



NEWSLETTER

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

7th Annual AQH Spring Trial

James and Jenise Frost will be hosting this year's Trial at Frost Farms on March 24. We had our largest turn out ever last year and this year promises to be even better. They have 2 fields separated by a road but situated so that spectators can see the action in both fields. We are changing the format to a modified National Bird Dog Challenge trial that features one dog at a time in the field and participants are scored rather than judged. All hunters are scored on the basis of 3 found birds, six available shells with deductions for mistakes. The brace is also timed and unused minutes are added to the score. Each dog will run twice and will be allowed probably 10-12 minutes each time and the scores for both runs are combined. There is also no luck of the draw that penalizes or rewards participants. We will be running only 2 classes: puppy up to 12 months and all age is over 1 year. For further details on scoring, check out the National Bird Dog Challenge Association web site at www.nbdca.com. Remember, this will be a modified format and is not an official NBDCA trial. The major difference will be in times per brace and price. Ours will be less in both cases.

If you would like to see an official trial, Frank Rodgers (674-7244) is holding one this Saturday and also Feb. 10 and Mar. 10 at his place. This trial is filled, but you are welcome to watch. The other dates have just been set and are open at this time but may fill quickly as participants sign up this Saturday. You will see some outstanding dog work at a fairly close distance. We were exposed to this format in Clanton recently and every body there including the spectators loved it. While the participant looks for that third bird, every body is on the edge of their seat. Aaron Parker (A&S Preserve 280-0024) is supplying the birds.

United Approach

The 3rd meeting of the Alabama Hunting and Fishing Alliance was hosted by ADCNR Commissioner Riley Boykin Smith at the Boykin Hunting Lodge in Washington County on 12-13. Jerry Jones and Vernon Burns attended the meeting representing AQH and QU along with 13 others representing most of the hunting, fishing and conservation groups in the state.

At the previous meeting, the following mission statement was adopted. "To maintain the strong tradition of and participation in hunting and fishing in Alabama by working to identify issues and opportunities of common priority and serving as a catalyst for coordinated action.

This meeting's purpose was to identify and prioritize common issues and opportunities that fit within this statement. About 15 issues were identified and the top 3 were selected for immediate action. There were as follows:

- 1) Communicate the conservation message to the non-hunting and non-fishing public.
- 2) Increase participation in hunting and fishing with emphasis on women and children.
- 3) Increase access to hunting lands and fishing waters to the general public.

These 3 issues are a monumental task for the alliance, but with the resources from all the organizations involved, we should be able to make great strides toward accomplishing our goals.

If any one would like a copy of the minutes of the meeting or if they have helpful ideas on the above issues, please contact Jerry Jones at 205-491-8120.

Presidents Corner

Last year was a good year for AQH and this one should be even better. As evidenced by the articles by Jerry Jones and Frank Harris, more and more people are taking up the Quail problem. Attendance at our meetings has been up and we had our most successful spring trial ever. Jack Kidd was very gracious in allowing us to have Bird Dog Day at his place. We have a hard working board and many workers not on the board. We have a good working relationship with the Cahaba Management Area. Of course we can always use more workers and there will always be an open seat for you at the monthly meeting at Lloyds'. Speaking of meetings, do not miss out Feb. 13 meeting when we are very fortunate to have Dr. Lee Stribling speak. What a way to start the year. Some of our members that have not made a meeting lately, this would be a good one to start back with. I have not done the BELT BUCKLE thing yet but I want one of those buckles!

While last year was a good year for me, my family and my dog, others ran into problems. Harold Ridgeway, a founding member, had a close call, but made it. James Frost and Jim Price developed major and mysterious back problems and both are undergoing extensive rehab and treatment. We would pray that all three are on the road to complete recovery not just because of their efforts for AQH, but because they are good men.

Most of us delude ourselves into thinking that we are bulletproof, but we are not. While I realize that I come up short in many areas, my biggest deficit is in being grateful for the good health and good fortune that I have been blessed with. My New Years Resolve is to work on this problem mainly by spending more time with people less fortunate. If the reader also has a tendency to lack gratitude, I would suggest the same remedy. Happy New Year!

