

BLACK DUCK SHOOTING

**Over Decoys Can Be Had at the
Darton Farms on Merrymeeting Bay**

Located in the very heart of the best Duck grounds in New England. Board, Boats, Blinds, Decoys and Equipment for Sportsmen who desire wing shooting

Open September 15 to November 15

EXPERT GUIDE SERVICE

Write For Open Dates and Terms

**NON - RESIDENCE HUNTING LICENSE
AND SUITABLE AMMUNITION FOR SALE**

W. B. DARTON, Bowdoinham, Maine

R. F. D. No. 1

DUCK SHOOTING

on

MERRYMEETING BAY

at the

DARTON FARMS

W. B. Darton, Proprietor

BOWDOINHAM

MAINE





Headquarters at Darton's

Merrymeeting Bay

MERRYMEETING Bay is formed by the Androscoggin, Muddy, Cathance and Abagadasset Rivers which join the Kennebec and embraces an area of several thousand acres, largely shallow water. This bay averages two miles in width, seven in length and lies about twenty miles in from the seacoast.

This bay is a natural feeding ground for wild fowl for the water of the bay is fresh and yet it is also tide water. Here grows a wealth of natural duck foods which attract thousands of wild fowl during the late summer and fall. Many years ago some public spirited local sportsmen thought that wild rice would make the bay even more alluring and draw ducks from a larger area, hence they planted this well-known duck food. As the years have passed the rice has spread over a large territory and it is safe to say that during the fall migrations a very large number of ducks, possibly all which have been hatched and raised on the Kennebec and Androscoggin Rivers and their tributaries and many more from farther north, stop here for several weeks to enjoy the wonderful feed.

It is hard to conceive of the immense number of ducks which center here and it is very interesting and amazing to sportsmen who see for the first time these huge

flights. The black duck is the principal duck of this region, but during the season many other varieties such as teal, widgeon, pintail, blue bills, whistlers and buffleheads are here. A few mallard, redhead and canvasback are taken. Geese are not plentiful but it is not unusual to see them.

THE DARTON FARMS are located three miles from Bowdoinham village on the shore of this bay. Bowdoinham is situated on the Maine Central R. R. and is thirty-seven miles east of Portland. It is also located on the main state motor highway. Guests arriving by rail may arrange with the management to be met at the station and conveyed to the farms by automobile. Guests coming by automobile from Boston will leave via Newburyport Turnpike and pass through Portland, Brunswick and Bowdoinham. To reach the Farms from Bowdoinham proceed in the direction in which the cannon in the square in Bowdoinham village points. Cross small bridge, up small hill, cross two other small bridges, up larger hill to church on right about 7/10 mile from cannon. Turn right, cross railroad, proceed to second right hand road at schoolhouse, turn right here, follow telephone line and Darton's is 9/10 mile from schoolhouse on left side of the road.

The location and natural surroundings are ideal for a resort for duck hunters. The Farms are in the very center of the finest duck shooting territory in New Eng-

land and from a long wide covered veranda there is a fine view of the water and almost always of birds moving about.

Headquarters are far enough removed from the Bay (4 minutes' walk) to eliminate all disturbance which might tend to alarm birds inclined to feed along our half mile of shore front.

The main camp consists of a good sized lounging or smoking room, large dining room, both of which have open fireplaces, gun room, large kitchen, cook's room, five guest rooms with double beds, one with fireplace, one large room for three single cots with a fireplace, a large wood shed and garage accommodations for 10 cars. On the shore of the Bay is a small camp which furnishes sleeping quarters for six people.

The living quarters are neat, warm in cold weather, with clean, comfortable beds and guests say that our table is all that can be desired.

Each season more sportsmen are accompanied by their wives; some of whom enjoy the shooting while others delight in the quiet and beauty of the country. To the lover of the out-of-doors there is a great variety of pleasures for the locality furnishes walks and drives, canoeing and boating with grand scenic effects. To those who are susceptible to beauty of color, the sunsets, the lights and shadows over the grasses of the bay and the brilliant colors of the autumn season are unsurpassed and

afford intense enjoyment. The camp has a strong appeal to those who seek to be free from the noise and bustle of city life. A week spent here will make one sleep, eat and be happy.

The shooting is done from floating blinds over live decoys, supplemented with a good showing of wooden decoys, and one has ample opportunity to test his skill. The blinds will accommodate two people.

Many of our guests who understand handling a boat and decoys bring a sportman friend and both enjoy good sport from one outfit and no guide is required. Places are selected for the shooting not far from shore, seldom being more than half a mile away.

