



NEWSLETTER

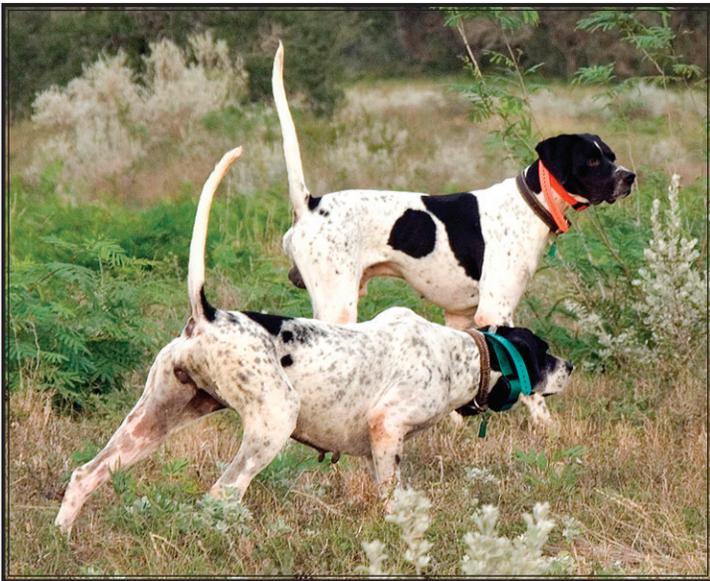
OUR GOAL: To Promote, Preserve, and Experience One of the Greatest Southern Traditions Known... Quail Hunting.

February 2014 • Published Quarterly • N.H. Holt, Editor

AQH Spring Field Trial

The Alabama Quail Hunters Spring field trial will be held on February 22nd.

If you would like to register your dog please contact Bob Carr (205-424-1381) or Frank Harris (after business hours 205-595-0203). Please register by Thursday night (2/20) at the latest.



Registration fees:

- Puppy Class up to 12 months old - \$35.00
- Derby Class any dog up to 36 months old, \$40.00
- Gun Dog Class is open to any dog, \$45.00
- Senior Dog Class only open to dogs over 8 years old, \$45.00



Directions to AQH Stemley Preserve:

- Exit I-20 onto US 231 South and go through Pell City.
 - Turn East (left) onto County Highway 34 (also named Stemley Road) and go about 5 to 6 miles to County Hwy 366.
 - Turn South (right) and go about 2 miles to the STOP sign. Our leased property is on your right. Turn right onto Cove Access Road and our main gate is about 200 feet on your right.
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Do pen-raised quail supplement wild-bred populations?

By: Bob Kornegay - AlbanyHerald.com

Bobwhite quail populations in Georgia, the South-east in general, and around the nation have drastically declined over the last 40 years. During that time, land use practices have changed and subsequently, the habitat favorable for bobwhite quail has dwindled. Gone is the era of small family farms with their small agricultural fields and hedgerows, overgrown fence lines, and perfectly suited quail "edge" habitat. Though the Southeast remains "Quail Capital of the World," it is obviously a far cry from what it once was.

It has been suggested by some factions that states should attempt to supplement native wild bobwhite quail populations through the use of stock from pen-raised birds to increase the harvestable quail populations on state-owned properties managed for hunting. On the surface, it sounds like a good idea, but would it actually be feasible?

"In the short term, releasing pen-raised bobwhite quail would increase the population on a given piece of property for a week or so," said wildlife biologist Mitchell Marks. "In the long term, however, supplementing wild quail populations with released birds produce no benefits to the overall population and in some cases there may even be certain negative impacts to the wild bobwhite quail on the property."

Hunting preserves and even a number of private individuals have long used the "put and take" strategy to increase quail numbers for hunters to enjoy. This involves the habitat managers' "planting" captive-bred birds and then coming along shortly afterward with hunters. In many areas today, this is the only way to consistently provide what may be the only type of quail hunting many will ever experience.

"Any quail not harvested during this type of hunt will afterward find it necessary to survive on their own," said Marks. "To this point in their life, these birds have been given food, water and protection by humans and do not have the finely tuned instincts to survive in the wild as a native bird does. From the beginning of its life, a wild bird has been taught vital survival skills by its parents and experience, but a pen-raised quail has been totally dependent on the human for its basic needs. A hatching incubator and climate-controlled surroundings are poor substitutes for honing the instincts needed to cope with life in the wild."

According to Marks, many states have seriously studied the survival rates of stocked pen-raised birds and stocked wild birds as well as the differences between the two.

