



WINGSHOOTER

Magazine of the SA Wingshooters Association

Vol. 28 No. 2 – June/July 2022



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Contents

D I G I T A L I S S U E



Vol. 28 No. 2 • June/July 2022



Use the right chokes.....8

The Cover

Speedy dove retrieve by Purdey, owned by Ian Ross, at a recent Singita dove/pigeon shoot. Photograph by André van der Westhuizen.

Editor's Message 2

Shooting & Conservation News..... 4, 6

Local, association and international news

Knives for Africa 12

Charles Duff discusses this age-old tool

Where's our Partridges & Francolins 16

Dr P.J. Viljoen explains why we prefer the original names

What makes a Hunt Successful 20

Birds for the table

Members in the Field 24 – 26

Images of our members

Shooting Tips 32

Learn from the pros



K9 – Protect your dog from overheating.....28

Seasons & Bag Limits Updated 36

Note Spurwing is closed in Gauteng & KZN bag limit

Dedicated Report Form..... 37

Do send in your report – it's a legal requirement!

Guineafowl Physics..... 38

A classic, republished article

More Shooting Venues, Suppliers

and Services..... 42-47

See what's on offer

Dedicated Reporting Procedure 48

How to submit dedicated reports

Retriever Trial Supplement..... 53

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A WORD IN YOUR EAR



The Wingshooter zeitgeist...

Paging through some old Wingshooter magazine editions of many years ago – 2005 to be exact – I came across a very entertaining article my father wrote. In this article he explains the relationship the Andromeda Galaxy, the 'Copenhagen Interpretation' and the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, have with Guinea-fowl and how to make sense of Guinea-fowl and their movements. Needless to say I'm still laughing as I write this column. Read it again on page 38 of this issue, just for old-times sake and for the benefit of new members.

Reading old articles brings back so many memories and enlightens the path the Association has been on the past 27 years. We are indeed blessed to be able to keep doing what we love and promoting the cultural activity of wingshooting in all its forms first and foremost, as well as hunting and sport shooting of every kind.

True hunters are soul developers in every way, hence our keen attraction to what is essentially pure... nature! We want to spend as much time in nature as we can. Be it hunting, fishing, photography, outdoor sports, or whatever, as long as it happens in nature.

I believe we need nature's retreat now more than ever before. The world has gone a tad Kafkaesque in my personal opinion and we need re-align this little planet soon and add a dash of speed to it, or else we will not have much left of hunting, shooting and nature in the near future. For the most part new laws and rules are being passed by folks who do not have the foggiest idea of what they speak and this is happening across the globe!

We exhibited at the recent *HuntEx2022* show, and I was a bit taken aback as there were not nearly as many actual hunting rifle and shotguns on display as previous years. There were many non-related booths, such as people selling air fryers, tires, glue, etcetera, and it missed the core of the original show, which was hunting. I think the industry support needs to pick up, as without the support of the industry at this show, I fear hunting and shooting in all its forms will be worse off. We cannot let that happen, and for that reason we will be at *HuntEx2023* again, supporting what we love and hold dear.

SA Wingshooters started as a *'speelgroepie'* (a play group) of like-minded folks doing what they love, where anyone with good manners and ethics are welcome. We want to keep it that way forever!

See you in the field!

Waidmannsheil

André –



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Murder and violence in South Africa will not be solved by disarming law abiding private citizens

South Africa hails from and exists in a continuum of political extremes. When governments hold extreme views and exercise extreme measures the losers are the citizens who elected them and there is no room in South Africa for additional extremes.

Gun Free South Africa and its newest champion, Jeremy Vearey, hold an extreme position. In their view, South Africa should be completely gun free. As desirable as this may be to persons who daily lose family and friends to violence in South Africa, we can all agree that it is completely out of touch with reality in our community. Imagine if Safe Citizen propagated the extreme view that everyone should be armed?

In fact, we believe that there are persons in South Africa who should never be entrusted with the lawful possession of a firearm. What we do believe - and this is supported by the fact that more than a million South Africans lawfully possess a firearm for self-defence - is that law-abiding and competent citizens have the right to choose to apply for a licence to possess a firearm for any lawful purpose.

It is facile to imagine that violence can be legislated out of human beings. From before 10,000 years ago when 27 members of a tribe were brutally bludgeoned and hacked to death in Kenya, to France, where on Bastille Day 2016, 31-year-old Tunisian Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, denied access to a gun, simply rented a 19-ton refrigeration lorry and drove it into crowds of holidaymakers on the Nice beachfront in France, killing 86 people and injuring 458 others, humans have proven that they will kill each other.

Statistically, the actual murder weapon of choice for South Africans is a knife (data from the South African Medical Research Council's (SAMRC) latest national survey of injury-related deaths, published in September 2021, shows that weapons

like knives ('sharp force') account for 41% of murders in South Africa. Firearms account for 32%).

In a story liberally peppered with irrelevant information about his political activism, incarceration at Robben Island, police experience and his current unemployment woes, Mr. Vearey adds little to the hackneyed refrain of Gun Free South Africa, for whom he now 'lobbies as an activist.' He appears to have forgotten that it was the possession of a firearm, or at the very least the threat of the application of a firearm that underpinned his authority within the public as a high-ranking police officer and that enabled the tens-of-thousands of police officers under



him to do their jobs with a measure of protection - for themselves and the public that they were expected to protect.

Vearey asserts that a firearm is the 'first resort of defence for middle class people who can afford to buy firearms.' Sounds much the same to me as claiming that armed response, initiated with a button but backed up by a gun is the first resort of spoiled middle class who can afford to live safely behind electric fences and high walls. Millions of South Africans will never afford to live in a gated community behind electric fences, with armed (yes armed) response. And those people have no choice but to see to their own defence

as they wait for a police van that may arrive in thirty minutes, or never.

Even prior to the events of July 2021, South Africans were in no mood to hear about being disarmed. And if there was ever a demonstration of how the police are unable to protect the public, it was the riots in KZN and Gauteng. It was the public, the lawfully armed public, that saved the day for the police while that agency floundered without leadership, organisation or ammunition.

In contrast to Mr. Vearey's view, I advance the notion that a firearm is a necessary and intrinsic part of a civilised nation. We protect our ministers, assets, celebrities and visiting dignitaries with guns, we lawfully use guns for hunting and competitive sport shooting and we rely on them for self-defence against a life-threatening attack. Whether we like it or not, guns are intrinsic to civilisation.

A firearm removes the disparity in physical strength, size or numbers between a potential attacker and a defender and is realistically the only personal weapon that puts a 60kg woman on an equal footing with a 120kg attacker. Why should private persons at the mercy of unchecked crime face criminals with empty hands while the political elite live in state-sponsored safety?

In closing, perhaps it is time for Gun Free South Africa to move away from an extreme that makes them irrelevant in our country? Could they re-brand as Crime Free South Africa and work with civic-minded persons to make South Africa an uncomfortable place for criminals? It beats punishing law abiding firearm owners while criminals roam free.

Murder and violence in South Africa will not be solved by disarming law abiding private citizens.

— Jonathan Deal. *The #SafeCitizen Campaign*

BASC statement on lead ammunition restriction proposals

Following the publication of the UK REACH restriction dossier for lead ammunition by the Health and Safety Executive today, 6 May 2022, BASC



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executive director of operations Steve Bloomfield said:

"The proposed restrictions would see a ban on the sale and use of many forms of lead ammunition outdoors in England, Scotland and Wales. Limited exemptions have been outlined in the dossier for the continued use of lead ammunition in some licensed settings.

"The wide-ranging proposed restrictions, which closely reflect EU REACH proposals, would apply to shotgun, rifle and airgun ammunition. The dossier will now undergo a high level of scrutiny and BASC will be playing a full role in that process.

"Through a six-month consultation also launched today by the HSE, we will challenge proposed restrictions where there are no viable alternatives to lead, where socio-economic factors mean a transition isn't appropriate, and where lead can continue to be used in settings that present negligible or no risk.

"We have significant concerns about the short timeframes outlined in the dossier for transition away from the use of lead ammunition, which could be as little as 18 months. This is particularly alarming in light of current global supply chain issues. We will fight for timelines that are realistic and guided by the sector to ensure that the range of lead-free products and their supply can meet market demands.

"BASC will be engaging with the regulator to ensure that proposals are robustly scrutinised and that any future restrictions are based on evidence and proportionate to identified risks. We will not accept disproportionate restrictions that unfairly disadvantage shooting activities.

"Shooting is worth £2 billion to the UK economy, employing the equivalent of 74,000 full time jobs. The proposed restrictions stand to impact all 600,000 live quarry shooters and the estimated four million target and air rifle shooters in Great Britain. The regulator must be able to show its working and acknowledge the monumental challenge that restrictions will bring to the shooting community and market.

"BASC remains fully committed to the five-year voluntary transition away from

using lead shot for live quarry shooting that has made such significant progress under challenging conditions.

"Given the severity of the proposed restrictions, the voluntary transition has afforded the sector a head-start in the move away from lead ammunition."

