



NEWSLETTER

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

2001 Habitat Short Course

The 2001 Wild Quail Habitat Short Course was held on August 18. The event was held at APCO's Clanton Conference Center. The facility was cool and comfortable and offered the landowners and quail hunters a relief from the humid weather.

The theme focused on what could be done to reverse the declining bob white quail population. Speakers included Larry Ford, Jerry de Bin, Yale Lieden, Stan Stewart, and Ted Devos. Stan and Ted have been active since the first short course. Reggie Thackston was the key note speaker. Reggie is the Senior Wildlife Biologist and Head of Georgia's Bob White Quail Initiative. I wish to use this medium as an opportunity to express thanks to all the speakers.

If you didn't attend the short course you may not be familiar with the Georgia program. Reggie stressed the program is still experimental, but he is very optimistic about the long term prospects. May I explain the program to you. The Georgia State legislature has funded a program to develop quail habitat on private lands. Repeat public funds for private lands. The landowner does not have to offer public hunting to be eligible for funds. Many landowners would be reluctant to enter the program, if it required public access. I think you would agree that landowners do have concerns about public hunting and things in general that go along with opening up to the general public. Perhaps more importantly is the fact that quail cannot survive daily hunting pressure. This feature allows more quail habitat and reduces hunting pressure. The goal is more habitat, more birds and finally more hunting opportunities. Payments are tied to specific activities. Landowners/ row crop farmers are asked to leave 30 feet buffers around their corn fields. The buffer is not planted or harvested, it lies idle. Hardwood

sprouting is discouraged. Every other year, ½ of the buffer will be lightly disked. Pine plantations are eligible for payment if they are thinned and/ or burned. Numerous habitat improvements are paid specific amounts. The more a landowner does the more points they receive and the more cash they are paid. The focus is early successional habitat.

Economics is very important. Have you considered the numbers of quail hunters in Alabama who travel to Texas and Oklahoma each year to hunt quail. Every one that goes spends money on leases, motel rooms, meals, etc. Money leaves Alabama's economy that is desperately needed in the blackbelt counties of Alabama.

Encouragement. Alabama needs and deserves a habitat program. If every quail hunter in Alabama developed quail habitat on the land they control, it would unlikely stop the declining bird numbers overall. Specific properties would be improved. small game biologist tell us quail thrive on larger areas. To make a sizeable impact we need to reach landowners who may or may not be willing to spend their money on quail habitat. A program with cash incentives would be ideal. Wouldn't it be worth your time to contact someone influential or someone within the legislature to ask for their help in sponsoring a habitat bill for Alabama. Perhaps you may wish to contact someone like Gary Moody in Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division at 64 North Union Street,

Montgomery, AL. 36130 or call him at 334-242-3469. You may want to ask Gary, why the state does not have 1 full time small game biologist on its staff? There is no doubt they like the quiet nature of quail hunters.

Presidents Corner

As usual, we had our monthly meeting at Lloyd's on the second Tuesday of the month. However, the September 11th meeting was far from usual. Since we did not have a guest speaker, we discussed not having it but decided to meet and if no one showed up, we would eat and leave.

Surprisingly, we had about 15 people show up and we talked about that morning's terrorist attack. We also listened to the president's speech that was played over the speakers.

It is now Sunday night October 7. As I write these comments, we have just begun bombing Afghanistan.

It gives one pause to reflect on our priorities. Just how does improving small game habitat fit in the big picture? This is a great country we live in when we have the luxury of working toward goals that would surely seem trivial in most of the world.

Suddenly, selling oranges did not seem as important as family and friends. But life goes on. Improving small game and song bird habitat is still way down on most hunters and landowners priorities and most people who are not hunters or birdwatchers are not aware of the problem at all.

Why not make a point of calling your elected reps and telling them that our land owners deserve something like the Georgia Plan only on a state wide basis. You can help us and others make a difference.

New Members

The life blood of any service organization is new members. We welcome the following people and invite them to join us each month in an effort to restore native small game habitat.

Mike Arban Jr.

Phillip Weidmeyer

David L. Crawford

James David Ramsey

Clay Stiles

Chris Franks

MEETINGS

October Meeting

You missed Larry Britt, a traveling vet who saved Jake's life by showing up with the antivenin after he had been bitten by a copperhead. Larry covers several counties in central Alabama can be reached at 672- 8800.

November Meeting

Mack Vann, a Storyteller, and bird hunter from Huntsville will be talking with us at our Nov. 13th meeting. I met Mack at the Quail Short course meeting and enjoyed chatting with him for a few minutes. I know we all have our own stories, but I think most of us enjoy hearing

others. In fact, that is probably the single thing that I enjoy most about our meetings is hearing about great dogs and great hunts.

My dad was a master storyteller and I never got tired of hearing stories about old Bell and their many hunts in their Model T. I just cannot tell a story as well as my dad or a lot of our club members, but that still does not keep me from trying.

Anyhow, if you have ever driven around Madison County, you can just imagine what bird hunting was like in years past. If you cannot make the meeting and would like him to meet with another group, you can reach Mack at 256—533-4213 or www.creekbottomhome.com.

December Meeting

This will be for an opportunity for all hunting preserves to come by to say a few words and bring any literature about their operation. Also, any field trial organizations are invited to come.



Dues Increase

The board voted to increase dues by a whopping 50% from \$10 to \$15 starting in 2002. Any one joining or renewing now should send \$15 with their form and this would be applied to their 2002 dues, which are due in January. We have had two stamp increases since we formed and printing and paper are a little higher. Also we are sending the letter to some members that occasionally forget to send their dues. We could cut them off but we always hope that some point in the future they will become a productive member. If you are receiving the newsletter and wish to be taken off the mailing list, call Jeanise Frost at 665-7810.

Web Site Activity To Be Promoted

Frankly our web site has not seen an abundance of hits since it has been established. Fortunately, we have very little tied up in establishing or hosting it. We have also not done a very good job with monthly updates between newsletters.

Starting in July we will have monthly updates and I will be writing a monthly series called "An Amateur's Guide to Bird Dogs". We will make every effort to have the site updated before the end of each month.

DON'T FORGET TO VISIT

www.newleafpub.com/alaquail

now containing monthly updates

Field Trials

If you are not participating or spectating at field trial, you are missing a real treat. They are a great place to bring friends and family to view great dogs competing. Most of the newer trials are competitor friendly with the judges working with you and explaining rules and working with you. Rarely to almost never is a competitor or dog disqualified. Most of the subjectivity has been removed from the scoring systems and you have several options as to which form best suits you and your pup or dogs. Whichever format you like, you will not win ever time no matter how good your dog is. Most likely, you will also have to compete several times before you place or win. But you will certainly like the competition. My dog Jake is pretty smart but he cannot tell whether he has won or lost.

The club has a fun trial scheduled for December 1 at Harold Ridgeway's place. Please call me at 205-991-8635 for further info and directions.

FIELD TRIAL INFO

National Bird dog Challenge

Frank Rodgers205-674-7244

October 13th & November 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 Boyette.....205-486-6888



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Office Phone _____

Email Address _____

New Member Renewal

2002 DUES – \$15.00

Check Payable to "Alabama Quail Hunters"

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



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