

non-resident Illinois hunting license before you get to Marion, if at all possible. On her last trip, she said, she was only able to find one such license between St. Louis and Marion. She had to make special arrangements with the conservation department to get a second one for her hunting companion.)

DATELINE: AFRICA

(Editor Note: Correspondent Gary Kramer has been looking into the varieties of wingshooting available in Africa, and the riches he has turned up are a bit amazing. We originally planned to confine this overview to a single report, but he found so much to write about we decided to break the report into two parts, commencing this month with South Africa.)

Africa is one of those far-away (and expensive!) places that most of us dream about but few actually experience. Just the airfare to get there packs a wallop. At least it used to before South African Airways (800-722-9675) resumed its direct flights from New York to Johannesburg and from Miami to Cape Town. Now, the ticket price has dropped from about \$2,500 to as little as \$1,500 during the low season. Additionally, in South Africa at least, some outfitters have actually lowered their prices of late. The upshot is, you can shoot in parts of Africa now for about the same price you can shoot in Argentina. Compared to European shooting, African shooting is downright cheap. But what is available in this part of the world? Quite a bit.... In South Africa alone, I recently turned up five reputable outfitters who are catering to international gunners. Here's a quick summary that should get you off on the right foot with your shopping for an African shoot. Note the time of year the best shooting occurs. It's coming up soon:

- **Game Bird Safaris**, operated by Collette and Trevor Comins, is considered one of the best wingshooting operations in Africa. We've mentioned these two before in the pages of *The Hunting Report*. They have been in business for years; both are licensed professional hunters and skilled dog handlers. Their hunting

takes place in two areas: Zululand (where the main quarry is spurwing geese hunted from pits and over decoys, plus some doves and pigeons); and near Vryheid in Natal Province (where the focus is ducks over decoys, walk-up francolin and driven guinea fowl). Collette and Trevor offer a real mixed-bag hunt with the use of Labradors and English pointers adding to the experience. Gamebird Safaris is booked by Frontiers (PO Box 959, Wexford, PA 15090. Tel. 800-245-1950) and in 1993 they will offer two programs: six days total/four shooting days at \$2,550 per shooter - \$850 per non-shooter; and 11 days total/eight shooting days at \$6,000 per shooter - \$1,800 for non-shooters. The hunts are offered from mid-May through September.



- **Over and Under** is a unique program that brings together the collective efforts of two outstanding professional hunters - Coenraad Vermaak of Hunters and Guides Africa and Basie Maartens of Mountain Shadows Lodge. Their mixed-bag wing-shooting itinerary spans 13 days and includes shooting in Natal and Cape provinces. The gunning these two offer runs the gamut from pass-shooting and hunting waterfowl over decoys...to field shooting doves and pigeons over harvested grain...to driving guinea fowl (and when conditions are favorable, walking them up over pointers)...to walking-up francolin over pointers. A unique feature of the shooting in the Cape region is hunting for greywing francolin, a swift and strong flyer found high on the mountain tops and plateaus.

Greywings are acclaimed as one of the swiftest upland birds in the world. The season for all species except dove and pigeon in Natal is May 31 to August 31 and in Cape Province mid-April to the end of July. There is no season for dove and pigeon but they tend to be at their best from early March to the end of July. In Natal, hunters are housed in an old Victorian house converted to top-class accommodations, while in Cape Province they are housed in Basie Martens' acclaimed Mountain Shadows Lodge. The 13-day itinerary incorporates 10 days of shooting and costs \$4,200 per hunter - \$2,500 per non-shooting companion. The price includes everything, even domestic airfare. You can book this hunt directly through Coenraad Vermaak (PO Box 739, Dundee 3000, South Africa. Tel. 011-27-342-5729. Fax 011-27-342-5837).

- **Bird Hunters Africa** is another Natal-based operation. It's headed up by Mark Haldane, who lives in the Natal Midlands, which is famous as a mixed-bag area. Waterfowl here are hunted in an unusual driven fashion, with birds being flushed off the water over waiting guns. There is some decoy shooting, too, but with the unusual (and completely legal) twist that most of it occurs during the evening flight from just before sunset until after dark. With a full moon, the shooting can continue well into the night. Haldane uses pointers for ground birds and hunts his doves and pigeons pass-shoot-style in sunflower and milo fields. Bird Hunters Africa is booked by Dunn's Hunter Services (1 Madison Ave., Grand Junction, TN 38039. Tel. 800-223-8667). The cost of a five-day hunt is only \$1,350 per shooter and that includes lodge-style accommodations, meals and hunting services. Hunts are available from May 31 through August 31.