Upcoming Speakers

Dr. Lee Stribling with Auburn U. and The Albany Area Research Station will speak at our February 13 meeting. Dr. Stribling has been a driving force behind some of the most comprehensive Quail research on the planet. I am sure that he will bring a limited supply of the premiere issue of the new publication "Wildlife Trends". I have just received my copy and enjoyed it immensely. If you hunt, fish or just enjoy the outdoors, this publication has practical wildlife mgt. info in it that you can use. If you cannot make the meeting, you can visit the web site at www.wildlifetrends.com or call them at 1-800-441-6826. This is one meeting that you do not want to miss.



Dues Are Due

Belt Buckle & Braggin Rights A. Q. H. Tournament

This fun competition for fancy belt buckles and Bragging Rights will combine Clay shooting with Quail hunting. The competition will include 2 quail hunts and 2 rounds of Five Stands and will be highlighted by a unique point system and an opportunity to experience an event with your fellow AQH members.

This competition, which was Ted Stuckenschneiders' idea, will run Sept. 1st - Mar. 31. The one time Tournament entry fee is \$10.00 and you pay your usual Quail Hunting/Five stand cost. For further details and an entry form, contact Ted at 324-5631 or me at 991-8635.

Field Trial Info

National Birddog Challenge

Frank Rodgers205-674-7244
Feb 10 & Mar 10th

American Field Trial (Horseback)

John Ennis205-254-8040

N. S. T. R. A.

Sand Mountain

Hal Kirby256-228-6885

Danville

Junior Smith662-365-5398

Limestone

Ed Pearson256-974-1895

National Bird Hunters

Lamar-Marion Chapter

Harold Boyette205-486-6888

Early Successional Habitat

The early successional habitat initiative group met in early December to discuss and develop plans for bringing back the bob white quail and song birds . The meeting was held at the Robert Trent Jones center near Prattville. The group is a coalition much larger and broader than A.Q.H. Supporting groups and their representative that were present included Tim Gothard and Ted Devos with Alabama Wildlife Federation, Stan Stewart with Game and Fish, Steve Guy with ALFA, Michelle Iseberg with BASF, Dr. Lee Stribling with Auburn U. Ext. System, Jerry Jones with Mountain Shadow Farm. Other groups represented at the meeting were the Audobon Society, Quail Unlimited, Alabama Power Company, Long Leaf Alliance, the U. S. Forest Service and many others I cannot recall.

The group is looking at 3 key land types in Alabama that are often void of quail and other small animals. They are:

1. Utility right of ways.
2. Wooded lands.
3. Farm lands-both row crop and pasture

The purpose is to identify what is needed for these land types to become better habitat suitable for quail, song birds and rabbits.

Utility right of ways tend to be mowed on a routine basis. Mowing is necessary so that trees will not become entangled with power lines and so that lines and poles are accessible for maintenance by the linemen. This frequent mowing or clipping tends to create a grass covering of the ground. This matt is too thick for baby quail chicks to travel through. A possible solution may be to persuade the power companies to switch to chemical control of brush with a product such as Arsenal. This product will control undesirable woody growth like sweet gum and undesirable grass communities like Bermuda and fescue. Arsenal is being used in brush control today by utilities on a limited basis. In many cases the product is mixed with other products that kill plants such as legumes which are beneficial to quail. Used as a single ingredient, the product does not harm partridge peas or lespedeza. Tax incentives could be used to persuade the utility companies to switch from mechanical applications to chemical applications. The challenge is more often educating the public than the utility companies that not all chemical products are toxic to the environment.

Similar ideas are being developed for the wooded land and farmland. These ideas are to be directed at general properties not specific properties. A text book could be printed to provide the general public. Much good research data is available from Clay Sisson with Auburns Albany Area Quail Project and Wes Burger with Mississippi State. A condensed text would be provided to facilitate education of landowners.

It is generally accepted by the group that predators are a limiting factor in the return of bob white quail and other small game.

How to address this is unknown.

Funding will be necessary to promote this idea and to provide demonstration areas and to encourage landowners to provide bob white quail habitat. It would be well worth your time to write a letter to your state representative explaining the decline of the bob white quail and begin asking for his/her assistance with this problem.

Frank Harris



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Call Jim Bradford, 991-8635 or for more information.



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