In addition to the regulation outfits we have a well equipped shore blind, also a swamp blind where good shooting may be had in seasons with a normal amount of rainfall.

The management aims to furnish clean, wholesome accommodations with a good atmosphere, first-class equipment and plenty of it, good service, and trustworthy, courteous guides. Guides will not shoot unless requested to do so by sportsmen whom they are guiding.

Resident sportsmen must come with hunting licenses and for non-residents licenses may be obtained at the Farms at a cost of \$5.00 each, good until November 1st, after which a \$15.00 license is required. It is legal to shoot from one-half hour be-

fore sunrise to sunset on week days. We are often asked what is the best time of season to enjoy good shooting. Our answer is, "almost any time during the season when we can accommodate you, and when you can spend enough time in order to be on the grounds when one or more flights arrive."

Darton's appeals to sportsmen who enjoy the exhilaration and excitement of a game requiring patience, concentration and skill. To be assured of enjoying the best of sport one should plan to stay a week or ten days. The shooting season on ducks and geese opens on September 16th, accommodations being furnished for sportsmen up to and including November 15th.

While there is no Sunday hunting here, to those who visit us for the first time we wish to advise that it is interesting to be at the farms on this day as useful information can be obtained regarding our methods, and one has an opportunity to look the country over and visit points of interest in our vicinity.

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED AT DARTON'S

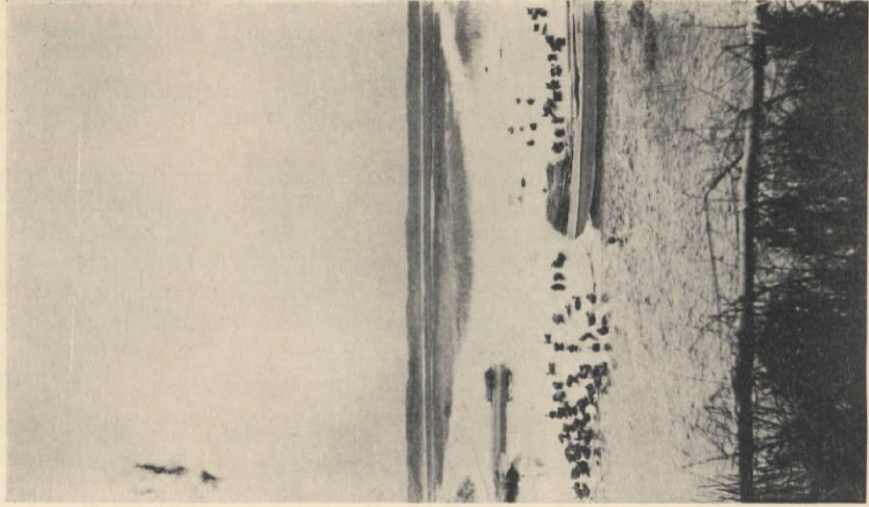
Flat bottomed boats of ample size for two people with all equipment, part of which is a portable blind, are used. A smaller boat is towed behind the larger one to the spot selected to hunt from and taken alongside and hidden from view by a

portable screen of grass, etc., when all is ready for the shooting. The small boat is for use in picking up the dead birds as it is quicker and easier than moving the larger boat with its trimming, or blind, in position, especially should it be a windy day.

Places have been selected to hunt from in the Bay near which two stakes are driven which mark the spot and supplies a mooring for the boats.

Near the stakes all the grass has been cut making a small open pond for the placing of the decoys. A trawl line some 150 feet long is stretched across the open space about twenty yards from the shooting boat and at intervals of twenty feet the line has attached snap lines about seven feet long. The trawl line, anchored at each end, is used with the snap lines to tether the live decoys. In each flat boat is a duck box containing live decoys, also a dozen or more wooden decoys. On arriving at the spot selected, pick up the bouy on the end of the trawl line and work the boat along this line, snapping to each snap line one of the live decoys which are held by a strap attached to its leg.

Ducks coming into decoys always head the wind, so the decoys should be placed so as to be readily seen where the wild ducks will have to pass the blind within gun shot on their way to alight. The wooden decoys should be placed further away than the live ones and should be well separated to prevent fouling.



