



Midnight Sun Gun Dog  
Association  
P.O. Box 241291  
Anchorage, Alaska 99524-1291

### “Preserve Game, Use a Trained Retriever”

MIDNIGHT  
SUN  
GUN DOG  
ASSOCIATION



MSGDA Website <http://msgda.org>  
*Check out our web site for more information!*

#### BOARD MEMBERS

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*Please come join us!*

MSGDA Newsletter

“Preserve Game, Use a Trained Retriever”

September 2005



MIDNIGHT SUN GUN DOG ASSOCIATION

## 2005 SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

MSGDA Web Site

<http://www.msgda.org>

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### PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

*by Jeff Carlson*

Wow! What a great year for MSGDA! We just finished our last formal club event involving an upland fun hunt at Falcon Ridge. Everyone participating in the upland fun hunt had a great time, enjoyed plenty of food and fellowship, which is what we like to see. Falcon Ridge, one of our club sponsors, is a great place to hunt pheasants, chucker, and quail. Check the link out on the club website and give Gary a call. It is a good thing club activities have wrapped up as waterfowl and upland hunting seasons are upon us and that is what our club is all about. We would love to hear about this hunting season, so snap those great pictures and send them to Brad Hanson (webmaster@msgda.org) with a brief caption so he can post them on the club website. 2006 events are already in the works, so keep an eye on the website for additional information. The Board and I wish everyone a safe and great time during your hunting adventures this season and look forward to your participation once again in 2006. Thanks again for making MSGDA a family-oriented club dedicated to

hunters and their hunting retrievers. Have a great hunting season and we'll see you once again next spring at our club banquet!

### JUDGES WANTED

Anyone who participates in hunt tests know the judges play a big part. On the surface, they evaluate the performance of dog / handler teams, but they're actually involved in many aspects of the hunt test and it is often their planning, oversight and effort that insures the events run smoothly.

It is a common misconception that people who judge have been asked to judge because they know everything. While they may have a significant amount of knowledge and meet judging qualifications, it is the rare person who judges that knows everything.

Judging is actually the beginning of an entirely new learning experience, rather than the end result. Anyone who judges with an open mind will readily admit that they learn something new with each judging assignment.

The MSGDA, in conjunction with NAHRA, is looking for motivated, dog loving folks to take their training and hunt test involvement to a new level by becoming a judge for the upcoming 2006 season. If you're interested in increasing your personal knowledge and satisfaction while making the hunt tests a success, log on to the MSGDA website and link to the NAHRA website to download the judges test and rules, or contact Kody Bull at 441 8722.

#### 2006 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

APRIL 6-9, 2006: MSGDA & FALCON RIDGE BOOTH AT GREAT ALASKAN SPORTSMANS SHOW  
APRIL 15, 2006: MSGDA MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND BANQUET AT BIRCHWOOD SHOOTING RANGE  
MAY 6, 2006: MSGDA PICNIC TEST, LOCATION HEAVENS FIELD “LAND MARKS”  
MAY 20, 2006: MSGDA PICNIC TEST, LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED “LAND MARKS”  
JUNE 4, 2006: MSGDA PICNIC TEST, BOYDS FARM “WATER MARKS”  
JUNE 24-25, 2006: NAHRA LICENSED HUNT TEST  
JULY 22-23, 2006: NAHRA LICENSED HUNT TEST  
AUGUST 12, 2006: MSGDA FUN HUNT, FALCON RIDGE

Midnight Sun Gun Dog Association
P.O. Box 241291, Anchorage, Alaska 99524
Membership Application/Renewal

The Midnight Sun Gun Dog Association is dedicated to Alaska's hunters and their hunting dogs. Please fill out the information below and mail it with your check payable to the Midnight Sun Gun Dog Association. Thank you for your support!

Name(s): Mailing Address City & State Zip Code

Home Phone Work Phone Mobile/Cell Phone Fax Email

New Member Renewal Type of Membership (please check one):
Sponsor\* ..... \$100.00
Contributing\* ..... \$50.00
Family\* ..... \$30.00
Individual ..... \$25.00
Additional Contributions ..... \$
Total Enclosed ..... \$

Please indicate which committees you would be willing to work on: Membership Newsletter Publicity Fund-raising
Education Hospitality Field Events

\* These memberships are entitled to list two voting members per family. Please include names of both voting members on your application.



Foot care: How to bandage a paw

A how-to guide to caring for an injured appendage

By Ben J. Character, DVM
Veterinarian
Special to ESPNOOutdoors.com

Injuries to the sporting dog can result from the rough terrain we ask them to navigate. While injuries to the skin usually heal easily, the pads often require significantly longer recovery times.

Bandages serve two important functions: they help protect the wound from weight-bearing forces, and they serve to protect and keep the wound area clean.

Being able to apply a bandage properly can facilitate healing, provide convenience, and keep the cost of care down when a pad is injured. Since it is better to show you how rather than tell how and I can't hop out of your computer, check out the how-to chart below.

