

The Whoa Post

August 2024

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August Issue

It is less than two weeks from the 2024 Rocky Mountain Cup Wild Field Trial. If you haven't entered, it's too late as entries were due August 23. If you have questions, please reach out to the field trial secretary. This year's event will be a full 2 days of field trials on wild birds. Be prepared to see a lot of wild birds, partridge, sharp-tailed grouse and ring-necked pheasants. In the evening on Saturday, in addition to the best food on the trial circuit. There will also be a silent auction. Bring your checkbook, you will probably find something you can't live without.

This trial will test your dog and maybe you too. But remember, it's just a snapshot in time. Be kind to everyone and be humble if you win. Remember, there is only one blue ribbon.

Judges are people too. And while they are tasked with judging dogs, sometimes helping handlers, and being the expert on UKC field trial rules and pointing dogs, they are still human. They want everyone to do well. If you have questions, ask them and they will answer honestly.

If you are new to the trial world, don't forget to a few essentials. They include:

- Your dog
- Leash
- Water for dog and you (water from home or bottled)
- Rain gear (just in case)
- Clothing for all temperatures
- Medical kit
- Snacks
- Dog food
- Good walking boots
- A copy of the UKC Pointing Dog Rules.

I'm sure you can add to the list. Just remember to plan for all weather and have a great time.

Lastly, your run is only 15 minutes. You came with a great dog and will go home with a great dog, regardless of what happens during your 15 minutes in the field. The dog is the prize, not the ribbons and trophies.

Sherry Niesar
Whoa Post Editor



2024 Hunting Outlook in Montana and North Dakota

WESTERN MONTANA

Pheasant hunting on the Ninepipe Wildlife Management Area near Ronan and surrounding area could be positive compared to previous years. Good grain production and some opportunistic moisture in the spring led to fair conditions. The chicks/brood ratio appears good and the size of the chicks observed indicates a good survival rate.

For waterfowl, drought conditions have plagued northwest Montana through the summer and didn't help local wetland conditions during nesting and brood rearing season. This could lead to a dip in waterfowl opportunities besides Canada geese, which remain healthy.

Across west-central Montana, hunters should experience an average year for forest grouse and wild turkeys. Despite a long winter, the conditions were still manageable for many game birds to have good winter survival into spring. Spring surveys detected plenty of adult ruffed and dusky grouse, and the spring turkey season showed no shortage of birds. Hunters focusing on dusky grouse should move up in elevation as the season progress.

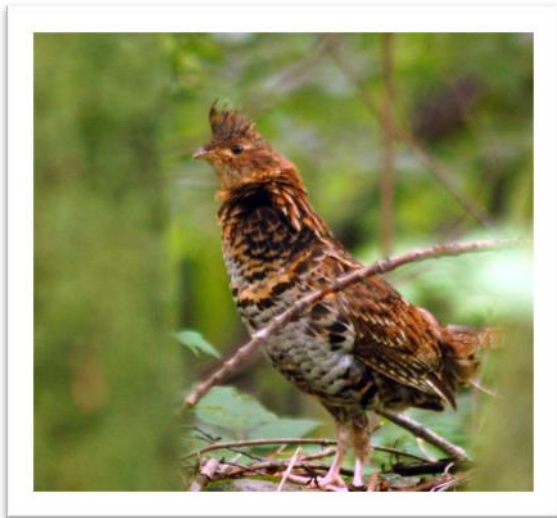
Due to recent efforts to restore native sharp-tailed grouse to several areas in western Montana, it is possible you could encounter a sharptail while hunting. Be careful to identify birds, as hunting is closed for sharptails west of the Continental Divide in Montana.

Mountain and sage-grouse productivity, as well as partridge productivity, should be decent this year since much of southwest Montana experienced cool, wet weather in June that produced good vegetation and insects but was not cold and snowy to the detriment of hatchlings. There will be wing barrels out in several locations throughout southwest Montana. Hunters are asked to deposit only one wing from each bird harvested into one of these barrels or with the Sheridan or Dillon wildlife biologists' offices. Wings will be used to determine the age and sex of grouse to determine productivity for the year.

