



# Hunting Ducks with Gang Lines - The Basics

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## What are they?

Gang lines are typically made with a 25ft to 50ft base cord with hooks that are evenly spaced that allow you to add and remove decoys prior to the hunt, or as you are feeding the line out. Each end of the line has an anchor that holds the line in place. Gang lines are effective for divers, but I've also used them for puddlers when I need a mass quantity of ducks spread out.

The basic advantage - Fast deployment of large spreads (with less weights) in 3 types of water where regular individual decoy lines simply can't work

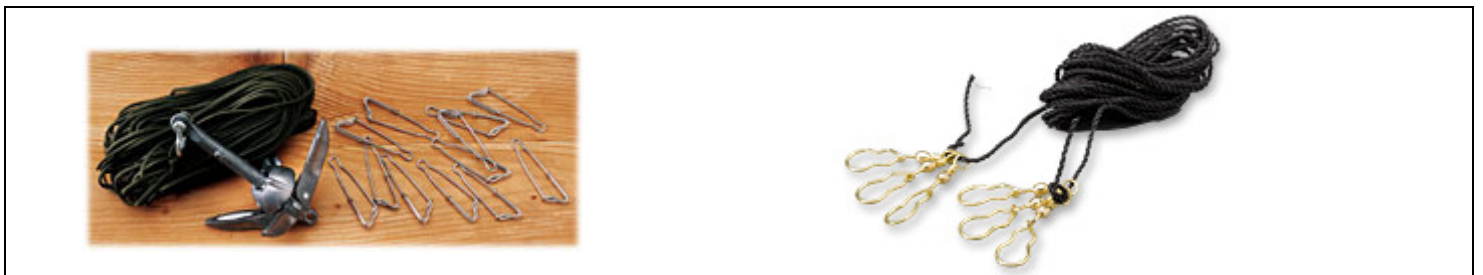
1. Deep water (lakes or ocean)
2. Rivers
3. Tidal Waters where currents are shifting

## Where do you get them?

Redhead Gang Lines with Weights: [http://www.basspro.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product\\_10151\\_-1\\_10001\\_85364\\_SearchResults](http://www.basspro.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product_10151_-1_10001_85364_SearchResults)

Redhead Gang Lines with NO Weights: [http://www.basspro.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product\\_10151\\_-1\\_10001\\_81361\\_SearchResults](http://www.basspro.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product_10151_-1_10001_81361_SearchResults)

## What do they look like?



## The Major Advantages

1. The line can then be used to position decoys when there's deep water, since the anchor end can be as short or as long as you need it.
2. You can use decoys in a river - since both sides are anchored, you can fix decoys even in a running river.
3. Ocean - again, deep water but the fact that you're hunting divers, and they will sometimes align themselves in a straight lines means your decoys still look somewhat natural in a straight line.
4. You can put out a massive amount of decoys in short order (and as a result, bring them in quickly as well) as long as your gang lines are orderly, and of course, you have a boat that can deliver the payload. My experience is it's slower to put them out than it is to pull them in.
5. I've used gang lines while hunting puddlers. I lay out the initial V with two long gang-lines, then fill in around them to make a more natural looking V. Depending on the wind, I've done other shapes (in images below)
6. Gang Lines require less weight. You are only using two heavier weights to hold 15 or so decoys down per line, whereas with loose decoys you need 15 individual weights.

## How to Deploy

1. STEP 1: Come up the targeted area and turn the motor off on your boat. Observe which way the boat floats in the wind and the current and/or tidal water.
2. STEP 2: Move the boat into the upper wind, farthest tip of the area you want to lay the line (up wind or up current).
3. Be prepared to quickly deploy the anchored end and decoys out as the boat floats downstream or downwind.
4. Don't try to run the motor and prop while you are doing this, leave engine in idle or you will cut the line if it gets tangled.
5. If there are 3 people on the boat, one person uses a push pole or trolling motor to gently guide the boat while the other two hunters deploy the lines.
6. **ALWAYS Lay decoys on the side that's moving away from the targeted location.** If you lay decoys on the side the boat is moving towards, you'll just float over the top of the decoys and I promise you they will tangle with the engine. It may take several passes to get the decoys spread evenly.
7. I like using push poles in combination with the wind to let the boat float in one direction while I concentrate on decoy placement.
8. Finally, deploy the opposite end anchor making sure the line is tight and straight. If the line is too loose, then the decoys get tangled together if they float into each other.

