

Hen Scratch

2007 in Review

Season Wrap-Up and Re-Cap

The 2007-2008 Season finally wrapped up the last weekend in February with almost six months elapsing since the first caps were blasted on September 1. It was a season of tremendous growth for Yardbird Hunting Club (YbHC) and by most accounts it was a "Good" season of hunting. As always the hunting results at the various properties ebbed and flowed but with the invitations to dove and waterfowl hunt at the other properties, everyone had a chance at quality outings.

Dove season started fast and furious on the 1st of September with full limits for the participants at our annual Labor Day opener at the McAnelly 290 property. Heavy rains throughout the remainder of that weekend and the month of September and October conspired to push the doves out of not only our traditional hot spots, but really all of Southeast Texas. "Where are the doves?" was a common question asked by Houston area hunters during this time period.

Teal season arrived in mid-September and brought some of the better and more consistent teal shoots we have had in a number of years. Here the ample rains helped us and combined with the fresh cut rice on most of the properties. Teal limits were the norm and not the exception.

Big-duck season arrived in early November and the teal on-slaught continued with a fair number of Specks and Pintails being taken in the early going. The rains stopped around this time as well which helped con-



J.J. leads goose hunt in fog at North Brookshire

centrate the birds on our properties with pumped water, rain water or water from the canals. Mid-December saw us hang our largest tally on the geese with a 65 coming in the fog at McAnelly's North Brookshire property (see picture above). New Year's came and went and the straps became progressively lighter and lighter. The last day of the final weekend of duck season saw about 30 hunters go into the field and the tally was about 30 ducks—27 or so were Sthingys. That is one way to control the reproduction of some of our favorite ducks!

February and the extended season was more productive than it has been in a number of years. We never "caught'em with their pants down" but consistently nicked at them. Each hunt was low effort and focused on the last hour of shooting time at the various roosts we have in the program. Several of these were the Happy Hour hunts hosted by Jay 'BW' Daigre. For those of you who hung it up early this year, we would encourage you to keep the gear out next year for one of the late season hunts. The snow geese are always a roll of the dice but with low effort and minimal time it is a way to even the score a little bit from the regular season.

Speaking of Happy Hours, we did host more of the get-togethers throughout this past season for our members. These events are designed to foster camaraderie and to let our members network for hunting and business success. We plan to have more of these next

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J.J., Barry and Charles taking drakes at Cypress

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year and encourage you to attend. The next social gathering planned is the 1st Annual YbHC Classic Sporting Clays Shootout which will pit each lease group shooting against one another. See the back of the newsletter for all the details. While it is the season for charity skeet shoots, this one will be a little different format. It is centered on the YbHC members and simply having a good time. We will have some BBQ, shoot some sporting clays, drink a few beers and as is always the case with YbHC, it will be structured as a pure cost pass-through.

Plans for the 2008-2009 season are being formulated but it includes, at a minimum, adding one more flagship property to our line up. We added the Chesterville complex to the line up this past season with tremendous success. Adding this property was a stretch for our budget and our logistics but we made it work with over 275 birds being taken off of it in the first split of duck season alone. These types of properties exist and we plan to focus on adding them to our line up this coming season and possibly culling some of the lesser performers.

Have a lead on a property? Let us know. Some of our best tips come from within the YbHC ranks. We continue to believe that our mix of quality, safety conscious members, liability insurance, organization, and knowledge of the "prairie infrastructure" make us the blue-chip choice for leasing land by Landowners.

Our plans also include this newsletter which will be produced bi-annually in the late winter and in August before the season commences. It is a stab at increasing our communication about what we have going on twice a year without the limitations the internet places upon us.

Lastly, thank you all for your participation during the 2007-2008 season. It was a great year by our standards. If you ask around, we killed as a group more birds than anyone on the prairie. We had more fun than most too. This is not by accident. It is a product of hard work and years of working on this model for a club. We view it as a collective effort. We are trying to make it better with the endorsement deals, the merchandise, the lodging options and especially new properties. However, we can not emphasize enough that it is your input and participation that makes the thing "sing". If you can think of ways to materially or marginally improve the club, let us hear from you.

