

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022

# DELTA

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**Annual Outdoor  
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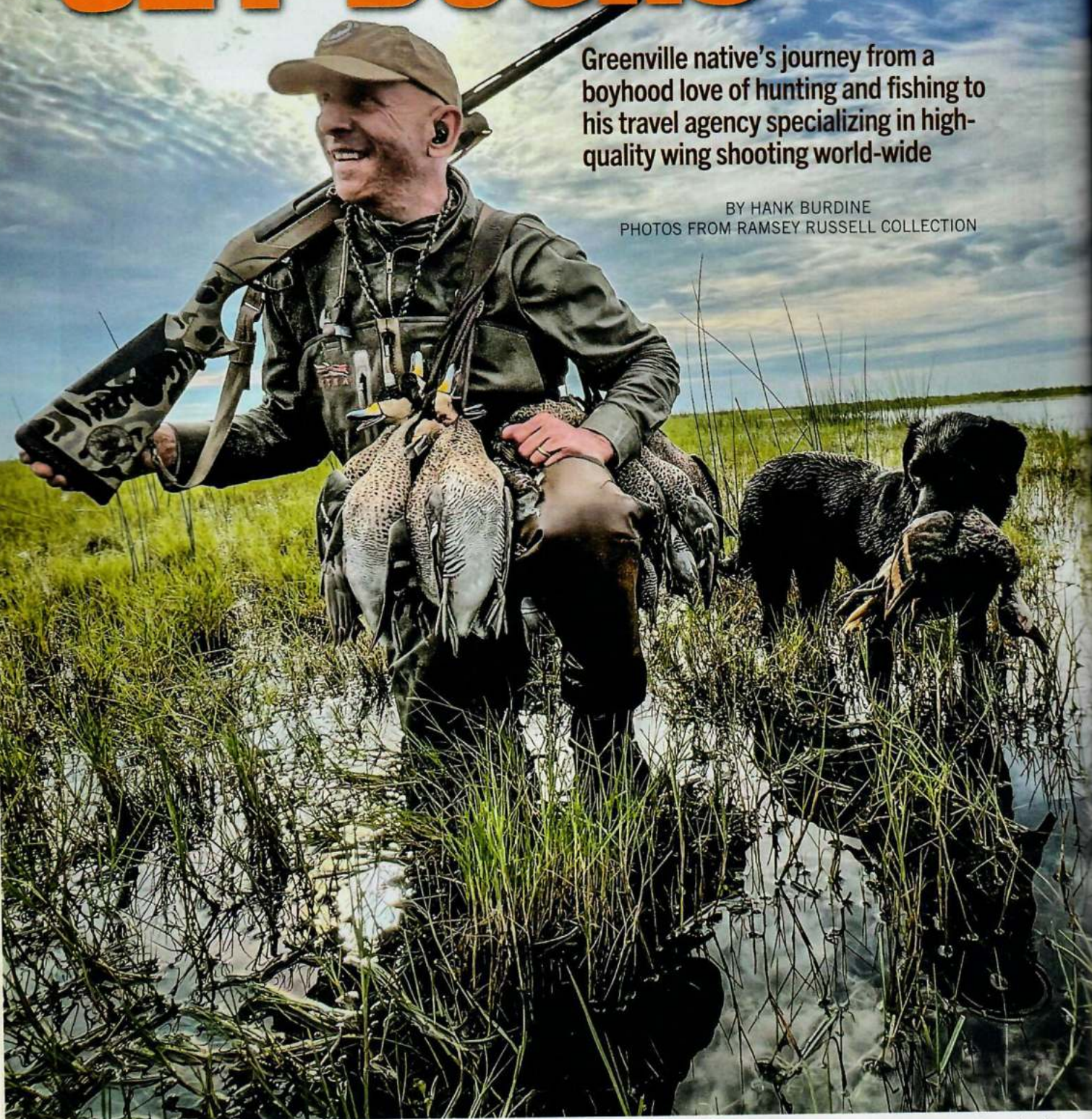


# Ramsey Russell

## GET DUCKS

Greenville native's journey from a boyhood love of hunting and fishing to his travel agency specializing in high-quality wing shooting world-wide

BY HANK BURDINE  
PHOTOS FROM RAMSEY RUSSELL COLLECTION



World traveler and renowned waterfowl sportsman emeritus, Ramsey Russell, duck hunting with Char Dawg. Here in this marsh in Argentina is Ramsey's most special place in the world and where he wants his ashes spread when his duck hunting days are over, a long, long time from now.