## Retrieving and Safety

1. Retrieving is self explanatory, but I recommend lining the decoys up in an orderly fashion side by side along the side of the boat.
2. NEVER leave decoy lines tangled around your feet. If you boat goes down and sinks, you DO NOT want that line anywhere near you...it will drag you down and you won't be hunting tomorrow.
3. Manage those lines, keep them away from your kids and their feet on your boat. Going through brush that pulls lines out of the boat to tangle with solid objects or fast spinning props and any number of mishaps with lines can instantly pull you out of the boat with head or limb injury!!

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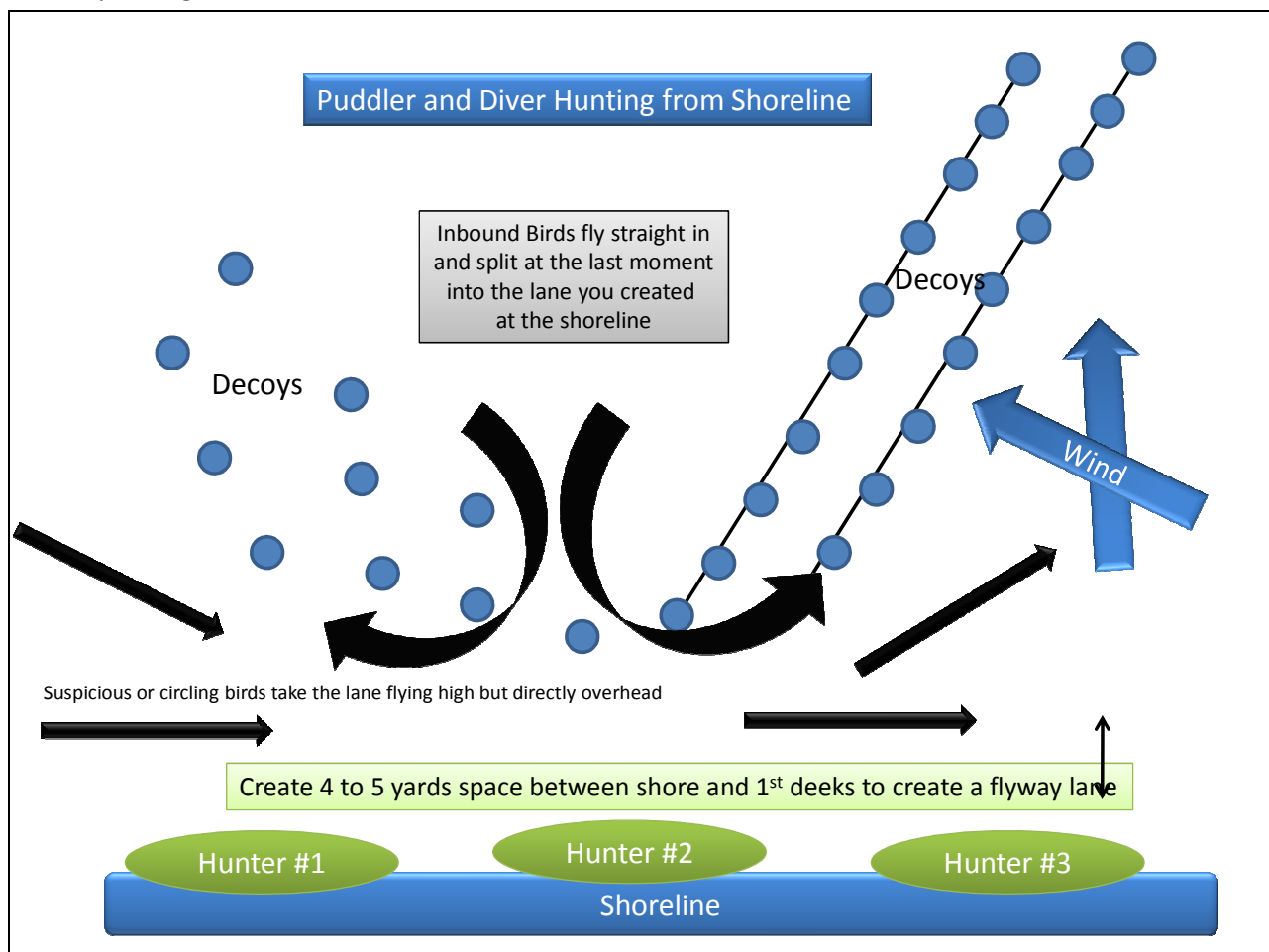
## Details Matter

The below layouts represent scenarios that I use most often. They are not intended to be all-inclusive, and I'm by no means the expert. The configurations represent the most practical ones I've used over the last several years of experimenting with gang lines and decoy setups. I've had success with these configurations and that's why I want to pass them on to you.