— BASC Press Team

<https://basc.org.uk/basc-statement-in-response-to-uk-reach-lead-proposals/>

Trophy hunting, conservation and animal welfare

Proposed anti-hunting laws in the UK and Europe threaten long-standing successful conservation models across the globe, says Prof. Amy Dickman of Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit. She discusses common



misconceptions about hunting and stresses the need for less sensationalism and more nuanced coverage of wildlife conservation. Dr. Dickman has been a frequent contributor to Conservation Frontlines.

Watch the video here (copy and paste link in your web browser):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=csM5PDLNn7M>

— <https://www.conservationfrontlines.org/current-issue-frontline-dispatches/>

SHOOT ETIQUETTE...

1. Reply promptly to all invites
2. Get the PH/shoot captain's briefing
3. Ascertain correct dress
4. Only take steady dogs
5. All cell phones off

6. Gun carry – slip or broken-open
7. Never poach a bird.
8. Prompt post-shoot thank you's.
9. Listen to the loaders.



10. Only buy good reliable gear
12. Listen to the PH/Shoot captain
13. Eat what you shoot
14. Significant other's dress, colours
15. Pick up all empty cartridges
16. No noisy cars, car doors, bright lights
17. Keep the line in walkups
18. Never shoot across the line
19. Never, ever poach a venue
20. Be on time

— Charles Duff





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How to choose the Right Chokes

Chokes play a key role in getting the best out of your sporting shotgun, so it is important to make the correct choice. William Evans explain how to go about it.

by William Evans – Courtesy of GunsOnPegs



The invention of choke and its subsequent development in the late 19th Century was perhaps the greatest advance in the history of the shotgun, because extending the effective range made it into the efficient sporting device we know today.

When considering 'choke' we tend just to think of the degree of constriction of the barrel at the muzzle, which nominally it is, but not all chokes are the same. They differ in type, such as whether they are conventional or retro, in terms of length and therefore the distance over which the shot is constricted, and also whether they form part of a multi-choke system, which also differ in terms of being internal (invisible) or external.

The advent of the multi-choke represented another major step forward, giving sportsmen the ability to tailor the effective shot pattern to the quarry and shooting environment. But, whether you are purchasing a

new gun with fixed or multi-chokes, knowing which choke to select can be a key factor in shooting well.

Whilst many sportsmen spend endless hours thinking about the 'right' chokes to use, even experienced shots often don't fully understand the subject or appreciate that it is not a panacea for success.

What I would say is that the process should not be over-complicated: eighty-plus percent of shooting is 'mental' so if you are consistently missing targets it is unlikely that the chokes are entirely to blame and your time would probably be better spent considering other causes.

The standard shotgun for game shooting has long been a side-by-side 12 bore with 28"-barrels and ¼ choke in the right, ½ in the left, but times are changing. Even side-by-sides are now available with multi-chokes and with countless options in terms of bore size, barrel length and cartridges to take into account, the choice of chokes can appear daunting.

In practice, it is somewhat simpler. For most the 12-bore remains the most appropriate, not least because it is the most versatile in coping with a wide range of quarry, from grouse to geese, but because it offers the widest availability of cartridges. Consequently, that is what we will focus on in this article.

My preference is for 'fixed' chokes as this is one less 'variable' to think about when out in the field. Where the specification includes fixed chokes I suggest at least starting off with tighter chokes, as you can always take metal out at a later stage, but it is significantly more difficult to put it back.

Half-choke is very under-rated, being tight enough for all but the most extreme situations, yet not too tight for 'normal' range shooting.

The question of multi-chokes is increasingly common as systems have become more affordable and 'discrete'. These do have an obvious advantage in allowing the more experienced shot to tailor the level of constriction to the type of shooting - for example, they may shoot grouse in August and September, then high pheasants from October.

However, unless you fully understand the benefits and capabilities of each choke, this feature will likely just make shooting more complex, and ultimately detract from your enjoyment of the sport.

Currently, about 40% of the shotguns we sell are equipped with multi-chokes, the majority being fitted to over-and-under models, with about 20% of side-by-side guns being so equipped. But how does one go about making the right choice?

Making the right choice

The starting point is to appreciate what choke is and what it does. Simply put, choke is the amount of constriction in the barrel at the muzzle, which significantly affects the size of the effective shot pattern and the distribution of the shot pellets within it. The more constriction (choke) in the barrel, generally the tighter the pattern in terms of size and pellet density, but this is not always the case.

A choke is classified by the number of pellets, calculated as a per-



centage of the total number in the cartridge, which fall in a 30" circle, the effective pattern, at a distance of 40 yards from the muzzle. In the case of a 12-bore, which has a nominal diameter of 0.729", with no choke (True Cylinder), the effective pattern will be less than 20 yards. 'Skeet', which provides a constriction of 0.005", increases that distance to around 22 yards, while Quarter or Improved Cylinder (IC) has a 0.010" constriction and generates the effective pattern at 25 yards.

The respective figures for Light Modified (0.015" constriction) is 30 yards, for Half/Modified (0.020") 32.5 yards, Improved Modified (0.025") 35 yards, ¾ /Light Full (0.030") 37.5 yards, Full (0.35") 40+ yards, and the same for Extra Full (0.040").

A rough guide is to use Skeet chokes for a target that is less than 25 yards away, ¼ choke for 25-yard targets, ½ choke at 30 yards, ¾ choke at up to 35 yards and Full for anything at 40 yards or more.

C = Cylinder (no choke); IC = Improved Cylinder (quarter choke);
M = Modified (half choke); IM = Improved Modified (Three-quarter choke);
F = Full Choke.



image: www.shopbenelli.com

In addition to the degree of constriction, or choke, many other factors impact on pattern size and quality, from bore size, the type and hardness of the shot in the cartridge, to atmospheric conditions. No two days will be exactly the same, but for practical purposes you should evaluate your shotgun with a range of different cartridge brands and shot sizes

will be shooting and choose a degree of choke that will ensure that there are no holes in the pattern that are large enough for the target, be it clay or feathered, to fly through.

Much will depend on the type of shooting you have in mind, and personal preference.

Most fixed choke guns will be over-choked as standard, simply because it

rels, which have the effect of slightly increasing shot velocity.

However, chokes that are too tight may result in 'blown' patterns, which are uneven and ineffective.

Also bear in mind that if using cartridges containing steel shot, these should only be used with a maximum of half choke. This is due to the fact that steel does not deform nearly as much as lead, and will significantly increase pressure created within the barrel, potentially damaging a heavily choked gun and injuring the shooter.

Another key point to remember is that many modern cartridges, especially those with plastic wads that 'cup' the shot to minimise the pellets scuffing against the bores, produce tighter, more even patterns, which may significantly reduce the amount of choke required for a given target.

The best chokes for game shooting:

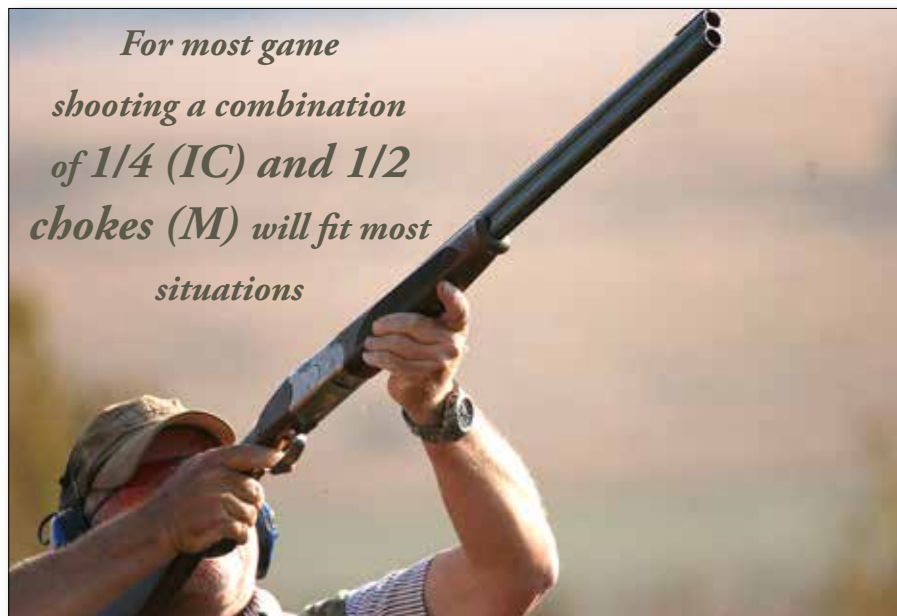
- For most game shooting a combination of 1/4 and 1/2 chokes will fit most situations
- For very high driven birds, 3/4 and full chokes may be required
- For walked-up and rough shooting, where birds are closer, cylinder or improved cylinder may be best.

This is a brief overview of a subject that can be as simple or as complex as you choose to make it. Most people over-complicate matters to the detriment of their shooting performance.