The poled boat or skiff is a well-known mode of travel in the marshes of Azerbaijan. Once a trip is booked through GetDucks.com, all your travel and sporting needs are taken care of. Quality hunts are booked and enjoyed in some of the most remote and prolific waterfowl habitat areas on earth.



**R**amsey Russell was raised in Greenville, Mississippi. His granddaddy lived through and was an integral part of the relief effort in Greenville during the great 1927 flood, and he loved to hunt and fish. Ramsey grew up under his granddaddy's wings fishing on Lake Ferguson and hunting. His favorite sport while young was dove hunting around Inverness. He also deer hunted and duck hunted. He was reared under the tutelage of some of the greatest masters of the hunt to ever come out of the Mississippi Delta. Soybean, grass, and sunflower fields were covered with doves in the early fall. Whitetail deer were abundant on the many islands along the Mississippi River. And greatest of all, later on to Ramsey, was the myriads of waterfowl that came down and settled into the sloughs, lakes, cypress brakes, and flooded timber, bean, and rice fields. The 1960s and 1970s were a young sportsman's utopia. And it was the local gurus of those hunting sports in the Delta who were his mentors. As a young teenager, Ramsey Russell learned well.

Ramsey's family moved to the Jackson area, and one day just prior to his sixteenth birthday, Ramsey was cleaning paint brushes in his family garage when a gas hot water heater pilot exploded the gas fumes and left him with an 8 percent chance to live and second and third degree burns over 75 percent of his body. He almost lost three of his four limbs. After two weeks in intensive care, Ramsey was moved to the burn center in Galveston, Texas. For four months he lived through living hell. "Spiritually and emotionally, I crawled deep

into a rabbit hole. I somehow was able to put myself into a self-induced coma. It's a dark place; it was my human way of coping." After a life-changing and mind-altering dream one night, Ramsey jumped out of that rabbit hole with a zest and willingness to live that was overwhelming. Following two more months in the burn center and after more than seventy surgeries, with both arms and legs still attached, Ramsey rebounded with an appetite for life and a willingness to overcome the scars and happenstances that almost took his life. Throughout the months and years of the healing process, he realized, "my perspective on life changed. Life is full of uncertain, critical moments, and I realized that it's all about your attitude and how you react to those moments." Ramsey Russell has not slowed down since.

The horrors of the scars, bandages, pains, and continuing treatments and surgeries were overcome with a readiness and a zeal to excel in what he knew and loved the most—the great outdoors. He had grown up in the woods and waters of the Delta and wanted to make that a major part of his life. Ramsey's grandfather, a lawyer, told him there were only three degrees he should consider, "law, medicine, or business." Having lived through the Great Depression, his erstwhile counselor may not have thought much of Ramsey's decision to get a degree from Mississippi State in forestry and wildlife. Yet it was he himself who had instilled wholeheartedly that love in his grandson! And that appetite for the outdoors and wildlife was about to explode in the burned and battle-scarred young man like a covey of wild quail!



Ramsey and his beloved "Coop, the Chicken Dog" on a self-styled, do-it-yourself sea duck hunt on the coast of Alaska.



Stunning Tundra Swans above the Arctic Circle.



Motorcycle turned swamp buggy in the marshes of Azerbaijan.



Beautiful rosybills harvested in Argentina.

While in college, Ramsey worked on a big ranch along the Mexican border and began exploring hunting venues across America and Canada. He became focused on a path in life that involved the areas where his heart lay, wildlife, the great out-of-doors, and conservation. After graduate school, the love bug bit, and he married and started raising a family. While working in forestry positions in the private and federal sector, Ramsey compiled quite an impressive resume. He served as forester for USFWS North Mississippi Refuges covering Dahomey, Tallahatchie, and Coldwater NWRs and then as USDA NRCS forester covering twenty-four central Mississippi counties and on the side as a certified wildlife biologist performing baseline documentation reports for conservation easements statewide. And he hunted—across America and Canada. During a return trip to Alberta, Canada, to hunt Canada geese, the outfitter became quite impressed with the increasing number of friends and guests he brought along and suggested that Ramsey become his booking agent. Back home, a simple webpage was put together booking hunting trips and a whole new field opened up. He strongly believes that "God guides you on this path of life. There are things like my upbringing in the Delta, my close call with death, and the people I've met since that have led and brought me to where I am now."

