

Field and Feather The Retrieving Game

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8/29/00

Hopefully by now some of you have decided to take the plunge into the AKC hunt tests. Maybe you are even enjoying it a bit--I know your dog is! This is a new challenge for you and your dog and it tests your teamwork beyond the safety of the obedience ring. How will you know when you have become consumed with hunt tests and retriever training? Well, here are some telltale signs.

You know you are hooked on the retriever game when...

...your auto purchase is based on how many crates and how much training equipment will fit in it.

...you no longer think twice about reaching into a bucket of dead ducks.

...you can't drive past a pond or body of water on the side of the road without rating it for training possibilities.

...you have a whistle and/or a duck call swinging from your rear view mirror, or sliding around on your dash.

...you put your coat on for the first time of the season and find spent 22 shells in the pockets.

...you have more pairs of boots for all types of weather than you have street shoes.

...you often come home with "duck butt" (you sat on the bucket of birds during training so you have the scent of duck on your rump!).

...you pay someone to mow the grass each week so you don't feel guilty about training every weeknight and traveling every weekend to hunt tests while the yard is neglected.

...you use all your vacation days up going to hunt tests.

...you have boxes of 22 blanks in your kitchen pantry.

...you take a lunch break during training or a hunt test and forget to wash your hands.

...you have designated a section of your freezer for bird bodies that don't come from the grocery store, or you buy a second freezer just for the birds.

...you knock on a stranger's door and ask permission to use their pasture or their pond, but you don't even know your neighbors.

...you have more hunt test premiums in the mailbox than junk mail.

...you see a fat pigeon walking casually on the sidewalk in front of you and you wonder if you could catch it for the pup at home.

...you look at your neighbor's kids and see potential bird boys.

...you use a whistle and hand signals to direct your spouse.

How did you do?

CALCULATE YOUR SCORE:

0-5: You don't have your feet wet yet!

6-10: You have the itch and you are scratching it.

11-15: Admit it—you are hooked!

Happy Training!

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