My advice would be to experiment at the pattern plate, possibly seek expert advice to help you assess pattern quality, choose one or two choke combinations that cover most of the shooting situations you are likely to encounter, and be consistent in terms of your cartridge choice, as this is another variable to think about. With that done, forget about chokes and cartridges, focusing instead on enjoying your chosen sport.

— For further details on William Evans have a look at their website. William Evans shops are located at 67a St James's Street, London SW1A 1PH (Tel: +44 (0) 20 7493 0415) and The Old Armoury, National Shooting Centre, Queens Road, Brookwood, Surrey, GU24 0NY (Tel: +44 (0)1483 486500).

<https://www.gunsonpegs.com/articles/shooting-talks/improve-your-shooting/how-to-choose-the-right-choke>



to see what works best. If you have multi-chokes, then see how the different options affect the size and quality of the patterns.

The ideal way to check how your gun performs is on a proper pattern plate, generally at a range of 40 yards, but tailor this to the distance at which you are most likely to be shooting.

The ideal pattern is characterised by an even distribution of shot across a central 30" circle and the choke determined by the percentage of pellets falling inside the circle at 40 yards. For a True Cylinder this level would be 30%-40%, Improved Cylinder (IC) 50%, Quarter/Improved 55%, Half/Modified 60%, Three-Quarter/Improved Modified 65% and Full 70%-75%, with anything over that considered Extra Full.

If the pattern is too tight your chances of hitting the target are likely to be reduced, and if it is too open then it may be possible for it to fly through the shot pattern without being hit.

The starting point is therefore to assess the likely range at which you

gives flexibility in terms of reducing the amount of choke by taking metal out. Most shotguns will also have different chokes in each barrel, with the right barrel of a side-by-side or lower barrel of an over-and-under having the least choke, but that is not always the case.

The best chokes for pheasants and other quarry

Unless you are shooting targets that are particularly close, say less than 25 yards, open chokes (cylinder or improved) are generally not to be recommended. For most purposes, a combination of 1/4 and 1/2 choke will probably suffice, and 1/2 /full may be preferable for general use, providing the ability to deal with longer range targets without too many compromising at short-range. The tighter chokes tend to 'kill' the bird, whether clay or feathered, more cleanly and thereby increase confidence.

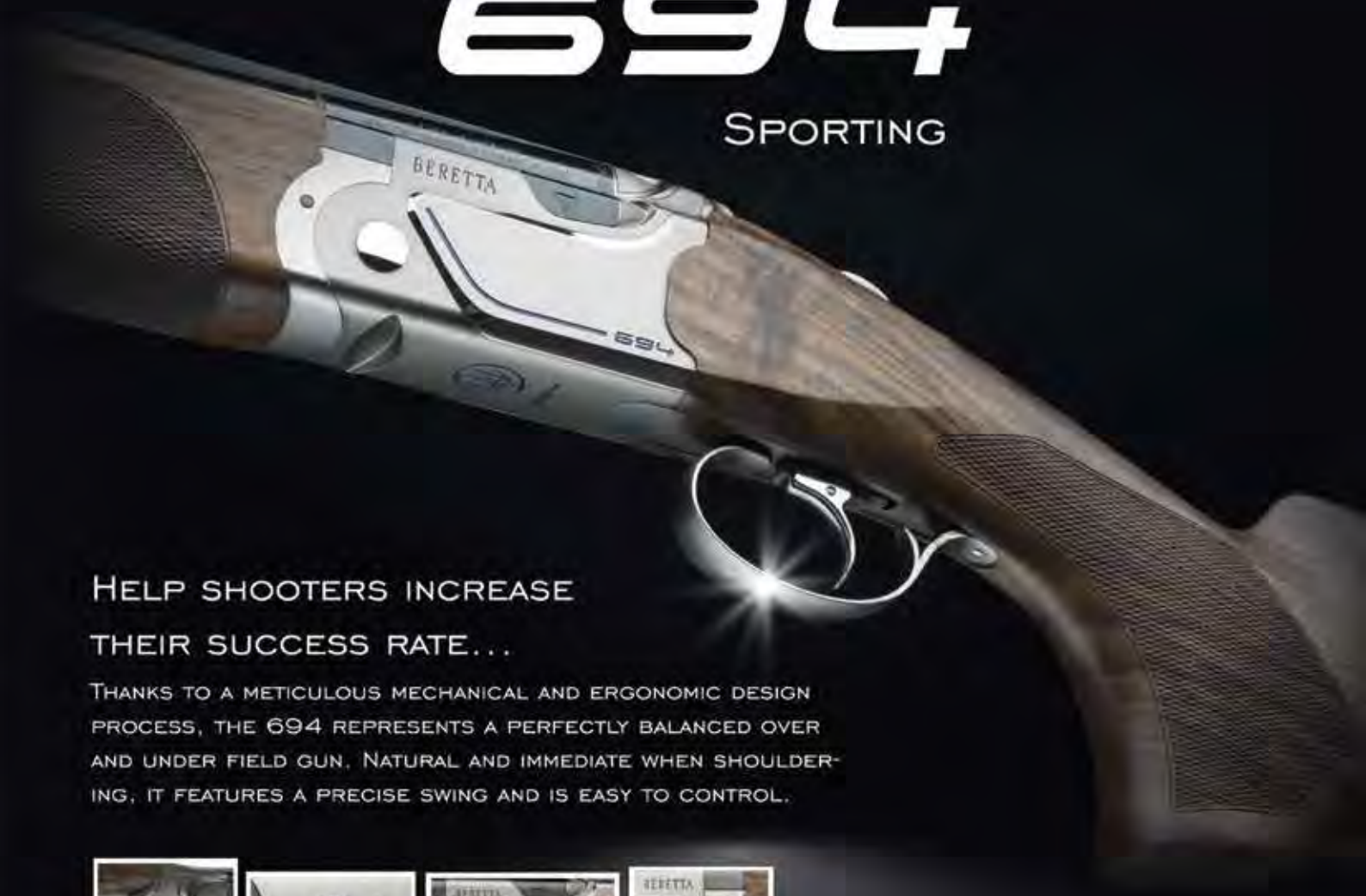
For really high targets, many find the combination of 3/4 / 3/4 or full / full chokes to be the most effective, especially when using longer bar-



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Knives for **Africa**

Let me open with the opinion of Joe Abercrombie, an author for whom I have the deepest respect, who frequently states 'you can never have too many knives' – amen



Various knives for various uses – from all over the world

by Charles Duff

photographs by André van der Westhuizen



In the United Kingdom any knife with a blade in excess of 3 inches (7.62cms), measured from the hilt so including any ricasso, is illegal. This quite markedly curtails what you can use in the field and I understand that the laws are pretty stringent.

Shades of Scotland in 1746 where the disarmed highlanders were only allowed blunt-ended blades! Here in the R of SA, any length of blade is permissible 'in the pursuit of any lawful employment, duty or activity including any cultural or religious activities'. So my skean dhu Scots dagger with its 3¾ inch blade is legal because it is one of my race's traditional weapons.

They can be surprisingly useful, provided that the blade is of decent steel – all too many are made for show only and are pretty but useless. Long experience proved to my economical kin that it was long enough to slide between the ribs and hit the heart.

Mine I made in the 80's with an American Mordseth single edged spear-point blade with African ebony scales and german silver fittings, the pommel incorporating a rough amethyst dug out of my property well north of Johannesburg, the farm over the hill contained the remnants of an old Boer silver mine, which also supplied good quantities of lead

for bullet-heads. The pommel, hilt and sheath fittings were made by a jeweller in exchange for a bag of the amethyst pebbles.

Turning to wing-shooting I have found that, whereas there is a strong South African Knife-makers Guild, there are very few members indeed who properly address the needs of a bird shooter.

A 'birding knife' should, in my opinion, have the following features: a blade length of between 3 and 4 inches; single edged with a very slight spear tip; non-folding blade with width not more than ¾ inch; flush hilt and pommel; a full length and width tang is preferable; easy to clean; the steel retaining an edge well, and a secure sheath.

In use you first open up the bird's anus somewhat by sliding the knife into it. Then with a fore finger alongside of the blade and guiding it, cut free the heart and lungs and moving forward, sever the larynx, then pull the guts and organs out of the bird.

Do this for a legal bag of ten birds and the knife is really gory. Thus, since blood is one of the more rust producing fluids around, the sooner and easier it is to wash the knife, the better. In our typical winter climate on the Highveld, the day can start at a couple of degrees minus and by noon

can be in the mid-twenties. So the quicker you gut your birds the better. The knife is most useful in giving the quietus to a wounded Spurwing or Egyptian goose. Don't even think of wringing the neck, the blade inserted just behind the eye or angling upwards through the nape of the neck and into the brain ends things quickly and quietly.

I have found that folding blades get really gummed up and require far too much cleaning effort. Further, the folding bird knives with a thin blade and built-in gut hook that emanate from the UK are mostly too small and the hook is too short if it is meant to keep you from getting your hands dirty. The bigger ones are heavy and require a sheath, so they might as well be non-folders. Also you still have to get your hands bloody getting the heart, lungs and windpipe out.

