

**Dan Hendrickson Bird Dog Training Seminar**  
**Odell Adam's Bird Dog Club Grounds**  
**Benson, NC**  
**May 1 & 2, 2010**

Dan Hendrickson of Phantom Kennels, Abilene, TX, led a bird dog training seminar on May 1 & 2 near Benson, NC. While the seminar was hosted by the Odell Adam's Bird Dog Club, our Carolinas NAVHDA chapter was well represented. Twelve handlers with their dogs interacted with Dan learning and putting into action numerous training techniques. While time was limited it was obvious to all that these techniques, when used properly and persistently, will transform their pups into polished bird dogs.

We started off the seminar Saturday morning with a "skull" session. Dan emphasized "selecting the best pup you can afford from a reputable breeder that raises field bred stock". When we acknowledge all that we spend on feed, health care, vet bills, training expenses, hunt trip expenditures; the price of a pup is the least we will spend on the dog during its life. When it comes to selecting a puppy, we should spend our efforts on picking the breeder. Dan cautioned against buying a pup from "paper puppy ads" or short term breeders. Professional breeders develop blood lines and track records. Also when we have puppy or dog concerns we can go back to the breeder for a discourse. Dan encouraged us to procure pups produced by field champions. "Remember, the closer you are to the spring, the more pure the water will be". Dan also related how many potential buyers turn down great pup buying opportunities because the pup was the "wrong color".

We talked about how important it is to socialize the pup. Take the pup on walks. Make sure the pup has a great time. We can start using verbal (social) commands at an early age. Get the pup a substantial collar so that the collar does not fall apart during training or hunting. Do not rush a pup through its training. They all mature at different rates. Get a good check cord. It is an important training tool. Dan cautioned against letting the pup engage in too much sight pointing. Our pup needs to learn from an early age how to use its nose if it is going to be a great bird dog. Get the pup into birds – let the pup learn to how hunt – how to find birds. Let the pup chase and have fun. During this phase, don't worry if pup catches a bird or two. However, Dan emphasized all weekend the importance of high quality, good flying birds.

Training tools Dan encouraged us to have and use include: an equipment bag, check cords, a strong collar, pinch collar, whoa string, leather gloves, a raised platform (bench) for the dog to stand on, a training post, whistle, and a 2-dog e-collar. Some of the commands discussed and which Dan uses include: Up, Whoa, Here, Heel, Hey, Down, Lay Down, and Whistle. Dan demonstrated teaching a command, making sure the dog knows the command, and then over-laying the e-collar.

Dan worked with a lot of the participants' dogs starting out with pups on pigeons. The pigeon was on a short line attached to an equal length of a small pole such as a yard rake handle. The pigeon was hidden in the grass. The pup was brought around and worked into the scent cone. Once the pup pointed, the pigeon was "flushed" by pulling it up by the pole and tossed. The flapping pigeon certainly got the pup's attention! The pup was circled out and brought back in. For more experienced pups, the pigeon can be re-hidden after the toss while the dog's vision is blocked. At some point during the

weekend all of the young dogs were worked in this exercise. Its effectiveness became very obvious - very quickly!

Next Dan demonstrated handling dogs on the raised platform. Here Dan demonstrated how to set up a dog and gain control and build up the dog's confidence. It was amazing to see a dog transformed from an unsure pup to a "bird dog statue" while on the platform under Dan's care and instruction. After the platform session, Dan demonstrated a very effective whoa training method. While a handler heels the dog with a check cord, an assistant walks behind with a "whoa" cord attached around the dog's flank. As the threesome move along, the handler gives the whoa command but keeps walking. Simultaneously, the assistant applies a tug on the cord stopping the dog. The handler hangs onto the extended check cord in case the dog wheels around to approach the assistant. Most of the dogs caught onto the whoa command with this method in short order. Again, Dan made sure everyone got involved. Once the dog understands this command, the e-collars, one around the neck and one around the flank, were over-laid to the command. Stimulus on the flank e-collar is used to enforce the whoa command. Stimulus on the neck e-collar is used for general control.

Once the dog knows the "whoa" command thoroughly and responds to the e-collar properly, the training can move to steadiness on birds. Dan did several wonderful demonstrations on how to work a dog on birds taking it from chasing birds at the flush to being rock steady on flush and shot. Once a dog is steady to fall, natural retrieving is not discouraged at this point. However, formal retriever training comes later - after a season of hunting. Dan again emphasized how important wild acting, good flying birds are to this whole process. Dan took time to introduce and discuss the Phantom Quail Kennel and how to use it to maintain birds in near wild condition and behavior.

It is difficult to describe in print how worthwhile this seminar was. It is probably better to ask someone who was in attendance! We all had a great time and all agreed it was money and time well spent. Personally, I am ready to put Dan's techniques into action at our NAVHDA training sessions. If the opportunity arises next year I will attend another of Dan's seminars.

Thanks to Odell Adams Bird Dog Club for hosting the seminar. Everything was great - including and especially the food! Congratulations to our own Larry Elmore on winning the e-collar donated by Tri-tronics!



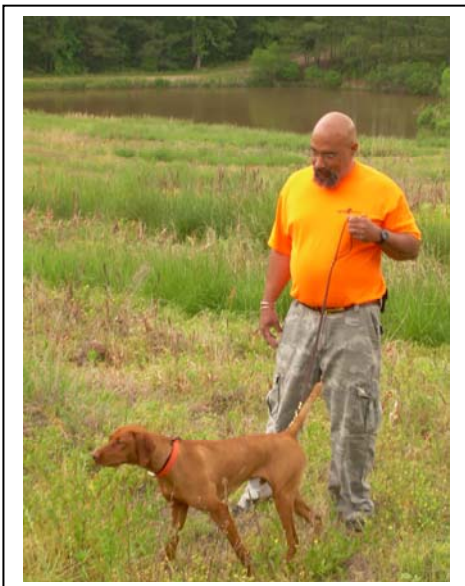
Phantom quail kennel in action. Birds are not handled or “planted”. There is a call back feature and funnel as well. Plenty of feed and water to lessen human contact.



Dan showing how to style R.C.'s pup on a platform.



Robert working on the "whoa" command



Clarence working with his pup on a pigeon.