

# Blue Sky Outfitters Winter Newsletter



December 2006

Welcome to Blue Sky Outfitters; hunting the Peace Country of Alberta may be the very best waterfowl-hunting destination on the continent. Another fantastic waterfowl-hunting season has come to pass, and this year was another phenomenal adventure. Our hunters experienced substantial numbers of several different species of geese and ducks, and took shots that were closer than most have ever experienced before. We guided this year from September 1 until November 1, 2006.

## The Blue Sky Outfitting Team



### Your Outfitter/Guide Kevin McNeil and Raven September 2006

Our guides Kevin McNeil, Russell Friesen, Brian Chartrand, and Dustin Carroll bring you the expertise and knowledge of many years combined experience, along with top of the line equipment to add to the excitement of the hunt. Because of our success year after year, we now have a 75% repeat clientele ratio.

The spotters, Cody McNeil, Katie McNeil and Giselle Friesen did a wonderful job of finding fields full of waterfowl hunting opportunities. Behind the scenes was Patti McNeil, making sure that all the little things that count were done.

## 2006 In Review

We hosted some of the best duck, goose callers, and call manufacturers in the industry this year, with Richie McKnight of **Night and Hale** Duck and Goose Calls, **Mossy Oak**,



and **Orion Multimedia**. They were all here to produce waterfowl hunting TV shows and DVDs. You'll be able to watch us on TV and DVDs again this year, and you'll see waterfowl hunting in one of the best duck and [goose hunting](#) regions of North America.

**Mossy Oak Shoot October 2006**

### **The Ever Changing Weather of the Peace Country**

We had an early spring, which led to early seeding by the local farmers. This meant harvest came quickly to Northern Alberta; most of the pea fields were harvested by August 15<sup>th</sup>, and wheat, barley and oats fields were all harvested by September 10<sup>th</sup>. Late September brought rain for a 2 week period, which meant wet and muddy, but happy, hunters. As I write this winter newsletter we have about 3 feet of snow on the ground, which will be great in spring for replenishing all the pot holes, swamps, and beaver ponds, and should help out with the waterfowl hatch this spring.

### **The Duck Season**

Our field duck hunting was remarkable this year; our hunters had plenty of opportunity to shoot their full limits of Mallards, Pintails, Gadwall, and Widgeons. There were also opportunities to film more than 5000 ducks, swarming over and around the decoy spread.

We did some diver duck hunting this year, with great results. Some of our hunters joined Blue Sky Outfitters in experiencing some incredible "In Your Face" diver duck hunting, where the shooting was unrestrained and the action non-stop. They were lucky enough to witness firsthand the flocks of Blue Bills, Golden Eyes or Buffleheads come screaming into the decoys and land only yards from away.

Here in the Peace Country, we can shoot a wide variety of species including; Mallards, Pintails, American Widgeon, Blue Wing Teal, Green Wing Teal, Blue Bills, Buffleheads, Canvas Back, Golden Eyes, Ring-Necked, Mergansers, and Red Heads along with the occasional Canadian Geese. When the birds are down, having a flock of 10-50 birds skimming into the decoys is not uncommon. A typical decoy set would see us anchored 200 to 500 yards out from shore, hunting in 6-20 feet of water or hunting from shore

blinds with our decoys placed off shore. The smell burnt powder and hot barrels and the feeling of sore shoulders, dazzling sunrises and spectacular northern sunsets awaited the waterfowl hunters each day.



Kim Ward, Jack Hirt (Tanner)  
Kevin McNeil (Raven) Third  
week of October in the Peace  
Country

### **2006 Duck Harvest Statistics**

Mallards	1142
Pintails	389
Gadwalls	210
Widgeons	170
Blue Bills	77
Buffleheads	62
Canvas Back	94
Common Golden Eye	49
Red Heads	56
Ring Necks	20
Rudy Duck	20
Northern Shoveler	11

### **Plenty of Geese in the Peace**

Goose hunting was impressive again this year. The geese had plenty of options as far as where to eat this year, as all the fields were cut this year earlier than normal. We had

hundreds of geese; with their black landing gear down and wings cupped, it translated into “in your face” shooting.

