private land holding birds is a real plus in November.

Lodging availability in November is a benefit as well. After the first two weeks of the season, motels vacancies are much

more common. If you are a deer hunter, you should consider deer hunting either early morning or late evening. Run your dogs from legal shooting until you have had enough and just maybe you can have a successful pheasant and deer hunt on the same trip.

If you can wait out the first two weeks of the season, prefer to hunt in more comfortable cooler temperatures, prefer to not hunt huge crop fields, desire to gain access to private land, like to hunt concentrated birds in cover, and prefer to not hunt in crowds, maybe this year you should wait until November to let the dogs out. Your dogs will love you for it. The roosters will not appreciate it much.

## South Dakota Mid To Late Season Pheasants

BY DENNIS FOSTER

In my opinion, later season hunts are far more enjoyable than the decidedly chaotic nature of the first three weeks or so after the opener. Yes, there is the anticipation and rush of going afield and popping that first rooster as you take your first few steps into some good cover. But that can also be a detriment (if you can consider it that) in that these birds—yet wild—are largely uneducated at this point, and all too often, your limit may be reached and the hunt may be over after only the first walk or two.

This is great fun and the stuff bar-room banter is predicated on, but often over far too quickly for those of us who enjoy stretching our legs and seeing the dogs work. I personally prefer the opportunities later season excursions offer. This is due in large part to the fact that the first and largest wave of hunters is long gone and things have settled down a bit. We are no longer witnessing the sea of orange descending upon every piece of decent cover in sight. The traditional opening get-togethers of family and friends of landowners have left, as have most of your "Cabela's Cowboys." You know the type; the guys who like to look, dress, and talk the part of a mighty hunter more than thoroughly enjoy the actual hunt. I guess that impresses the local barmaids... but I have yet to have seen that proven.

To truly experience what South Dakota has to offer, the mid to late season hunts give us an opportunity to showcase what we truly have. Although the birds have been pushed around a bit and are now wise to what is going on, great hunting can still be had and I would say even better hunting for a number of reasons.

One of the main reasons is that the temperature is much more conducive to hunting—both for us and our dogs. The first week or two can be downright warm and this does not mix well with overweight and out of shape hunters and their similarly fated dogs. It can be more than just uncomfortable in the fact that it is quite common for us to see dogs literally drop after the first walk. A word of advice is to walk and work with your dogs so as to have them—and yourself—in a bit better condition and disciplined long before you cross our border. I can



guarantee you this will make for a much more satisfying hunt. This is also a major cause of tension between outfitters and hunters as there is nothing worse than seeing a guy's pride and joy not only disappoint him, but potentially screw up a hunt as well.

Another factor to consider is that the birds will begin to congregate as the weather cools, and I like to stick to smaller areas of heavier cover, which I leave untouched for just this purpose. This allows for several advantages. First of all, if we use our heads, we can quietly approach these patches and quickly surround them without alerting the birds for several hundred yards ahead of us, as we do in a typical big area walk. The most fun and exciting part is that as we have the birds surrounded; we can quickly push them into the center of the cover and when they do come out, there is literally an "explosion" as they rise up and away in large numbers. It's a great way to get your heart pounding without walking a mile in order to do so.

Comfortable weather, a relaxed atmosphere, and large numbers of birds grouped into tight confines—it just does not get any better than that folks! If you have never experienced a truly 100 percent wild bird South Dakota pheasant hunt, this would be my recommendation.

Dennis Foster is an outdoor writer as well as a fishing and hunting guide in South Dakota. You can learn more by visiting [www.eyetimepromotions.com](http://www.eyetimepromotions.com) or calling him directly at 605-887-7069.



PROMOTION

### Archery Product Reviews BY NEIL LAMBERT

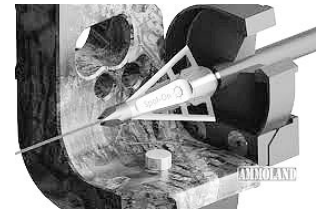
The Bubba Prowler Climbing Treestand  
by CougarClaw



The Bubba Prowler Treestand by CougarClaw is the heavyweight champion of big boy climbers. The Bubba Prowler was one of the best stands I've tested this year, and has everything you need and more from a large climber. The Bubba Prowler weighs only 22.5 pounds—it is the lightest big boy stand on the market!

It is rated for 300 pounds max, and the dimensions are: 25.25 inches wide x 38 inches long. You can add or remove the seat with ease, and you have the option of facing the tree or facing away from it. The stand also has a leveling system that is second to none, and a foot rest that can easily be removed by simply removing a screw. I would recommend this stand for all the big boys out there. For \$349.99 you'll have the best 100 percent American-made stand, and it will last a lifetime! [cougarclawusa.com](http://cougarclawusa.com)

Clean-Shot Laser Broadhead  
by Clean-Shot Archery, Inc.



Well, here it is! A broadhead with a laser built inside of it. I knew the first time I saw a laser pointer it wouldn't be long before it would be small enough to put in a broadhead, and Clean-Shot has developed the means by which to do it. Not only does the tip of the broadhead have a laser, but you can also adjust the laser for elevation and windage! The broadhead comes with everything you need to go hunting. All you have to do is attach a magnet to your riser—just like a tracer nock—draw your bow and adjust it to your pin that you have already "sighted in." It is as easy as that!

Clean-Shots are available from three packs to singles. You can easily charge the battery in your car or truck with a 12-volt charger. This great device will open up your hunting in ways you've never thought possible. Not only is it a deadly broadhead, but it is a training tool as well; the laser will help you if you have torch issues. [clean-shot.com](http://clean-shot.com)

To learn more about this product and others, please go to:  
[www.ArcheryDeerHunting101.com](http://www.ArcheryDeerHunting101.com)