

For waterfowlers it's goodbye lead, hello steel

A number of states already have designated areas where waterfowlers must use steel shot and by 1991 the entire country will be under steel shot requirements for all duck and goose hunting. Colorado County has been required to use

rect steel shot substitute for lead this isn't necessarily so.

The easy way to understand all the factors involved is to visit your Remington retail dealer to pick up a free copy of the Remington booklet "Shooting Steel Shot with Confidence," which provides information on some previously unanswered questions and deals with others in far greater detail than anything previously published.

The booklet covers the issue of lead poisoning in waterfowl and the reasons for switching to steel shot. Charts in the booklet list which steel shot loads to substitute for the lead loads you're more accustomed to shooting. There are also charts showing how much lead you need on fast flying, right angle targets when you shoot the new steel shot. (Generally, you'll find that required leads for Remington's rec-

ommended steel loads are virtually the same as the lead loads they are replacing. Most hunters will miss birds with steel shot for the same reason they miss with lead - shooting behind the birds. The charts will help with this problem too, no matter what kind of shot you use.)

A general rule of thumb in substituting steel for lead has been to "go two shot sizes larger." In other words, use steel 4s in situations where you previously shot lead 6s, or steel 2s for lead 4s.

This is a good starting point but Remington's experience indicates that effective hunting with steel shot depends on a balanced combination of both pellet energy (based on size) and pattern density.

Maximum steel shot range
One area where the two kinds of shot are definitely not the same is effective killing range. Remington tests and field observations show that 50 yards is about as far as waterfowl can be cleanly killed with the larger steel shot sizes. Sixty yards is a crippling range, beyond steel's effective combination of pellet energy and pattern density.

Chokes and patterns with steel
There's evidence that steel's "bridging" effect in passing through a tight, full choke constriction tends to disrupt the pattern, so modified chokes may produce better long-range patterns than a full choke.

The best practice when learning to hunt with steel shot is to pattern your loads beforehand at various ranges and with different chokes, then select the load and choke combination best suited for your

hunting. Be careful not to pattern steel shot against a hard surface.

Can you use steel shot in your shotgun?

Steel shot can damage the chokes of older shotguns and those with thinner barrels, including even high quality over/under guns and doubles. If in doubt, check with your gunsmith or directly with the manufacturer.

The following Remington shotguns can be used with **all steel shot up to BB pellet size** without damage to either the barrel or the choke:

•All Model 11-87 shotguns, including those with "Rem" chokes.

•All Model 1100 shotguns, including those with "Rem" chokes.

•All Model 870 shotguns, including those with "Rem" chokes.

•Model 3200 Magnum over and under shotguns with 3-inch chambers and marked "Magnum," but no other 3200 shotguns.

The Remington booklet points out that waterfowlers who make the necessary adjustments to hunting with steel shot will still enjoy their sport and will collect about as many ducks and geese with the new steel shot as they have in years past with the more familiar lead loads.

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