

the
SOUTH AMERICAN
TEAL
TRIFECTA



**There is no six-bird limit in Uruguay.
Neither is there a limit to the hammering
hunters deliver to each other
during a once-in-a-lifetime experience.**

By Jeff Johnston, Field Editor

For some it's the heart-hammering *kaaaaaaa!* of a longbeard in a hardwood hollow. I've seen good ol' boys moved to poetry when a wild covey of quail explodes over bird-dogs posed as if painted in time. Maybe it's a bull elk crashing timber in snowy Montana pines, or the bawl of a favorite coonhound at bay. But music to my ears is a flight of teal, searing the fall air moments before plopping in the decoys with a telltale *splish*. The sound is exhilarating, regardless whether I hit one.

My affair began in my ninth year I believe, at Charlie's watershed, just before day-break. We'd slipped to the water's edge, having no designs on a blind, when I heard that curious air-tearing sound overhead. At first it startled me. Then 10 green-wings rode the waves where seconds before there was only rising fog. I parted the willows with the barrel of my old Stevens and leveled it at the raft of little birds bunched like driftwood. *Boom!* The 20-gauge barked, and when my eyes opened two teal remained, bobbing in unison, heads down. We waited as they drifted to my feet then I picked them up and held them out for my father. He held out their wings and admired them. They've been my favorite ever since.