

The Gun Dog Supreme

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings:

I hope that all you friends of the Fousek are doing well. It's been quite a spring, so far. Only the Southeast Chapter managed to sneak in a test back in February before Covid-19 brought everything to a screeching halt. As you can see from our test scheduling on the back cover, Fall 2020 testing is still unsettled, but we're optimistic that things will be nailed down soon.

Spiro Mavrodiss is taking on editor responsibilities. He played a major role in assembling this June issue. I can't thank him enough for his help. The training wheels come off January 2021, and he should do great.

This issue has a couple training articles to give you some inspiration for working with your dog this summer. There's also information on the 2020 litters and some great photos. Black and white is pretty restrictive though. Please visit our web page gallery for tons of pics on these litters. (<https://ceskyfousekna.org>).

The centerpiece of this issue is the excellent and detailed Cesky Fousek breed history article by Laurie Connell. Maybe in the August issue, we should insert a multiple choice test so you can demonstrate how well you've read it! In the meanwhile, enjoy the dogs.

Rem DeJong,
Editor

On the Cover:

Hawkeye of Dutchman's Hollow
(D.O.B. June, 2013)

Owned by Mark and Karen Barker

Bred by John Pitlo

Artist: *Lori Fowler* (Iowa)

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History of the Český Fousek

by
Laurie Connell

The Český Fousek has been called an ancient breed, and in a way it is, with records tracing back over centuries. But in other respects, it's a new breed, having been finally recognized by the Fédération Cynologique International (FCI) in May 1963. More than simply a database of pedigrees, the background of this bushy-faced hunter is a story of cultures, politics, wars, and resilience. The Český Fousek is both a distinctive breed in its own right and a key contributor to the genetics of other versatile rough coated gun dogs.

The oldest records of a hunting dog generally called "fousci" (bearded/whiskered) are preserved in Karlštejn castle from the time of The Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV (1316-1378). The first king of Bohemia, Charles IV, was born in Prague. He was an avid sportsman, and was fluent in several languages including Czech, Latin, French, German, and Italian (There were many dialects at that time.). Prague became his capital, as it remained untouched by the plague. His rule was what has been called the Golden Age of Bohemia.

There are multiple records from Charles IV where he writes about hunting incidents. For example, when he was hunting for deer with his Czech hunting dogs, he jumped into a pool and the dogs followed him. With a big whimper they immediately got out of the water because it was hot. Thus, the discovery of a hot healing spring, later the spa town of "Karlovy Vary" was established. There is a report of a gift of "Canius Bohemicus" to Margrave Ludwig of Brandenburg, although the exact time frame of that gift is uncertain. Gifts of hunting dogs all over the region were common among nobles, and many of these dogs were exported throughout the central European region. However, it is unlikely these were what we would now call a pointing dog - but were an early ancestor of our breed.



"Grosser (französischer) Barbet."
Kadliger Band VI, Bl. 44.

Rough-coated hunting dog
(Kadich 1888)

Bohuslav Balbín (1621-1688- Prague) wrote a series of six volumes about the Czech lands published 1679-1687. Chapter 62 describes the Czech hunting dogs and the kennels of the time. The next important work is by Johan Fredrich von Fleming, *Der vollkommene teutsche Jäger*, (1724) where he also describes a Bohemian hunting dog, although no details are provided. Up until this time there was very little specific breed development, and these dogs had a great deal genetic variation.

The Czech lands were under the rule of the Holy Roman Empire, Hapsburgs, Austrian Empire, and then the Austro-Hungarian Empire for about 300 years until the end of WWI. During this time there was a gradual change to Germanization of language for the ruling classes. As a result, these Czech rough coated hunting dogs became called by the German name of Stichelhaar (prickly hair) or later by the name "Hessian Rough-beards" or "Czech Pointers". By whatever name used, the original stock for these dogs came from what is now the Czech lands.

The earliest real description of a pointing dog called a "Fousek" is in a book by the Czech Dr. Hanns von Kadich, *Der stichelhaarige deutsche Vorstehhund*, published 1888. The author includes a number of letters, including one from "one of the oldest and wisest hunters in our country, and it is the only detailed description of the old stichelhäring bird dog, as he knew it in the first decades of our century"

The color of the rough-coated pointer, as I see it before me from my childhood days, was a sometimes lighter, sometimes darker ash gray, with innumerable brown spots, sprinkles, dots, and plates throughout. Especially the large brown plates were sprinkled with white hair and thus truly 'gestichelt'. To the Bohemian and Moravian pheasant hunters who preferably hunted with these dogs this indefinable color was the only right one. In pure stock the coat was always harsh, each hair as spiky as glass, the whole body *not* woolly rough. Only the head had pronounced furnishings and thus somewhat longer and softer fur, the reason for also calling the dog "Fousek", the bearded one. The top of the head and the neck were rather smooth. Rough like a poodle and woolly were only dogs of unknown descent, preferably used for hunting in water and simply called 'water dogs'.

The description goes on to detail the shape of the head and coat on the body and head. This description would be from very early 1800s or late 1700s. This is only about 75 years after the publication of *Der vollkommene teutsche Jäger*, indicating that it is likely the Bohemian and Moravian "Fousek" were used as pointing dogs since at least the mid - to late 18th century.

Dr. von Kadich's book has a number of other letters with memories of breeders and hunters dating from the early 1830s with more information about the rough coated pointers giving height and the pedigree of some early dogs with many references to Bohemia and Moravia as well as the use of the name "Fousek".

The period of rapid breed development came during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In Germany, the Stichelhaar became a popular hunting dog and was the basis for the development of the Korthals Griffon. Franz Bontant was a devotee of the Stichelhaar and many old studbook records show that the Stichelhaar was instrumental in the eventual development of the Drahthaar. So, we see that those old Czech dogs became the genetic basis for several rough-coated Central European Pointing breeds.