- **Game Birds of Africa** is also a mixed-bag wingshooting outfit. It's owned and operated by Ian Strashoon in the Cape region. He walks his ground birds up over pointers and hunts his waterfowl from camou-

"SERVING THE HUNTER WHO TRAVELS"

flaged hides using decoys. He does his pigeon and dove shooting in wheat fields. His 10-day itinerary combines wine-tasting, touring, fishing and wildlife viewing with bird hunting. Accommodations are at country inns. The trip fee is \$4,800 per shooter (\$1,680 for observers) and that includes everything from Cape Town. While all the wing-shooting operations in South Africa are well-suited for non-shooting companions, this program is particularly attractive. To book a trip, contact Ian Strashoon (PO Box 1039, Hermanus 7200, Cape Province, South Africa. Tel. 011-27-283-22152). He offers his program throughout the southern hemisphere's winter months of April to August.

• **African Rod and Rifle Safaris** is the final operator I will mention. The company operates in Natal Province,

housing its hunters in a small country inn that affords ready access to five different hunting properties. The shooting is mixed-bag. A typical day starts with waterfowl shooting from



blinds at first light, followed by francolin (including greywing) and guinea fowl shooting over German shorthairs. Lunch is typically followed by afternoon dove and pigeon

shooting, capped off by a sundown shoot for waterfowl. While a seven-day trip is suggested, hunts of three or four days can be arranged. The price is \$350 per day. On a seven-day hunt clients are told to expect opportunities to fire about two cases of shells. More details from: African Rod and Rifle Safaris (PO Box 154, Mayville 4058, South Africa. Tel. 011-27-31-202-6890, Fax 011-27-31-218796). Enjoy! - Gary Kramer.

(Don Causey Note: What about bag limits? There aren't any throughout South Africa, but it would be wrong to suggest you can fire away in this part of the world the way you can in Argentina or the Cauca Valley of Colombia. The resource simply won't support that, so you'll feel pressure from outfitters here to moderate your take of most individual species. The ethical shooter will do that.)

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Reader Questions...Specialty Where To Go...And More

by Gary Kramer

(Editor Note: This occasional column of interest to collectors - that is, gunners who like to take new species and/or have specimens mounted for display in homes or offices - is provided by Gary Kramer. This month, he turns his attention to two little-known species of wild turkey.)

■ In a recent issue of *The Hunting Report* we mentioned that Dunn's Hunter Services (1 Madison Ave., Grand Junction, TN 38039. Tel. 800-223-8667) is offering a Grand Slam Turkey Hunting Package. The species included are the Osceola (or Florida), Eastern, Rio Grande and Merriam's turkeys. Most hunters don't realize that there are two more species found in North America and that the taking of all six of them earns one what has been called a Super Grand Slam. The two additional turkeys are the Gould's turkey (*Melegris gallopavo mexicana*) found in the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico from southeastern Sonora and central Chihuahua south to Jalisco; and the Ocellated turkey (*Agriocharis ocellata*) found in the lowlands of southern Mexico south to Guatemala and Belize. While both birds are widespread, they are rarely bagged by American hunters, not only because they occur far from where most of us call home, but also because there are only a few guides available for these birds. In fact, I know of only one outfitter who regularly arranges hunts for Gould's turkeys. The company is called Mex-Bass (9297 Siempre Viva Rd., Suite 20-122, San Diego, CA 92173. Tel. 011-52-641-49934, Fax 011-52-641-34797), and it operates on some 100,000 acres of leased land near the mountain village of Yecora on the Sonora/Chihuahua border. The four night, 3 1/2-day all-inclusive package is of-

fered during the month of April and costs \$1,100 per person. Accommodations are in a hunting lodge that has all the comforts of home. Hunters must reach Ciudad Obregon in the state of Sonora, where transportation to the hunting area is provided. Alternately, for an extra fee, air charter can be arranged directly from Phoenix to Yecora, where there is a 5,000-foot paved airstrip. The hunting takes place in the high country at between 5,000 and 6,000 feet. The birds are called to the hunter by trained guides; or hunters can do their own calling. Gould's are the largest and the rarest of the subspecies. A good tom can weigh 23 or more pounds.... Turning to Ocellated turkeys, the outfitter to call is Jose Sansores in Champoton, Campeche in southern Mexico. Sansores operates the Snook Inn (booked by International Adventure, 20 Worthington, Maryland Heights, MO 63043. Tel. 314-434-0506). His Ocellated turkey hunts take place during April. Ocellated turkeys are a large, handsome bird glossed with blue-green and bronze. They do not have a beard like other turkeys. The Snook Inn is merely the starting point for an Ocellated turkey hunt. The actual hunting takes place in jungle camps where the birds have to be stalked as they move into feeding areas. Calling is of limited value, as Ocellated turkeys just don't react to a call the way their northern cousins do. The cost of a three-day hunt with Sansores is \$1,995, plus a \$200 license fee. Access to Champoton is via Merida, where hunters must hire a taxi (\$140 per person RT) or rent a car. The trip takes about four hours. Enjoy! - Gary Kramer.