The middle 10 days of October were a little tough. The birds had figured out what was up, and we had no new birds because the weather was so nice (with temperatures in the mid 70 F range) that the birds further north had everything they needed, so they didn't bother to fly south. Finally we got a push of Mother Nature's cold front, and along came the geese by the thousands; we were back to normal hunting again for the last 2 weeks of the season.



Charles Harris family and friend October 2006

### **2006 Geese Harvest Statistics**

Canada Geese            2,155

White fronted Geese 286

Snow Geese            196

### **What Really Matters**

We are committed to managing our number of waterfowl hunters to ensure that hunters who book with us will have excellent duck and goose hunting throughout their stay. Our waterfowl hunters will be happy with a solid effort and a well organized, well run hunt. We are committed to a policy of 100% "fair chase" and stress principles and ethics above all else.

Our goal every year is to ensure that our guests get what they came for – great hunting opportunities, fantastic food, and very comfortable sleeping conditions. These are some comments that our clients (and new friends!) had about this past year waterfowl hunting.

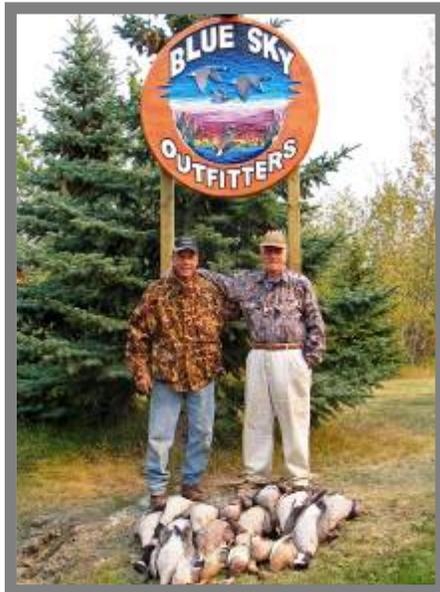


Peter Wolfe the buyer of our 3 rd annual donated Waterfowl hunt to DU with us Sept 2006

### First Week Hunt

Kevin & Patti,

I just want to thank you for a great time I had this year with my friends at your place. The lodging was beautiful, the food was awesome, and the hunting was out of this world.



It was a first class waterfowl hunting vacation, all of the 6 days we were there. Look forward to coming in October 2006 again and will see you the first week in September 2007.

George Cavrous

George and Scott Sept 3, 2006

### Second Week Hunt

Kevin,

I just wanted to thank you for the great hunt with my son in September. I have been hunting waterfowl for 40 years, and I have never seen so many geese and ducks in one geographical area as we experienced with you. Your equipment and accommodations were first quality, and the hunting was superb. I especially like shooting waterfowl when their feet are down, and many times I wish I was shooting my 28 gauge, rather than my 12. We look forward to hunting with you next year. Thanks again and take care.

Terry Johnson

### Third Week Hunt

When Kevin and Patti McNeil say they have “new birds”, they mean it. The waterfowl there were extremely easy to hunt. Our group enjoyed one of the most rewarding 6 day waterfowl hunts I have been a part of. Locals said the birds were not down yet, because the fall was so nice, they had no reason to move - but we had all the opportunity a hunter could ask for. Being able to hunt an area like this is the reason we as water fowlers go to the Peace River Country of Alberta Canada.

Bruce Johnson

Absolutely unbelievable!!! I’ve duck and goose hunted for nearly forty years, and, quite frankly, the hunts at Blue Sky Outfitters are the best I’ve ever seen. Over the course of a three day hunt, my group killed a large number of ducks and geese and a variety of species. In fact, we killed everything from teal, gadwall, mallards, to a pair of red heads, Greater and Lesser Canada geese, white fronted geese and snow geese - all in one day. In



short, the hunting is the best. However, the hunting is not the only thing that makes Blue Sky Outfitters special. This is my second year visiting Kevin McNeil, Patti McNeil, Cody McNeil, and the gang. When I arrive at the lodge and walk in, I feel at home. The lodge is spacious and comfortable, with a large number of bathrooms with showers to accommodate the hunters. Then there is the food. Mrs. Patti can create some of the best down-home, country meals around. Great hunting, great lodging, great food, and great people—these are the things that make Blue Sky Outfitters special.