Organized cynological activity ushered in an era for breeding specialized dogs often for

national pride. In 1880 the "Association for breeding and training of dogs in the Czech Kingdom" was established in Prague. In 1882, Josef Černý, a Forest-master from Bečoun, writes the first accepted Český Fousek breed standard. Soon thereafter dog trials were popular, and the larger, slower, Fousek competed against English pointers and "pointerized" German short-haired pointers that were very popular at that time. Versatility was not considered because the contemporary trials organized were almost entirely field trials. Thus, it is understandable that the Český Fousek subsequently started to be forgotten in the dog trial world.

Breed registries for sporting dogs arose in this time frame. In 1886 the "Czech registry of dog breeds" was established and listed:

- 19 pointers
- 17 English setters
- 9 Irish setters
- 17 Gordon setters
- 2 griffons
- 81 short-haired pointers
- 41 coarse-haired pointers—Fouseks
- 32 smooth-haired dachshunds
- 4 long-haired dachshunds
- 30 Hannover blood-hounds
- 1 English retriever
- 8 smooth-haired greyhounds
- 2 borzois
- 10 foxhounds

Later, this breed registry merged with the Vienna breed registry (Österreichische Hunde Stammbuch- or the ÖHStB). It was still all in the German language.

The "Association for coarse-haired pointers- Český Fousek for the Czech Kingdom with premises in Písek" was organized and founded in 1896 by Ferdinand Sekyrka, a forester, a professor at the forestry school in Písek, and a patriot independent of the nobility. Part of their mission was to preserve and spread the Český Fousek breed. However, this group was quickly dissolved by the Austrian Monarchy because it did not use the German language in its reports.

From its inception in 1883 through 1924, the ÖHStB listed numerous rough-coated pointing dogs that were originally from Czech lands. These dogs proved to have a strong influence on coarse-haired pointers in the entire Austro-Hungarian Empire. Their offspring would later become a resource for re-generation of the Český Fousek. 1912 brought a new club for wirehaired pointers. This club paid 400 crowns for a female named Freya that had just won first prize at an exhibition at Písek. Freya was bred to a "decorated" dog from St. Hypolite, and she had 7 puppies, of which one died. The remainder of the puppies were given to club members and were entered into a strictly controlled breeding program.

World War I was devastating for many sporting breeds and the Český Fousek was no exception, but a few enthusiasts were able to keep some excellent dogs. Breed registra-

tions were discontinued during this time, and unfortunately, dogs that were not officially registered had difficulty entering breeding programs after the war was over. Freya had a sad ending in the course of a rabies epidemic during WW I, likely in 1916. She was taken and was destroyed before her owner, Ferdinand Sekyrka, could get to her. The laboratory report later came back as negative for rabies. In spite of the tragedy, she remained a "Primal Mother" of Český Fousek.

In 1918, the official Czech stud book was divided into a Czech part with the Czech partridge book (CPB) and a German part with the Deutsches Jaghund Stammbuch Hubertus (DJStH). Continuing though WWII with the Reich books (RZB) there was a blending of Czech and German dogs but under different breed names, depending on where they were registered. By 1923, with a new Sportsman' union, the ČSMU, a new registration was established for Czechoslovakian dogs the Člp. The Czechoslovak Republic became members of the newly formed World Canine Organization, the *Fédération Cynologique Internationale* (FCI).

František Houska and like-minded Český Fousek enthusiasts formed the Spolek Pro Ohaře Hrubostřé- Český Fousek (Association for Coarse-haired Pointers- Český Fousek) in 1924. It was now the third breed club, because the ČSMU didn't keep up breed registry, particularly affecting Český Fousek. This left only a limited number of dogs allowed to be bred and registered. The new organization broke with the typical European model for breeding in that they instituted the new rules that individuals could only enter breeding if they were successful in both exterior exams, through dog shows, as well as working aptitude at trials. This was a seminal point in the history of the Český Fousek, and did mean slower expansion of the breeding pool.

Beginning in 1939, the hunting unions were challenged by increasing Nazi influence, especially along border areas. The hunting unions were in dynamic flux as well, but the breeding of good quality Český Fousek continued with František Houska dedicating his whole life to the breed. Complex post-war activities saw many changes in the various hunting unions. Complicated rules were set forth for registering a Český Fousek so that they would be registerable in the FCI. Many dogs were eliminated from breeding because of the breed name that was used during examinations and ability tests. Dr. Joseph Kuhn championed the breed in the FCI application, and finally an incredibly old dog breed was getting recognition as the Czech National Hunting breed. In May 1963 the FCI adopted the breed standard under number FCI 245. After recognition, breeding continued to be carefully controlled with the established lines under the Breeders of Český Fousek club (Klub Chovatelů Českých Fousků - KCHČF) within the Czech Moravian Kennel Union (ČMKU).

