



DOVE CLOUD: Huge flocks of dove were available for Texas hunter Ike Standley during a 2010 trip to Argentina. But first, he had to endure a massive earthquake during a stop in Chile. Photo by Ike Standley.

Ultimate adventure redefined

Group weathers earthquake, mountain bus trip to reach Argentina hunt

By Craig Nyhus
LONE STAR OUTDOOR NEWS

Ike Standley of Garden Ridge will be heading to his longtime opening-day dove hunting spot in September near Pleasanton.

"We've been going there for years and years August 26, 2011

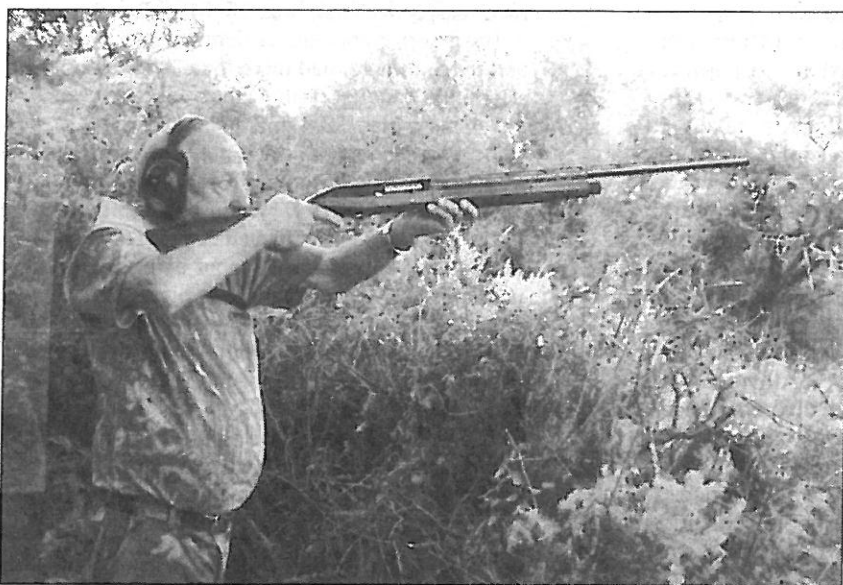
with people from our church," said the businessman. "It's been real good and fun."

But it was another dove hunt in February 2010 that was the ultimate adventure — in both danger and fun.

See **ADVENTURE, Page 6**

Adventure

Continued From Page 4



FROM DANGER TO FUN: Ike Standley, a businessman from Garden Ridge, enjoyed excellent wing shooting in Argentina, once he got out of quake-ravaged Santiago, Chile. "It should be on any dove hunter's list," he said of hunting near Cordoba. Photo by Ike Standley.

"I had saved up to go to Argentina with a group of 12," he said. "Six of us went down a few days early to do a wine tour in Chile, then we met up with the rest of the group in Santiago to fly to Cordoba, Argentina the next day."

But that night, a massive earthquake hit Santiago, registering 8.8 on the Richter scale.

"We were staying in a 16-story hotel," Standley said. "You couldn't stand to walk to get to the interior of the building — the only choice was to crawl."

During the night, sirens blared, the building swayed and power was cut.

"We were sure glad when morning came and we could see," he said.

Santiago's buildings, known for their structural soundness after earthquakes in the 1960s, held up fairly well. The streets and glass in many buildings didn't, though.

But the group was still determined to get to their hunt.

"We spent most of the next day trying to get out of Santiago — it helped that two in our group spoke Spanish," Standley said. "That night we were able to get on a double-decker bus trip over the Andes."

Part two of the adventure had begun.

"The mountains are incredibly high and the switchbacks were treacherous — when you looked out the window you couldn't see bottom," he said. "And there were one-way tunnels through the mountains. Fortunately it was at night."

Once they reached Argentina, the outfitter, the Beretta

Trident-rated Estancia Los Chanares, had arranged for a plane to pick up the group and get them to Cordoba.

Then the trip changed from extreme danger to extreme fun.

"A friend had told me before I went that going down there is like a lifetime of opening mornings within the first 30 minutes," Standley said. "I didn't believe him.

"I do now."

Standley doesn't claim to be an expert shot by any means, but he accomplished his goal of more than 1,000 birds in a day's hunt.

"And the last morning I shot 157 birds in the first 30 minutes, all within a few miles from the lodge."

Danger hasn't been a stranger to the veteran and hunter, but the earthquake tops the list.

While serving in Vietnam with the Air Force, "we were mortared and rocketed not constantly, but close," he said. "And the last night at the air base before coming home, it was constant. I didn't think we would make it back."

Standley also flies an ultralight aircraft that sustained a catastrophic failure in 2007.

"On the way down, I was scared I wasn't going to make it," he said. "But I got out of it with a fractured leg.

"But that damn earthquake was the worst — just hoping that building would stay together."

Despite the hair-raising trip, Standley is saving up to return, hopefully next winter.

"It should be on any dove hunter's list," he said.