

News from Colorado



Colorado Newsletter April 2009

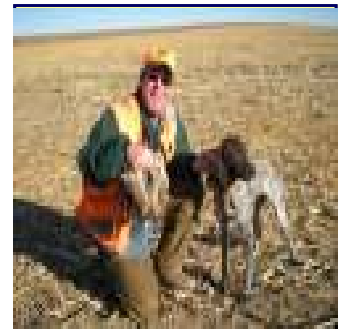
Spring is definitely here and roosters are turning their thoughts to hens and attracting mates. Game managers use crow counts in the spring to get a better idea of what pheasant populations may shape up to be. To learn how this is done, and why the roosters crow, see story below. Spring is also a time when many people are looking at picking up a new puppy! The Folks at Native have tips to make sure that you are getting off on the right foot. I also have a new pup that is now 1 ½ years old, and these tips really come in handy even for a German Shorthair guy like me.



Prairie Flower of the Month

Bastard Toadflax

Perennial, 4 to 15-inch-tall erect plants. The simple, alternate leaves are smooth and linear or lanceshaped. In the fall, when plants lack leaves, they look like a typical stick. The small (less than 1/2 inch) white flowers, which bloom in the spring, lack petals; instead, the five sepals are white. Blossoms remain open night and day for two days. The minute fruit are drupes, that is, they have a soft fleshy part around the seed stone. They generally drop from the plant while still greenish, soft and leathery. Henry David Thoreau called it a "handsome" plant.



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Spring banquet season has been a big success in Colorado and thanks to all of the chapters, their officers and the members of Pheasants Forever for all their hard work and dedication. We have also had three youth hunts this spring, Yuma had to postpone their 1st annual youth hunt due to the spring snow storm but it was rescheduled for April 4th, Northern Colorado held their 11th youth hunt and had another big turn out. Metro Denver held their 2nd youth hunt with a full house too! My hat is off to all the chapters who are focusing on youth and youth events. This is our future and we need to keep striving for more youth activities. This summer Colorado PF/QF will be hosting the 2nd annual T.U.N.E summer camp for 30 kids from grades 6th through 12th for information on the summer camp read flier below.

The winter in Colorado has been very mild but our recent spring snow storms are just what we needed. The next three months are critical for next year's pheasant population. With last years drought returning to southeastern Colorado our chick numbers were drastically down in that part of the state for both Pheasants and Quail. Moisture is the key for us in the western arid climate we and the birds live in. So let's keep hoping and praying for good solid moisture this spring!

We are planning a summer PF/QF meeting in late July, the location has not been determined but will keep everyone updated. Please remember to turn in your banquet reports and habitat reports.

We have a summer youth camp scheduled for July 11-14 at Camp Calwood called TUNE. Youth are invited from Colorado and Wyoming, cost of the camp is \$335.00. The ages for the youth are from 6th to 12th grade, they will learn how to shoot a bow, tie flies, fly fish, shoot shotguns and train dogs to name a few classes. We have great partners on this, Trout Unlimited, Colorado Bowhunters Association and Colorado 4H Shooting Sports.

PF/QF chapters are sponsoring youth to attend the camp, for example the Greeley chapter has kids writing an essay on why habitat is important to wildlife, the chapter will pick a winner from their contest. For more info please email me.

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"Crowing Counts"

Some states conduct a Rooster crowing count survey. A 20-mile survey route is established through the county and run every year. The route is surveyed each April, since April is the top crowing month. The route is started 50 minutes before sunrise and ends 50 minutes after sunrise, the rooster's peak daily crowing. The surveyor stops every 1 or 2 miles, turns the vehicle off, quietly exits the vehicle, listens for 2 minutes, and notes the number of Crowings heard (not number of roosters heard). The routes are run on calm (<8mph), clear mornings. Wind effects how well the crowing is heard, and cloudiness lessens crowing activity.