My first really successful birding knife was a 'Frost Model 277' from Sweden with a Mora steel blade that kept an edge like an angel. Unfortunately I lost it in an extensive marsh at the headwaters of a large dam on the Usutu river headwaters in Mpumalanga. The small leather

continued on page 14...

strap that secured the bubble at the top of the brass pommel worked loose over the years. I tried to replace it over several years and eventually had a replacement made in 1999, by Theunis Beukes, a well-known knife-maker from Risiville near Vereeniging south of Johannesburg. He gave me a life-long guarantee that it would never fall out of the all-enveloping elephant hide sheath. Getting it out

for getting thorns out keeps it in use every season. For skinning after many years of rather cheap sheath knives that required endless sharpening, I settled on a Muelay 'Rebeco' from Spain. A drop point hunter with a 3½ inch hollow-ground blade, half an inch of which is ricasso, and ahead of the flush brass guard is a half-moon cut out that allows the whole hand to hold the blade firmly and

white ones, the sales slogan for these is 'White knives matter'.

I also own two of the ubiquitous Opinel folders from France, the first a standard No.9 with a 3½ inch blade and the other with an unusual slim curved handle and a very thin 3¾ inch blade, both with the signature twist lock ferrule about the front of the handle. The latter came to me in a robust elephant hide sheath. Both



Okapi



Opinel Slim Fillet knife

requires a sharp pull on the short looped nylon lanyard (the original leather one wore out years ago).

Twenty-two years later I still have and use it so I guess that his guarantee is pretty safe. Subsequently I eventually obtained another Swedish 'Moraknil' with a laminated steel blade – a virtual copy of my original, except for the non-performing retaining bubble on the hilt. It relies on a longer tighter sheath to stay with its user; only time will tell how reliable this is.

The Beukes knife lives on the strap of my cartridge bag, its sheath has two horizontal loops through which the strap is threaded. On the other side of the bag, similarly hanging on the strap, is a Schrade 'Tough' multi-tool in its robust leather sheath. This is one of the best ever multi-tools, its wire cutter for snares and the odd bundles of wire that dogs can get into, plus the needle nose pliers

controllably.

The steel is a molybdenum/ vanadium alloy and it keeps an edge very well. Since I have not shot any four-legged game in a couple of decades it no longer gets much use, but it's nice to have!

For everyday carry and use I have a couple of folders, both of the liner lock genre. A big and heavy Browning with a wide 3¾ inch drop point curved edge. The heavy hilt incorporates a safety-belt cutter and a car glass breaker at the end. It's held securely in a pocket by a spring clip; a brute of a knife.

The other folder is a 'Honey Badger', made in China to a local company's specifications, a 3 inch blade with a finger cut-out in the blade matched by another in the hilt. Much lighter and barely noticed clipped into a pant's pocket. Usually the hilt scales are black but the quirky company CEO had some made with



Birding Knife

are ideal for slicing French cheeses and Italian salami, though neither gets much use but, again, they are nice to have.

The Okapi folder from Germany is remarkably common in our rural countryside and every small country store will stock these in a variety of sizes. If any knife could be called indigenous to this country, this would qualify. The long metal fitting to the back of the handle locking into

a deep cut-out at the top rear of the 3 7/8 inch blade, prevents it from over-opening. Though it folds forwards readily, there is no lock. The steel is not of the best and the older and more used ones all have much skinnier blades from continual sharpening. It is strange indeed that there are no ancient indigenous knife blades in our country, though throwing spears and assegais abound.

An obligatory Victorinox Swiss army knife has been a constant companion for decades, its corkscrew probably getting more use than either of the two knife blades, the longer at just 3 inches, and both are not lockable so it's legal in Britain. The Leatherman Micra with a puny 1 1/2 inch blade can hardly be called a knife. The scissors, tweezers and screwdriver blades have had much more use. But being found on my person at a flight check-in would result in its confiscation.

One knife that I should have is a dedicated biltong cutter, every good Boer has at least one. The most popular is typically a blunt ended folder though many have short fixed curved blades sharpened on the inside of the curve.

Another knife that used to get annual usage is my diver's knife, one-piece spear-point double edged 4 inch blade in stainless steel. This, in its polymer and rubber sheath, used to accompany me on every dive but thanks to Covid-19 I haven't been diving for several years. Twice it got me out of a tangle of abandoned nylon fishing line and once got a moray eel, which took exception to me poking around in its hole after crayfish, off my finger, which it seemed determined to keep.

Angola, to our north-west, does have an indigenous knife – usually double-edged and spear-pointed made from hand-beaten iron and hilted and sheathed in wood, generally about 9 inches long. I have three, our troops used to bring examples home during our border war in Namibia. Otherwise the European introduced ubiquitous panga (aka machete) is to be found everywhere in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Masai in Tanzania and Kenya used to make a slashing blade called a simi. Typically with an overall length of about 20 inches, the double edged and rather blunt ended blade about 14 inches long and up to 2 inches wide. The handle and sheath made from rawhide, this always stained red. Mine is of clearly European steel, the double lines on each side a dead give-away, the hilt and sheath are genuine Masai manufacture. The smaller one was made for the tourist market. For stabbing and throwing, their formidable long bladed spears are ideal, and were reputedly capable of being thrown through the body of an adult rhino.

Should you be going on your first mammalian hunt it can be a good idea to bring a couple of 3 inch skinning knives with you, these are always much appreciated by the skinners and trackers in the hunting party.



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What happened to our

Partridges & Francolins

By Dr. P.J. Viljoen, Dr. P. le S. Milstein and the late Prof. R.C. Bigalke

Traditionally, for more than 300 years, South Africans made an easy distinction between the two groups of terrestrial gamebirds that were divided into “partridges” and “francolins” in English, and “patryse” and “fisante” in Afrikaans.

Grey-wing
Partridge



image: Bobby Pistor

Matters, however, got confused in the early sixties when a scientist declared that she could find little differences between these two groups and tentatively suggested that we should call all of them francolins. More recently, scientists 'discovered', that the farmers, hunters and conservationists were right all along, and that the differences between these two groups are indeed large enough not only to warrant different genera, but to even place them on different evolutionary branches.

This interim suggestion was regrettably immediately taken up in the bird books and caused unnecessary friction, and in some cases irreparable damage between hunter and landowner. Often hunters shot what their book knowledge told them were francolins, only to discover that the birds turned out to be the scarcer partridges that the landowner had specifically forbade them to shoot.

Instead of solving the confusion, it has increased, as some leading publications insist that what everybody knows as partridges are now classified under the genus *Francolinus* and should be called francolins, and that the original francolins are classified under the genus *Pternistis* but should be called spurfowls.

The name "spurfowl" derives from *Francolinus leucosceptus* in East Africa which was named spurfowl by a scientist with an apparent disregard for the common name in usage. This also completely ignores the fact that the name 'spurfowl' is historically reserved for certain Asian bantam-like birds of the *Galliperdix* group, namely the Red Spurfowl *Galliperdix spadicea* the Ceylon Spurfowl *G. bicalcarata* and the Painted Spurfowl *G. lunulata*, all of which occur in Asia (Sibley and Monroe 1996).

Presently the vernacular names of southern African birds are in a state of flux, with numerous "new" supposedly international names

proposed. Now would consequently be an excellent opportunity to redress a grievous error in renaming two major groups of terrestrial gamebirds, well-known by their original names of "partridge" and "francolins" since the very first edition of Roberts in 1940, but which appear to be increasingly subject to "strange" names, perhaps illustrating the drift between practical and theoretical scientists. Names should facilitate communication and understanding among various interest groups, particularly when they refer to economic bird groups of undoubted interest to landowners, farmers, hunters, conservationists, administrators, legislators and the public in general.

The early naturalists, together with the farmers and hunters, readily saw the similarity of the more cryptic smaller partridge-like squatters to those of their European counterparts and promptly named them as such. They also recognised the larger upright type birds as being different from both the partridge and the pheasant and consequently the name francolin came into use.

All naturalists, farmers, hunters, and conservation officials used these names, even newcomers could soon spot the difference and everybody knew which birds were involved (Wolff and Milstein, 1976). Even today many overseas visitors and laymen almost invariably see the similarity between our partridges and those in their own countries.

Legally the situation became ridiculous in some provinces, where, if you went according to the letter of the law, you were quite legal when you shot in English all francolin species, but became a criminal when you shot in Afrikaans the "patryse". Farmers, conservationists and hunters

alike partially solved this problem by always referring back to the old partridge or francolin divisions whenever these birds were discussed.

Now the confusion borders nationally and internationally on a Babylonian chaos. Apart from the fact that the spurfowl name is totally non-descriptive, since virtually all phasianids have spurs and all galliniforms are called fowls, one might wonder if you are in Asia or Africa. Also, just imagine what it is going to sound like if you try to translate it into Afrikaans or any of the other African languages.

For those of us who are conservation minded, however, the situation is far more serious. If merely an academic difference of opinion was at stake it would not have mattered as much, but the conservation of some of our scarcer partridge species is at stake.

