

The Gun Dog Supreme

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EDUCATION & RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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Where Woodcock Live

Burley of Salmon River points an elusive timberdoodle.

(Photo by Rem DeJong)

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Sorry this issue is a tad late. Well, not too sorry; I mean, it's hunting season and the dogs and I have been hunting grouse and woodcock since mid-September. A guy's got to have his priorities. I hope that you're hunting too and are way too busy to hunt for typos.

Thanks to some dedicated authors, we have a great issue. Jim Seibel addresses what to do when a n otherwise fine dog doesn't point in a test. Jon Coil has an important article about black-legged ticks (deer ticks). They carry dangerous diseases for you and your dogs, so take heed.

Kudos to the RMGC and other WPGCA members who contributed to a major improvement of the Idaho test grounds. Ann Pool details the fine job that should result in a great site for water work next spring.

Finally, Larry Semmens sent in a nice hunting adventure article from the back country of Alaska. I'm sure that you'll enjoy it. I hope that you'll share your hunting adventures too. So send in your stories and your photos. We can post them on the website and on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/griffon.fan).

Here's to warm barrels and cold noses,

Rem DeJong

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A DOG DOES NOT POINT AT A TEST?

by

Jim Seibel

Senior Judge and Breeding Committee Member



Freeze Right There! Good Boy of Dutchman's Hollow and Anna-belle of Two Rivers Crossing hold on huns on the North Dakota prairie. Owner, Hank Carriger, exposed "Boy" to hundreds of wild birds; although steady on real game, he wouldn't point pen-raised, planted birds.

Photo by Hank Carriger

Let us say that at a test, an Intermediate Hunting Dog does not point but does everything else to qualify as a breedable dog. How does the breeding committee further evaluate the dog? This question is asked frequently, so here is an attempt to address that very issue.

We are assuming in this discussion that the dog in question has qualified in all other aspects of the standards used to select breeding stock. Conformation is good, hips are scored in the upper 50% of our dogs and the natural abilities, training ease and tempera-

ment are very good. Experience has taught us that many dogs who are properly exposed to wild birds in the first 12 to 18 months of their life won't point pen raised or planted birds. We theorize that experience has taught the dog that intact or uninjured wild birds smell differently from wounded or injured wild birds. They soon learn that if they don't catch that "wounded" bird, it will get away. That is not good and the boss is not happy. It is fun to capture "wounded" birds and the pup gets lots of praise when they are brought back to the boss.

Now it is test day and this experienced dog is in the field with boss and too many on-lookers to deem this situation normal hunting. The bird, which has been raised in a confined area and transported to the test in a crate of some kind, has been roughed up a bit. Most likely, it smells more like a wounded wild-bird than an uninjured wild-bird. Many experienced dogs will interpret the situation as just that, " I have found a wounded bird and my job is to catch it and retrieve it to my boss."

The dog gets a zero in pointing and could be disqualified from the breeding pool. That, of course, could be a huge mistake. It would be easy to just ask the handler if the dog points wild birds and if he/she says yes, we could assume that the explanation above is true. If that were true we would not need the pointing score in the test. There is a better solution. We need to have a *credible* judgment made by an unbiased individual. It is not sufficient to have a buddy along who testifies to the observation of a point. That would open the door to too many problems. If that were acceptable, then why have the tests at all? Just ask the handler's hunting companions how good the dog is. Now we would be back to a real lack of credibility for our organization. What we have decided is to require that at least one qualified judge hunt with the handler and the dog in question and witness the pointing as if at a test. The judge observes not only the point, but also the cooperation the dog exhibits allowing the handler to flush the bird. Now we have something that we can put in the books that is credible.