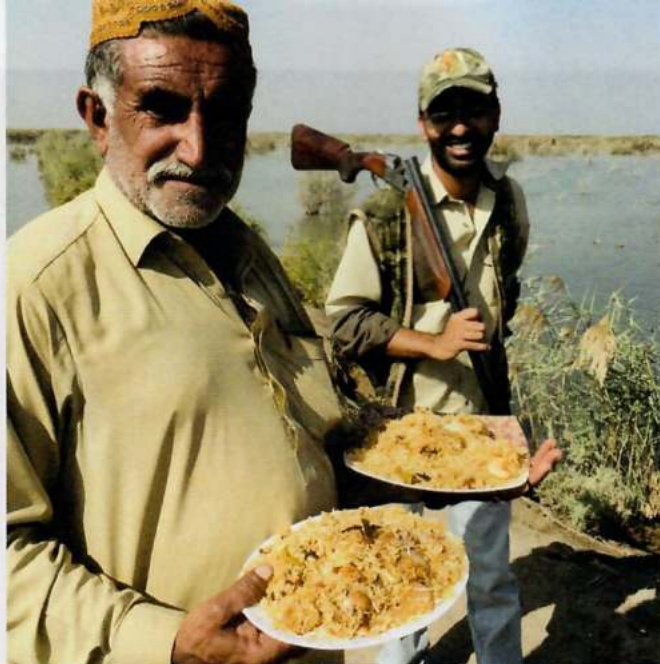
GETDUCKS.COM

Realizing that there is a duck season open in some part of the world every day of the year, Ramsey began exploring different locations far and near that could be accessed and hunted. His online booking business, GetDucks.com, begun in 2003, gained momentum as he traveled to Argentina and Canada setting up hunts. Soon he and his wife realized that between his federal



Typical, and quite stylish while warm, duck hunting attire in Mongolia.





All needs are taken care of on the many different international hunts put together by Ramsey Russell and crew. Here, favorite guides prepare and serve local fare during a successful hunt in the Indus Valley of Pakistan.

government job, his consulting business, and coordinating hunting trips, there were not enough hours in the day, a decision and a path forward had to be made. It wasn't easy to leave a government job with all the benefits and security, but Ramsey felt a calling, felt it was fate that he may have this opportunity, and in 2010 he turned in his resignation papers and jumped full time into exploring and setting up waterfowl hunting adventure trips all over the world. He has been able to set up trips to places heretofore unknown to the hunting and sporting community. Places like Azerbaijan, Peru, South Africa, Australia, Pakistan, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Argentina, among others, are exotic and lucrative locations where Ramsey pre-hunts, sets up, and then sometimes hosts hunts. He has hunted on six continents and spends almost 225 days a year pursuing his passion.

Ramsey's business, GetDucks.com, is a full-service travel agency specializing in high-quality wing shooting and excellent waterfowl hunting adventures worldwide. Traveling to far away and off-the-beaten-path locations around the globe to hunt wild game in some of the most legendary wetlands in the world can come with intricate and tricky strings attached. Ramsey's fine and well-tuned operation takes care of all those problems by coordinating the proper wing shooting location at the right time of year, customized itineraries, airline schedules, customs assistance, hunting licenses and permits, hotels, dining, car rental, travel insurance, bird importation, and, if wanted, bird taxidermy delivered directly to your home.

Ramsey Russell is living the life of his dreams. He travels the world immersing himself in different and varied cultures meeting people of all walks of life, centered around a common love of wildfowling. He attributes his chance to be a part of bringing a shared sporting opportunity to thousands of people to fate and responding to what God has laid before him. In an article by Brian Broom in *USA Today*, Ramsey states, "I almost died. You can't take life for granted. You're one breath away from not having it. I learned that at too young of an age. Life is about living, not just doing. It made me very, very thirsty to live life to its fullest. It's a mighty big world, but I'm going to see it." DU



Ramsey and his world-famous Char Dawg enjoy the bounty of an Argentine marsh.



Setting out blocks and preparing for a hunt from a sink box in a bay off the coast of Nova Scotia.



In America, teal season kicks off our waterfowl season. Here is a beautiful specimen of a blue winged teal.