

Winter's Wonders

Hunting ruffed grouse in the bitter months

Text and Photos by Nancy Anisfield



Fingertips numb. Eyes watering with the sting of icy air. Thick snow cascades from cedar branches, packing cleverly down the neck of your jacket. But your heart is pounding. Grouse tracks circle the ground beneath a huge evergreen and the dog has already caught scent.

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Winter grouse hunting isn't for everyone. In several inches of snow, it's hard to keep up with your bird dog, and it's even harder to get to him quickly and quietly when he locks on point. The grouse are smart, educated by the season and wary of their vulnerability as the cover thins and predators search for a winter meal.



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Hunters who savor a challenge will find great rewards in these winter months. There is the delight of seeing grouse tracks in one direction, and your bird dog tracking in the other until he realizes his mistake, reverses directions and locks on point in what seems like just seconds later.



Nancy Anisfield was a commercial illustrator, college English instructor and a corporate copywriter before discovering that she would have a good excuse for skipping out of work to hunt and train her dogs if she became an outdoor writer and photographer. Her work is used by Tri-Tronics and appears in *The Versatile Hunting Dog*, *The Bird Hunting Report* and many other publications. She is a consulting editor for *The Upland Almanac* and a field photographer for RGS. Nancy also serves as the creative entity behind her husband Terry Wilson's company, Ugly Dog Hunting. They live in Hinesburg, Vermont, where their lives are carefully managed by her two German shorthaired pointers, his two German wirehaired pointers and a retired Chesapeake Bay retriever. To see more of Nancy's photos, visit www.anisfieldhuntingdog-photography.com and www.uglydoghunting.com.



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