Besides putting a bandage on too tight, letting a bandage get wet is probably the worst thing you can do. You must keep bandages dry at all costs. This means if your dog stays in a kennel you'll either need to make other arrangements or check the bandage several times a day. If it's raining, you can slip a plastic bag over the foot for short periods, but don't leave it on all the time. If you do, you'll create a "sweat" wrap and suffocate the foot.

If the terrain you hunt on is especially rough or you are having a constant problem with paw cuts or sore feet, you may want to consider investing in some footwear for your pup. Specialty boots are available from many sources that you can try. Some are leather and some are neoprene with rubber soles similar to swimmer boots some divers wear.

The leather boots are more durable and may serve the upland dog well, where the neoprene is more suited for wet areas. To determine which work best in your hunting environment you'll have to try them for yourself. In addition to protecting the foot, sometimes an oversized pair will work well for keeping a paw bandage dry — and sometimes on at all.

Remember pad injuries usually take longer to heal than simple cuts do, because of this, keeping the canine athlete on its feet, all four of them, can sometimes be a challenge.

Step-by-step: How to bandage a paw

Step one: Be sure that paw and hair coat is dry. Moisture under a bandage will stink and damage their skin.

Step two: Apply any medicated ointments or salve to the wound area. I usually just put these on the gauze instead of trying to smear them on the dog — especially if the wound is tender.

Step three: Place a layer of gauze/sponge directly over the wound site.

Step four: Apply a layer of cushion — cast padding, roll cotton. This layer is very important to keep the bandage from getting too tight.

Step five: Apply a layer of stretch gauze. This holds your cotton in place.

Step six: Apply an outer covering — medical tape or stretchable wrap. This layer protects the under layers from wear and moisture.

Don't neglect the Dogs

There are three grave dangers to hunting dogs in South Dakota: Heat stroke, dehydration and barbed wire. All of them seem to appear without much warning and tend to ruin an otherwise great hunting trip.

Heat stroke and dehydration are both prevented by providing adequate water. Having a well-trained dog and sharp eyes can reduce cuts from barbed wire, but sometimes the dog gets to the wire before you can call him off. So it pays to be prepared.

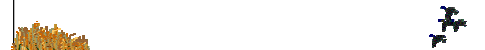
Remember to take ample water for you dog and if you won't be returning to the truck every two hours, carry a canteen or water bottle for the dog and teach the animal to drink from it. In addition to water in the field, make sure you offer water well before the first pheasant drive of the day. Any experienced hunting dog will get excited upon seeing the shotguns come out of the case. The dog may get too excited to and forget to drink. So start the day with water and offer it before the dog thinks you are going hunting.

Once you are in the field, watch for heavy panting, especially if the temperature is above 50 degrees. Remember, dogs don't sweat. They only release heat through panting. And, the dogs are also down in the grass and weeds where they do not benefit from the ever-present South Dakota breezes. If the dog is panting heavily, take a short break, make the dog sit and offer water. Don't over do it.

In the cold weather, dehydration can cause problems for the dog. Every breath is expelling a tremendous amount of water vapor. Stop regularly and offer the dog a drink.

On the issue of cuts, the simple solution is to carry a first-aid kit. For dogs you should have at the minimum some 3M Vetrap and a selection of gauze pads. A small bottle of saline can be used to wash the cut or clean seeds out of the dog's eyes and ears. Locking forceps are just the ticket for porcupine quills (I've found two porkies in South Dakota in the last seven years).

Stow your first-aid kit right in your hunting vest and carry it on every outing. You may never need it, but when you do it can mean the difference between a minor tragedy and a long, lonely, quiet ride home.



There is little else in dog training to equal the thrill of your retriever picking their first blind on the hunt. So often our retrievers do not see the birds go down. The dog's ability to handle blinds may mean the difference in whether or not the bird is recovered. The retriever's ability to pick those unseen, fallen birds remain a very important aspect to the dog's role as a gamefinder... to bring back the ones we can't get.

#### 4. Confidence

Finally, and equally important, is the dog's confidence in the handler, confidence enough to go out with enthusiasm and accuracy on the line without even seeing any indication that there is a bird to retrieve.

Blinds require the dog to trust that there is a bird down and his hunting pal will help to locate his reward, the retrieve.

This level of confidence and trust is built slowly in training through daily success.

Make haste slowly is always our rule. Never test the dog above their limits. The dog's confidence in himself and his handler is established through repetitive successes, not failure. Interdependence is the relationship between the dog and the handler that must be established to run blinds effectively in the field.

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### MSGDA TRAINING LIBRARY AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS

We have our training references available for members to check out. The list below is what is available to check out. Any of the books and videos can be checked out by members. We hope that everyone will take advantage of this great opportunity. If you are interested in checking out any books or videos, contact Paula Ferguson at 562-7774 or via email at jpferg44@aol.com. New books are now here!!!

