

BUTTE SINK ASSIGNMENT

Photo Essay By Gary Zahm

Leaving Sacramento behind, I exit Interstate 5, headed toward rice country and the 18,000-acre Butte Sink. This natural floodplain, primarily private duck clubs, hosts the highest concentration of waterfowl per acre in the world! Nearing the 2,000-foot-high Sutter Buttes, a jagged jumble of volcanic lava domes, I spot tornadic swirls of greater white-fronted geese parachuting into flooded rice stubble. Game on!

Teamed up with American Waterfowler Editor Jay Strangis and “Benelli’s On Assignment” television host Joe Coogan, plus the Sub7 videography team, we’re primed and ready for three days of hard-core waterfowl hunting. We’ll be field-testing Franchi’s newest smoothbores, the lightweight and sweet-swinging semi-automatic Affinity and a stylish over/under, the Instinct. Our prime targets: pintails and specklebellies—true California classics!

See the hunt and the new Franchi shotguns this year on **Benelli On Assignment** —The Outdoor Channel. BenelliTV.com for show listings.



Loquacious yodeling signals rice-choked specks looking for shaded wetlands. The guides pour forth a true symphony of hails, yodels and contented clucks. Mesmerized, the geese respond, drop altitude and circle the honey hole. Wings cup, orange feet drop, black-splotched bellies contrast with the azure blue sky. The moment of truth arrives—Franchi guns speak, showers of feathers fall, the smell of burned powder wafts on the air. Along with memorable dog work, expectations are fulfilled. As they say in the business, “That’s a wrap!”

