

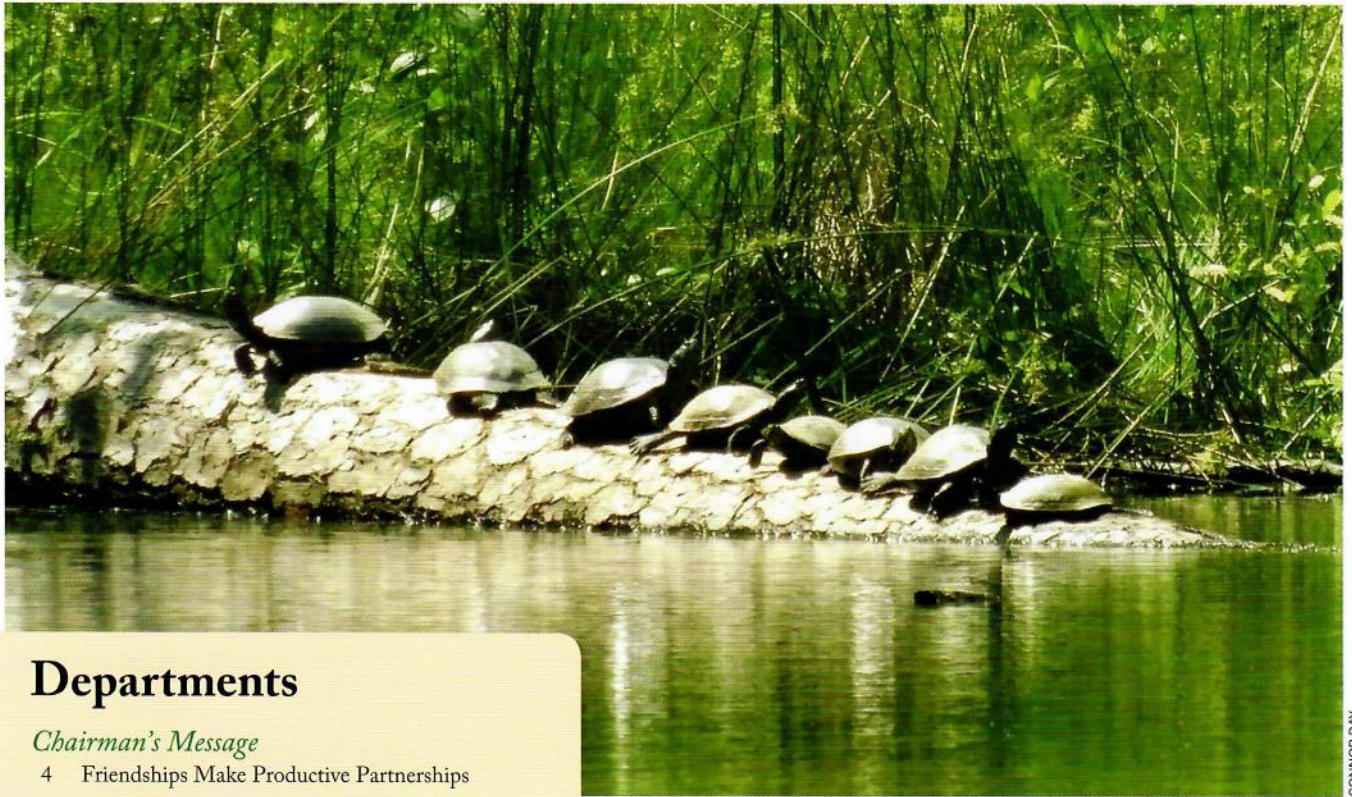


# Delta Wildlife

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CONNOR DAY

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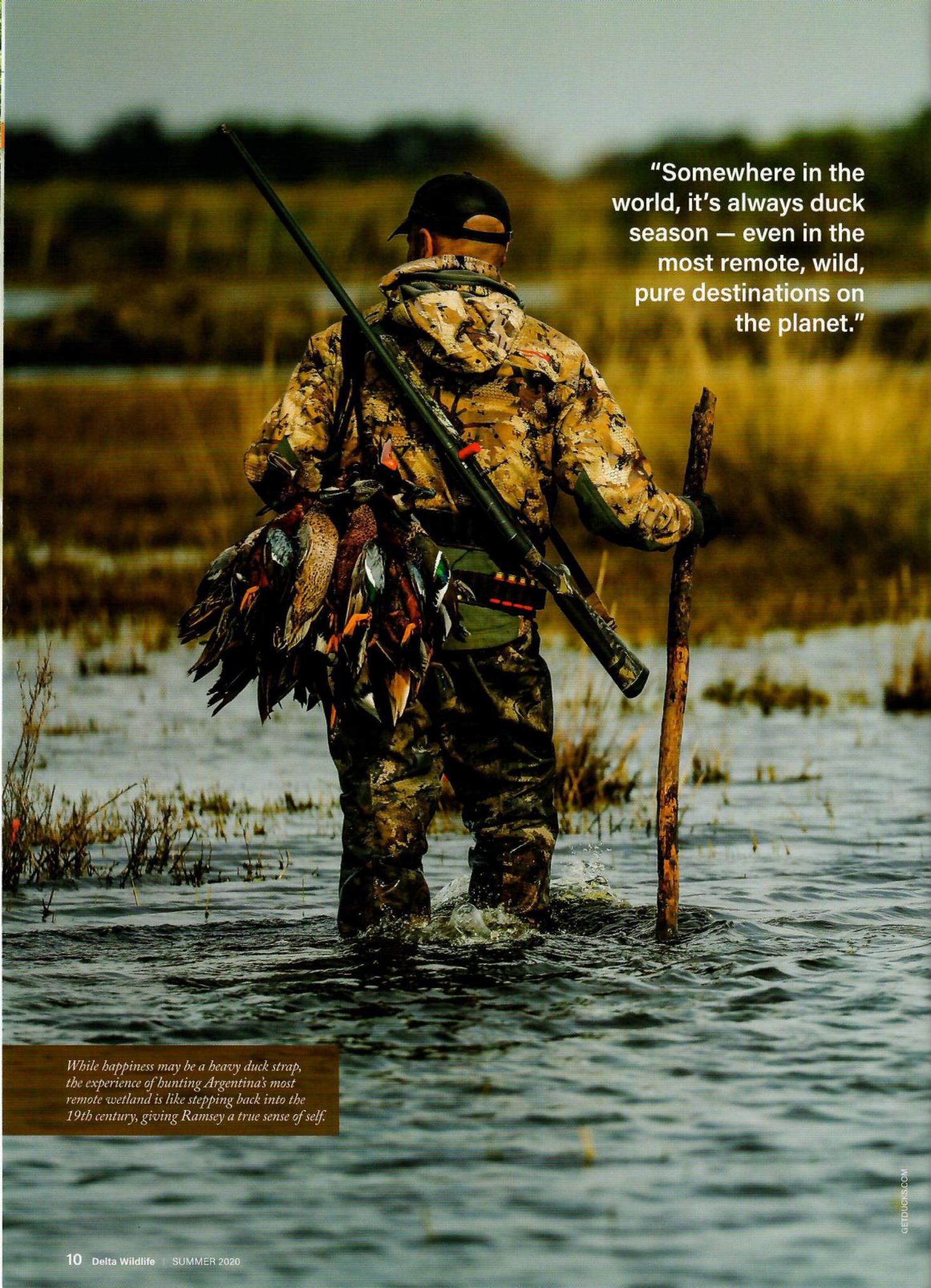
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Over the past two decades Ramsey Russell, the Delta native and owner of GetDucks.com, turned his passion into a full-time business. "Somewhere in the world, it's always duck season — even in the most remote, wild, pure destinations on the planet."

### 20 Biblical Flood Causes Wildlife Apocalypse in the South

"Countless wild animals perished during a record 219-day flood last year in Mississippi's Yazoo Backwater Project."

Cover Photo by Joe Mac Hudspeth

A hunter in camouflage gear is wading through shallow water. He is carrying a long rifle slung over his shoulder and a large bag of ducks on his back. He is holding a wooden stick in his left hand. The background is a blurred wetland landscape.

"Somewhere in the world, it's always duck season — even in the most remote, wild, pure destinations on the planet."