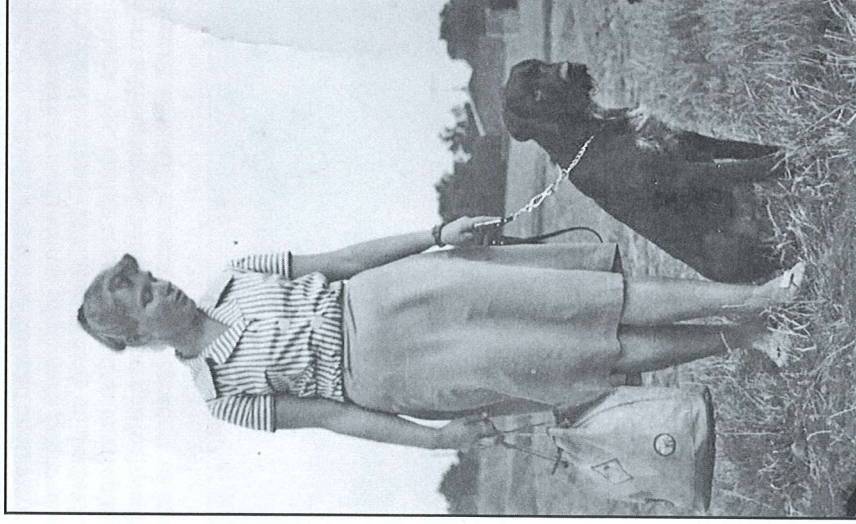
History of Český Fousek in North America

Our first records of Fousek in North America are under the German name "Stichelhaar". A German language newspaper, Nebraska Staats-Anzeiger, reported in the 31 August 1893 issue, a duck hunting story from the previous fall/winter (1892). According to the report, a Stichelhaar pulled another hunting dog out of a partially frozen slough that was too difficult for the hunters to enter. The story goes on to tell of how the owner of the Stichelhaar was at first angry the dog had disobeyed a command and then worried he would lose his dog. But the incident became a celebration where all turned out well and the Stichelhaar was praised.

A review of European and North American studbooks from 1900 through 1950 can trace a number of dogs registered as Stichelhaar in Europe that upon import into North America were registered in the AKC, FDSB, or CKC under the breed name of Wire-haired Pointing Griffons. Thus, continuing the influence of the Fousek on the Wire-haired Pointing Griffon breed in the North America.

The first know dog identified as a Český Fousek brought to North America was **Gero z Hlubočinky**. Prior to arrival in America, Gero was owned and trained by Dr.

Milena Stoszek. He received prize I in all of his lower tests and was selected to enter the *Memoirál Karla Podhajského* in 1963, and from there selected among the ten best dogs to run in an International trial in Hluboka also in 1963 where the Czechoslovakian team won against the German team. By 1964 Dr. Stoszek and Gero had escaped from what was then communist Czechoslovakia. They eventually made their way to the USA.



Gero (Gero z Hlubočinky) with owner Dr. Milena Stoszek

The first North American Český Fousek Club, called the Fousek Club of North America, was soon born and began registering dogs. By the mid-1970s there were 30-40 Český Fousek in North America with most dogs in Canada. Mr. Stanley Vězner's Swansea Kennel in Toronto Canada was one of the two leading breeder/importers during that time. He imported **Baron z Ochvaldu, Fanka z Vrbeckého hájku, and Ilka z Fešandy**. The other Canadian kennel that imported Český Fousek was Pine Ridge, owned by Mr. Michael Pallota.

They imported **Argo Plato, Dona z Alblova dvora, Aida z Tiské hájenky, and Šik z Mokřan** and bred three litters. However, Pine Ridge subsequently moved to breeding Pudelpointers. Dr. Stoszek's Palouse Prairie Kennel imported **Ferko z Beranovské stráně and Bela ze Zvíkovské bašty**. Together these three kennels formed the core of their club. In the mid-1970s Ed and Joan Bailey attended a NAVHDA event in Spokane WA where Český Fousek were being tested. The Fousek Club of North America remained small with about 17 members, but produced a number of litters by the mid-1990s but by the late 1990s had disbanded. Incidentally, Scott Overton bred a litter of pups in Oregon and one of those dogs, **Angus of Chinquapin Ridge**, remains in the CFNA as a potential stud dog (frozen semen) that we hope will

add much needed genetic diversity when used. Angus is also one of the founding dogs for the Český Fousek New Zealand breeding program.

During the early 1980s the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Club of America (WPGCA) concluded that the griffons that they were producing needed infusion of new blood. They turned to club member, Mr. Joseph Nadeker for help. Mr. Nadeker was Czech, and after correspondence with Czechs "back home" he recommended that the Český Fousek, one of the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon founding breeds under the German name of Stichelhaar, be used. An excellent and detailed account of this can be found in Joan Bailey's book, *Gun Dog Supreme: The History and Story of How to Improve a Breed* (1996). The first Český Fousek imported by the WPGCA was **Erik od Jezárek**, followed closely by several other Czech dogs. Ms. Bailey took the lead in developing the breeding system in the USA. Mr. Warren Webster, Mr. John Lundberg, Mr. Joseph Nadeker, and Dr. Thomas Whitley were early WPGCA owners and/or breeders of im-



Erik od Jezárek was the first Český fousek imported to North America by the BWPGCA (then WPGCA). Erik was born 28 June 1981. In the Czech Republic he earned a Prize I in MFH (451) and Prize I MRK (477). He sired several excellent litters in North America and is represented in the pedigrees of about half of the puppies recently imported from the Czech Republic. Erik's offspring were well known for their sweet temperaments. He lived to the ripe old age of 18 years 3 months.

ported Český Fousek. Within two generations what began as an infusion of Český Fousek into the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon had changed to the WPGCA breeding Český Fousek instead. The WPGCA members were happy with their dogs but persisted in calling them Griffons for the next 30 years even though pedigree analysis shows these dogs were predominantly Český Fousek.

Several more Czech Český Fousek were imported during early- to mid-1990s to help sustain the small breeding population including two males that were used extensively in breeding, **Dan Černíky** and **Chyt ze Záplav**, both owned by Mr. James Seibel. The Breeding Committee at that time consisted of Mr. Seibel and Mr. John Pitlo. They traveled twice to visit with Dr. Jaromír Dostál, the KCHČF breed advisor, cementing the US-Czech relationship. With the help of Dr. Dostál, a number of Czech dogs were selected for importation of frozen semen to support the US population. In 2005 Mr. John Pitlo imported **Ayla of Ancient Kennel**, a brown female, from Mr. Armando Carlos of Ontario, Canada. Ayla produced three litters, two of which continue to have an influence on the population of the current CFNA club dogs.