Enjoy the off season and keep in touch!



Speck hunt with Multi-Lease on Chesterville



Not sure what's going on here

1st Annual YbHC Classic Sporting Clays Shootout

April 19, 2008

See back page for details



J.J. at North Brookshire in a downpour

Yardbird in Argentina / Scout Program / Yardbird Lodge

First, congratulations to David Mackie, YbHC's senior scout from this past season. He will be graduating from Texas A&M in a few months with a BS in Agriculture Leadership and Development. David has been a fine scout and good friend to all of us. We owe him a debt of gratitude for his hard work and dedication to promoting our club and promoting duck hunting on the Eagle Lake prairie.

YbHC has introduced David to Rob McAndrew at Argentina Outfitters. We are pleased to report that David has secured a position with Rob's organization as a guide and host for the spring and summer hunting season. Yardbird now has an emissary in Argentina!

Many of you may want to go down to Argentina and hunt with Mackie. We have negotiated a special Yardbird package which grants a substantial discount to our members off the rack rate. Barry Young has personally been hunting with Rob McAndrew's group in Argentina and he can attest it is everything you would expect and more. Check out Rob's site on our Links page and shoot him an e-mail with questions. Feel free to call Barry to discuss his experience as well. Rob leaves no detail to chance. Do not forget to tell him you are a YbHC member.

One of the fine amenities that our club provides is the scouts. They are an important part of our program. These are the guys that are working in August brushing blinds, patching levees in November, and driving the highways in late January looking for birds. Mostly they are working for tips and a chance to hunt some of the best properties on the prairie. What has evolved over the last several years is a quasi-apprentice program. In return for their dedication and commitment, we expose our scouts to our network of members. What has transpired



Scouts: Brent Eubank, David Mackie and John Persha

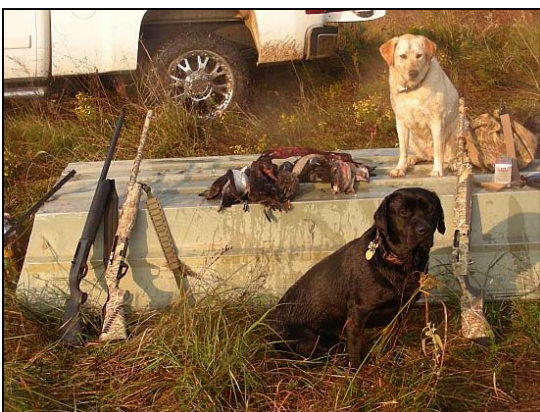
and what we hope will continue) is that after they graduate we have been able to secure permanent em-

ployment for them. You can see how beneficial this dynamic is to them and subsequently to Yardbird as it helps to attract quality new scouts.

In 2008, we have promoted Brent Eubank to senior scout position. Many of you hunted with Brent this past year and know that Brent is a true waterfowler. Brent distinguished himself this past season with a solid effort and going the extra mile on the scouting trips. Brent is moving into his junior year at Texas A&M and should set us up for a solid scouting effort in 2008-2009. We plan to layer in another scout in the junior position. Let us know if you have any recommendations.

In other news, there have been many calls over the year for us to establish a lodge. We are in PRELIMINARY negotiations with the owners of the Farris Hotel in Eagle Lake to season lease the hotel on an exclusive basis. What we need to gauge is general interest in this endeavor. We do not want to waste time or money developing this resource if members are not TRULY interested in utilizing it. The Farris is a Historic Landmark. It has a legendary bar and is ideally located to suit our needs. The best part is that it is already set up, so no prep is necessary. We will need to guarantee the owner something and our offer will be predicated on what the membership has to say. This expense WILL be passed through in some fashion, so you will need to sound off. We will put a poll on the Yardbird website soliciting your interest. Thanks for your input!

During the off-season, please send in your pictures to [Jay Daigre](#) so that we may post them on the website. We also appreciate fishing pictures or an off-color picture or two. We will use a little discretion... we promise.