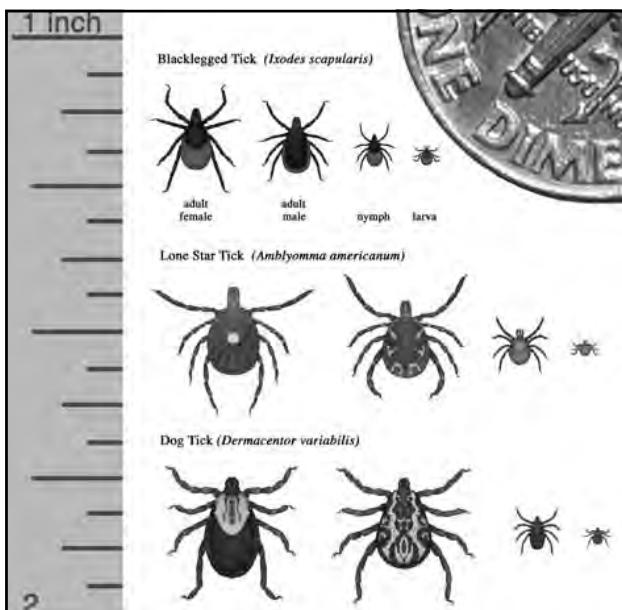
Why don't we do that for every dog that does not point at the test? We don't change the score on the dog in question. We only add to the notes on the dog as to what happened in the wild. Doing that for every dog would be a bit too cumbersome. Not that most judges would be unwilling to accept an invitation from a handler to observe the dog on point, but it would not add to the information needed on dogs that have qualified in all other aspects for breeding. It would also be better if all our dogs could be judged in wild bird hunting situations. So far, we have not been able to create such a ideal situation. Maybe someday.



Full As A Tick

by
Jon Coil

I pushed myself back from the table, the carcasses of the two woodcock picked apart on the plate, and I felt full as a tick. Full as a tick; that old homily got my thinking of how dangerous the grouse and woodcock woods are these days. Wolves, bears, meth labs a bother? We can mostly avoid them. The real danger is the diminutive blacklegged tick though there are other species that may be common in your area.



Note the small size of the blacklegged tick compared to dog tick.

Image from CDC

http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/life_cycle_and_hosts.html

thick as they can be in the fields and trails in early June they run out their life cycle and disappear by July in our part of the country. The deer ticks are a different tenacious little bugger. They are prolific and looking for a meal continuously from the first patch of bare ground in the spring to the last patch of bare ground in the winter. That is a long time to be vigilant, even in Minnesota.

Know your enemy! Good advice for everyone and key to keeping deer ticks from feeding on you. The University of Rhode Island: Tick Encounter Research Center <http://www.tickencounter.org/> has very good information on avoiding and living with black-

The Blacklegged tick or “deer tick” is used for transportation by at least three diseases that affect humans, Lyme disease, Human Anaplasmosis and Babesiosis. These diseases can cause fever, muscle and joint pain, lethargy, and may escalate to affect the heart and joints. There is also danger that your dog can pick up Lyme disease and anaplasmosis.

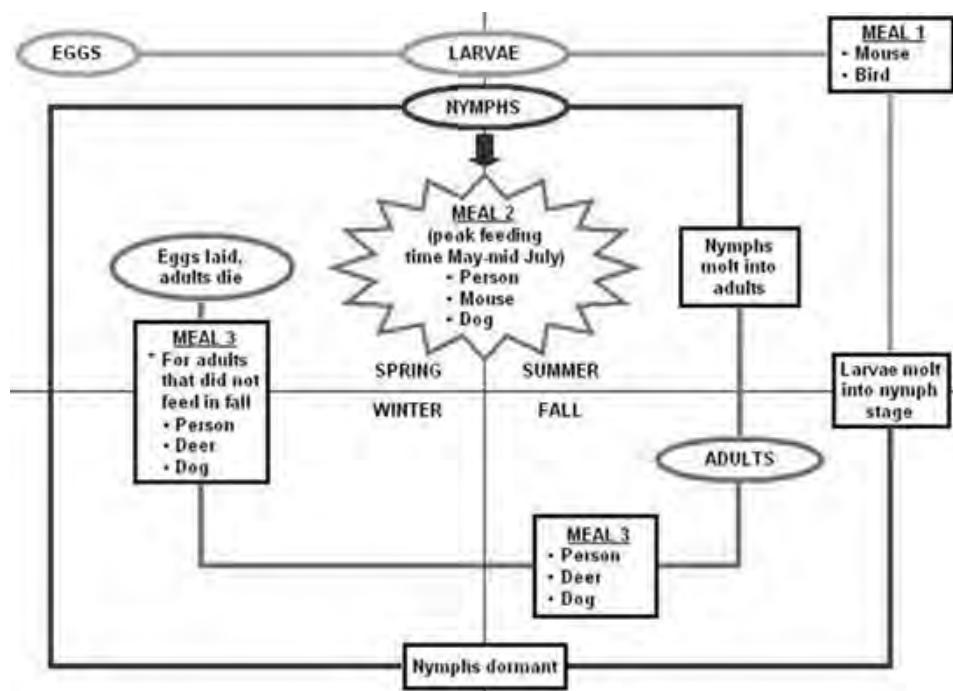
You can discuss disease prevention for your griffon with your Veterinarian for the black legged tick. I will concentrate how to keep these ticks off you and thus keep these dangerous diseases from attacking you.

