



My determination was fueled in no small part by a desire to remain on speaking terms with Caymus. She had caught sight of the trading flocks and was whimpering with anticipation.

"I'm up for it," I told Ira, attempting to hide my skepticism. "Let's load 'em up and get after it."

We had a 200-yard walk across a rutted, rotten rice field, breaking ice the whole way. OK, Ira broke the ice, I just followed (remember, I was the student here). To keep my mind off the burning pain in my legs and the warmth of the fireplace back at the camp, I thought back on all those hunts from my pit — hunts where I had helplessly watched as every duck in the county decided to land in the middle of nowhere. Ira had assured me that with his little boats and some gumption, those frustrations would be a thing of the past.

WIND



I was operating on pure faith in a man who can break an anvil with a rubber mallet.

Pulling our boats behind us, we broke ice and sized up the situation, taking into account wind, available cover and where the birds wanted to be. At that point, I started to appreciate the Fatboy in action. You can push, pull, pole, paddle or even motor to get around in it. They are designed to be used with either small mud motors or trolling motors, but we had no such luxury on that morning. The conditions of the marsh dictated pulling the boats, and despite the long trudge, these shallow-draft boats glided effortlessly behind us towards the birds.

We approached our spot and set up to afford ourselves the greatest flexibility in gunning. That means 30° to the right of where you wish to move on the birds if you're right handed, 30° left for the southpaws. That way, you can swing your gun in a way that covers your spread. (cont'd)