"The rate of survival from one year to the next for released pen-raised birds is around one percent," Marks explained. "On the other hand, survival of released wild birds is on average 20 to 30 percent and sometimes even higher. Pen-raised birds are far more susceptible to depletion by predators because they fly slower and are often more prone to run than fly when flushed. The captive-bred quail have a lot of difficulty identifying food sources and in most cases fail to successfully nest and successfully raise a brood, which is the key to increasing a population. All these factors are instinctive in wild birds, even those not born and raised in the specific habitat into which they are placed".

Marks points out that the other factor directly affecting a pen-raised bird's survival is disease.

"Avian pox, salmonellosis, and parasites are just a few disease-related factors affecting the survival of captive-raised released quail," he said. "Pen-raised birds are held for much of their lives in confinement in close proximity to other birds, which makes them much more susceptible to diseases and parasites. Once released into the wild, these diseases and parasites not only affect the pen-raised birds, but can be transmitted to previously healthy wild bird populations. Because of these risks, stocking pen-raised bobwhite quail on public-access property is not a reasonable solution for increasing wild bird populations."

It is generally agreed that proper habitat management is the key to sustaining healthy bobwhite quail populations.

According to Marks, bobwhite quail need early successional habitat that can be regularly maintained. Prescribed fire is the most useful tool to establish and maintain this early successional habitat. Ideally, these burns need to be conducted on a rotating basis every two to four years. While prescribed burning will not provide an overnight change in the quail population, it does help create the opportunity for increased populations when combined with other beneficial habitat management practices.

"Releasing pen-raised quail might seem like the quickest way to increase quail populations," Marks concluded, "but the best way to enhance quail populations, whether on public or private land, is through careful habitat management. Proper habitat management provides wild quail the opportunity to expand without the risk associated with releasing penned birds. Wild quail also provide a better challenge for the hunter."

HEY FOLKS

Hey Folks:

Bird hunting season, such as it is these days, is in full swing. Friends that traveled to Kansas in the Fall of 2013 have shared their experiences. Those with more knowledge about the area found three coveys of quail per day. Others, on their maiden voyage, were not so fortunate. All groups reported it worth their while and enjoyed the trip out of state.

My reports from Texas are limited, but bird numbers continue to be low. An interesting point about pen-raised birds is that you kill as many as you purchase. I like to keep my purchases in line with what the law will permit for wild bird limits here in Alabama, which is 12 birds per day.

Of special interest to me is the recent report from an individual in east Alabama who reduced a large predator population, including fox. He reported seeing a large covey of quail recently. The fascinating point is that he had not seen a covey in that area in over 15 years. Back in the 1990's, I traveled down to Tallahassee, Florida to attend a conference about quail. As I recall, the two most important facts concerning quail populations were: 1) mammalian predators are very destructive to ground nesting birds such as quail, and 2) recovery of decimated wildlife populations can take decades to recover. Mammalian predators, including raccoons, opossums, and skunks, can destroy a quail nest in a single night. The energy devoted to breeding, laying eggs, and nesting is lost when predation occurs. If the hen isn't killed, re-nesting may occur, but often those hatches are not fully developed before winter arrives. The east Alabama story underlines the point of predators as being a factor in limiting quail populations. I urge you to get involved in a quail recovery project.

Frank Harris,

President

Treasurer's Desk

I hope everyone made it unharmed through the "Dusting" of snow we got on January 28th. All AQH membership dues are payable annually on Jan. 1.

Thank you to those who have already paid and "12-14" should be after your last name on the address label. If you see "12-13" on your address label, you should write a check for \$15.00 to AL Quail Hunters and mail it to my office address: 1901 Morgan Road, Bessemer, AL 35022. I wish you all Good Hunting the rest of the season.

Bob Carr,
AQH Treasurer

Welcome To Our Newest Members

Ben and Hillary Chambley from Irondale

Byron Webb from Moody

NEW MEETING LOCATION Golden Corral in Pelham.

101 Cahaba Valley Pkwy E,
Pelham, AL 35124

205-682-0150

**Join Us 2nd Tuesday of Each Month! —
Great Food!**

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone (____) _____ Office Phone (____) _____

Cell Phone (____) _____

Email Address _____

New Member

Renewal

2014 DUES – \$15.00

Check Payable to "Alabama Quail Hunters"

For more information call N. H. Holt @ 205-936-6293 or contact:



1901 Morgan Road S.E. Bessemer, Alabama 35022



Alabama Quail Hunters

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