I grew up with the ubiquitous dog tick and know that as

legged ticks. I also found good information from the Minnesota Health Department website <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/dtopics/tickborne/ticks.html>.

Tick bites have become one of the most common injuries reported by employees with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and my participation on our regional safety committee has allowed me to watch the battle against tick bites and infections and also see some of the cutting edge prevention aids being made available to employees. With the potential for long term lost time and medical expenses along with the potential for permanently affecting the wellbeing of the employee it is understandable why so much effort is being taken to try to avoid these tick bites.

The first step to keeping ticks from biting is to keep them away from your skin. There are repellents that are recommended to help keep ticks off. Deet can be sprayed on clothing or skin and permetherin is a spray that is sprayed on clothing to kill and repel ticks. Permetherin is not for bare skin but when sprayed on clothing and let dry is good for several washings. Read and follow the instructions and cautions on the can whenever using chemicals. There are tick cuffs that can be purchased to restrict access to bare legs.



and keep the ticks moving up the outside of your pants. Tick and Chigger Gaiters, made by "Nite-Light", are an elastic cuff that goes over your pants and boots and are used often by my co-workers. L L Bean sells a field pant that has a tick cuff sown in. The light colored sleeve fits into your boot and the ticks can't get up your pant leg. They are functional, long wearing field pants. They work well during hunting season but are

somewhat heavy for warm weather use. Besides the LL Bean tick pants I have used “Elimitick” made by “Game Hide”, a line of clothing that is impregnated with permith-erin and they claim will provide effective protection for 70 washings. These trousers are made of light, cool material for summer use. With my aversion to washing clothes, I am sure the trousers will wear out before I get to 70 washings! The University of Rhode Island site has a link (<http://www.insectshield.com/Default.aspx>) to a company that offers a variety of treated clothing plus the offer to treat your clothing with permith-erin and good for 70 washings. I haven’t tried this company but it looks interesting. Of course there is always the handyman’s friend; a few raps of duct tape around the pant bottom and your boot to seal them up. The second step for avoiding tick bites is simple. Light colored clothing so you can see the little buggers.

It was discovered, in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, after an extensive promotion of tick cuffs and spraying the pants that the number of bites did indeed decline but an interesting observation was that the reported tick bites were now more often on the upper body. Remember that ticks like to climb so keep your shirt tucked into your pants.

Ticks can fall off your clothing or dogs when you enter your vehicle after an outing, they then become a hazard anytime you re-enter your vehicle. Changing clothes in the field and putting the tick infested clothing in a plastic bag, is recommended but not practical, so a visual check of your clothing is always recommended at the end of a field trip. Keep your dog in its kennel for its safety when traveling and to confine the ticks. Ticks may likewise fall off in your home, so if you have an entry room like a mud room it is a good place to remove your outer clothing and place them in a plastic bag until you can wash them to kill the ticks. An entryway is also a good place to confine your griffon until you can search it for ticks.

Tick treatment for dogs has come a long way from dipping or powders. There are now monthly treatments that work well. Most of these treatments are meant to kill the ticks but some of them have a repellent as well as chemicals to kill the ticks. We were using a treatment that just killed the ticks and our veterinarian recommended putting a tick collar on the dog to repel them. For our griffons, we have now switched to a monthly tick treatment that kills as well as repels. Paul Stadem of East Grand Forks, Minnesota often hunts ruffed grouse in heavily tick infested areas and found that leaving his griffons, **Merry Meeting’s Bella** and **Aesir of Dakota Praire**, in their dog crates for a half hour after getting to his cabin after a hunt allowed the tick treatment to do its job and most of the ticks were dead on the floor of the dog box.