*While happiness may be a heavy duck strap, the experience of hunting Argentina's most remote wetland is like stepping back into the 19th century, giving Ramsey a true sense of self.*

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# Beyond the Birds

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BY AMY TAYLOR

**F**or Ramsey Russell, duck hunting is about the passion, the quest, the authenticity of adventure. The Delta native and owner of GetDucks.com explains, “Somewhere in the world, it’s always duck season — even in the most remote, wild, pure destinations on the planet. Of course, there are ducks galore in many places we hunt, some incredibly unique species; but for me, it’s not about collecting trophies or accruing numbers, it’s about collecting experiences.”

His passion for hunting was spawned in the Mississippi Delta where he enjoyed quality time spent with his grandfather who introduced him to fishing on Lake Ferguson as well as the pageantry of dove hunting near Inverness. When Ramsey reached junior high, his family moved from Greenville to Jackson, but he continued down the path, explaining, “I’ve always been enamored with outdoor adventures.” Throughout college at Mississippi State University, where he received a degree in Forestry and Wildlife, he first began exploring hunting venues by working on a massive ranch along the Mexico border. He then had opportunities to hunt with friends in the United States and began dreaming about hunting Canada. However, he attributes his resolute focus on the sport to a life-altering event.

When Ramsey was nearly 16 years old, he was involved in a near-death explosion. “I was cleaning paint brushes when the pilot light ignited the fumes. I remember the ambulance ride and was given an 8 percent chance of survival. I fell off into a black hole from May to November.” He continues, “Through the many months and years of healing, my perspective on life changed. This life is full of uncertain, critical moments, but I’ve realized that it’s all about your attitude and how you react to those moments.”

“In college, my goal was simply to wear a brown uniform and work for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to make this world a better place. After graduate school, some friends and I hunted migratory Canada geese in Alberta. We returned several times. The outfitter was impressed with the increasing number of people who came along and said he wanted me to be his booking agent. From that exchange, I put a very simple webpage up, and it slowly grew into something.” He adds, “God guides you on this path of life—through my upbringing, my injury and the people I’ve met.”

One such person was a client that has since become a close friend. He encouraged him into podcasting, saying, “Ramsey, you’re among the biggest waterfowl conservation voices in the industry. I’ve hunted three continents with you and



*A 40 square-mile piece of volcanic rock smack in the middle of the Bering Sea produces real North American gems in January. This hunt epitomizes true adventure hunting for king eiders, harlequins, more.*

want to see more. You may think you’re just duck hunting, but your stories make people think waterfowl conservation beyond their own back yards.”

Since turning his passion into a full-time business during the past two decades, Ramsey has traveled six continents in search of authentic duck hunting experiences for serious duck hunters. It keeps him traveling for as many as 225 days per year. In 2003, he launched his brand, GetDucks.com, about which he comments, “Selling duck hunting is our business, and we have developed a very credible reputation. We leave no stone unturned while searching for the best outfits across the globe. We personalize each hunt, tailor-made for each client. We are always accessible, personally answering the

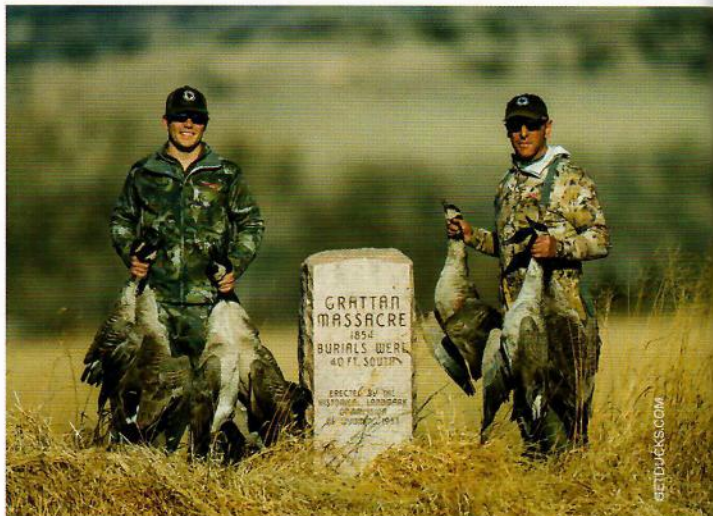
phone when you call, and if we can control it, we do.