By 2013 the breeding pool had dropped significantly, even with support of imported frozen semen from the Czech Republic. Two club members, Mr. Hiram Adelman and Dr. Rick Sojda from Montana decided to import a female puppy, **Círa od Aliny z Neh-**



Dr. Jaromír Dostál discusses the Cesky Fousek with Breeding Committee member, **John Pitlo** (Judges Seminar: Heartland Spring Test 2008)

(Photo by Rem DeJong)

vízd, and a male puppy **Edý z Veseckých luhů**. Subsequently, 2014 saw the beginning of a wave of imported puppies to reestablish the genetic diversity in North America with over 50 imported by 2019, including two from The Netherlands. Soon after this wave of imports began it was recognized that there should finally be a club name change to reflect the dogs that were actually being bred. In 2015 the name Bohemian Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Club of America (BWPGCA) was established. (Bohemian Wirehaired Pointing Griffon is specified by the FCI as the English name for Český Fousek.)

The KCHČF remained very involved with the development of their Czech National Hunting breed in North America. Dr. Dostál made several visits to the USA to watch tests, and help train club members. 2014 brought a new step in interaction with the KCHČF through a delegation from the USA club representatives to the Czech Republic. This trip culminated in the signing of a formal agreement of cooperation between the two clubs. Later, in 2017, a delegation from the Czech Republic visited the Rocky Mountain chapter test and gave a series of presentations about the KCHČF and the Český Fousek.

The KCHČF inaugurated and hosted the First Český Fousek World Cup held in September 2018. The World Cup had dogs representing Czech Republic as well as Austria, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, and the USA. Only FCI registered dogs could enter, so that eliminated most of the BWPGCA dogs because only those that had been imported Europe had FCI registrations. However, Dr. Andrew Ogden was able to bring a Czech import, Kája od Tyrše, as the North American representative where they successfully prized in the World Cup.

The fact that most of the North American dogs were not eligible to join in the World Cup, highlighted the importance of work that had been going-on for six years to have our dogs recognized apart from our small club group. To this end, the Club began to work during 2014 in conjunction with the KCHČF, to acquire FCI recognition for our North American bred dogs. During the Český Fousek World Cup in September 2018, members of the USA delegation and the KCHČF met with MVDr. Široký, president of the ČMKU. In May 2019 the FCI held an international meeting at the Shanghai China International Dog Show where the question of registration was brought up. In the fall of 2019 the North American club finally got word from Yves De Clercq, secretary of the FCI that registration should be through the Puerto Rico FCI kennel club, Federación Canófila de Puerto Rico (FCPR) by a special agreement between the FCI and FCPR to register dogs of breeds not recognized by the AKC. Since that time, registration of both individual dogs and litters have been through the FCPR.

In December 2019 club membership voted to change the club name from the Bohemian Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Club of America to Český Fousek North America (CFNA). This was to reduce confusion between the Korthals Griffon and the Český Fousek breeds here in North America and further bring us into alignment with our parent club, the KCHČF. Therefore, the CFNA was established to finally recognize that switch in breeding that began in 1985 with the importation of Erik od Jezárek.

Training: Search Without a Duck

by

Dr. Andrew Ogden and Kája od Tyrše

Search without a duck is one of the disciplines in our CFNA Utility Field Test (UFT) that is usually an afterthought compared to steady to wing, shot, and fall and a difficult marked retrieving segment. However, it does present a number of training obstacles to the dog/trainer team. NAVHDA has a similar test known as “search for a duck” and with minimal adjustments you can prepare for both at the same time. The origins of this test may seem funny to many duck hunters here in the US but after watching a duck hunt in the Czech Republic the test makes perfect sense. In Europe hunters work as a group with several gunners and several dogs. The dog may be retrieving a duck that another hunter shot, so they need to be able to search for the duck as well as do directed swimming to find a duck that the dog did not see fall in open water. In addition, the dogs are expected to search through reeds for ducks. By their search the ducks flush and this action is a discipline in European tests that is very similar to train for as our “Search without a Duck”. At the end of the hunt the group shares out the daily bag, go to a local pub and, of course, share some beer. It is a very social event compared with most of our duck hunts.

In both the CFNA and NAVHDA test, a handler is brought to the edge of a marshy pond or swamp and is asked to have their dog make a thorough and exhaustive search for a duck. The differences between the CFNA and NAVHDA tests are primarily that (1) in the CFNA test no shot is fired at the start and in the NAVHDA version there is a single blank fired at the start. (2) In the CFNA version there is no duck alive or dead and in the NAVHDA version there is a live duck released quite some distance from the starting position. These minor differences are easily overcome with a slight adjustment in training.

Getting started:

First, let's assume that your dog retrieves in the water, brings a bird to hand, and searches well in the field. After all, we are training for the UFT. If you need some tuning up- get started right away. Consider a refresher on your check cord quartering drill as this will reacquire your dog with the concept that when your body faces right the dog should work to the right and visa-versa. Next, you need a swamp/marsh/pond with weeds, stumps, grass, and all kinds of obstacles. You get the idea, not a deep clear lake with no cover. You will need a kayak or canoe as waders don't work well for this drill. You will need several dead birds preferably ducks. If you are planning to test with NAVHDA you will also want a shotgun with blanks or a starters pistol. Like most training exercises it helps (and is more fun) to have a training partner but it is not necessary.