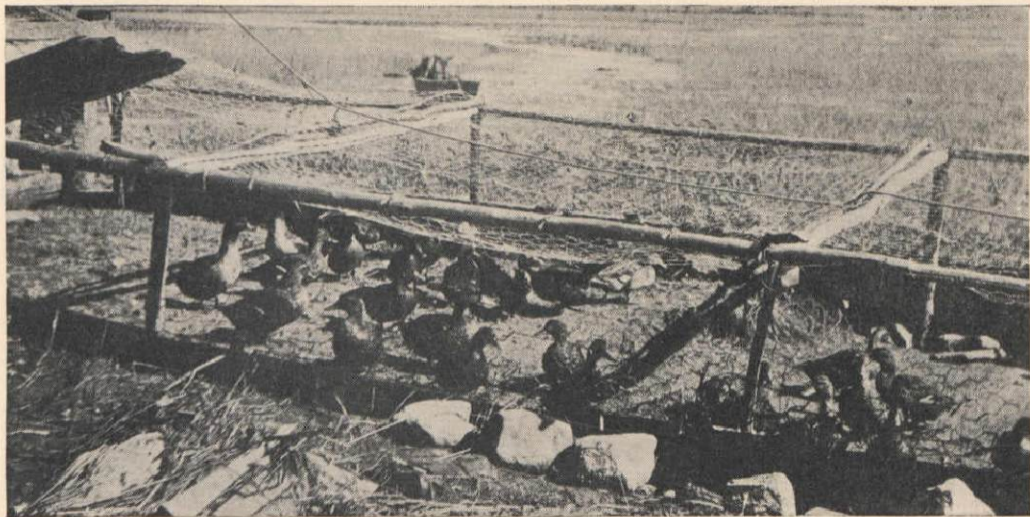
*Type of boats used and
a few of our live decoys*



Blind in operation and partial view of camps and shore line



Blind in operation and partial view of camps and shore line



A few of our many Live Decoys

Next push over to the mooring stakes, secure your boat by taking a turn around each with the short ropes attached to the sides of the boat, and then make fast to the cleats, leaving slack so that the boat will rise and fall readily with the tide. Bring the small pick up boat close in on the opposite side from the decoys, make fast and cover it over with grass screen, there for that purpose.

Now trim your flat boat with the 4 piece sectional blind and get ready for business. If two are shooting together sit back to back, not only for safety, but this will enable you to more readily see approaching birds. Guns should be loaded now.

The majority of shots will be in one place, directly over the live decoys. The sportsmen's success in getting shots will depend to a great extent on his remaining quiet and still, well concealed, and watching for the

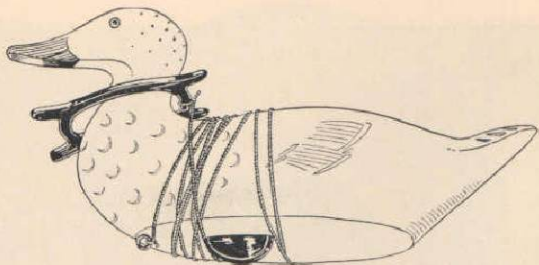


Our live decoys are equipped with Bill Darton's Merrymeeting Bay Duck Strap

birds to appear at the place where he expects to shoot them, over the live decoys. Keep a sharp lookout to leeward as the best shots come from this quarter.

Do not try to see how far away you can see ducks for they will always see your movements and their suspicions will be aroused and many a chance is lost that would have been a fine shot if the sportsman had kept down and quiet.

When ducks intend to come over the decoys and have approached, say within one hundred yards and the sportsman has discovered them, this is indeed the crucial moment. At this distance they appear to be well within gun shot, but to move now is fatal. Keep perfectly still until they have arrived, then with feet placed firmly in the center of the boat stand up quickly, select a bird, hold well ahead and shoot. Should the ducks alight before you can shoot scare them out, but be careful to hold well over your bird or you will surely under shoot him.



**Our wooden decoys are equipped with Darton's
Decoy Anchors and Body Weights*



A single over the decoys



All ready to throw a flyer

Often birds that are wary will alight well outside of the decoys and if nothing occurs to alarm them they will usually swim in and join the decoys. Sometimes the sportsman will not discover these birds until they are among the live decoys. Having made a kill the sportsman should not attempt to retrieve the birds until assured that no other birds are approaching.

When two are shooting, the man to leeward should allow the birds to go up past him before standing up, thus allowing his companion to get a chance also. When birds have become unusually wary, oftentimes a flyer can be used to advantage.

When the day's sport is over, guns should be unloaded before coming ashore. Do not bring loaded guns ashore. Safety First is our motto.

Sportsmen not accompanied by a guide will be held responsible for the safe return of all the outfit supplied them by the management. Care must be used in handling our live decoys and should any of them be lost or shot through carelessness, a charge will be made for the birds so lost. Wooden decoys should not be left out over night.