Confusion between the scarcer and more habitat-specific partridges and the more abundant and more resilient francolin species, which many farmers regard as pests, can cause irreparable damage to some of our gamebird populations.

Already there have been incidences reported where the hunters inadvertently shot what the farmer knows as partridges while the farmer actually gave permission to only shoot the francolins. In other incidents farmers did not implement





***“To avoid confusion
with the Asian
spurfowls, Madge and
McGowan (2002)
continue to
use the term
francolin”***

conservation management measures for their partridges since they thought that the measures applied to the francolins, which they wanted to reduce because of perceived crop damage.

We therefore appeal to conservationists, ornithologists, farmers and hunters to use the common use names to avoid confusion. Especially bearing in mind that common names are not subjected to rules but to common usage. And no, it is not an Afrikaans/

English thing – it is a conservation thing.

During the last 30 years it became clear that individual scientists could not change traditional common names that have been in usage for more than 300 years and which have proven to be a more correct biological division in the first place.

Not only do these names bridge the gap between English and Afrikaans, but many of the other African languages have also adapted the group terms partridges and francolins since their languages do not readily distinguish between the different species.

From a taxonomic point of view the term “partridge” is not restricted to the *Perdix* of Europe, but is used worldwide for some 53 different species classified in 17 different genera and from different evolutionary branches. In all cases the term “partridge” refers to medium-sized squatter type gamebirds with similar habits.

Clearly the term “partridge” is not restrictive and promotes worldwide recognition of a bird group with an apparent parallel or convergent evolutionary development.

Madge and McGowan (2002) in their book “Pheasant, Partridges and Grouse”, the leading authority on terrestrial gamebirds of the world, state that the revision of Crowe et al. (1992) has not been universally accepted, and they regard Crowe’s revision as subgenera of *Francolinus*. To avoid confusion with the Asian spurfowls, Madge and McGowan (2002) continue to use the term “francolin”, following the vernacular name long used in South Africa and adopted by Urban et al. (1986).

In conclusion we would like to formally add our plea to that of Milstein and Wolff (1984) and Duff (2000) that our gamebirds should be recognised by their grassroot names by the entire public, and not only by the so-called initiated.

If there should be a distinction required between our gamebirds and the European counterparts let us refer back to the established names, and, if necessary call them African partridges and African francolins, and in so doing end the increasing confusion, and promote conservation instead of trying to talk over the heads of the

public and unnecessarily confusing them to the undoubted detriment of gamebird conservation.

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Postscript: Professor R.C. Bigalke contributed to and approved of earlier drafts of this article, shortly before his untimely death. Based on an article originally published in *Wingshooter* edition 2 of 2001.





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What makes a successful HUNT?

I have, over the years, often pondered about what makes a successful hunt.

by Four One Six

On a recent hunt near Alldays this question came up again. A hunting buddy of many years and I were sitting on a rocky outcrop, glassing an area of roughly 800ha in front of us for a specific group of three big kudu bulls that we knew lived there. We had the privilege to hunt on 7200ha of pristine Bushveld real estate on the Botswana border and we were on day three...

The hunting had not been easy and, although the rest of the party had been successful, we (despite having a collective experience of 70 years and putting in the effort), had very little to show for it. According to the owner, the farm had 600 impala and a multitude of blue wildebeest, kudu, red hartebeest, eland, giraffe, waterbuck and sable but very few animals were seen, given the overcast weather and size of the farm. Furthermore, a migrating herd of eighty elephant had ventured onto the property, which in turn resulted in certain areas being off limits for "safety reasons". The party had effectively shot everything that they had come across and the cold room was full but the general consensus was that the farm, compared to other farms, had little game. If you do not see game or signs of game there normally are none or very few around!

Both of us prefer to hunt on our own, revelling in the challenge of



outwitting Africa's wily plains and big game with rifle and bow. The ability and opportunity to hunt Africa's antelope species successfully without being chaperoned, is the ultimate hunting experience.

Unfortunately, the owner of the farm that we had been hunting for the past 23 years had sold his farm. We were accordingly hunting blind on an unknown farm, stuck with trackers that knew less about walk and stalk hunting than either of us. The trackers on this farm preferred the "sitting at a convenient spot and wait" method and although we have used this method in the past, nor-

mally whilst resting during a hunt, neither of us preferred it as a primary way of hunting. Furthermore, having one sixteen and four seventeen year olds sitting idle in a hide for hours on end, not seeing anything, is not conducive to a great hunting experience!

So what exactly constitutes a successful hunt? Is it easy or a freezer full of game? Or an entry in Rowland Ward or Safari Club International?

Or is it the overall experience that one derives from the hunt?

When a hunter starts out, success is often measured by how many of this and how many of that he/she had hunted. Some move on to chasing



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horn lengths but as one gains experience you realise that none of these really makes a hunt successful.

To my mind, the success of a hunt is determined by the degree of difficulty that the hunter has to endure and overcome in order to do the actual hunt. Some of the most successful and memorable hunts in my life have not ended with a dead animal. The ability to keep going day after day, not giving up, pushing a bit more, having a never say die attitude and outwitting your quarry is what makes a hunt memorable. Knowing that you have hunted non-stop for six days in the past, only to get lucky on the last session of the seventh day! Walking the whole morning with one farm tracker only to have another one allotted to you in the afternoon (as the first suddenly has farm chores to attend to) says a lot about you as a hunter!

I have hunted buffalo during a rainy spell in the mountains of Zululand for days on end in pouring rain without actually shooting one, lying flat on my stomach in the rain and mud, surrounded by buffalo, waiting for the right opportunity that never came. A buffalo is huge, and looking up at a few bulls standing only fifteen feet away whilst lying prone is both exhilarating and frightening at the same time and will not be easily forgotten. I also, during that

same hunt, experienced what it is like to hear and smell a black rhino on the other side of a small bush so thick that you cannot see the actual bull. I did shoot a buffalo during that trip but the aforesaid interactions with other buffalo and a black rhino at extremely close range overshadowed the taking of the trophy by far!

My late father once told me the story of a well-known radio personality in the 1970's who dreamt of hunting buffalo for thirty years. So he saved up, bought his big game rifle and kit, read all the books he could find, practiced and finally booked his hunt in the then Rhodesia after years of saving – only to bump into a huge buffalo bull whilst leaving camp on the morning of the first day of his hunt. He unfortunately gave in to his PH's urges to shoot the monster forthwith, which he duly did, from the hunting car – what an anti-climax!

Thirty years' of dreaming, anticipation, planning and excitement - all for nothing. Needless to say, he was so disgusted and disappointed with himself that he never hunted again. He did not even mount the trophy!

Shooting a 55" buffalo bull from the Landcruiser on your way to the hunting area can and will never equate to shooting a scrum-cap dagga bull on foot on day seven whilst hunting in 48 degrees Celsius in the Zambezi

Valley on a 600,000ha concession!

Even hunting buffalo in the conventional manner over many days, enduring the hardship it entails, without actually shooting one, in my mind, still beats actually shooting the 55 inch from the Landcruiser. The anticipation of the hunt, finding and tracking of the animal forms a big part of the overall experience, much more so than the actual shooting thereof – do not do anything that will take away that satisfaction.

One of my most memorable kudu hunts was near Vivo at the foot of the Soutpansberg and entails the stalking of a kudu bull solo for the better part of a day and making a great off-hand shot with the .416 Rigby at 90 yards while only seeing the upper part of the bull's thick neck and head when the opportunity presented itself. I knew it was a bull but its horns were obscured by the branches of the tree. I only noticed its size when I walked up to it – the slaughtered carcass weighed just under 200kgs and as an added bonus the horns measured 59 inches!

We hunt for the experience, to find ourselves and bond with Nature - the meat and trophy size is secondary - the overall experience is everything! Let's face it, if you wanted meat your local butchery is more convenient and the biltong is also much nicer! I suspect that that primal urge of the hunt experienced by hunters a thousand years ago still inexplicably flickers in many of us!

Both my sons have accompanied me from the age of eight on hunts and both have been successful in the field. Over the years I instructed them in the art of field craft, tracking, stalking, follow-up, skinning and butchering. They are now young men and at an age where I can send them off on their own, knowing that they have been taught properly and can handle themselves well. I derive more pleasure from their success than hunting on my own!

On the Alldays hunt one of my sons took along a friend that never had the privilege to hunt and despite having to hunt hard both were successful - nothing beats introducing a novice to the proper art of hunting and then having him/her hunt their first animal successfully. The sparkle

in their eyes says it all and is a great reward indeed.

Hunting is much more than just firing the shot – it is the whole experience, the arrangement and planning of the hunt, the waiting in anticipation, the travelling to the hunting area, the walking and stalking and the tired but rewarding evenings around the camp fire with lifelong friends and family members that make you aware that time is precious and has to be spent well!

The success of a hunt is also directly related to your fitness and overall condition – you, after all owe it to yourself to keep in shape. The fitter you are the easier the hunt, the harder the effort you can put in and, on many occasions, the more pleasurable and better the result!