NORTH-CENTRAL MONTANA

Despite better quality habitat and higher nesting success, sharp-tailed grouse and sage-grouse numbers still remain down from their historical average according to spring lek counts conducted by biologists. Pheasants are surveyed by spring crow-counts, and biologists reported fair to good results in areas of high-quality habitat, but few or no pheasants counted in areas of marginal habitat. Overall, spring surveys show pheasant numbers still remain lower than the historical average across northcentral Montana.

Sharp-tailed grouse will be found in the grasslands intermixed with farmland and foothills throughout the region, tending to day-roost on the tops of hills and coulees with grass and forb cover typically averaging shin height. On windy days, they prefer to stay on the leeward side of the hill where they can rest out of the wind. Pheasants will generally be closer to riparian areas and farmlands. Finding areas with grass that is knee-high or taller, mixed with shrubs and small draws near a food source (farmland/shrub berries) is a good place to start looking for roosters. Hungarian partridge thrive in all the above habitats but are more susceptible to extreme weather and larger fluctuations in their numbers. Large patches of grass and CRP with draws or fields and shrubby cover near farmland are good areas to search for Huns.



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SOUTH-CENTRAL MONTANA

Upland bird hunting in the region will likely be limited this year. During spring surveys, very few successful broods were observed. Frequent cold spring rains impacted chick hatches for multiple upland species, including Hungarian partridge, pheasant and sharp-tailed and sage-grouse. Though upland birds in some areas were successful in hatching broods, many areas are showing very few young of the year. Turkey brood sizes also appear to be below average. Hunters can expect to see very limited and spotty numbers of upland birds on the prairie this season.



NORTHEAST MONTANA

In the far eastern portion of Region 6, pheasant hunters should expect pheasant numbers to remain the same or increase slightly from the previous year, which means they will remain above average.

Hunters should expect pheasant numbers in the Glasgow area to be close to long-term average and about the same as last year, whereas in the Malta and Havre areas, numbers are likely to remain below average this fall.

Based on survey results, the good habitat conditions and biologist observations this summer, it appears sharp-tailed grouse numbers will remain above average this fall for this eastern third of the region. In the Glasgow and Malta areas, sharp-tail numbers may recover and be somewhat average like the previous season.

In the eastern portion of the region, partridge harvest in the fall of 2022 was well above average for the area and increased substantially over the previous year, reaching a 20-year high. It is expected that numbers will be like last hunting season.

With the good precipitation received this year, sage-grouse hunting is likely to be average or slightly below average in the Glasgow area this fall, and relatively like last season. Habitat conditions will be better, which may cause sage-grouse to be more dispersed across the landscape than last year.

SOUTHEAST MONTANA



The area is coming out of a few tough years of drought, but so far this year the area has received ample moisture across a majority of the region. This has resulted in better grass and forb growth, which has equated to much better habitat conditions compared to previous years. Once again, the region had a lot of grasshoppers, as well. With good habitat and forage options across the landscape, birds will be spread throughout the country, and hunters may have to travel around. This may give the illusion that numbers are worse than they actually are. With the conditions being so good, birds will be able to make a go of it just about anywhere and will not necessarily be in the typical

places that hunters would find them on a "normal" year.

NORTH DAKOTA

According to the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, the survey numbers were expected to be favorable after a very mild 2023-2024 winter where survival rates and carry-over populations are typically stronger.

Spring precipitation has improved habitat, wetland indexes and created better nesting conditions than seen in previous years. The latest drought monitor report shows only 2.2% of the state is classified as areas of drought, compared to late summer of 2023 when over half the state was abnormally dry and over 20% of the state was classified as in severe or extreme drought. Healthy population numbers and nesting conditions typically create a better experience for hunters in the fall.



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The 2024 spring pheasant crowing count survey indicated the pheasant population in North Dakota is up 37% statewide over 2023. Much of the increase is the result of positive weather patterns for wildlife and improved habitat conditions on the northern plains.

Increasing the pheasant population in North Dakota involves a multifaceted approach centered on habitat improvement and conservation that allow game to take advantage of positive weather patterns to thrive. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGFD) collaborates with landowners, conservation groups, and government agencies to restore and enhance habitats critical for pheasant survival.

NDGF initiatives such as the Working Lands Program, Wildlife Food PLOTS Seed Program work along with Federal programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that encourage landowners to convert agricultural lands into grasslands, providing essential nesting and brood-rearing cover for pheasants. State and federal partnerships aim to create a more supportive environment for pheasants to thrive.