I hunt with my boat in boat access only areas. Thus, in that context I configure the layouts while floating in the but I typically find a location on shoreline to hunt from, or I find an island to hunt from where I've seen birds congregate on non-hunt days. When I stow the boat away, it's typically 200 yards away if possible to create no possibility of a distraction. I park and stow the boat sideways to the shoreline so it blends in, (not anchored with nose pointed at the shoreline).

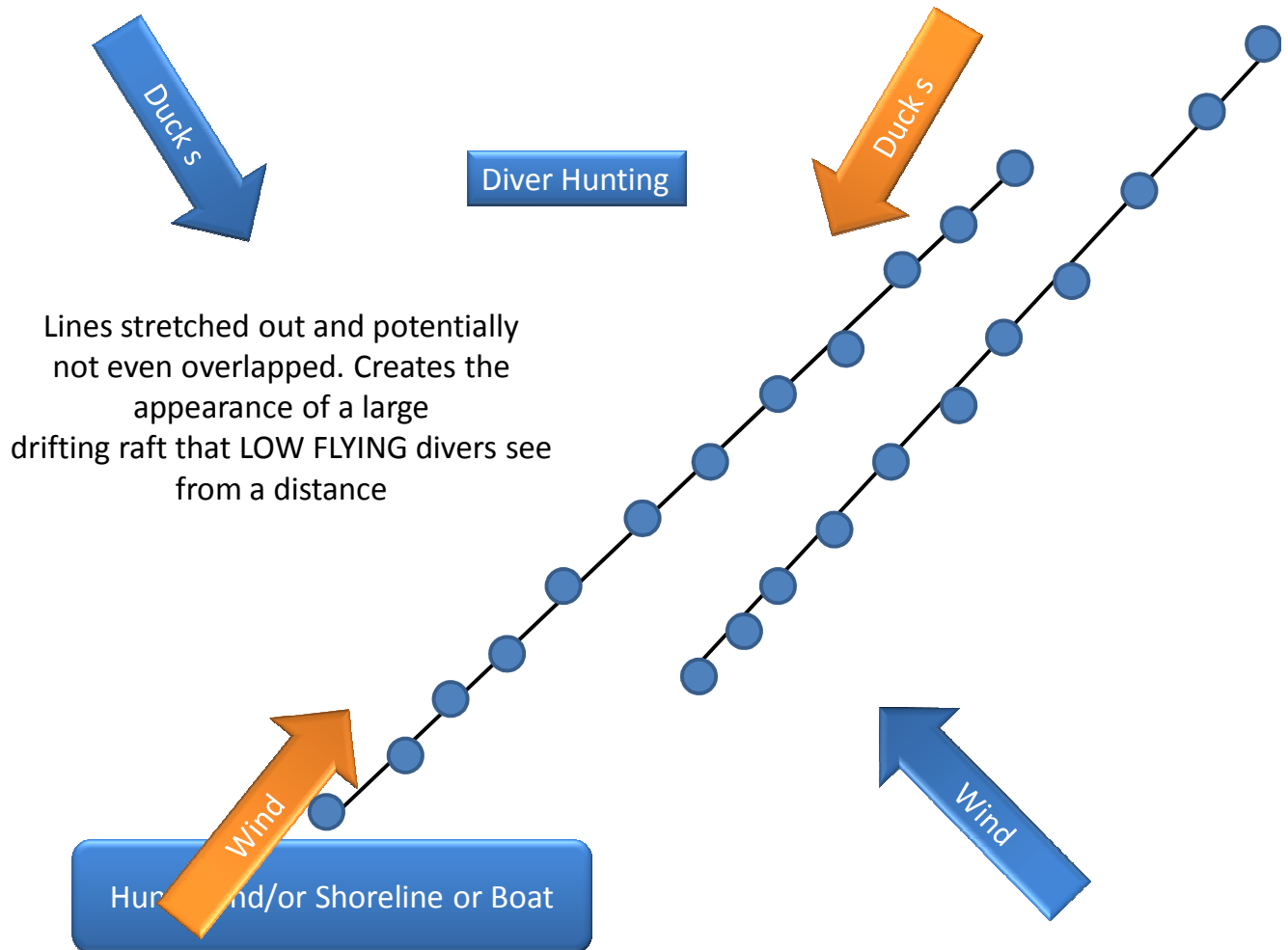
On each of the layouts described below, you should leave 4 to 5 yards of open space between the hunter and the bottom section V of the decoy setup, especially when hunting from the shoreline. Several effects will result:

