



HUNTING TIP

SHELL GAME

Keep rust from ruining your ammo

One of the common problems with shotgun shells, particularly for waterfowlers, is that they get wet and eventually rust. One time I hedged my bets, thinking that some of the bases of my shells weren't too rusty, but I was proved wrong; an easy triple on brant geese was spoiled when I killed the first bird and then couldn't eject the shell from the chamber. Keeping shells from getting rusty will keep you from wanting to wrap your gunning iron around a tree.

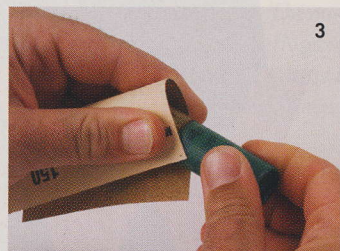
—TOM KEER



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[1] Wipe the bases of the shells with a rust inhibitor such as Knight Oil before you head out for a hunt. The oil repels the moisture so your shells don't corrode before you use them. Dry them out after every hunt and relube with oil to keep the bases smooth.

[2] On a boat, use a waterproof ammo box. When hunting by foot, toss your shells into a zip-sealed plastic bag to keep them dry from rain or if you wade too deeply when setting your dekes.

[3] If you do get rust on the bases (which happens to all serious waterfowl hunters), dry them, then wrap a small piece of fine-grain sandpaper around the brass and twist the shell several times. Most of the rust will fall off. You won't need to discard the shell or worry that it'll jam when the ducks are pouring in.



TACKLE TRICKS

WHY DON'T THEY MAKE A SPINNERBAIT BOX?

A simple trick for storing these lures

Most of the newly popular soft-sided tackle bags are designed to hold several inexpensive, flat tackle boxes (Plano No. 3600, for example). The boxes themselves hold every type of bass lure imaginable—except those all-important spinnerbaits and buzzbaits. The wire arms of such lures are too wide to fit in the narrow box compartments.

Use a knife or Dremel-type cutter to cut a series of shallow slots or vees spaced about 1/2 inch apart along the top of one of the tackle box dividers. Your wire-based spinnerbaits can now nestle tangle-free in a row like fanned-out playing cards, easy to see and reach as they span two compartments with the wires passing through the divider slots.

—JOHN MERWIN

SURVIVAL



BURN, BABY, BURN Strategies for lighting wet wood in an emergency

Duct tape A fist-size ball of loosely wadded duct tape is easy to light and will burn long enough to dry out tinder and kindling.

Inner tube Three-inch strips or squares of bicycle inner tube burn with a rank, smoky flame hot enough to dry small kindling. No bike? Try the rubber squares in a wader-patch kit (don't forget the flammable patch glue) or a slice from a boot insole.

Aluminum can and gas Pouring gas on wet wood rarely results in more than a flare-up. Instead, cut the top off a soft drink can, bury it so that the rim extends an inch above the ground, and add 4 ounces of gas. Stack a tepee of wet kindling over the can, and light the gas. Or, pour in 4 ounces of gas and place the can on its side with the open tab on top.