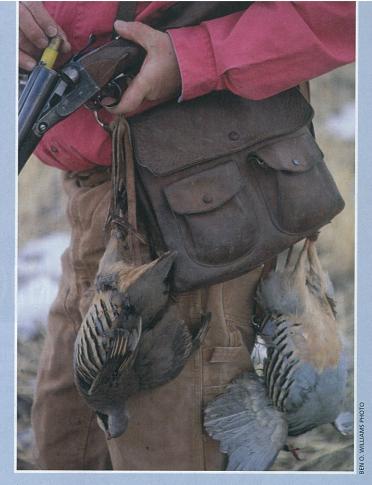




For now, the odds are stacked against these small red-legged partridges, and hopefully the warmer spring weather will arrive soon.

The south slopes near the sun-warmed ledges may provide the only food source for these birds. These massive outcroppings will absorb the sun's light and convert it into heat, yielding the first sprouts of cheatgrass. This will be their primary diet until spring, when insects will provide a greater source of protein.

ecember and January chukar hunting is of special interest to the avid Northwest bird hunter, as it is during this period that the most exceptional dog work can be observed. The cooler air allows the heat thermals created in the warming canyons to transport the birds' scent up to the ridgelines. Experienced dogs are often found standing



birds at startling distances in these conditions. It is also during this period that the cooler air allows for six- to eight-hour hunts without risking heatstroke or rattlesnakes.

For the chukar hunter, the winter season sees a variation of weather conditions not experienced with any other gamebird, making each hunt a new experience. These deep canyons can fill with ground fog or a winter blizzard

that can diminish visibility to fewer than 50 feet. Be sure to pack your beeper collar; this is also when you need a good GPS and complete faith in its readings.

But when it's a cool, crisp day with a blue-bird sky and solid footing on frozen ground, it's perfect for extending the hunt to one of those special coverts that only you frequent.

