

The Campfire

Getting Ready

FROM A RECENT SURVEY by Southwick Associates, companies that make and sell shooting and hunting products enjoyed a steady stream of business since the recent recession. For 2014, outside of firearms, things don't look like they slowed down either. According to a HunterSurvey.com poll, the majority of shooters and hunters expected to spend as much on shooting and hunting equipment in 2014 as they did in 2013.

Considering accessories and shooting supplies, of those surveyed, nearly 52 percent reported they planned to spend at least the same amount in 2014 as they did the previous year, while 20 percent anticipated spending slightly more and almost 10 percent expected to spend "significantly more" in 2014. Less than 7 percent expected to spend "significantly less" than they did in 2013.

Key product categories surveyed shooters and hunters expected to purchase in 2014: ammunition, 74 percent; gun-cleaning supplies, 40 percent; hunting apparel, 37 percent; targets, 35 percent; miscellaneous hunting gear (stands, calls, etc.), 32 percent.

I've had to part with a few dollars myself to get ready for the 2014 season. Having only rifles for big game in the gun safe, I needed a slug shotgun to hunt in the Special Regulations Areas and for Maryland. The accuracy of slug guns today is remarkable with their rifled barrels allowing 1-inch groups or smaller at 100 yards with sabot slugs. A far cry from granddaddy's old pump shotgun with punkin balls. Did I mention how expensive a box of five sabot slugs is? Then I needed to put a scope on the shotgun. I was fortunate in finding on eBay a new-in-box Redfield Widefield Lo Pro 4x scope that was made back in the day. As a kid, I had always wanted one of these cool-looking scopes with the wide field of view, but never had one until now. Let's not forget I had to purchase the scope mounts and rings. New deer-hunting opportunities await me in 2014, and I can't wait.

For bird hunters, next month ushers in the new season when doves and resident Canada geese become fair game. By the way, we have a couple good dove-hunting features scheduled for the September issue. I spend a lot of time hunting doves. The weather is warm in September, and sitting on a stool in a shaded hedgerow is a relaxing way to hunt. Plus, the shooting opportunities are usually plentiful. I expend more ammunition by far on doves than any other game bird or animal. And that reminds me, I have to buy more shotshells.

Bob D'Angelo