Work crew at the Gravel Pit

Membership / New Members / 2008-2009 Details

Our membership exploded in the 2007-2008 season. We went from around 50 members to 90 members and from 4 lease programs to 7. As we move into the off-season, our growth does not show any signs of slowing. At the end of February, we had a waiting list of around 20 guys and it is increasing daily. Obviously our current infrastructure and way of doing things is going to have to change a bit if we are to expand successfully over a 100 members. We are in the process of making some of those changes. Most of those changes include adding a layer of management to handle the varied responsibilities of the club beyond being a simple collection of guys that were on a few leases at the beginning. Want to get more involved? Let us know. There are a lot of areas we could use more help as we map out 2008.

Speaking of 2008-2009: If you have a suggestion or a nominee for a lease spot, let us know. Nominees will be slotted into a lease if we have an opening and if we think someone is a good fit for a particular lease. As for existing members, plan on a little more structure to the lease payments and paperwork this year. Deposits for all continuing lease programs will be due on **May 15th** with the balance due on **August 1st**.



Find the Big Boys in Saskatchewan

Need some work done?

Try these guys....

ATV Upgrades

Jessie 409.782.6203
Works out of his house near Baytown

Gunsmith

Parkhill Gunworks
Martin Tisdale 713.861.3234

Taxidermy

Birch Creek Outfitters and Taxidermy
Mark Sullivant 281.454.9340

Sponsorship / Affiliate Programs / Advertising

One goal for 2008 is to acquire sponsorships for Yard-bird Hunting Club (YbHC). We are attempting to create a relationship that benefits the YbHC members and the retailer. A 'sponsorship' would be a business donating merchandise or cash that benefits the YbHC membership. And in return the club would give that business first consideration when shopping for their type of product. Another example would be an affiliation's retail business that offers YbHC members a percent discount when shopping at that business. Here are some of the companies that we have recently contacted: Orvis, Remington, Bass Pro Shops and Academy.

Additionally the club is pursuing advertising sales in the club newsletter. We would prefer the source of advertising be from within the club. If you have a company, a product or a service you would like to advertise to fellow YbHC members; please contact George Huntoon at huntoon3@yahoo.com for rates and information.

KELLY SIEGLER
FOR HARRIS COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
Real Experience. New Ideas.

**Join us Monday, March 31 at the
Porch Swing Pub, on Washington and
Heights from 5 to 7 PM for a Happy
Hour to celebrate the primary win.**

www.YarbirdHunting.com

YbHC kicked off *The COOP* this season. An online message board used to communicate scouting reports and coordinate hunting efforts. We had 100% of our membership register for *The COOP*. The majority of the lease programs used *The COOP* exclusively this season, which dropped the Reply-All email chatter to a minimum. We will continue next season to utilize *The COOP* to report and coordinate hunting activities.



Many of our members sent hunting and scouting reports to *The COOP* from the field via cell phone (PDA). This comes in handy when the plans change in route to the field. Accessing *The COOP* from your phone can be a valuable resource. Explore it if you have not already.

Why post to *The COOP*? Not only does it allow everyone on a given lease to know who is hunting and what days, it allows us to rest properties and redirect



JJ. and Jay saving the Tundra members to areas that may have greater potential based on scouting. This is one of the benefits of our "club". We can see who is hunting on a given day and know who is available to fill spots on other hunts when someone on that line-up drops out. Even in the



early AM hours, we rely on the posts to contact members and move guys around to better prospects. We cannot always move around members but when an opportunity develops, we can grab those guys we know are hunting based on the posts.

Next season all properties are going to be added into Google Maps for 2008-2009. Google maps offers user-friendly mapping technology and driving directions that can be customized. Each property will be detailed on the satellite image showing blind locations, topographical features, parking areas, and property boundaries. You will have the ability to print maps of the property and receive directions to the property from any starting address.

Several members were utilizing navigation systems to get to and from the properties last season. These are great tools for those that are directionally challenged. They come in handy at 4:30 AM in a heavy fog. The longitude/latitude coordinates, physical address where possible, of each property will be made available on the website. Consider adding a navigation system to your equipment inventory next year.