The ability to keep going, despite not seeing a lot of tracks in the sand, despite the thirst, the cold, the hunger and the discomfort, is important. As is the mental capability to put the negative experiences and fear of failure behind you – to get back on the horse as they say, to try something different – even if you fail, again and again.

Having a positive mind-set is extremely important when an animal is wounded. Anyone that boasts that he has never wounded an animal whilst hunting is either lying or just has not hunted enough. Sooner or later it happens to all of us, for a variety of reasons ranging from poor marksmanship, a moving animal, excessive shooting distances or a myriad of other reasons. Despite what many may think – not all game animals are killed instantly. Many animals are wounded, some drop merely to get up again and not all of these are successfully tracked down and recovered. Not all wounded game provides you with a proper spoor, blood or otherwise. That is when the knowledge of your target species, tracking and field craft and a positive attitude determines success or failure! I have tracked and followed up numerous antelope that only bled for the first time on the load bin after being recovered. Likewise I have been present quite a few times when both the hunter and tracker openly declared a miss – only to after employing the basics of a follow up find the dead

*To be successful you
have to possess an
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of the bush.*

antelope a short way off.

Too many youngsters today never get the opportunity to properly hunt on foot and to become part of nature itself. Instead they grow up shooting truckloads of antelope from the back of a pick-up loaded with cooler boxes and empty beer cans whilst listening to pumping music from earphones... measuring success by the number of animals shot in the shortest period of time. Inspired by 30 minute Youtube videos titled "40 Kills in 60 minutes", portraying a noble pastime as being a drive-through event and failing to present realistic hunting conditions or its challenges.

To be successful you have to possess an intimate knowledge and understanding of your quarry and like any other predator, have to become part of the bush. Outwitting an antelope in its own habitat is the ultimate experience...

In the end, lying on that rocky outcrop in Alldays, we spotted one of the big kudu bulls resting underneath a thorn tree at the fringe of a dense pocket of bush, 500 yards away. A bit far for the .308Win Ruger M77 Compact rifle with its 16, 5" barrel, 185grain Lapua Mega rounds and 2-7 x36 Leupold telescope, difficult but not impossible.

We decided that, as the load's trajectory was unknown over that distance, not to shoot and to get closer. Knowing that the group contained three bulls, we continued to scan the surrounding bush for the others, as it was important to know their location

in order to plan a stalk.

After a while we spotted the second member of the group, browsing 50 yards to the right. However the third bull was nowhere to be seen. The first bull had also gotten up and was slowly feeding towards the second. As the wind was favourable and time was running out, we decided to make a stalk, hoping to reach a specific tree at the beginning of an open area that would hopefully give us an open shot. Slowly we approached the general area, stopping frequently to listen, carefully placing our feet and checking the wind, finally getting to the tree we identified – only to spook the still unseen third member, sending the group away with the hoarse cough all kudu hunters know so well.

We gave them a bit of time before carefully resuming the stalk, this time cutting the running spoor and following same for quite a while, through a dry river bed, past one of the biggest Leadwood trees I have ever come across, ending up at a fence a kilometre away with the kudu bulls nowhere to be seen.

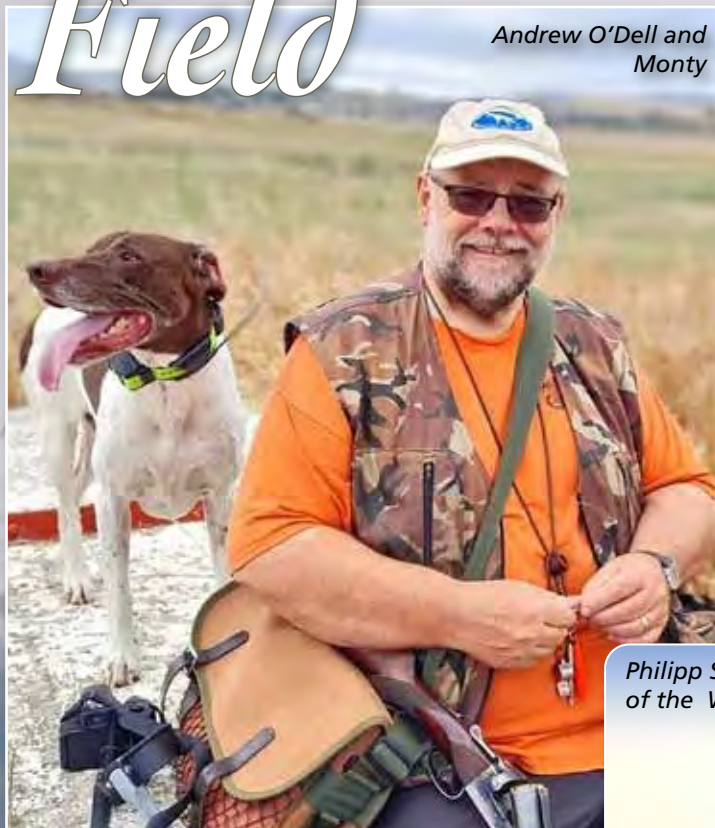
Turning back we came across the fresh spoor of one of the bulls that had split off and apparently turned back to the thickly wooded bush. Immediately we resumed the stalk, checking the wind, eventually ending up back on the bank of the dry river bed. As we were admiring the bush and discussing the potential location of a future bow blind, my hunting partner noticed the head and magnificent set of horns, making its way through the bush, a mere 50 meters away – heading for the hill but not allowing any shot.

We got on it again but that bull was just too clever for us and we could only smile. Big kudu bulls are not called "Grey Ghosts" for nothing! I will always remember that day – we did not shoot that bull in the end but it was still the most successful stalk of that hunting trip in my book! Time spent in the bush hunting with close friends and family is precious, regardless of the number of animals shot.

You can still have the same quality of a hunt as the legends of old – it just depends on how much effort you are prepared to put in! Hunting is, in my book – like climbing Mount Everest – not supposed to be easy!

Members in the Field

Andrew O'Dell and Monty



From left:
Ian Ross and
Jason Klein
at Singita



Philipp Schulz and friends at one
of the Western Cape venues



Corrie Jordaan at Singita venue



Mike Constantinou
and his son.



The Vice-Chairmen of SA Wingshooters, from left: Peter Karsas, Dr Henni Boudjelthia and Dr Alan Kloeck at the Association's National Council meeting.



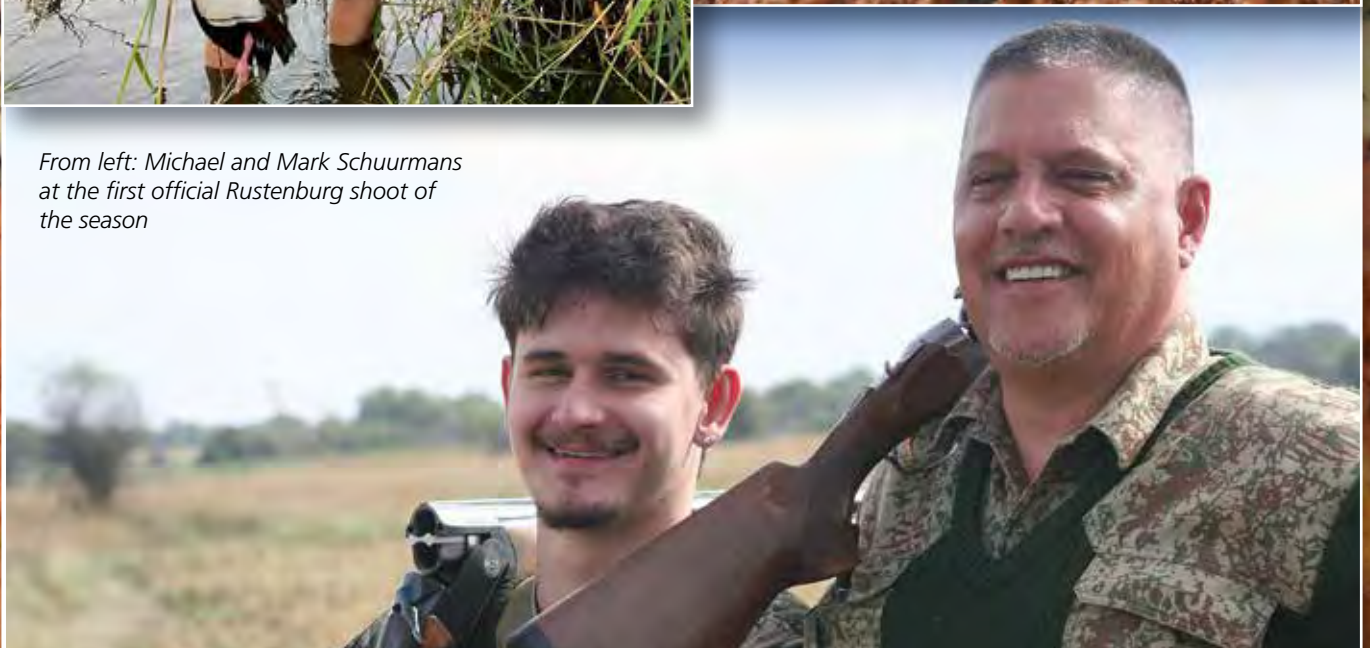
Neil Swart at the Ceres venue



*Bernard Cilliers at the Erdzak venue.
Amazing Rocky flights!*



*From left: Michael and Mark Schuurmans
at the first official Rustenburg shoot of
the season*



Members on our LRSC Range

Multi-gun practice

Member Andrew Pamphilon

From left: Etienne Polson, Martin Magwaza, Friedel Kirstein, Charl Jacobs & Angelo Spada

Doc Mongezi putting that AI to work!