### [Banded White front Goose](#)

Hazard Campbell,

### **Fourth Week Hunt**

Kristina and I would like to thank you again for a wonderful hunt with Blue Sky Outfitters this September 2006. The goose and duck hunts were incredible, especially the



birds landing in the decoys, before we could even get the guns up to shoot! Talk about up close and in your face hunting. Your experience locating the birds and getting us set up in the right place at the right time, made the difference.

We especially appreciated your focus on fun and safety as part of the hunting experience. I have been hunting for 35 years and both Kristina and I have hunted throughout the US and Europe and we both agree; your services, accommodations, and location make for a wonderful hunting vacation. As you know, we have already booked for September 2007 along with my father and a colleague from work. We are certainly looking forward to more fun in the field next year. Please give our regards to Patti and Cody, and thank them again for the hospitality. We are more than happy to provide references to anyone interested in some of the best water fowling in North America. Best regards,

Tom and Kristina Waldman  
Gurnee, Illinois

### **Fifth Week Hunt**

Another great year at Blue Sky Outfitters.....I never have any fears when I bring friends to see you people, because I always know there is isn't a better spot in Alberta for great hospitality, good friends and of course lots of geese and ducks. All six of us had just a marvelous time, and need a diet now we are home. As usual, your gear was first class and the "honey holes" gave up plenty of birds.

I really liked the old lodge until we got a look at the new one. Cannot believe you got that together in such a short time, and took advantage of the opportunity to include in all the nice details that make Blue Sky Outfitters a first class operation. Please share our best wished for the New Year to our guides and all your staff. Cheers,

Carl and the "gang"

### **Sixth Week Hunt**

Hello Kevin and Patti

I wanted to say" thanks again" for the great hunt. Duck season has come in for us here in



Kentucky, and we are seeing some birds. But with every hunt, our minds go back to Alberta. Our five and six bird groups working only remind us of those 100 and 200 groups of duck tornados, dropping from the sky with no hesitation. The time I had with my three sons and all the memories we made are priceless, especially my 12 year old blazing away at all the "in your face" goose action. I would recommend Blue Sky to anyone and we will be back.

Mike Embry Russell Springs, KY

## Seventh Week Hunt

Kevin:

Wanted to write and say thanks again. As you know from our hunt together, I live in



Queen Anne's County Maryland. As a young boy, I was able to shoot divers on the Chester River, shoot puddle ducks in the fields, and have hunted through the good days of 3 birds and ninety days of goose hunting here.

[Kim Ward and Winston Chance with mixed bag of birds October 2006](#)

I have waterfowl hunted a great deal. I have never ever

Experienced what I experienced with you on our hunt in Alberta. Print, pictures, or video can only give a

snapshot of the experience. To be there, and experience it firsthand with you, your family, and of course raven (the bird dog) is something I will always remember and always cherish. The sheer number of birds is one thing; your commitment to make sure that everyone enjoys the experience really sets you apart. Thanks for a wonderful experience. I will be back. All the best,

Winston Chance  
Queen Anne's County Maryland

## Eighth and Final Week Hunt

Hello Kevin and Patti

Thanks again, we had a great time; Brian will not get the smile off his face until next year when he comes back. Take care and hope to see you this summer. You may contact me at [mike@alaskanduckhunter.com](mailto:mike@alaskanduckhunter.com) or check out my web site [www.alaskanduckhunter.com](http://www.alaskanduckhunter.com)

Mike Harned  
Anchorage, Alaska

## **Goodbye to 2006**

As one hunting season ends, the planning for another begins. My "booking season" begins in September each year, as I look for hunters to fill future hunt space. I do all bookings from my McLennan home, and have not attended any hunting shows. There is strong demand for our hunting service, but to preserve trip quality, we take only a limited number of people each season. We are actively booking for the 2007/2008 seasons. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about our operation.

We had a great year, and I would like to thank all of our 2006 clients for their sportsmanship on the hunt, the farmers for allowing us to hunt on their land, and our guides and spotters for their dedication, and of course to Patti for keeping us warm and comfortable back at the lodge. Above all I give thanks for being able to hunt these magnificent waterfowl birds of Alberta.

If you want the ultimate Canada goose, speckled goose, Snow goose and duck hunting adventure, please contact us for more information or to book your hunt

## **Good Hunting, Shoot Straight, Shoot Often**

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