“Whether braving the Bering Sea for king eiders, experiencing a ‘Honeymoon Hunt’ in Mexico; immersing yourself in the massive wetlands of Azerbaijan or the highly interpersonal atmosphere of Australia; lodging in a Pakistani palace or sleeping in traditional Mongolian gers, delivering supreme duck hunting experiences is not just what we do; it’s *all* we do.” Ramsey adds, “My personal bucket list increasingly focuses on the many waterfowl subspecies and diverse, regional hunting traditions throughout North America. But my favorite place on earth is an extremely remote 130-square mile marsh in Argentina, the foremost duck hunting destination in all the world. Hunting this particular place is like stepping back into the late-1870s. It’s where my ashes will be scattered.

“I often think back about my grandfather. He instilled in me his love of hunting, but things were so different back then. I remember telling him that I was going to major in Forestry & Wildlife, and he, being a lawyer, told me there were only three degrees I should consider: business, medicine or law.” Ramsey reflects, “They were such practical people in his day, having lived through the flood of ’27 and the Great Depression. They were not only shooting for sport and enjoying the camaraderie, but they were also putting supper on the table. He plucked all of his birds. If he shot a banded duck, he’d say it was just a government tag and toss it. And I’m certain he couldn’t fathom today that we can actually get on an airplane 365 days a year and land somewhere in the middle of a duck season!

“Most importantly, duck hunting is about spending quality time with the people you care about and sharing profound moments. It’s about those moments of connection between the volleys — connection with your family, connection with nature,” he says. Traveling the globe in search of ducks has also allowed Ramsey the opportunity to connect to and embrace people of all cultures. “The people all over the world that I work with in my year-round quests are of all colors, creeds and cultures. We treat each other with respect and honor. Whether poor servants or feudal lords, we form strong bonds. In those moments, we’re all just duck hunters.”

“I tell my three kids, ages 18 to 22, to find a job they have passion for and to find their niche. It may have been a crooked path to



*History lessons beyond the classroom: oldest son, Forrest, and Ramsey hoist heavy Canada goose limits in eastern Wyoming, at the precise location that the American Indian Wars began.*

discovering the most desirable duck hunting locations in the world, but I have found my niche. I have found my voice in conservation creating a narrative that promotes hunter-conservationists.” He concludes, “Our first short-film episode was filmed in Australia. While standing knee deep in the marsh, enjoying an incredible hunt for Australian hardheads, I realized it was exactly 36 years to the day since the explosion. I had never really talked much about it but began sharing the story with my Australian friends. We got all choked up, then laughed it off. Someone asked, ‘So, what’s the most important lesson you’ve learned?’ I thought a minute and came up with the words that have become the very cornerstone of who I am: *Life’s short. Get Ducks.*”

*Ramsey Russell is a certified wildlife biologist and owner of GetDucks.com, a full-time, full-service agency specializing in worldwide trophy duck hunting adventures. His weekly podcast is Duck Season Somewhere. Visit GetDucks.com for hunt offering details and much more.*

## Delta Wildlife News

# Parker Frew Joins the Delta F.A.R.M. and Delta Wildlife Staff



*Parker Frew*

**G**reenville, Mississippi native Parker Frew is the newest member of the Delta F.A.R.M. and Delta Wildlife staff. Parker joined the team this June after working for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Washington County as a Soil Conservationist Technician for the past two years. Prior to his employment at the NRCS, he received a degree in Environmental Science with a Wildlife Management concentration from Delta State University.

Parker will be putting his soil conservation skills to work by serving as project manager for several Delta F.A.R.M. projects. Among these projects, his focus will be working with farmers to increase adoption of practices

that advance cover crops, soil health, water quality and irrigation efficiency. Parker will also be putting his wildlife management training to work as the lead on Delta Wildlife’s Wetland and Feral Swine Management Project for WRP landowners.

“With his wildlife background and knowledge of NRCS conservation programs, we believe Parker will be a good fit for both Delta F.A.R.M. and Delta Wildlife,” stated Bubba Simmons, Delta F.A.R.M. Chairman and Washington County producer.

Outside of work, Parker is an avid fisherman and dedicated husband to his wife Christin Manor of Hollandale, Mississippi. He and Christin reside in Greenville.