Jan Potgieter and Pieter Greeff

Danie Tait always – the Open Minor division king!

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Protect Your Dog from Overheating and Heat-Related Illness

Joe Spoo DVM, DACVSMR explains the signs of heatstroke in hunting dogs and how to prevent it while in the field

Courtesy of projectupland.com



It wasn't quite noon on the prairie and the light northwest breeze made the early season hunt seem almost cool. Usually on these early September prairie grouse hunts I would call it quits by noon, but after a rough summer at work and this being my first outing of the season, I decided Emma and I could make one more loop.

We started into the cool breeze with the sun at our backs and life was good. For a Chesapeake, Emma was quite athletic in the uplands and covered ground gracefully. I was lulled into the enjoyment of the moment and continued across the prairie. As we looped around to head back to the truck, my heart sank; the now-midday sun was blazingly hot as we marched toward it and the light wind that was now at our back offered no relief. While Emma was graceful in the uplands, one thing she definitely wasn't, was heat tolerant. I knew we could be in trouble by the time we got back to the truck.

I soaked her with my one remaining water bottle and hoped for the best. By the time we made the truck, even I was miserable, and Emma's harsh panting, wide tongue, and vacant look in her eyes told me I came very close to pushing my best

friend too far. I quickly fired up the truck's air conditioning, soaked her again, and put her in front of the vents. Her breathing came under control and my dog was back; I knew I had dodged a bullet. Nearly 20 years later, there hasn't been a time that I turn a dog loose I don't think about the conditions we are starting under and how those might change while the dog is working.

What to know about working dogs in extreme temperatures

A vast majority of hunting dogs in North America start their seasons with temperatures that can reach the 90s in the early season. Those same dogs may end their seasons by hunting in wind chills 10-20 degrees below zero. That is more than a 100-degree swing over the course of a working season. Emma was certainly one of those dogs who would start with early-season dove and grouse hunting and end the year on late-season ducks and pheasants. When asking a dog to work in such extremes, it is vital to understand your dog, the weather, and what to do should they experience the extremes of hyperthermia or hypothermia.

While it's important to understand the signs and treatment for both extremes, I will say that heat stroke, or hyperthermia, is much more common than hypothermia. It's also a condition that we tend to cause as handlers. As a veterinarian who specialises in hunting dogs, I get to interact with a lot of gun dog owners from all over the country. I am commonly asked about hypothermia and almost never asked about hyperthermia. In contrast, the reality is that we unfortunately lose dogs to heat every single year and yet in 20 years of practice I've not lost one patient to hypothermia.

What causes hyperthermia?

Overheating is a condition that develops from the body's inability to regulate its own temperature. Basically, the heat being produced by the body is greater than the heat being dissipated.

The causes of heat stroke in hunting dogs are numerous, but at the top of the list is a lack of conditioning. Too many hunters take their dogs from the couch or the kennel straight into the field without any thought about the dog's level of conditioning. This would be akin to taking most of us on a given day and demanding that we run a marathon...at the drop of the hat. The difference is that we're able to say no and are in tune with

of overheating will predispose a dog to overheating again, because overheating can cause the body's internal thermometer to become dysregulated and make the dog more susceptible to future episodes.

It is also important to know that a dog in water can still experience heat stroke. This is particularly true in the summer and early fall when many of the shallow bodies of water have had time to heat up. At these times it can



our bodies enough to know when to stop. Our dogs, on the other hand, love to hunt and love to perform; by the time they are showing signs of a problem, it is often too late.

Other causes of overheating include lack of acclimatisation, high humidity, and high temperatures. A rule of thumb used by many dog trainers down south is that if the sum of the ambient temperature added to the relative humidity is greater than 150, you probably shouldn't be running your dogs. Heat stroke can still develop at lower temperatures, but this is when it becomes particularly dangerous. You'll also see heat problems with too much exercise done too soon without a warmup. Also, an obese animal is going to be much more prone to overheating than one running at a lean body weight. Previous episodes

be like swimming the dog in a hot tub. Just because they are wet does not mean they are cool. The bottom line is that you should always try to be smart when working your dog in any type of heat.

Signs of hyperthermia

Signs that your dog may be getting close to overheating include heavy panting and/or extreme hyperventilation. These dogs are not just hot; they are trying to move as much air as possible in an often-futile attempt at dissipating body heat. Many of these dogs will also be hypersalivating. They will come back with long ropes of drool coming out of their mouths or puddles of saliva around them. They will also have an altered mental state and appear glassy-eyed. Often when you look at these dogs they will look like they

continued on page 30...

are in trouble, almost as though no one is home when you look them in the eyes. Many will become ataxic (stumbling and incoordination) and show muscle weakness. Often, but not always, there may be vomiting or diarrhea. From here it may progress to total collapse.

At this point you are probably wondering what temperature the body has to reach to fall into the category of heat stroke, but unfortunately there isn't one particular number. The normal body temperature of dogs is 100-102.5F (37,7 – 39,1°C), but in normal working dogs without heat stroke, we can have temperatures during and immediately following exercise that get up around 106-

The normal body temperature of dogs is 100 -102.5 F (37,7 – 39,1 °C)



107 F (41,1°C to 41,6°C) without causing a problem. But these are the same temperatures at which we start worrying about heat damage starting to occur with heat stroke.

This is where having a thermometer in your emergency kit becomes important. If your dog's temperature does not begin to fall immediately, or worse it continues to climb, after the exercise is stopped, then your dog is in trouble.

To better understand your four-legged hunting partner, I recommend taking your dog's temperature

after a day of hunting or while out training when you are not even close to crossing the overheating line. This will give you an idea at what temperature your pup typically runs while at work and will allow some sort of baseline if you ever get into trouble out in the field.

During heat stroke, all the body systems are affected. The tissues of the body are essentially cooking themselves as proteins denature. When we get these dogs into the clinic they have severe blood chemistry abnormalities, including acute liver disease

and kidney failure. They can develop a coagulopathy and bleed internally or develop a respiratory distress syndrome. All of these conditions can quickly lead to death if not treated immediately and aggressively.

How to treat overheating dogs and when to seek veterinary care

As far as starting treatment in the field, the most important thing is to get them cooled down. If there is water around, get them a cool water bath or spray them down. If you are going to cool them in standing water, be sure to wade in and hold on to them, as they could collapse and drown or get out too deep and not be able to make it back. Apply ice to the hairless portion of the belly and especially deep in the armpits and groin, as there are some very large blood vessels in these areas that help cool them down quickly. You may also get them in the vehicle with the air conditioning on high and the fans blowing directly on the dog.

During the entire cooling process, monitor the dog's temperature and stop cooling them when the temperature reaches 103 F. This will make sure you are not cooling them too fast. It is very easy to over-cool these dogs and drop them down too low and end up causing hypothermia. Remember – the internal thermostat is no longer working correctly.

If it appears that your dog has experienced heat stroke and is showing symptoms, seek veterinary attention. It is important to continue attempting to cool your dog down while transporting them to a vet. Hospitalisation, monitoring, and supportive care are very important and in many cases are a necessity in order to save these dogs. Many dogs that survive may have long-lasting problems; the sooner they receive veterinary care, the better their chances.

– This story was originally published in the Fall 2020 Hunting Dog Confidential Issue 1.1.

https://projectupland.com/hunting-dogs/protect-your-dog-from-overheating-and-heat-related-illness/?mc_cid=ec97b0f234&mc_eid=f4a76f1beb

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SHOOTING TIPS

Some tips and hints from shotgun shooting pros and authors...

don't like the term "bayonet move" because it implies that we should thrust our shotgun at the target and shift our balance to the front foot...which is ill-advised. As we mount the shotgun in FITASC, should we mount and move simultaneously using both hands to move to the cheek and breakpoint, or should we use a more aggressive one-handed move? The answer is, it depends.

Similar to sporting, there are a handful of different techniques a shooter can use in FITASC to break the same target. Unlike sporting clays, however, each move must be initiated from a "legal" low-gun ready position. As a FITASC shooter, we may have to use a technique that differs from the move we would use in sporting clays in order to adapt to this "limitation."

For example, if we are presented with a crossing target with a long window, we would not need to adjust much from our "default" technique for engaging crossing targets, whether we use pull-away or sustained lead. In this case, we would assume a good ready position, call for the target, then mount and move to the cheek and target (or insert point) with both hands moving equally and together.