We always want our dogs to be successful when training and use mistakes as an opportunity to reward the correct response. We start with an easy scenario and increase the complexity in a stepwise fashion to one slightly higher than the test standard in order to be prepared for “anything”. There is also one other concept that we must consider here. Although the test is Search without a Duck, the dog must ALWAYS think that there is a duck out there somewhere and have the drive to search heavy cover to find it. To this

end, we should always try to make sure that dog is successful in finding game in this training situation. When we send the dog out the dog will know that there is always game out there to find. Never lie to your dog -except on test day.

Start by deciding from where you want to release the dog. A point or opening at the water's edge will work fine as long as there is a spot for the dog to enter the cover/water. Using the kayak take 3 or 4 dead ducks out and beginning at about 20 yards from the starting point drag the ducks one at time about 10 yards through the swamp/cover water in a radial pattern as shown in figure one (the solid lines are where you will drag a dead duck). At the end of each drag leave the duck slightly hidden in or behind cover so that the dog cannot see the duck from the starting point. Paddle the kayak away from the area of the search. If you are alone you should pull the kayak out and hide it out of sight, if you have a partner they can simply paddle out of sight.

Bring your dog on a lead to the starting point and sit or stand your dog on the side of your preference. If you are training for NAVHDA or you just want to get your dog fired up- fire a blank in the direction of the search area and release your dog. For the CFNA test remember that you should also practice without a shot as none is allowed. I prefer to use a different command for each different task so that the command/expectation pair are the same each time. I use "Dead bird- Find it", others use "search". I don't like using fetch here because I do not want a dog searching when I say fetch. Fetch to me means pick that up and bring it to me. It really doesn't matter as long as it is always the same. The dog should go out into the cover and begin to search, and on

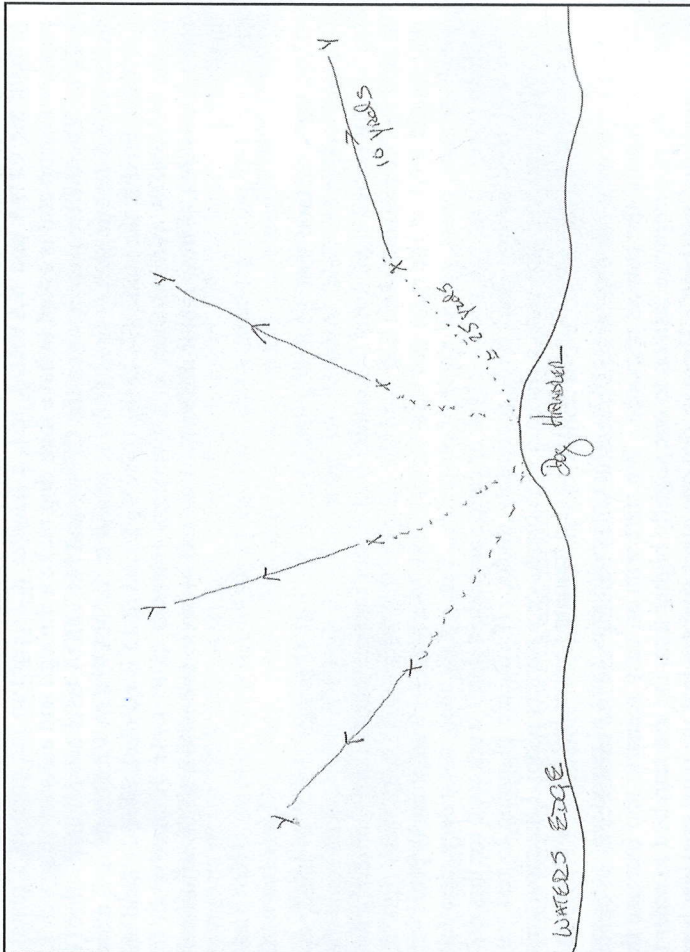


Illustration by Dr. Andrew Ogden

finding the sent trail work down the trail and find the bird. If your dog needs a little help throw a rock to help the dog find the track. I also keep a dead duck with me and if the dog searches hard without finding the duck you can throw the duck out without the dog seeing it into the path of the dog. Remember we want the dog successful. Do not use hand signals, this is a search not a blind retrieve. Most dogs will bring the bird back without a further command but if you need to recall the dog to your side and take the bird.

At this point you need to decide if the search was long and the dog is exhausted take the bird, call it a win, and heal the dog away. If, however, the search was easier take the bird from the dog and resend the dog into the search area to find another bird. The reason for this is twofold. First the dog learns that every time you send them into the swamp/ water there is a duck to be found. This is key. Second if you are NAVHDA testing and the dog finds the duck before the 10 min. mark you will need to show that you can resend your dog to complete the time period. If you don't train for this the dog may be confused and refuse to return to the search. If you resend your dog, make it successful, take the duck and put the dog away.

Each session should be made a little harder. At first try starting the drag at 30 yards, then further. Consider a session where the wind is a crosswind. Then progress to having the birds 50 yards or more from the start and don't drag the birds. Then try the birds downwind so the dog must go out past the birds to scent them. Try it in different locations. Remember if you start from a different side of the swamp/pond it is "different"



Kája od Tyrše being sent on a water retrieve (Owner: Dr. Andrew Ogden)

to the dog. Dogs love this exercise. I don't repeat the drill any more often than once a week. Four to six sessions will prepare most for success but all dogs are different. As the sessions get harder and the search longer the dog will build stamina. Keep it fun and make the dog successful. Another hint is to remember that when in the field you turn to the right, the dog should go with you to the right. When standing at the starting position try turning your body slightly to direct the dog out to a different location within the search area. Think of it as steering your dog in the direction you wish them to go. It is rewarding to turn your body slightly and watch as your dog moves into a new search area and completes a thorough search of that portion of the test area.