We did manage to add new content to the website this season. We plan to continue to add to the website in 2008-2009. Please send suggestions and comments about the website to jay@yarbirdhunting.com.



Jay Daigre and Scott Hanks at the Pit

Travel Plans – 2008

Through trial and error, we have developed relationships with some of the premier outfitters in the northern, and now the southern, hemispheres. We pass along these outfitters for the members to use in putting together your own group or to jump in with us on our trips. All these outfitters put together a first rate experience with a solid effort you expect when you travel this far to hunt. As always, the hunting can still be “hunting” but its good a large majority of the time in the dates we recommend below.

I. Canada: September 27-October 1 we will be hunting with Frontline Waterfowl near St. Walburg, Saskatchewan. This is Ward McGee's outfit that many of you have heard of and maybe had the pleasure of hunting with him. He is the three-time Texas state duck calling champion. His partner Chris Swift (2003 Texas Guide of the Year as awarded by TPWD) will be joining us for Canada goose and field Mallard hunting. Chris and Ward use top notch gear and are both known for their first rate calling abilities. Guide fees, lodging, meals, license and shells are all inclusive. YbHC has negotiated a special price for our group. Contact either Jay Daigre or J. J. McAnelly about this pricing. A few spots remain in our group and Frontline also has other dates available. More info: www.frontlinewaterfowl.com



YbHC in Saskatchewan



YbHC in the Texas Panhandle

II. Panhandle: January 3-7 we plan to hunt with Blackfoot Outfitters in Lubbock, Texas. Center stage here is the Canada geese, Snows and Specks that winter in and around Lubbock. Ducks, Sandhill Cranes and, depending on the season dates, Pheasants may work their way into the mix on this trip. We have not done this trip in a few years but it was a good one for us for about 5 years in a row. We tried some other areas and think that in the North Texas/Panhandle area, Blackfoot is the top outfitter. Pricing is still being determined but deposit checks will be written in late April. More info: www.blackfootguideservice.com

American outfitters--Argentina Outfitters. The upcoming season is for waterfowl (and Perdiz as a side-light) and the lodge they are currently booking into is Estancia Ameghino. As Barry indicated in the other article, this is first class and having David Mackie on the inside looking out for the YbHC members, it's even better. We again have negotiated a YbHC pricing arrangement that is available to our members on the following open dates:

May 31-June 3	6 to 8 Hunters
June 24-June 28	2 to 6 Hunters
June 29 – July 3	6 to 8 Hunters
July 4-8	6 to 8 Hunters

For a brochure and YbHC pricing based on the discount, contact either Jay Daigre or J. J. McAnelly for more information as well as www.argentinaoutfitters.com.



YbHC in Argentina

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Eubank, Loveless, Jones, Dr. Sauer and Hanks showing off their sthingsys



Lissie West group filling the tailgate



Multi Lease Teal hunt



Todd Hanslik and nephew



We sure do like the ATV pics

1st Annual YbHC Classic Sporting Clays Shootout

April 19th, 2008

Westside Sporting Grounds - Katy, TX
\$65 per shooter

Included: Catered lunch, soft drinks and water,
100 clay targets, good times with fellow members

Awards: High score shooter, low score shooter,
high score team and low score team

12 :00 pm to 1:30pm - Arrival and check in, lunch, safety brief

1:30pm to 3:30pm - Team competition and 2 man quick-draw

3:30pm to 4:00pm - Cocktails and awards

This is a great opportunity for YbHC members to do some shooting during the off season and get to know the other members in a relaxed environment. This will be a casual event for members only. The different leases will assemble teams and will compete against each other to see which lease has the sharpest shooters. 2 man quick-draw contest; gunners team up to break the most targets in a 30 second frenzy. 2 man teams are to be randomly selected.

All members are encouraged to participate in this event, good or bad shooters. The Goal of the event is to have fun. Eye and ear protection are required on the course. No alcohol is allowed until shooters have completed the course.

For Directions: www.wsg-clays.com

YbHC 

Yardbird Hunting Club
www.YardbirdHunting.com

Contact George Huntoon for questions at 713-870-9747