The third step is eternal vigilance. With all the protection there is still opportunity for a tick to make it to bare skin and attach so at the end of the day it is best to do a thorough body exam to look for embedded ticks. A life of gluttony and sloth has left me with areas of skin that I will never see again, add that to the areas that even the most nimble can’t get a good look at and it is wise to get help to do a complete check. I suggested to Judy that we do a thorough buddy check each evening, anticipating a titillating and tick free bedtime. Judy got me a long handled hand mirror and offered a toast to my contin-

ued good health. I wish you better luck than I had but the concept is still sound. I guess that I don't always hunt with Judy and I don't want to do a buddy check with any of those other companions so the mirror is a good tool.

If a tick is found attached, the recommended removal method is to grasp the tick as close to the head as possible with a tweezers and pull slowly straight out. Most sources say that if the tick has been attached for less than 12 hours there is less chance of getting infected by one of the three diseases. You should see a physician if you find a black-legged tick that you think has been attached for more than 12 hours or after any tick bite if you become aware of any symptoms that may appear up to several weeks after the bite.

Have fun with your tick checks but do some research and use the tools available to keep on top of the dangers from infections from a tick bite.



A quality test requires quality water—Ace of Wolf Fork Canyon
tracks a duck at the 2012 Rocky Mountain Griffon Club spring test in
Idaho.

Photo by Robin Strathy

New Water Gates for Idaho RMGC Testing Site

by
Ann Pool



New gate assures quality water work site for RMGC spring tests.

This new gate, built and installed with the help of the Rocky Mountain Griffon Club, will help provide a site for the wter portion of WPGCA spring tests.

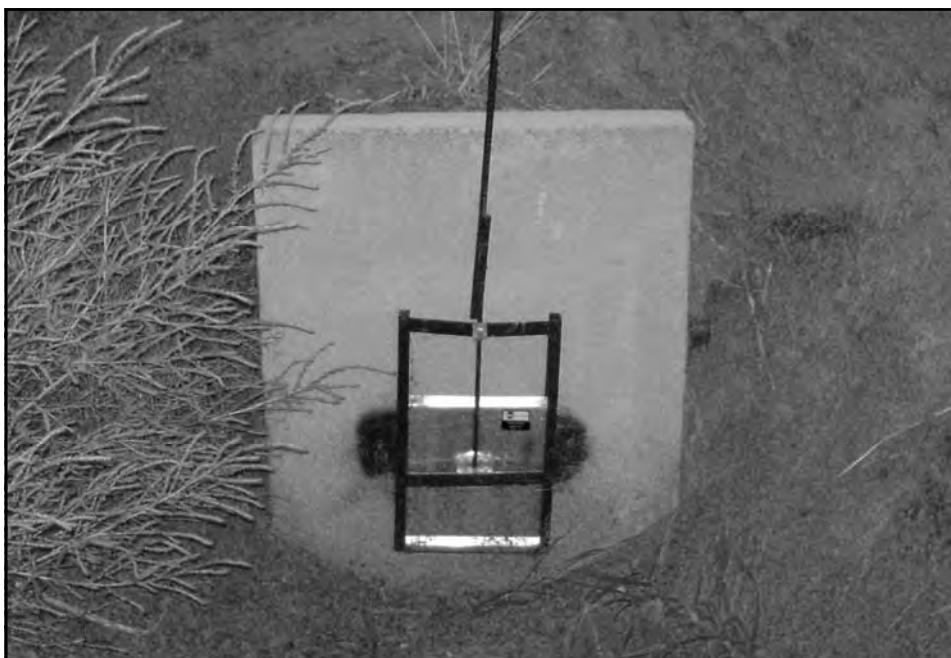
Photo by WMA Manager, Frank Edelmann

The Rocky Mountain Chapter of the WPGCA was organized and held their first test in the spring of 1988. This first Idaho test and each annual spring test thereafter, has been held at the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), Niagara Spring Wildlife Management Area (WMA), in the canyon along the Snake River.