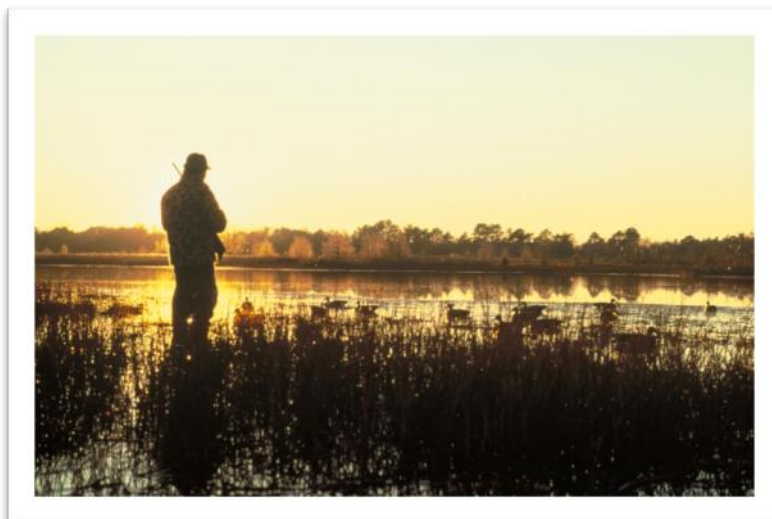


The 2024 breeding duck survey numbers in North Dakota slid slightly in 2024, though the population remains 17% above the long-term average and is the 30th highest across the seventy-seven-year record. Though the number is down in 2024, rains in May/June have improved wetland and habitat conditions and should provide ample nesting opportunities for breeding ducks.

Canadian geese are abundant during migration and nesting seasons in North Dakota. Agricultural depredation issues caused by the strong goose population have allowed NDGF to provide additional hunting opportunities, including an early take/management season with extra days in the eastern part of the state.

https://www.montanaoutdoor.com/2023/08/fwp-news-2023-upland-game-bird-forecast/#google_vignette

<https://www.ndtourism.com/info-page/2024-game-numbers-strong-statewide#:~:text=North%20Dakota%20Game%20and%20Fish,carryover%20populations%20are%20typically%20stronger>



Follow Your Heart When Puppy Picking By Peter Wax

A long time ago I wrote about picking a puppy. While not inaccurate, it would now be referenced with “I knew a lot more then and so much less now”. So much less that I rarely give any advice on the subject other than to follow your heart. Do not get me wrong, most of the advice is still useful, like researching pedigrees for things titles, checking bites, and making sure both parents have been evaluated for hip dysplasia, but none of these things tell you which bundle of joy is the right pup.

It will not tell because a good trainer can turn an average dog into a champion and some of the best dogs never compete, but mostly it will not tell you because the pup for you is a product of intangible ingredients. The perfect synergistic swirl of genetics and environment is beyond written comprehension but can be felt by the heart. Follow your heart. Go to the one that calls you. Give in to that unexplained pull.

Following your heart sounds simple. It is not simply, especially with all the myths and pseudoscience associated with puppy picking. Myths like a black mouthed pup is superior and pseudoscience like the famous 49 days as the only day to pick up your pup to ensure proper bonding. This one is beyond pseudoscience and falls into the world of pure poppycock. From personal experience, a 3-year-old dog will bond to so closely she will be the very mirror of your soul. Just let her in.

Following your heart is an essential ingredient used by all successful breeders and competitors and not discussed. Some will deny it. Shun it. It is real. It could be the first puppy or the last, but all good ones have the calling. You must surrender your heart like a child and the pup will fill it.



As Charlie Russell said "Romance sells"

"At the end of my years, I found companionship not in the bustle of life, but in the eyes of a loyal friend. He was a stray, his cloak was covered and his belly was empty, but his spirit was intact. With a gentle touch, I approached and he, with confidence as vast as the open sky, followed me home.

Now he is more than my dog, he is my confidant, my joy, my little beacon of hope. When I speak, he listens, answering not with words, but with a love so pure to be spoken in the silent language of tail wagging and tender licks on my tired hands.