Sportsmen returning ashore at night are met by a chore boy who takes charge of

all equipment, thus leaving one free to prepare for the hearty dinner awaiting him at camp. The best shooting is enjoyed at high tide, yet good shooting is often at low tide. At such times when the tide serves right for a very early start, a hearty breakfast will be served. Sportsmen will be supplied with a substantial lunch and hot drink to take with them each morning.

In early morning when it is very still on approaching the shore of the bay loud conversation and all unnecessary noise is to be avoided or else many ducks will be disturbed. Be as quiet as possible.

Our boats are tight, clean, comfortable and seaworthy, and properly handled they are safe for any weather. Each hunting boat is equipped with a good pair of oars, a pole, water jug, good painter and anchor, bailing dish and sponge and supplied with comfortable life preserver cushions. While hunting on these waters, never leave your boat under any conditions without first having put out the anchor. Should your boat go adrift from some places you could not recover it, neither would your chances of reaching shore be very good.

Many sportsmen on their way to the big game regions in the Maine woods pass within three miles of Darton's either by rail or automobile. Why not break the trip by stopping over and having a few days with the ducks? We are said to have the best outfits in New England for duck shooting.



Retrieving at low tide



Homeward Bound

WHAT TO BRING

Heavy hip rubber boots, woolen stockings, heavy underwear and plenty of warm rain proof clothing of a drab or dead grass color that will blend with the surroundings. Also bring a Duxback hat, a warm cap with ear lappers, if the weather is cold, woolen mittens, heavy shoes, moccasins or slippers, and oil clothes. Field glasses are handy but not essential. Include with your equipment a heavy pocket knife, small compass for foggy weather and a waterproof ammunition box.

For those who desire we have to rent rubber boots, oil clothes, field glasses, waterproof shell boxes and twelve gauge pump guns. We also have an assortment of duck shells with No. 4, 5, and 6 chilled shot for sale in 12 gauge only.

Our patrons whose names will be furnished on request will tell you more about the sport here than we can. But be assured that nowhere can you get more exhilarating sport more exciting and thoroughly satisfying recreation than you can obtain at Darton's Farms in the midst of the greatest duck shooting region of the State.

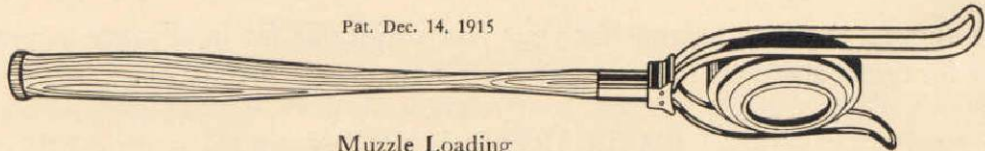
We suggest that you arrange for your reservations as far in advance as possible. Write for terms and open dates.

WILLARD B. DARTON

September 1st to November 30th, Bowdoinham, Maine, R. F. D. 1, daily mail and telephone. December 1st to August 31st, 14 Clifton Street, Portland, Maine, phone 1616-W.

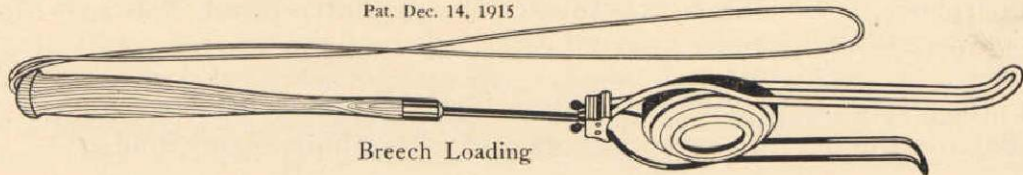
A little practice at Clay Pigeons thrown from a Darton Hand Trap prior to your hunting trip will improve anyone's score on ducks or birds of any kind.

Pat. Dec. 14, 1915



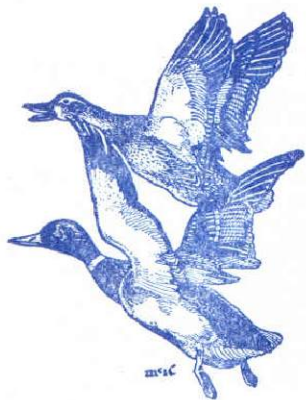
Muzzle Loading

Pat. Dec. 14, 1915



Breech Loading

The Bill Darton Merrymeeting Bay Duck Strap.
Darton Decoy Anchors and Body Weight.
Darton Hand Traps.
All on sale at sporting goods stores.



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on

MERRYMEETING BAY

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DARTON FARMS

W. B. Darton, Proprietor

BOWDOINHAM

MAINE

LICENSED AND INSPECTED BY THE STATE BOARD OF HEALTH