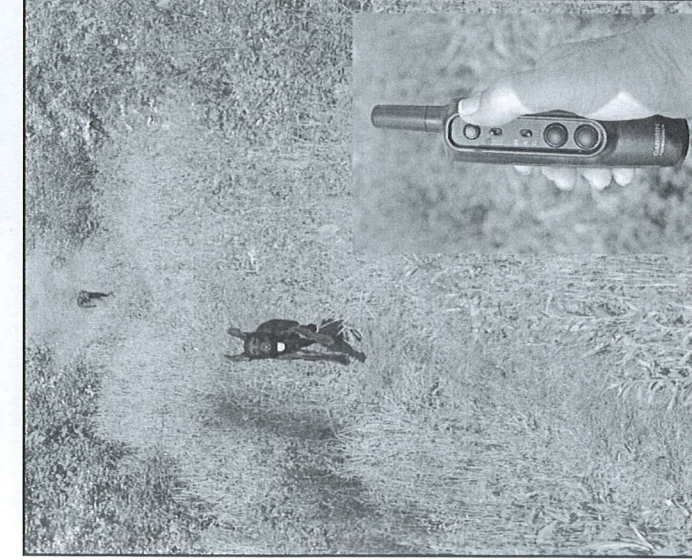
Like it or hate it, the "Search for/without the Duck" is a difficult portion of both the CFNA and NAVHDA Utility Field Tests but with patience and a training plan you can face this portion of the test with confidence in your team.



Asta (Asta z Jamajky
doing a water retrieve at
the Northeast test (2018)

Silence in the Field: Hunting with an e-collar

by Rem DeJong



Brom z Neřádova Stavení coming on the run
Photo by Rem DeJong

Ah, it's finally summer. The next hunting season is still months away, and it's a great time to do some training on some of those issues that back in November you swore you'd fix before next season. Remember when pup went galloping after a running rooster and there was no way you could keep up? Finally, that long-tailed old cock bird flew up cackling and all you could do was stand, pant and curse. And there were the times when you wanted to slip quietly along the edge of that cattail slough, but you had to blast on your whistle, and every bird within 600 yards knew you were coming. Or that time when it was your turn to block at the end of the corn rows and you needed to walk to the far end with Pup at heel. By the time you got there, your left arm was three inches longer than your right one and old Pupper was tripping over his tongue. Forgot about all that stuff, didn't you? Well, if you don't fix it, next season will be more of the same. Fortunately, summer can be a great time to do some fun training to make next you and your dog a better team. Here's an idea that I'm trying: hunting with an e-collar.

Now before you get in a dither about no need to train our friendly Fouseks with shock collars, hear me out. I'm not talking about training a pup, certainly not retrieve training; I'm talking about using the one feature to give commands during the hunt. Essentially, you replace your whistle with an electric tone or vibration. I was a bit gun-shy (actually collar shy) myself about the idea, but one of the best grouse hunters and patient dog trainers who I know, Dave Read, showed me how he does it. Dave currently hunts with Briar of Wolf Fork Canyon. Briar is a big, goofy, happy-go-lucky dog, but Dave has turned him into a fantastic grouse dog. More important for this article, Briar LOVES his e-collar. Dave explained to me how he uses his e-collar—a Garmin Pro 550, and I bought a similar model and adapted his system to fit my situation with my young dog, Brom. I've been at it for a couple months now, and when Brom sees me pick up his e-collar, he goes bananas with excitement. It means fun; it means going outside, and it means chasing critters!

There are many brands and models on the market. What Dave Read was using and what I bought on his advice is a Garmin PRO 550. For a great description of details and

alternatives, I recommend looking at the Gun Dog Supply website. The PRO 550 has several features that make it a handy hunting tool. It's relatively small, hand-held, you can operate it without looking at it, and use it while wearing gloves. It has a dial that includes a vibrate setting and seven levels of stimulation. Dave leaves the stimulation dial set on Vibrate and I do too. We don't use the e-stimulation for hunting, so there's little chance of accidentally giving pup a poke. There's a prominent green button for operating the tone function. Next is a three-position switch for momentary, axillary, and continuous function and then two large buttons for administering low, medium and high stimulation. For our purposes, we mostly just use the green tone button and one large button for vibrate.

Before getting into giving commands, one nice feature to point out is a controller operated LED light on the collar. Many a time I've stumbled through the marsh in the predawn dark and had to whistle for my dog as I set out decoys. With the LED light, you just set the switch on accessory mode and hit the button to turn on a very bright collar light. Hit the button again to turn it off. It's also great when letting the dog out one last time before bedtime or to alert motorists to his presence.

Handlers use the tone and vibrate functions for various commands. There's some debate on how to use the vibrate function. Some use it as a low-level stimulation. Gun Dog Supply advocates using it for a command. That's what Dave Read does. He uses the vibrate function for his "Whoa" command and the green tone button for "Come." He keeps the stimulation level set on vibrate, so commands are really simple and not prone to error. Just hit the green button for come or the lower black button for whoa. The signal to the dog is clearly distinct for each command too.

I've been training Brom a little differently. He was whistle trained where recall is two short blasts and whoa is one long blast. So, when converting over to the e-collar, I use two short tones for recall and one long tone for whoa. Early on, he sometimes confused the who command with come, but with practice, he's caught on. I might use the vibrate as a "Place" command, but we haven't worked on that yet. The almost silent commands mean less likelihood of spooking birds, bugging other hunters, or waking other hotel guests at 5:00 AM when you head out after waterfowl.