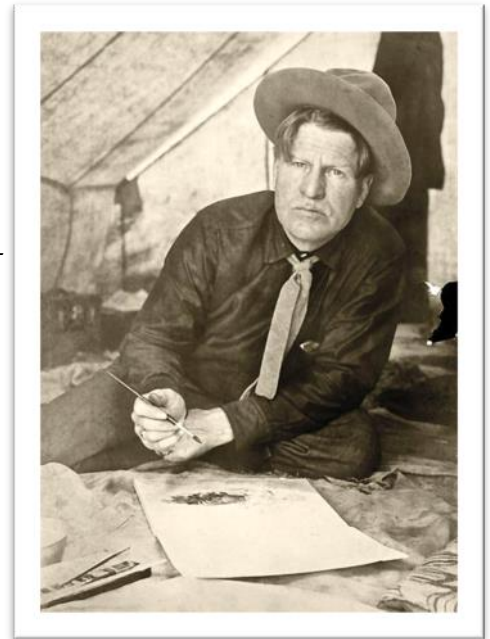
"Fido," I whisper, as the last coins jingle in our jar, "patience, my friend, for our feast is only at dawn. "

And when the sun rises, we stay together in the middle of the sea of faces overwhelmed by time, each holding the scripts of a life well lived. Fido's tail is dancing for joy, because he knows that today our bellies will be full and our hearts will be even bigger.

The cold of winter may filter through the crevices of our humble abode, but Fido is near and his warmth drives the cold away. As spring's first blossoms bloom, we bask in the golden glow, our souls entwined in silent gratitude.

From the depths of my being rises a prayer, brought up by the morning breeze: "

Thank you, Heavenly Creator, for the gift of the dog, a true friend that asks for nothing but gives everything."



Congratulations!!

Congratulations to Nate Hurliman with "Rex" and his UT 204 (Max Score) Prize I. A performance dog with a soft kid friendly heart! Good luck to a great representation of the breed and a great guy at the 2025 NAVHDA Invitational.

UKC Events

August 31 & Sept. 1, 2024

Denton, MT

Big Sky EB Gun Dog Club

WILD, TAN

Contact Sherry Niesar, 770-527-3714 or
sniesar@outlook.com

October 3rd, 4th & 5th

Tracy, MN 56175

United Vizsla Club

Liberated, TAN, WTR

Contact: Dave Retty skoglundfarm@gmail.com

December 4-7, 2024

2024 CEB-US National Conclave & Specialty Show
LaGrange and Lumpkin, Georgia

Watch for details



AKC, NSTRA & NAVHDA

Events

September 13 -15, 2024

Flathead Lake Retriever Club

Ronan, MT

FT Retriever

Contact: Luann Pleasant, (209) 840-1680,
redroverretrievers4@gmail.com

September 20-22, 2024

Western Montana Retriever Club

Ronan, MT

FT Retriever

Contact: Vicky MacLean (406) 459-6731
agillabs@mcn.net

September 17-19, 2024

American Chesapeake Club

Ronan, MT

FT Retriever

Contact: Christina Anderson, (480) 276-8332
chrisandnemo1@gmail.com



2024 Rocky Mountain Cup Field WILD Trial

**August 31 and September 1, 2024 Open to
*ALL POINTING DOG BREEDS***

13 Reasons to Attend this Field Trial

- Outstanding vistas
- High number of bird contacts for your dog at the field trial
- Compete for the famed *Rocky Mountain Cup*
- Go fish blue ribbon trout streams
- Upland game bird season starts September 1st
- Go hunt unique upland bird species
- Expand your lungs at higher elevations
- Unmatched hospitality
- Excellent and abundant food (don't plan to diet!)
- Meet new people and renew old friendships
- Win prizes at the dinner-affle
- Compete for the famed *Rocky Mountain Cup*
- Discover maple sticks at the local café (don't plan to diet!)

***Mark your calendars for
August 31 & Sept. 1, 2024!***

For more information :

<https://montanabreton.com/events-and-news/>

Trial Notes & Updates

For those of you attending: Remember to check in on Friday evening at dinner served at 6pm at the Denton Town Hall. We will provide trial information and answer your questions. If you are coming to volunteer, you can still join in the fun. Hope to see you there. If you have any questions, contact the trial secretary at sniesar@outlook.com or 701-527-3714

Trial Meal Plan: This year we are offered a trial meal package that includes 2 suppers, 2 breakfasts and 2 lunches for only \$80. This isn't your skimpy meal, its an all you can eat opportunity to sample the best cooking in Montana! If you did not order a meal, please call, text or email the trial secretary at sniesar@outlook.com or 701-527-3714 to reserve your meal ASAP.

