



Dear Ben,

I hope this news letter finds you doing well and enjoying the relatively good weather we have had this spring. I had been meaning to get this news letter out sooner, however we have been running non stop since the season ended. It may be a bit long but a lot to go over and cover. We ended the season on good Friday this year. As I had predicted birds were in short supply by March and there was not a pheasant or chukar to be had in the country. Quail also were hard to come by and we basically had to quit booking hunts that last week of March. Despite all the craziness we have lived with this past year we had a good season here at Top-Flight and we appreciate all of you choosing to hunt with us.

We Are Working To Get Ready For The Season

Here at Top-Flight we have been busy. Due to the unusually dry April, we were able to burn fields 1 thru 9, while it was a bit green we got a decent burn. Fields 10 and 11 we were not able to get burned but we were able to get them sprayed, so with any luck we will do some mowing once it dries out a bit and they should also be in much better shape this year. We are also putting cattle on the place for the summer and that will help in keeping things from getting too over grown. We plan to get the brush cleared out from under the big oaks in field 9 like we did in 7 and 8 last season so that will make that field much more hunter friendly. Hopefully with a little cooperation from mother nature the fields should all be in really good shape this next season.

At the bird farm we are extremely busy right now. As many of you know we had some major pen damage from the big freeze. We had two nights of freezing rain in Schulenburg and ice built up on the top netting and the poultry wire sides to the point it ripped the netting and sides down and in many cases snapped off posts. Three flight pens were a total loss and all the others had minor to major damage. We are getting those repairs made and rebuilding the 3 that were destroyed. We have already hatched out over 3000 pheasant chicks and this week we will be hatching out our first batch of chukar. Next week we get in our first order of quail chicks. We are hoping to raise 15,000 pheasant this year, 12,000 chukar and while cutting back on quail a bit should have around 20,000.

Please Be Careful

Now I would like to discuss some things with you all. Unfortunately this season we had 3 dogs that were shot and one of them killed. While no one goes out with the intention of shooting a

dog, and I know accidents happen, if you shoot a dog or anything else other than the bird, you took a shot that should not have been taken. In two of these cases it was adult hunters, but relatively inexperienced in hunting birds and over dogs. Each year we get new hunters out, this year we saw a record number which is good. However, quail is the last thing they should be hunting on their first time doing this. I always recommend and if I know we have new hunters I push them to just hunt pheasant and chukar. They get up higher, typically fly away from you and are easier to hit. Quail on the other hand fly low, are usually multiple birds, and are just as apt to fly right at everyone. (not a good situation to put an inexperienced hunter in). Also everyone needs to remember it is just a stinking bird not worth injuring or killing a dog or a person. I realize you pay for these birds but is it really worth it??? If you are bringing out someone new to the sport that is great, but killing every bird you see should not be the goal, showing them a safe and successful outing should be.

Each year we have a new guide or two, and sometimes they are young men. This year I had several complaints that the guides were too controlling and acted as if the hunters did not know what they were doing. Well, after these comments, I would go and compliment the guides!! Stop and think about this for a minute if you would? While you may have years of experience and have maybe even hunted with us before, the guides many times do not know you from Adam. They are going out in the field each day with people holding a loaded firearm that they do not know. They watch hunters point their guns at each other, and often at the them. So if they are getting on your ass, and they are controlling the hunt, they are doing their job. All guides have been told that if things are unsafe and if hunters do not listen, hunt is over. It is not worth risking their lives over it. If you are wondering why you don't see that many older guides or why I personally guide very little anymore, it is because we should not have to tell a grown man to quit pointing his damn gun at each other or us. You want to know why I can not hear? To many times of having someone shoot right over or beside my head because they did not want a bird to get away. I personally have lost the patience for that and am not nice about it when it does happen. All it takes is one mishap and someone does not go home that day. So, your guide, whether here at Top-Flight or anywhere should jump in the middle of your ass if you are doing anything unsafe while in the field with them. Keeping hunters lined up, and hunting the field in a controlled manner with the guide and not just chasing birds and dogs is the best way to keep it safe.

NEW FOR 2021

As many of you are aware, cost on just about everything have been going up and in some cases dramatically. Repairing the pens is costing more than it did to build them. The new pen is costing about three and a half times what it did ten years ago. Lumber and everything is through the roof right now. Feed for the birds has already gone up 20% over last year. Needless to say, no one wants to see prices go up on the hunts. I am going to do everything I can to not raise prices. Memberships will be the same, and at this time I am going to try and keep bird prices the same for members, however if feed does not level off or come down a bit we may have to raise the price of birds by \$0.50 per bird. We are going to do all we can not to.

There are a few changes we are making that will help us keep cost down:

- Fridays through Sunday - Unguided Hunts: will have a required minimum of 12 birds released to book a hunt. While I am happy to have unguided hunters come out to hunt and work their dogs, having fields full with hunters putting out 5 birds or so does not cover cost for the day.
- Those of you training, if you order a number of birds and do not use them we will not put back in the pen. You will be charged for number of birds you ordered and we caught for you.
- Credit card charges under 100.00 will be charged an additional 4%. (example: if your bill is 320.00 and you want to split it with your 3 buddies, each of you will pay the 4% for the 80.00 charge) If under 100.00 and you do not want to pay the 4% bring cash or check.
- Members that cancel a booked hunt, the day before or day of the hunt will be charged a \$50.00 cancellation fee. (this past season we had right at 121 total hunts booked by members that then canceled. I realize things come up and we will work with you on true emergencies. However, if you have to have the weather perfect to hunt, wait till day before to book. Too many times we get, oh its going to be hot, or the weatherman says it is going to rain, or the email that just says something come up.) Well, we have basically six months to make our living and pay the bills. When we are left with an opening on a busy day because you had something come up, that does not help with paying the bills. I want everyone to hunt as much as they want, but we have to many booking weeks in advance and then canceling last minute .
- Members are welcome to request a field and we will do what we can to accommodate you. However, most field assignments will be based on number of hunters, order in which booked and also the number of birds you want released. If you are only putting out 12 quail and I have another group putting out 50 quail, they are going to get the bigger field. This will only happen on the busiest days.

All of this is being done to help keep from having to raise prices. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS

Regular Price

Individual: \$875.00
 Family: \$1075.00
 Corporate: \$2750.00

Early Bird Discounted Price If Paid By Sunday June 6th

Individual: \$675.00
 Family: \$875.00
 Corporate: \$2000.00

As discussed earlier in the news letter we are going to try and keep bird prices for members the same. If prices on feed, fuel etc continue to rise we will then raise price of birds by \$0.50 per bird. Hopefully prices level off and or start to go down a bit.

For payment you may either mail a check or call with a credit card number. I would prefer the check but will do what ever you need to.

I hope you all have a great summer. We have lots to do here but the guys are doing a good job on getting projects knocked out. I appreciate your business and look forward to the upcoming hunting season which will be here before we know it. Have a great summer and stay safe.

Your business is greatly appreciated.

Leon Randermann

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