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# OUTDOOR LIFE

SEPTEMBER 2012

**THE  
BOBWHITE  
QUAIL'S LAST,  
BEST HOPE**

**+  
KILLER SETUPS  
FOR RESIDENT  
GEESE**

**+  
NAIL THE  
TOUGHEST  
BOW SHOTS**

**+  
HOT BAITS  
FOR FALL  
SMALLIES**

**+  
CROSSBOW  
ELK IN THE HIGH  
COUNTRY**

# THE SHOTGUN ISSUE

**25 GREATEST SMOOTHBORES EVER  
SHOOTING TIPS FROM THE SHOTGUN GURUS  
BIRD HUNTS AT THE END OF THE WORLD**



# BACK OF BEYOND BIRDS

SHOTGUN ADVENTURES THAT WILL TAKE YOU TO THE CORNERS OF THE EARTH

BY THOMAS McINTYRE



The English coined a phrase for the most remote parts of their erstwhile empire: the back of beyond. It originally referred to the Martian-desolate red-desert Australian Outback, also called the “never-never,” because one never, never wanted to go there. As far as I know there isn’t any quality bird hunting to be had in that back of beyond, so probably few hunters would care to take that distant trip. But what about those places that do have great and unusual wingshooting? How far would we be willing to venture if we knew the world’s most exotic (and possibly risky) bird hunting waited at the other end? Here are some back-of-beyond destinations for your consideration. If you go, make sure your insurance premiums are paid.



## GREENLAND

■ Eiders, common and the spectacularly colored king, are among the largest ducks in the world and can be hunted in Greenland during March and April. The Icelandic outfitter Lax-a can organize eider hunts in Greenland for a minimum of four hunters. The hunt itself costs \$6,050 per gun and lasts a total of six days. Hunters fly into Kangerlussuaq in western Greenland, then travel between three to five hours by boat to the selected hunting area. Lax-a makes all the arrangements for firearms permits and hunting licenses, and at present there is no bag limit on eiders in Greenland, though Lax-a does not want to overshoot the birds. The days are usually crisp and clear, but you need to dress warmly against the 15-degree temperatures that are the norm.

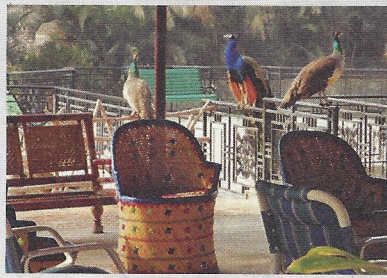
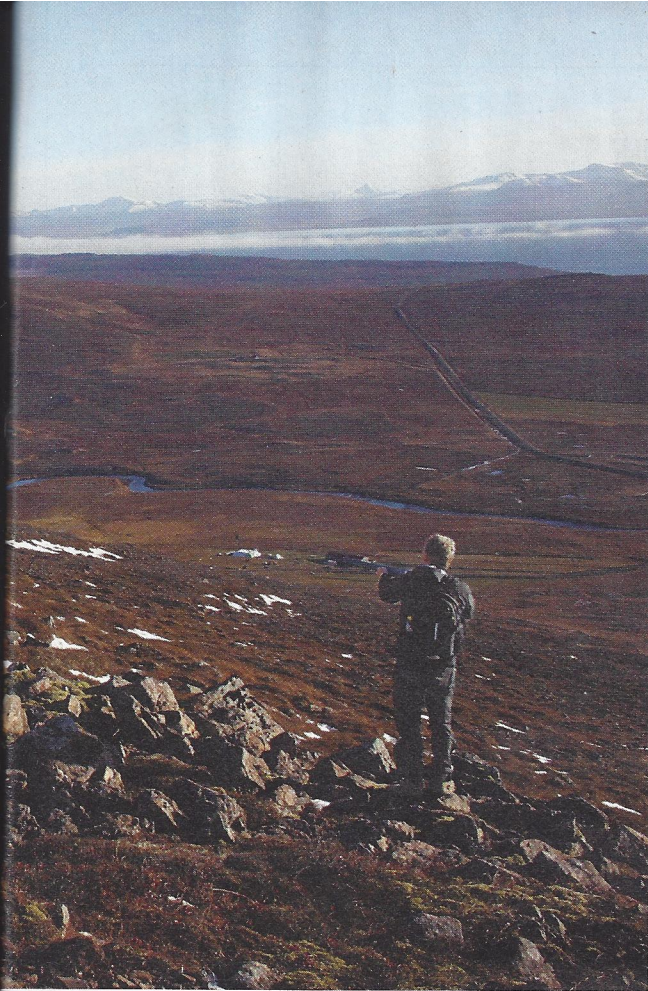
## BOLIVIA

■ Every April eared doves (*Zenaida auriculata*) begin migrating out of Brazil in Biblical proportions into the sorghum, sunflower, and soybean fields in the Bolivian countryside, and hunters can go through a hundred boxes of shells per day trying valiantly to stem the flow. The consensus is that the best outfitter for Bolivian dove hunting is Jorge Molina of Las Palomas Lodge, who began in Colombia before moving to Bolivia

many years ago. The lodge is a half hour by charter flight from Bolivia’s largest city, Santa Cruz, in the eastern part of the country. The accommodations and food are considered four-star. The hunt, at \$1,990 for three days of shooting, is actually rather reasonably priced, until you add in shotgun shells at \$13 per box. You do the math.

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Bird hunting at the ends of the earth can mean a rugged trek across the barrens of Greenland (far left), lounging among peacocks in Pakistan (left), or collecting exotic South American ducks in Peru (below) or eared doves in Bolivia (bottom right).



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transportation, outfitter-provided firearms, guide, and bird boys—plus oxygen, as necessary.

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## PERU

■ This is a bird hunt for either serious collectors or rock climbers. The idea of a trophy waterfowl hunt might seem curious, unless you're hunting exotic species such as (get out your guide to South American birds) Andean goose, crested duck, white-cheeked pintail, yellow-billed pintail, ruddy duck, speckled teal, Puna teal, and torrent duck. The hunt starts in Arequipa, Peru, and it's all uphill from there—literally; the torrent duck, for example, inhabits mountain rivers and rapids at elevations as lofty as 14,000 feet. The hunt, for a mountable pair of each species, is \$3,495 for five hunting days and six nights, and includes food and lodging, ground

## PAKISTAN

■ Yes, that Pakistan. The birds are doves, black and gray "partridges" (actually francolin), quail (the Eurasian variety), and mallards, which are, well, mallards. The outfitter is named Salim Khan. He and the guide meet clients at the airport in Karachi and then drive them in SUVs the four and a half hours to the Moro Game Reserve in Sindh Province, where big game like black-buck and hog deer can be legally hunted. Four days of bird shooting costs around \$7,500 per hunter. The outfitter can supply

shotguns—such as AyAs, Berettas, and Holland and Hollands. In September, the migratory quail can be hunted in extraordinary numbers, with six hunters (the preferred size for a group) taking 300 to 400 birds per walk-up shoot. The quail have moved out by December and January, but this is the best time for francolin and mallard hunting. The francolin are driven, and the hunt is stopped when the bag reaches 100 birds. Pakistan

may be the only place in the world to experience driven wild-mallard shooting with a hundred beaters pushing the birds out of the reeds toward shooters waiting in boats—which sounds

about as back-of-beyond as bird hunting gets.

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