1. Birds will tend to split down the lane between you and the Decoys, left or right exposing themselves sideways to you. This makes for cleaner kills.
2. Gives your crew the ability to spread out along the shoreline, if one guy is taking more shots and birds, then periodically mix it up to even the hunt out.
3. Birds that are cautious will use the **shoreline** lane to fly down as they circle out to the open water for a secondary approach. This means they are slightly high but directly overhead, with left to right shots, or right to left depending on the wind.

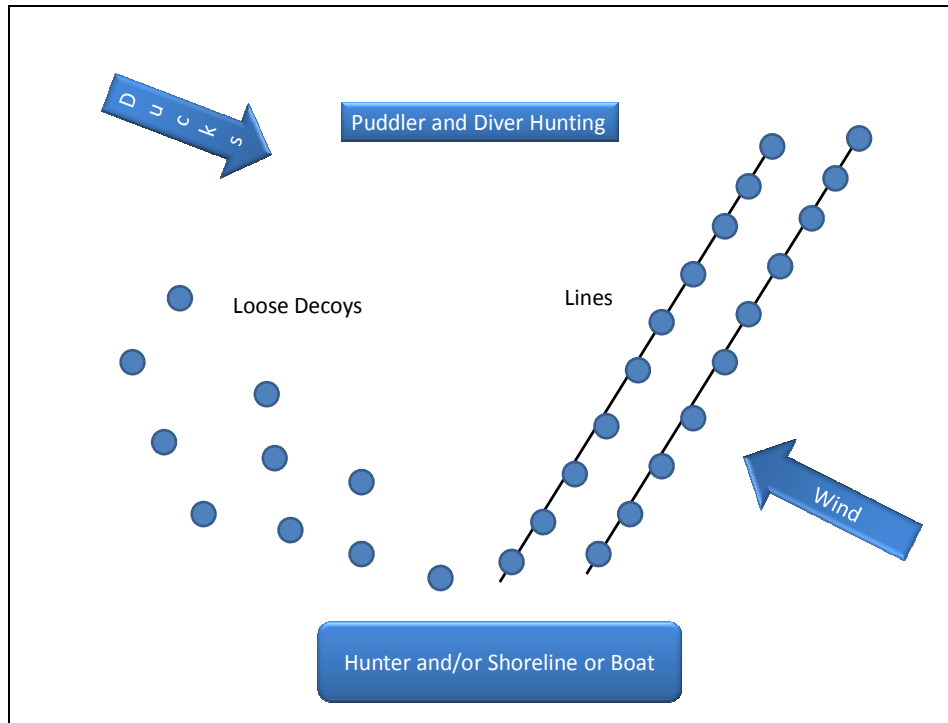


## Layout #1 - Drawing birds across a large area or ocean

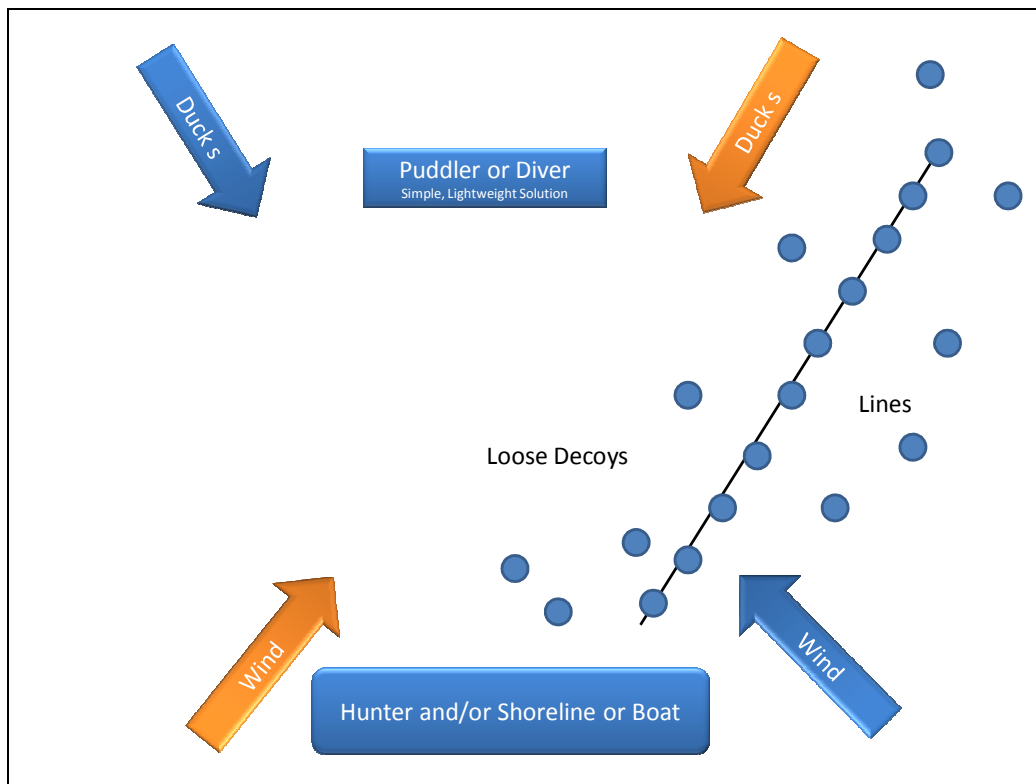
This setup is sort of interesting because from a distance a longer line of birds with just two decoys deep creates what looks like a very large raft of birds. As the birds