

## Half-light On the Somerset Levels

Peter Russell (59)

Took the family (Wife and two dogs) for evening flight on the Somerset Levels – Found a nice “splash” adjacent to an overgrown hedge with a convenient tree for the wife to perch in. Laid out the decoys “Assisted” by the dogs while the wife just looked dumbfounded why any idiot would put out model ducks in 6 inches of water.

We settled down to wait the onset of darkness and it wasn't long before the light went and the birds started to arrive and we were soon treated to the sound of ducks in flight and there various Quacks & whistles signally there proximity but we couldn't see them – THEN the moon arrived and the darkness lifted to be replaced by the soft lighting that only a moon provides and THEN we could see the birds. A couple or three quick shots unusually for me (!) resulted in a brace of beautifully marked Widgeon, so more than satisfied that an epic Sunday roast was now possible I sent my spaniel Becky to retrieve my two birds. Amazingly our usually lounge lizard labrador decided to get in on the act and disappeared into the half-light as well.

Before long we could hear the unmistakable snuffling noise that dogs make with a mouth full of game/wildfowl and shortly I had the first of my birds to hand via Becky Spaniel, Whilst Teal Labrador just hoofed about in the shallows! So it was left to the faithfully Spanner to go back for the second bird - What a clever dog! Only this time on the return I could hear TWO snuffling canines! How so ?? Yup don't ever get a labrador with a sense of humour – Whilst Becky had the second Widgeon – Teal has a bloody decoy! One less to collect myself I supposed! After all decoys were safely corralled back in the decoy net, we just let the birds land to eat/preen/socialise and immersed ourselves in the wonder of being on the levels surrounded by wild birds and the memories that form...

Alas both dogs are now long gone over the rainbow bridge to the flashes in the sky but I do have a replacement with an equally daft sense of humour.

I still love it on the levels and I will NEVER forget that flight.