During our test years, local RMGC members have met and worked with many different WMA managers. During this time, we have volunteered with a variety of different activities, such as windbreak tree plantings and DU Green Wing duck box projects with the local youth. We have found each manager at the WMA to be helpful to our test needs and dedicated to the enhancement and continued growth of this unique area. We've watched different fly-fishing groups, horse riding groups, individual horsemen, day hikers and have heard the hounds during their training in the same areas where we test. It's not uncommon to see deer, quail, fox, coyote, hawks, geese, ducks, bald and golden eagles, and great blue herons; years ago we ran into some transplanted turkeys that looked a little lost! This area is also heavily used for nesting by the migrating water fowl across southern Idaho.

One of the ponds we have consistently used, and often refer to as the ‘puppy pond’, has presented some challenges for us the past few years because it has been dry as test weekend approach. Our previous RMGC president Cliff Jaro, visited many times with the IDFG and the current WMA Manager, Frank Edelmann, about this challenge. It seems this pond has been taken out of the WMA management plans and was not scheduled to be filled again due to the leaks and seepage problems it caused. This presented a real quandary for us, as the shallow depth and cattails were the perfect place for duck track usage.

The IDFG and WMA Manager offered an option for our club to purchase a new water gate and fish screen, designed for their management needs, specifically for filling this pond for our RMGC test use. This was a strain on our limited chapter funds, but seemed to be our only option for test-day water use. The decision was made by our RMGC to approach the WPGCA BOD to see what their thoughts and suggestions were, and if we might get some financial help if needed. After discussion and a chapter vote, it was decided to go ahead and purchase the gate. Other chapters offered to help financially if needed.



Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

This gate may look like just a concrete and steel contraption, but it represents hard work and cooperation and will be a real boon to conservation at the Niagara Spring Wildlife Management Area

Photo by WMA Manager, Frank Edelmann

Last week, I hiked down to the ponds to take some pictures of the new gate and fish screen. This newly installed apparatus, built to engineering specifications for the IDFG, was installed shortly after our 2012 spring test. Not thinking ahead, I hiked into the area without water-boots, so was unable to really search along the coulee, finding tall plant growth obscuring any chance at a picture of the submerged gate. When heading home and on top of the canyon in phone range, I called Frank, the WMA Manager, asking his help with a picture of the new gate for this GDS article.



Future Pond—It's dry now, but thanks to the new gate, this spot will provide quality water work next spring.

Photo by Ann Pool

The next day, Frank called and not only sent pictures, but also included this note:

“...the project to repair leaks from the previous levee breaches and install the water control structures helped conserve water such that I could keep the ponds nearly full and connected to the main ditch all summer with the same amount of water (6cfs) that was inadequate last year. That gives a good idea how much water was being lost previously to leakage. The fishing reports in the east pond has also been favorable this year and I attribute at least part of that to the better inflows.”

The full ponds to which he is referring are the two bigger ponds west of the ‘puppy pond’. We use all three water locations for our test, the smaller, shallower ‘puppy pond’ being the farthest east of the three. Frank also mentioned and sent pictures of an additional new water gate included in our purchase. This gate was installed in the east end of the puppy pond, for drainage after our test weekend and is easily seen along the exposed levee.

Also, the pond near the old homestead is being cleaned out and filled. (We also used this pond in the past for tracking.) Access or usage of the maintenance shed is no longer allowed, which we will dearly miss throughout test weekends. A picnic area next to the homestead pond is now being developed for public usage, where we can set up for lunches.

We are very pleased that the IDFG and WMA Manager were able to work with us on securing the use of all three ponds for our future tests.



Bush plane bird hunt—No worry about crowds here.

Photo by Larry Semmens

2012 Season Opener

by
Larry Semmens

The bird season comes early in Alaska, hot on the heels of the sockeye run and in the middle of the coho run. It has to be early if hunters are going to get to hunt before the snow flies. This year we hunted in the same area as last season, a fly in to a lake close to home. This time the group was my two sons, Trent and Travis, Aniak of Wolf Fork Canyon and a friend with his German Shorthaired Pointer. We flew in a turbocharged Cessna Caravan on floats. This is an airplane popular with wheel based regional airlines in Alaska due to its hauling capability. It is the first time I have ever been in one on floats. We were told to ‘hold our weight down’ to 2300 pounds! I thought we could manage that for a 3 day or so trip. Many back country fly in trips restrict weight to about 50 pounds per person, but we could take everything but the kitchen sink on this trip. One son brought a dry suit, fins and mask. He had fun exploring around the lake. The other brought a rifle and a big game pack. This proved useful. We had fishing gear and two tents, chairs, cot, coolers, 7.5 gallons of water, shotguns, pretty much everything except firewood. Turns out we could have used some wood, but we did find enough dry brush to make some smoke at least.