Training a dog to follow e-collar commands proceeds rapidly, assuming your dog already responds to verbal or whistle commands. I trained Brom in the basics as a young pup using a clicker and positive reinforcement. Using the tone and vibrate simply requires pairing the electronic signal with the verbal or whistle signal that the dog knows already. So, for training "Come", just make two short tones followed immediately by two short whistle blasts. When the dog comes, give him lots of praise, maybe a treat, and do it again. After a few pairings, just use the tone, and the dog will come to it. Again, lots of praise. As in teaching any new command, you want to limit distractions and practice where there's a high probability of obedience. In Brom's case, I run him every day behind the house on a powerline with thick briars on each side. He loves to play a game where he gallops to the top of a hill, looks back for me to wave, and then he comes running full blast and slides to a stop at my feet. In training, when he got to the top of the hill, I just hit the tone button twice as he was beginning to come anyway. A key is to build a strong association between the tone and coming before encountering any distractions. I like to give him a treat at random intervals too. The goal is to condition him to experience coming to the tone to be just the most fun, greatest thing ever.

Whoa training is similar. Dave Read likes to use the vibrate function, and it's probably

less confusing to the dog than a long tone, but whichever you pick, it's easiest if the dog already knows to whoa to a voice or whistle. We also use a hand signal—arm extended with open palm up. Conditioning begins at close distance without distractions. Give the e-collar whoa signal followed immediately by the voice or whistle command. After a few repetitions, try just the e-collar command. Again, lots of praise for success.

It's important to work on this daily. Dave stressed to me the importance of putting the collar on every time we go outside. The collar is just part of the routine. I followed Dave's advice and Brom just loves the e-collar because he associates putting it on with going to have fun.

After several weeks, we're now at the point where he'll leave off sniffing a chipmunk or squirrel on the recall command and whoa when running 50 yards out in the field. Not up to stopping him on a bird track yet, but working up to it. I practice the recall and whoa commands every day on our twice-daily hikes.

So what about using the stimulation settings? Dave Read relies on e-stimulation for avoidance training. It can be a good tool for extinguishing deer chasing, raccoon hunting and getting too close to rattlesnakes. However, using the collar for correction must be done with great care. Dave gave me this advice:

The last and probably the hardest way to use the e-collar properly is the correction feature. I only use this feature for avoidance. I use it for teaching to not track or chase deer, turkeys, raccoons, porcupines, skunks and snakes. In the field, it's absolutely essential to get the proper situation where you use the e-collar for correction. You do not want to correct the dog when the dog is doing nothing wrong—say tracking a game bird or pointing a game bird. You have to be 100% sure the dog is tracking, chasing a trash animal. You must be sure of what the dog is actually doing when you apply a shock. Let's say your dog ran off after a deer. He's out of sight now and you've whistled or called him. Unbeknownst to you, he's just broken off the chase and is on his way back. This is definitely not the time to apply stimulation! You'd be punishing him for coming back.

Assuming that you're certain the dog is chasing deer, you stimulate the dog, and you don't say a thing when he comes back you. Just continue to walk. The same



Briar of Wolf Fork Canyon pointed these roosters by hunting silent.

(Photo by Dave Read)

goes if the dog is pointing a coon, skunk, porcupine, snake etc. You make the e-collar correction and don't say a thing. What this does it makes the dog associate the correction with the trash animal so that the next time the dog will avoid the animal. I have heard that you can do this training using dead animals, but I have not tried this myself. If your dog has already killed coons, you may want to try this with a dead coon and it may be the way to go. The value of the e-collar stimulation is to teach avoiding the undesirable animal. I would not use the correction if the dog is already in a fight with a coon because this may make the dog to fight more. Be very careful and positive that you are using the correction at the proper time. Using the e-collar correction feature is a great tool when used properly and a **very wrong tool if used incorrectly**.

One other correction situation for which I've found the e-collar helpful is enforcing the "Heel" command—not to teach it but to enforce it in the presence of distractions. Brom learned to heel at 10 weeks of age by using a clicker and positive reinforcement. Walking at heel on the driveway or around the neighborhood without distractions was no problem. However, walking at heel across a harvested cornfield toward cover where he's certain there are birds is another story.

As luck would have it, a mother fox provided an ideal training situation. The vixen set up her den under our neighbor's shed, and the fox pups would play in full view of Brom who was bouncing and whining from the patio door. Let outside, he would make a beeline for that den. I used the e-collar as an invisible pinch collar to reinforce heeling with distractions. We began walking on the driveway. When Brom moved away from the heeling position, he received continuous stimulation until he began moving back. It's critical to release the stimulation as soon as the dog begins to respond so that he associates being at heel with stopping the discomfort. That's essentially how a pinch collar works—no pulling means no pain. No verbal commands are required at this point. The dog feels he can control the discomfort by his own action.

Once he was staying consistently at heel on the driveway, we extended the walks on to our dead-end street. He got praise and an occasional treat as we walked. You want walking at heel to be fun. Next we started down the trail behind the house, making sure that there were no critters around for the first trips. Next step, I let our other dog, Burley, trot ahead and explore the fox den while Brom had to remain at heel. He trembled with excitement, but he stayed in position with only a couple brief stimulations. After a week, Brom would stay by my side, even when the vixen yapped at us from the neighbor's yard. Once I was certain that the pups were safely penned, Brom got the "Free!" command and he tore off yipping after the fox. The fox made her escape and Brom returned a few minutes later, tripping over his panting tongue. The following day, we did it all over again. Walking at heel has become part of an exciting game—you walk at heel and you'll get to have fun chasing the fox! No stimulation is required now. The goal is that by Fall, I want him to stay at heel as we sneak up on a mallard pothole or cross a bare field to a swale where he knows there are pheasants. You may find that a park full of squirrels would serve the same purpose as my fox.

