Are you sitting COMFORTABLY?

Wildfowling is seldom the most comfortable of shooting sports but a good seat is more than just a matter of personal convenience. **CLIVE ELLISTON** explains how it can also significantly affect your bag.

ROB DOUGLAS

Wildfowlers have at least one thing in common with pigeon shooters, other than a distinct lack of sartorial elegance. Much of our shooting is done from a sitting position. I guess we're pretty unique amongst shotgun shooters for that alone. The pigeon guys have the jump on fowlers inasmuch as they're usually in a comfy hide with decoys well placed to ensure they know where their quarry will be coming from. Do we have that luxury? Not often I'm afraid, unless we're also decoying.

I can't recall any of the writers of shooting technique books, who always place great emphasis on footwork, even mentioning shooting from the sitting position. I'd wager that if they did they'd spout on about being in the right position to address the target etc etc. None of this is very useful when you're half crouched, half sitting, perched on the edge of a creek and trying not to slide into it; or trying to keep as low as possible so as not to make the birds flare at the sight of your ugly mug.

Incidentally, do any wildfowling clubs who run clay shoots have stands where you have to sit to shoot? I know that Chichester Harbour Wildfowlers have done this in the past – with interesting results! If your club runs clay shoots then get them to arrange for the occasional "wildfowlers" stand.

Naturally, just when you're at your most cramped and uncomfortable is exactly when a couple of teal will zip past your right ear like surface-to-air missiles homing in on their targets. So how do we solve the problem of keeping a low profile on the marsh whilst still having a reasonable chance of connecting with our quarry? As ever, it's a compromise depending upon where you shoot and what the terrain is like as no two marshes are the same, and each marsh has its own traditional methods.

Gloopy gutters between mud-banks call for a differing approach to that employed on a flat vegetated marsh, or one criss-crossed with small deep gutters. On the south coast, where we have some gloopy gutters, there is a tradition of sitting on milk crates and such like – personally I've always favoured a bucket fitted with a length of seat belt for a strap.