The rooster's thoughts are turning towards spring. In March he begins crowing in earnest. He will stand with head held high, chest out, and wings flapping. He wants to entice hens and to establish a territory. The hens will pay him no attention until April, when she will be ready to mate. His crowing activity will reach a maximum in late April, early May. Crowing activity starts well before sunrise, increases to a peak just before sunrise, then diminishes. The average rooster will crow every two minutes. Crowing roosters may be heard throughout the day, but mid-day is usually quiet. There is a flurry of crowing late afternoon and early evening, but it is not nearly as active as the sunrise activity. Many state game agencies monitor the number of crowing roosters each year to calculate a breeding population index.



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As the spring moves forward and we move into summer I will keep all of the readers updated on projected pheasant populations and what to expect this fall.

Tips for Beginning Retriever Training

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There are many schools of thought regarding the best methods for training a finished retriever. The extent and style of training will often depend on the activities you plan to perform with your dog. For example, your standards of acceptable training may be very different if you plan to do a lot of Hunt Tests or Field Trials versus an effective dog for recreational hunting. We tailor our training to the individual needs of the dog owner. Most retrievers from good hunting lines will show natural tendencies to hold, carry and retrieve objects in their mouths. Some pups will retrieve directly to your hand with very little or no training. Others will drop things on the ground or just run around playing keep-away. Our goal is to develop a finished bird dog that consistently delivers birds to heel and hand. In order to achieve consistent delivery, force/hold and force-fetching a puppy is ideal around 6 months of age or whenever his adult teeth have come in.

Whether for hunting or competition, there are some basic "Do's & Don'ts" for retrieve training that are fairly constant. These are essential to build the foundation for a well conditioned bird dog that consistently retrieves to your expectations.

1. When the pup gets to the point it is no longer returning to you with an object, put a check cord on the pup so they are forced to return to you.
2. Praise your pup when he returns to you and while he is still holding the object in his mouth. Do not remove the object immediately, let him hold it and praise him.
3. Watch the corrections you give when retrieving. Higher drive pups can be corrected more while with a lower desire retrieving pup you may need to do less correcting.
4. Start by throwing retrieves in confined areas. This helps limit distractions and encourages direct returns. A hallway works great for doing this.
5. Avoid training sessions being too long. Keep them fun and make them successful. Introduce your pup to birds and feathers as young as possible. Getting a puppy into water at a young age is always a great idea as well.



Shawna Pantzke—Youth Leadership Representative from North Dakota.

This year Pheasant Fest was at the Alliant Energy center in Madison, Wisconsin. If you have never been to Pheasant Fest, Pheasant Fest is a lot like a state convention except there are hundreds of vendor booths. There were a lot of fun booths, the big buck trailer was a favorite for most and it had some of the biggest deer ever shot! My favorite booths were the ones with dogs or puppies. Almost half of the show room floor was dedicated to dogs. There were a lot of different breeds of dogs. There were also a lot of adorable puppies for sale. My favorite is the Labrador retriever. In the back corner was the youth village. The youth village is like an indoor youth day with casting, simulated hunting, air rifles, mock hunts, outdoor crafts, and much more! We were giving away free ringneck (youth) memberships all weekend thanks to a Wisconsin chapter, and an Iowa chapter that gave all the money.

On Saturday night there is always a banquet. At the banquet the national youth leadership council (that's me) sold raffle tickets for a one youth one adult hunt in South Dakota. While everyone was eating their dinner the national youth leadership council (NYLC) was busy selling tickets. We were split up into groups and me and my group went to Howard's table to sell tickets (Howard is the president and CEO of pheasants forever). His table bought \$100 worth of tickets. Then he challenged the next table to double the amount, and they did! They bought \$200 worth. So then Howard's table bought \$205 worth! Then at the very end another table got involved and bought \$300 worth! What a night!!!!

I would like to encourage all the chapters and members to help the NO CHILD LEFT INDOORS initiative by purchasing , a ringneck membership ie the Upland Tales Magazine for their local school or City Library. How could we make this happen so that we could give them credit and thank them for doing so. We could then also keep track of how many have done so.

Shawna Pantzke