The fact that the dog is close at hand and in full view, makes it possible to know exactly what the dog is doing so you administer correction at the right time. Stimulation needs to be administered as the dog begins to move away and needs to be stopped immediately as he begins to move back in position. It's also critical to apply the correct amount of stimulation—as little as possible to get the job done. After attaching the collar, let the dog move around a bit without distractions. Begin at the lowest level. Look for any

sign of reaction—almost like detecting a bug. You definitely do not want the dog to yelp or show pain—just experience enough reaction to be unpleasant. Once the dog is responding well and walking at heel, you can begin working with distractions. You may need to increase the level a little when your heel command is competing with "There's a critter to chase!" but if you gradually increase exposure to distraction, it shouldn't be much. Just don't expect that you can boot out a rabbit under his nose on day one of the training and expect him to behave.

There is much more that you can do, but having a dog that will come and whoa to silent commands, walk at heel in the presence of game, and avoid nuisance animals like deer and raccoons will make for a more enjoyable and safer hunting experience for both you and your dog.

Breeding Committee Update by Laurie Connell

As with the rest of our lives COVID-19 has impacted our breeding committee activities as well. None the less, we have had a successful season. We bred three females and all produced litters.

"A" of Cody Country (Oliver z Malého Boubína x Dorka z Podřípské stráně)

5 white females and 1 brown male

Adella of Cody Country (female)

Avibrisa of Cody Country (female)

Aspen of Cody Country (female)

Ann-Isabella of Cody Country (female)

Andra of Cody Country (female)

Alectoris Chase of Cody Country (male)

Merrymeeing's "C". (Mig od Pitné vody x Adele od Těrlické hráze)

2 females 1 male- all white

Merrymeeing's Calidonia (female)

Merrymeeing's C. (female)

Merrymeeing's Colt (male)

"C" of Two River's Crossing (Fousek z Sakerd Bohdan x Arika of Zumbro Valley)

5 females 3 males. All white

Not yet named

As an experiment associated with hip dysplasia, the Board of Directors approved the purchase of silicon traction mats. The concept is that when puppies get their legs underneath them early, they will develop strong and normal hip joints. The mats were shipped to Merrymeeing's "C" litter but used only briefly. Andy Yeast then had them for the "C" of Two River's Crossing litter. Video of the puppies on the Dura-Whelp pad before one day old showed that the puppies were able to get their feet under them. The traction mats were used, and although the puppies were able to get their legs under, they cried quite a bit. Consequently, the silicon traction mats were removed. The pups appear to be developing well on the Dura-Whelp pad.

Puppy Season: Spring 2020

C of Two Rivers Crossing Litter



"A" of Cody Country Litter



Merrymeetings C Litter



Fall Testing Dates and Information

General Information: As of this publication, most chapters are planning to hold fall testing events. There may be some limitations (e.g., no social gatherings, etc.) because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic precautionary guidelines established by state and federal agencies. Each Club Chapter test chair will communicate further details as we get closer to the test dates.

Rocky Mountain Chapter (prepared by Rick Sojda):

In lieu of our Spring test being cancelled because of COVID-19 concerns, the Rocky Mountain Chapter is conducting a reduced-level of testing this June. Several of us in the Chapter recognized that we had the opportunity to test five pups that are in close proximity in Southwest Montana. Therefore, we have chosen to conduct a Natural Ability (NAT) because the timing of this test is critical: "...the purpose of the Natural Ability Test is to begin evaluating the results of breeding as exemplified by the innate abilities of the dog" and "before it has had much formal training."

Because COVID-19 concerns are still with us, we are only inviting the five local Montana puppies to participate. We are asking handlers to bring but one observer, and we are not inviting any out-of-state participants. We are also splitting the five dogs between two days to minimize the overall group gathering size. We recognize that these restrictions are unfortunate, and may be overly conservative, but we also feel that public health concerns are paramount. We are trying to do our own small part to keep Montana's infection rate one of the lowest in the nation.

Our test will be held on the 13th and 14th of June at the ranch of Diane and Randy Ross, who have always welcomed the club to a great place on the Jefferson River. Because Randy has a dog to test, we have made arrangements to test her at a different location, on the ranch of the neighbor of Mary Ann and Rick Sojda. Tawna Skinner is handling registration and related logistics. Angie and John McDunn are supplying birds. Gary Pool will be Senior Judge, assisted by Zeb Breuckman, John McDunn, and Rick Sojda. Two dogs from the A of Cherry River litter, one from A of Payette River, one from A of Shaw Brook, and one from B of Bald Eagle will be tested. Questions can be directed to Angie, our hard-working President.



Diane and Randy Ross with their better third Ada (Adeline Rose of Payette River)

Future Events **Fall Test Dates**

Limited test information is available at press time. Please check web page: (<https://ceskyfousekna.org>) and Facebook pages for updated test details. Contact Test chairs for complete details.

Northwest Chapter

Victor's wetland restoration property
Monroe, WA

Aug 22 & 23 (possible training day August 21st)
Dennis Carlson: carlson@gorge.net

Rocky Mountain Chapter

Limited Test in Montana June 13 & 14
Contact: Rick Sojda; rick.sojda@gmail.com
406.223.1129

Heartland Chapter

Mazomanie Test Grounds, WI
September 11, 12, 13 (To be confirmed)
Dave Read: readgriff@gmail.com
(616) 836-5304

Northeast Chapter

Bristol Maine

September 26, 2020

Scott Craig & Laurie Connell: acquassa5@gmail.com
(207) 505 2175

Southeast Chapter

No event planned

Our club and the Cesky Fousek featured on

The Hunting Dog Podcast

Listen to Ron Boehme (host) and our very own Dr. Anna Artz (CFNA board member) discuss the our breed of dogs that we love so much. A link to the podcast can be found on the Cesky Fousek North America Facebook page or you may go directly to The Hunting Dog Podcast website (<https://thehuntingdogpodcast.com/episodes/cesky-fousek/>)

Please renew your membership
Memberships are January through December
<https://ceskyfousekna.org/join-renew/>