Volunteer? Not trial ready, but want to enjoy the fun, we are always looking for volunteers to help the trial run smoothly. If you would like to volunteer 1 or both days, please contact the trial secretary at sniesar@outlook.com.

The Last Word: One last word from the field trial chairman, *"Don't miss this year's Rocky Mountain Cup Field Trial, it is the best damn wild field trial in the country!"*

New this Year!!

Silent Auction

Saturday, August 31

at the evening meal and awards gathering



Join the fun, support the Big Sky Club and plan to bid and buy items like First Covey Upland Vest, Artwork and More!

Donate to the Auction

Interested in making a donation to the silent auction?

Contact our fundraising chairman, Jim Hoschouer at 406-579-0851 or jimhoschouer@gmail.com



Toxic Algae

That time of year again “Bluegreen Algae Poisoning Time”. Commonly called blue-green algae, these critters are actually toxigenic cyanobacteria, photosynthetic prokaryotes that when environmental conditions (such as light, nutrients, water column stability, etc.) are suitable proliferate and form toxic blooms in the upper, sunlit layers of your favorite wetland, pond or lake. Toxic blooms are usually green or blue-green but can be red or brown as well. If your water looks like this keep yourself and your dog out of it.

For a list of your states water bodies with hazardous algae blooms visit your department of water quality.

In North Dakota: https://deq.nd.gov/WQ/3_Watershed_Mgmt/8_HABS/Habs.aspx

In Montana: <https://deq.mt.gov/water/Programs/habs>





Recipe: Herb Batter Bread (no knead!)

From: *allrecipes.com*

Ingredients

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 (.25 ounce) package active dry yeast
- 1 ¼ cups warm water
- 2 tablespoons shortening
- 3 teaspoons dried parsley
- ½ teaspoon dried rosemary
- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon margarine, melted



Directions

1. Combine 2 cups flour, salt, sugar, and yeast in a large bowl. Stir in the water, shortening, parsley, rosemary, and thyme. Use an electric mixer to beat on low speed for 1 minute, scraping bowl frequently. Turn mixer to medium, and beat for an additional 1 minute, scraping bowl frequently. Stir in remaining 1 cup flour; mix until smooth. Scrape batter from sides of bowl. Cover, and let rise in warm place for 35 to 40 minutes.
2. Grease a 9x5 loaf pan. Stir down batter by beating about 25 strokes. Scrape batter into greased pan; pat down with floured hands. Cover pan. Let dough rise in warm place until doubled, about 30 minutes. Do not allow dough to over-rise.
3. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
4. Bake in preheated oven until the loaf sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom, 40 to 45 minutes. Brush top with margarine. Remove from pan, and cool on wire rack.

Cook's Note:

To substitute fresh herbs, use: 1 1/2 teaspoons chopped rosemary, 1/2 teaspoon chopped thyme, and 2 tablespoons chopped parsley.



Got a great recipe to share? Please send to the editor at thewhoapost@gmail.com

Renew Your Membership

Membership to the Big Sky Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club is due at the beginning of each calendar year in January. Each member is an important component to the club, adding to the newsletter with articles and photographs and at the clubs annual field trial. If you are not a member, then consider joining. Aside from becoming a part of a group of talented, friendly and likeminded dog owners, members:

- Receive the Whoa Post
- Are eligible to place ads in the Marketplace at no charge
- List Breeder and Stud Dog information (newsletter and web site) at no charge
- Have access to dog training professionals and mentors
- Receive advance notice of special events
- Have opportunity to participate in UKC sanctioned field trials
- Join a fellowship of like minded individuals

Sally says,
"Hey Boss,
it's time to
pay our
membership
dues!"



Complete your membership form today and help support the UKC trial system.

Big Sky Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club Membership Form

Name _____ 2nd Family Member _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Membership Category \$20 Individual _____ \$30 Family _____ \$50 Business _____

Make Check out to: **Big Sky Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club**

Return form & dues to: Jim Hoschouoer 3575 Pasha Lane, Bozeman, Montana 59718