#### BOOKS

**Water Dog**, by Richard Wolters  
**Working Retrievers**, by Tom Quinn  
**Tri-Tronics Retriever Training**, by Jim & Phyllis Dobbs  
**Training Your Retrievers**, by James Lamb Free  
**Hunting Retriever**, by Bill Tarrant  
**Retriever Training Test**, by Jim Spencer  
**Retriever Puppy Training**, by Loveland & Rutherford

**Problem Gun Dogs**, by Bill Tarrant  
**Retriever Training for Duck Hunters**, by Robert Milner  
**Training Retrievers to Handle**, by D.L. & Ann Walters  
**Training Retrievers for Marsh & Meadows**, by Jim Spencer  
**Smartwork Vol I** by Evan Graham  
**Smartwork Vol II** by Evan Graham  
**Smart Fetch** by Evan Graham

#### VIDEOS

**Water Dog**, by Richard Wolters  
**Game Dog**, by Richard Wolters  
**Total Retriever Training**, by Mike Lardy  
**Marking** by Mike Lardy  
**Tri-Tronics Video Trained Retrieve Part I "Hold"** by Jim & Phyllis Dobbs  
**Tri-Tronics Video Trained Retrieve Part II "Fetch"** by Jim & Phyllis Dobbs  
**Command Performance** by David Dikeman

**Help/Volunteers:** These events are made possible by volunteers. If you can help out, please contact Paula Ferguson at 562-7774. Your help is appreciated



## MSGDA ANNUAL BANQUET & MEMBERSHIP MEETING

This year's banquet and membership meeting will be held Saturday April 15th, 2005 at Soupy's Café in Eagle river. Festivities to include dinner, door prizes, silent auction, and live auction. A email and flyer with more details will be sent to all MSGDA members. Also check our website, msgda.org for more information. We are always looking for donations and help at the dinner, for any further info, please contact Paula Ferguson at jpferg44@aol.com or 562 -7774.

### The fundamentals of blind retrieves

Here are the four fundamental skill sets necessary to run blinds

By Mike Stewart  
 Owner/trainer  
 Wildrose Kennels

One of the most exhilarating and rewarding aspects of developing a finished waterfowl retriever is training the dog to run blinds, that is to pick up birds the dog didn't see fall.

Little else in the gundog world will equal the thrill of being directly involved with a retriever, one on one, as the dog boldly goes out to a fall area to locate an unseen bird under complete control, returning promptly to make a retrieve to hand. Successful blinds are a visible statement to anyone's training efforts.

Our goal is to develop a hunting companion which has the trust and confidence in their handler to go out enthusiastically for a retrieve without seeing anything fall; just because the line was set and the retrieve/release command was given. That's when all the hard work comes together ... the natural game finding ability achieved through genetics, the dog's intelligence and the skills trained into the dog combined with the dog's confidence in the handler that there is a retrieve to be made.

Successful blinds are mutual victories for both the dog and the handler and the achievement will likely mark the pinnacle of the overall training experience.

Let's briefly look at the four fundamental skill sets necessary to run successful blinds:

#### 1. Lining

A line is simply the dog's most direct route of travel to the bird. Holding a line implies that the dog run a straight line to the fall despite influences or distractions.

Primarily, lining skills are developed at Wildrose through sight, trailing memories.

Initially, a barrier edge is used to provide support for the young dog to run straight. You may incorporate a fence, field road, ditch edge or wood line to encourage holding a straight line.

As the young dog's lining confidence and skills improve, we eliminate the "crutch" of the straight edge and begin to incorporate various types of terrain.

Permanent blinds involve the dogs' running to a familiar location where they have successfully found bumpers in training. Permanent blinds are confidence builders and serve as a transitional step to cold blinds.

Cold blinds, as the name implies, are blinds which are run in new, unfamiliar locations. The locations may differ but the sequences to line and release the dog are exactly repetitive to previous exercises so confidence is transferred.

#### 2. Handling

The retriever must respond well to whistle commands and cast effectively in order that corrections may be made to the line if necessary. Dogs must reliably:

- Stop on the whistle promptly. A slow stop can put the dog further out of line.
- Recall quickly under all conditions
- Hunt back toward the handler slowly searching for a fallen bird. This is usually a different whistle signal than the recall whistle.

Casting requires that the dog be able to drive deep, straight back on command and that the dog take right and left casts with accurate lines.

The dog must be conditioned to take and hold straight lines given by hand signals until stopped or until bird scent is discovered.

A dog that does not handle properly cannot be adjusted to the correct line to the fallen bird, a vital requirement to running successful blinds.

#### 3. Hunting

The third necessary skill for effective blinds requires the dog to hunt the fall area thoroughly. This is where nose counts.

What we want are effective gamefinders trained to hunt cover, marsh or thickets on command after a whistle stop.

The dog's drive on the line is interrupted in the general area of the fall. Wind direction must be factored.

The hunt command causes the dog to devour the area in a methodical search for the bird. The dog should remain (or hold) in the area, land or water, throughout the hunt unless otherwise directed.

The competent retriever should also possess the perseverance to handle diving, wounded waterfowl and the skill to track runners (birds injured making an escape) as is often the case.