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By JD Casperson

We knew there was a really bad storm coming in... but it was a Saturday during duck season! We didn't even consider staying home.

The day started out with nice weather but I somehow locked the keys in the truck, while it was running! I knew I had better not call my wife at 5:30 am to come and bail me out. I wasn't going to let little stuff like that keep me from hunting, so I got the hood open and just disconnected the battery and decided to leave the truck and call for help at a time that wouldn't get me killed.

We went out and set up in about four inches of water with 7 or 8 dozen silhouettes around our coffins. We had our limit of 14 ducks in just over one hour with no storm in sight. I called my wife and told her to meet me at the launch later with some keys. She was already awake... so far, so good.

As we were headed toward the boat, the wind picked up and started blowing hard, so we hustled over to the boat and back to the decoys. Just about then, some snow started coming in sideways from

the north. The second we stepped out of the boat, my buddy Doug ripped his hat off saying, "It's shocking me!!" Just then, I felt it, too; a real slight shock on the top of my head.

Not good, I thought.

I could hear an electrical sizzle on the top of the airboat cage. I looked all around and there was no lightning yet. There was an island about two miles to the west of us, but other than that it was at least 10 miles to the next tallest thing besides us. We picked up the decoys as fast as we could while squatted halfway down. If we tipped the decoys upside down with the stake in the air we could hear that sizzle on the decoy, too. That day was probably the fastest I have ever picked up decoys.

That shock was still zapping us when we jumped in and fired the boat up to leave. By now, it was blowing hard from the north and snowing bad. Of course we were headed north to get to the truck. This was one of those days I was glad I had the windshield on the airboat.

I have a new GPS this year and that was the only reason I knew which way was up. I headed towards my dad and brothers who were also out hunting so that we could head in together. I only had a general idea where they were. I shut down for a minute to see what was around or if I could hear them. No such luck. When I started back up and looked down at the GPS, it said I was in the Pacific Ocean somewhere. Ummmm... crap. Well, those weren't my exact words, but you get the idea.

I turned it off and back on again, and then it worked fine. We found the rest of our party and cleaned up all the decoys and headed back in. About the time we got in, my wife pulled up with the keys and the storm let up. Perfect timing!

I decided that next time a storm like that is coming – shoot quickly and get out of there faster. It was a great hunt with some good company. I think if it happened again I would head for the island to wait it out by something that was taller than me. We were all fine, but it was too scary to do again. There is something about those airboats that keeps you going again and again.



*JD Casperson and his wife, Hadlee, with their limit of 14 ducks taken on a hunting trip in the Great Salt Lake, Utah area.*