



CAROLINAS CHAPTER NAVHDA

PAW PRINTS

WINTER, 2007

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! Hope 2007 will bring a bounty of blessings AND hunts to all!!

December, 2006 NAVHDA Test

Thanks to everyone (the dogs, included) who made this test such a success!! Club participation was tremendous.

After a great day of testing on December 2nd and a delicious dinner, a chapter meeting was held to elect officers and discuss business. Not to be “out-done” by the change in Congress, the following non-partisan members were elected as 2007-2008 chapter officers:

Ross Loftis, President & Web Master
Roy Thillberg, Vice-President
Kylie Loftis, Secretary
Larry Elmore, Treasurer
R.C King, Chapter Contact
Ruth Ann Grimes, Paw Prints Editor
Bebe Hill, Spring Test Secretary

A special thank you to out-going President, Jesse Grimes, and Secretary, R.C. King for their years of service and dedication as club officers.

Since no official minutes were taken at this chapter meeting, here are a few highlights.

- Increase of dues for 2008 - \$30.00 per member, \$45.00 per family
- Spring test will be held at Johnson Marsh Hunting Preserve on March 10th – 11th.
- Training days will be held the second weekend of each month. There was a request made for more organized training days.
- Continue the fundraiser of selling chapter hats and shirts
- Ideas for chapter activities? Send your e-mails to Ross and Kylie.

Spring, 2007 NAVHDA Test

There will be a NAVHDA test held at Johnson Marsh Hunting Preserve on **March 10th and 11th**. If you would like to test your dog, please contact test secretary, Bebe Hill, as soon as possible! Entry forms and Bebe's address are available via the website.

Chapter members are needed to assist with the test, so make plans to attend!

A small raffle is being planned for March 11th after the evening meal. Everyone is asked to contribute a dog-training item for the raffle. President Ross is in the process of getting business donations, as well. There are a number of chapter t-shirts left for sale. Hopefully with warm weather just around the corner we can sell more of these at the March test. Shooter shirts, long or short sleeve, can be ordered as well – see our web site. No hats left – should we get some more stitched up or wait awhile? We can do either patch – the new one with the Carolina states outlined or the International logo with “Carolinas Chapter” added on.

Website Updates

All chapter members are now listed on the member's page of the website. If you haven't already done so and would like a photo of you and your dog on the website, please send to President Ross! Photos can be sent by “snail” mail or e-mail. In the event you are involved in some criminal activity and do not want your name or photo posted on the website, let Ross know and he will remove your information from cyberspace.

The chapter now offers directions to events through google maps on the tests and special events pages.

There will soon be a place available on the chapter website for short digital video clips. Check back frequently for updates. Send those clips to President Ross. Let's keep all of this CLEAN – no “Dogs Gone Wild” videos!!!!!!

January, 2007 Training Day

The first training day of the new year was held at Johnson Marsh on January 13th. There was a good attendance. Progress was made by all in duck search and field work.

In regards to more organized training days, contact President Ross if you have any suggestions on drills, specific themes, etc.

****The next training day will be Saturday, February 10th at Johnson Marsh Hunting Preserve.** There are not many days left until the next test so all who are testing in March should make the best of our chapter training days.

Special Featured article!!

Quail – What Happened?! **By Roger Metz**

Ahhh, the big quail demise issue. When I was involved with QU many years ago, it was a combination of any of the following: Large scale farming, winter cropping, feral dogs/cats, turkeys, foxes, coyotes, fire ants, hawks, and loss of habitat. When I was growing up in Chester, we had 8 or 9 coveys that we didn't even need a dog to hunt, just knew where they would be at any given time of the day, which meant we hunted mostly in the afternoon after school. Then you had the small farmers who bulldozed down all the hedgerows that divided up the small fields until you had one large field. Now think about all the habitat that was lost in that one single act. Gone are the honeysuckle vines, cedars, wild cherry trees and all the thick stuff that quail needed to move around in without being exposed to any of the predators from the list above, not to mention all the small seeds and berries that they lost as a food source. Next, everybody that quit farming sowed fescue for beef cattle/hay fields or planted pine trees. Well, there is

absolutely nothing for a quail to eat in a fescue field, plus the first cutting of hay was taking out the hens that tried to nest in those fields, along with the clutch of eggs she had been sitting on. A pine thicket will give cover and food for a few years but as it shades out the undergrowth the quail have no more use of a pine plantation. Now the farmer who harvests a fall crop used to leave that field to rest over the winter giving all the waste grain for the quail to use as winter food. Plow it in to sow winter wheat and now they don't have that primary winter food source. Quail survived most predators in good numbers until all the cover was gone, then the predators had a field day. Throw in the common house cat, who has emerged as the #1 killer of quail (ever seen a cat stalk and kill just for the fun of it) and they had little or no rest from predators. Think of how many cats you see on the roadside or from your deer stand and in recent years the number of foxes. Now, as bad as coyotes are made out to be, they can and do put a major dent in the feral dog/cat and fox population, and they tend to leave quail alone or hunt them only as a last resort. Now, after about ten years of not having any quail at the farm in Chester, I've got 2 healthy coveys of about 16-18 birds each. Know what else I've noticed? A few coyotes have moved in and I have yet to see a cat and the 2 foxes I saw this past deer season did not appear comfortable at all in the open which is why they are still living and not a hide nailed to the barn wall at the farm. As an added plus, we have also seen a rebound in the rabbit population. Now, I've dibbled in a few thousand lespedeza plants, left the old fence rows to grow themselves as thick as they can get, planted pines in a 7x10 grid that lets enough light in so there is still a lot of undergrowth, and shot every cat/fox/dog I saw. Wish I had the guts to shoot a few hawks like the old timers did but I figure it's an even game as long as the birds have some cover. Turkeys, well think about how many bugs a young turkey eats and divide that number by how many quail chicks those same bugs would have fed and you've taken out a quail's spring source of protein. One last thing. A quail has better than a 87% chance of dying from the heat if he is flushed on a day when the temp is above 92 degrees. Take all this into account and the bobwhite is a very fragile gentleman who lives in a very fragile environment. Those of us who shot wild bobs in our younger years without paying through the nose were very fortunate indeed. Just take a tour of Pineland Plantation (Mellon Banks) or Nilo (Olin Winchesters place) in South Georgia and you realize the loads of money it takes to have a season-long huntable population of wild birds in the Eastern US. They average 6-8 coveys an hour and don't even worry about the singles. I sold all my setters about six years ago but if they start making a comeback, I think I can still remember how to make a puppy point with a wing and a fishing rod.

Thanks to Roger for that great story!

Everyone please feel free to submit your hunting stories, helpful training tidbits, dog photos, etc.! This is the **chapter** newsletter, not mine, so input from the members is very much welcomed! If you aren't a writer, give me some story information to "go on" and I'll be glad to write an article for you. How simple is that?!?!

SPRING TEST: MARCH 10TH AND 11TH !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Good luck with those last hunts of the season!!!!

Ruth Ann Grimes, Paw Prints editor



Cover page from a Quail Bulletin