approach, it turns out that the raft is thin, but it's too late. Next time you are in the field where there's large open water, notice the breadth or width of rafting ducks...it's often wide across the horizon (looking at it from ground level). But, divers mostly fly very low to the water as well as well, so they see what you do. If all your decoys are grouped in a tight package, they won't be as noticeable to divers. Use more white chested decoys or real bluebill ([http://www.basspro.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product\\_10151\\_1\\_10001\\_101627\\_\\_\\_SearchResults](http://www.basspro.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product_10151_1_10001_101627___SearchResults)) or canvasback decoys, they show up better at long distances.



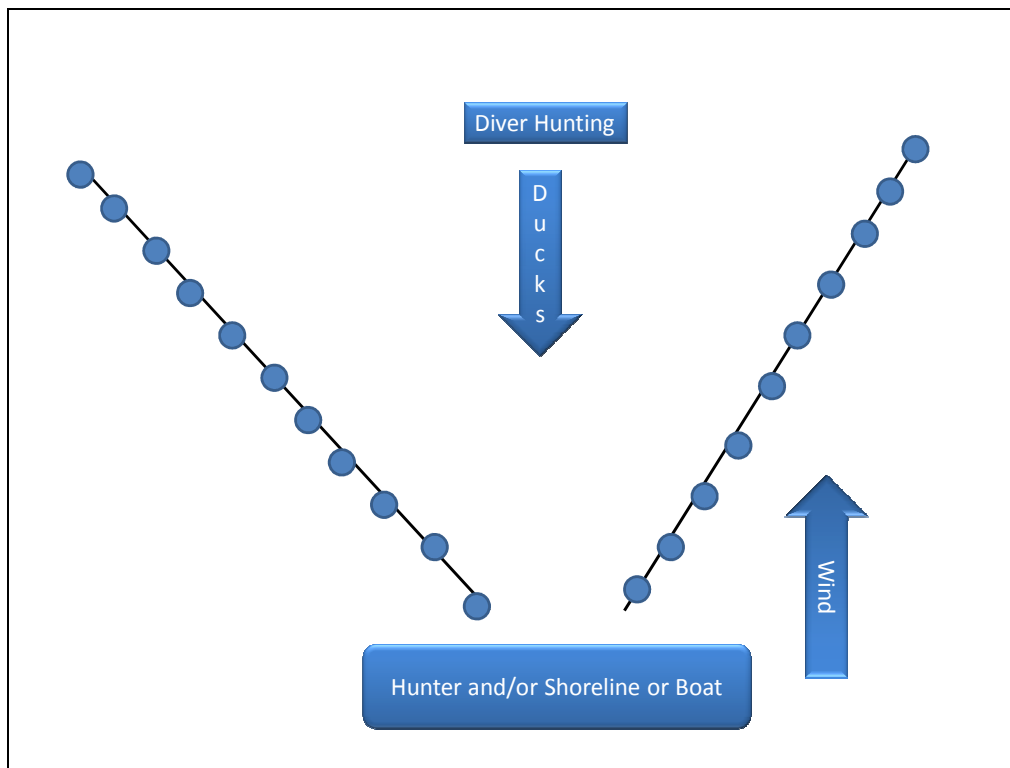
## Layout #2 - Large, heavy spread with lots of decoys