While sitting in camp one evening a black bear was spotted about a mile away in a big

avalanche run out area. There is no closed season on black bears here and the limit is three. This bear was alone so was probably a boar and looked to be pretty good sized. The boys loaded up the pack and took the 300 short mag to have a look. They hiked up high and the bear cooperated by walking toward camp. In about a half hour there were two shots. A half hour later, which was about 9 p.m. I thought I should go see what was happening. When I found them in the brush it was hard to tell who was winning, the bugs or the boys. The bear was down and skinning was started which definitely attracts biting insects. The boys forgot the bug spray, so they were really happy when I showed up with some.

Skinning a bear on the side of the mountain in the brush with bugs swarming your face, in your eyes, nose and mouth is challenging, especially if it is your first one, which it was for them. I would highly recommend a new style of knife we fortunately had with us. It is made by Havelon and has disposable scalpel-like blades. It is a folding knife that is very sharp and relatively inexpensive. The difference in that and the folding knife I brought was amazing. We got the bear skinned, quartered and packed and made the short hike back to the camp area where there was a big snow field to store it in. It was after 11 p.m. when we got back to camp. It was just beginning to be too dark to



Combo bird and bear hunt—While Larry was gearing up for hunting ptarmigan, his sons, Trent and Travis, took this black bear.

Photo by Larry Semmens

see. It was a fun side hunt to our bird hunting and significantly increased the meat yield. The bear meat turned out to be exceptionally good. We canned some and froze the rest. I will never turn down black bear from the high country. Annie didn't like being around the bear during this process. She probably runs across their scent often and I am glad she isn't interested.

Last year Annie was overwhelmed on her first real hunt, also in this area. This year she started out a little tentative, but was hunting real well by the afternoon of the first day. Shooting didn't bother her at all; in fact she was looking for a dead bird whenever a gun was fired. We had some good points and shot some birds, but the numbers were down from previous hunts in this area.

Perhaps the most memorable part of this trip for me was a hike we took the 3rd day. We weren't finding any birds in the valley so I suggested we do something new and climb up a steep mountain then follow a ridge back to camp. As is often the case with mountains, what looks like a peak from below is nothing more than a ridge a long way



On Point—Aniak of Wolf Fork Canyon finds hunting Alaska ptarmigan to her liking. Get ready, they fly fast!

Photo by Larry Semmens



Have dog; will travel—Aniak finds comfort from the cold by snuggling down in a duffle bag.

Photo by Larry Semmens

from the top. After cresting this ridge, we got on a huge snow field which the boys glissaded down. I walked; it was too steep and bumpy for this aging body. What I thought was going to be a short hike up turned out to be several hours because we could not safely sidehill across the numerous snow filled avalanche chutes, so we had to climb a couple thousand feet to the top of the mountain to get to the actual ridge that led back to camp. The new scenery was amazing with dizzying cliffs and spectacular snow cornices along with grand views of the Skilak Glacier and surrounding peaks. We did find three whitetailed ptarmigan up high in the rocks. They were in their gray color phase and were amazingly well camouflaged. The climb was very difficult for me, but like many things of this sort it is nice to look back on. It gave me some hope that perhaps I could keep on doing bird hunting like this for a little while yet.

It was great to be camping and hunting in one of the prettiest places I have been. We caught grayling on dry flies, shot two species of ptarmigan, experienced good dog work, shot a bear, hiked a tall mountain and had a relaxing time only 20 minutes from home. Now if only it would quit raining before it turns to snow, Annie and I will get out hunting some more birds. Hope everyone has a great season!



Hunting the Wide

Open Spaces—John Pitlo and his fousek, Ayla of Ancient Kennels pursue sharp-tail grouse and prairie chickens in South Dakota.

You can share your hunting adventures too. Send us your photos and stories for the GDS, web page and our Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/griffon.fan>)

Photo by George Scholten