

# HUNTING SPOTS

with Marc Murrell

## Taking The Bite Out Of Skunk Encounters

The colors of black and white are a universal signal of bad news to any upland bird hunter with a dog. The striped skunk, *Mephitis mephitis*, is common throughout Kansas, and there's no mistaking them. And when man's best friend tangles with one, it quickly becomes a battle of strong will and weak stomach to avoid losing your lunch.

Any hunter with a four-legged hunting partner has been there at some point. Some episodes are worse than others, and the worst tales include battle-killed skunks actually being retrieved to dog owners. Other encounters may include only parting shots of the viscous, vile, yellow fluid, but even a glancing blow is enough to make eyes water and remind you of the incident for months.

"Where's my dog?" Jim Reid asked while pitching duck decoys earlier this season in the predawn darkness. Reid has just got a whiff of skunk, and he hoped it wasn't an omen.

Jim's yellow Labrador retriever, Trav, came bounding back and sat down at his master's side.

"Thankfully, he just smelled like his normal, stinky, wet Labrador retriever self with no hint of skunk," Reid laughed.

But Reid, like many dog owners, has plenty of not-so-fond memories of skunked dogs. And even though one of the worst episodes was 35 years ago, he remembers it vividly.

"We were near Gove in western Kansas on Sunday afternoon of the opening weekend of pheasant season," Reid recalls. "My Brittany, Rusty, took a direct hit in the chest."

"We got out a galvanized steel tub to drench him in every can of tomato juice we could find at our friends' farm," Reid said. "It didn't help."

That's not the worst part of the story. Reid was in a van, five hours from home, traveling with his wife and another couple and the temperature was well below freezing. So Reid wrapped Rusty's wire dog



crate on all but one side with plastic trash bags and stuck him in the back corner of the van. He opened a roof vent and headed home, stopping occasionally for fresh air breaks.

"We sprayed evergreen room deodorizer and I smoked a cigar with no complaints from the passengers," Reid laughed.

Back then, the only recipe that truly removed the smell from a skunked dog was time. The good news today is that there's a wonderful solution for helping rid your four-legged friends of the distinctly odorif-

erous problem. Reid relayed his findings to me and it's good information to keep.

In 1993, an Illinois chemist, Paul Krebaum, discovered a mixture of common household items that works well to get rid of the oily stench. Krebaum was working on another project when a colleague's cat got skunked, so he tried a highly diluted version of his experimental formula to treat the cat. It worked.

The mixture can't be concocted ahead of time and has a short, effective lifespan once mixed. It should not be capped or placed in an airtight container. Rubber gloves are recommended for working the mixture into a dog's coat, being careful not to get it in their eyes, and it should be left on for several minutes before rinsing. A second treatment may be necessary for particularly close skunk encounters.

So the next time ol' Fido battles with a skunk, don't worry about breaking out the tomato juice, evergreen air fresheners or cigars. Simply stop by the nearest grocery store and grab a trio of common ingredients. You'll be glad you did!

### The Recipe:

1 quart hydrogen peroxide  
(standard 3 percent solution)

¼ cup baking soda

1-2 teaspoons Dawn liquid detergent  
(regular unscented)