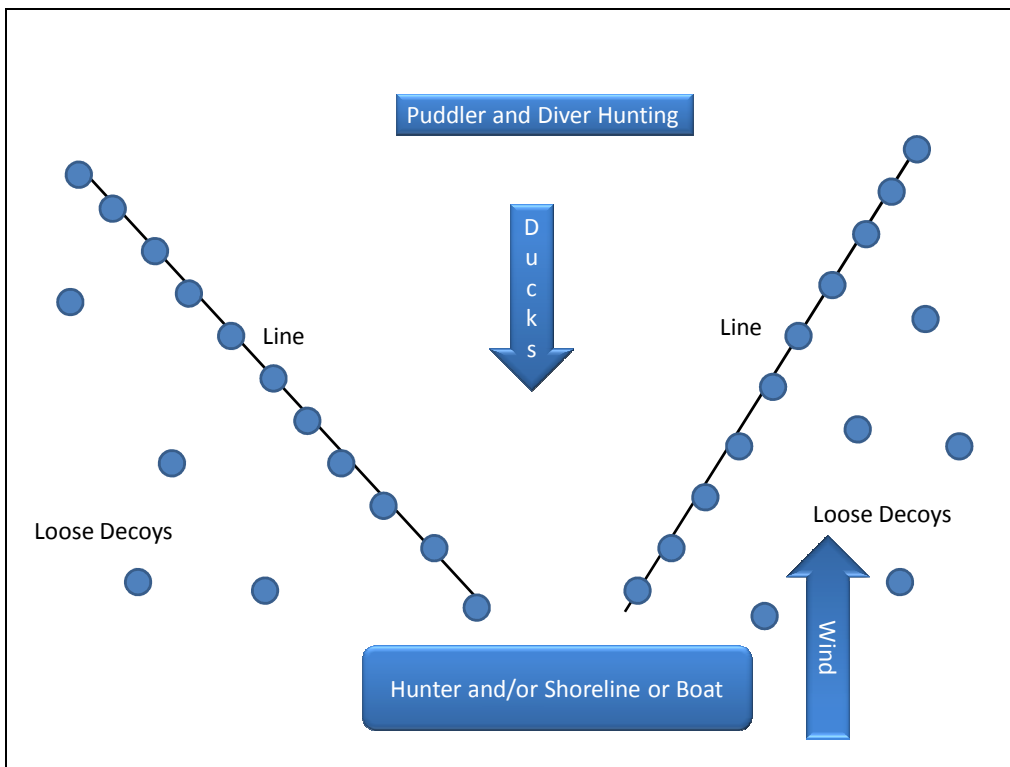
## Layout #3 - Simple setup for a canal where room doesn't permit big Vs.



## Layout #4 - Straight V, when you don't have room or ability for loose decoys



## Layout #5 - More Decoys, Hard V with softened exterior



## Referenced Resources

Blue Bill diver decoys [http://www.basspro.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product\\_10151\\_-1\\_10001\\_101627\\_\\_\\_SearchResults](http://www.basspro.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product_10151_-1_10001_101627___SearchResults)

Ground Blinds for hunting along shorelines: [http://www.basspro.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product\\_10151\\_-1\\_10001\\_91350\\_425009016\\_425000000\\_425009000\\_425-9-16](http://www.basspro.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product_10151_-1_10001_91350_425009016_425000000_425009000_425-9-16)

I prefer the brass clips over the metal ones because I hunt in salt water. The brass doesn't corrode. The metal clips don't seem to fit the decoy hole very well, I had to drill a few decoy holes larger to get them to remove faster.

## Conclusion

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