What if, on the other hand, we are presented with a fast trap-like target thrown from a trap machine 20 yards in front of us? In sporting clays, we might choose a pre-mounted ready position, but in FITASC we might opt to hold our muzzle at the same level as the breakpoint and primarily use the back hand to get the gun to the cheek and shoulder, using the muzzle bead as a "hinge" so to speak. While we can't vary our draw length in FITASC (distance between the comb and the cheek), we can adapt our move to the character of the target.

— *This tip came from Don Currie who is the chief instructor of the National Sporting Clays Association. His instructional DVD "Focus – Movement – Faith" is the #1 rated sporting clays DVD on Amazon*



at <https://amzn.to/3jEtt1u>. For more about Don, visit his web site at <https://doncurrie.com>.

For a right-handed shooter, the perceived lead on a left-to-right crossing target will be slightly greater than for a right-to-left crossing target. The actual lead is the same, however. Why the perception of greater lead? Let's start by recognizing that all lead should be subconscious and that measuring is bad, no matter what the reason.

Over your shooting life, you will accumulate a subconscious "database" of leads, so this is not something about which you should agonize because we subconsciously adjust for the perceived lead differential. If we were to "measure", however, the perceived lead on a left-to-right will be appear to be greater than that of a right-to-left crosser because we see

binocularly (with two eyes).

The perception of incremental lead for a left-to-right crossing target is due to the influence of the left eye on our sight picture. When looking at a left-to-right crosser with two eyes, your left eye sees more lead than the right eye given the angle of offset between the left eye and the rib/muzzle. With a right-to-left flat-trajectory crossing target, your left eye sees the target across the barrel and is often blocked by the barrel so the left-eye bias doesn't occur.

It is also important to note that the difference in perceived lead between these two targets will be different for different shooters depending on the degree of dominance of the right eye. If you only had one eye, and shot off the same shoulder as your one eye, then there would be no perceived difference in lead between these two types of targets. For left-handed shooters, this phenomenon is reversed.

– This tip came from Don Currie who is the chief instructor of the National Sporting Clays Association. His instructional DVD "Focus – Movement – Faith" is the #1 rated sporting clays DVD on Amazon at <https://amzn.to/3jEtt1u>. For more about Don, visit his web site at <https://doncurrie.com>.

Just as with standard target presentations, target trajectory or line is the most important thing to consider with dropping targets. It is unusual for a target that is not dropping rapidly to produce a truly vertical line – usually there is a slight deviation to the left or right. Failure to see this subtle nuance in the target's trajectory, combined with the added effects of the weight of the gun, often will produce vertical momentum in the barrels as the shot is triggered, and a miss to either side of the target. As the upper torso moves forward with this bowing movement, the arms must guide the gun accurately on the same line as the target. I often tell my students that

line is more important than lead because if you get the target line wrong on a dropper, you might as well forget about lead.

– This tip came from the book "Successful Shotgunning – How to Build Skill in the Field and Take More Birds in Competition" by Peter Blakeley.

Many top competitors are adamant that they shoot the same technique, regardless of the target presentation. Watch many top performers in various disciplines, yes, they do use one technique most of the time, but whether they are aware of it or not, all change, adapt and modify their first-choice technique on some target presentations. In fact, micro-managing or adjusting of techniques occurs on every target they shoot.

– This tip came from the book "Breaking Clays, Target Tactics, Tips & Techniques" by Chris Batha.

The mind will accept only so much concentration. Too much of it is tiring and

will eventually dull the shooter's capabilities. The most common example is the new shooter who starts concentrating the night before the shoot, turning and tossing in bed, mentally going over the targets he must hit the next day. But birds hit the night before do not count on the scoreboard, so there is no use in lying awake shooting at them. The top guns will be relaxing trying to think of something else.

– This tip came from the book "Shotgunning – The Art and the Science" by Bob Brister.

Even when the best shooters are on a good score card at the last two or three stations, there is a strong inclination to start the gun just a little bit closer to the trap, even when they don't need to. It's comforting to get that barrel where you can see it really well, but if anything, you should do the opposite.

– This tip came from the book "Sporting Clays Consistency: You Gotta Be Out of Your Mind!" by Gil & Vicki Ash.

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One association

We do it all

SA Wingshooters Association is truly the one association for all shooting disciplines. With us you can do it all. We offer shooting events and venues in all divisions, including shotgun, rifle, handgun, semi-auto rifle, long range target shooting and multi-gun sport shooting...



The SA Wingshooters Association has been accredited by the CFR as a Dedicated Hunting Association, since 2004.

In fact, we are the second oldest accredited association in South Africa.

We have current members, many of whom regularly participate in the various sport shooting disciplines available and thus have a definite need to be able to grant such members the Dedicated Sport Shooting status, in order to enable them to fully participate in their chosen sport. So, we are now both an accredited sport shooting and hunting association, as we have members who want dedicated status, but who do not hunt.

We currently offer the following sport shooting disciplines to our members, either at our own facilities/ranges, or at any range country-wide and internationally:

PSP (Postal Shooting Programme) target shooting for handguns, rifles and self-loading rifles. Various target shooting tables/disciplines are offered, which can be practiced at any range world-wide. All our targets are available on our website.

Clay Target Shooting – all members have access to Clay Target

Shooting using shotguns at any accredited clay target range or club (CTSASA, COMPAK, etc.) country-wide.

Long Range Rifle Shooting – we have our own dedicated long range rifle shooting range in Gauteng, where members compete over shooting distances ranging from 100m to 1900m. This range also affords us the opportunity to offer a 2-gun sport shooting discipline (handgun and rifle combination shooting with movement and transitions), starting at 10m for handguns, to 100m and then up to 600m for self-loading rifles, with official division categories for calibres and types of rifles.

Handgun Shooting – we offer handgun shooting, again at our LRSC range, or any other range world-wide via the PSP, on our 17 target steel pistol range with targets from 10m to 100m, and includes a 6-plate duelling tree.

The requirements for obtaining a Dedicated Sport Shooting status will be as follows:

All prospective applicants will have to complete a practical shooting qualification exercise, in either handgun, rifle or shotgun. A minimum final score of 50% must be attained in order to qualify and must be signed

off by a range officer or club official.

All qualified members must submit an annual report to us, in confirmation of their minimum dedicated sport shooting activities, as required. We propose a minimum of three sport shooting activities per year for members in order to retain such status.

Should you hold current dedicated sport shooter status elsewhere, we will accept that status, if it is indeed current, on the basis of RPL.

The Long Range Shooting Club (LRSC) and the PSP (Postal Shooting Programme) are part of SA Wingshooters and are subject to its constitution, disciplinary codes and rules of ethical conduct.

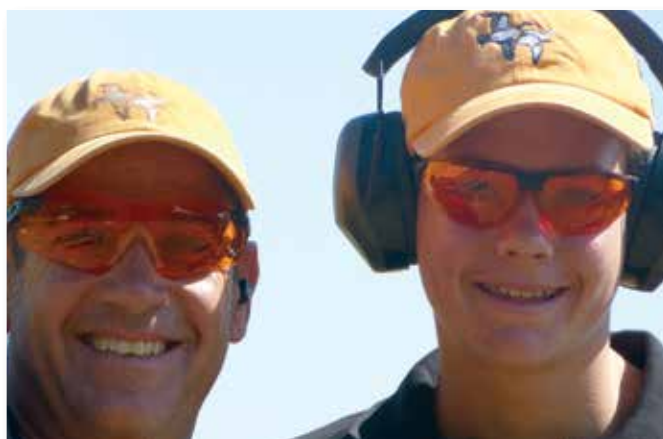
Lastly, as you know, the SA Wingshooters Association has R20-million liability insurance to cover the Association, with each individual member also having R20-million liability insurance as individual cover, for all shooting-related activities.

We are proud to be an association that offers all forms of shooting and hunting to our members. Thanks for your support!





We offer all types of shooting and hunting... as well as coaching!



PROVINCIAL BIRD HUNTING SEASONS (and bag limits in brackets)

MPUMALANGA – Not yet gazetted – Same as last year

All year	Rock pigeons (need licence).
1 May-31 Jul	Yellow-billed duck, red-billed teal, Egyptian goose, Spurwing, Guineafowl, Spurfowl, Crested francolin, Coqui francolin, Orange River Partridge, Shelley's.
1 June-31 Aug	Grey Wing, Redwing

FREE STATE – NEW season dates! Take NOTE!

All year	Rock pigeons, Cape turtle dove, Laughing dove, Red eye dove.
1 June-15 Sept	Greywing & O/River partridge, common quail, guinea fowl, Swainson's francolin, yellow-billed duck & red-billed teal, Egyptian goose, spurwing, Red KnbKoot
1 Jan - 30 Apr	Shelduck (1)
Note:	(maximum 10 land & 10 water birds pp per day)

GAUTENG – Not yet gazetted – Same as last year

1 May-30 April	All year. Rock Pigeons (need licence) (20).
1 May-31 Jul	Egyptian geese (5); Red-bill teal (5); Yellow-bill duck (5). Note: Spurwing remain closed!
1 Jun-30 Sep	Swainsons francolin (5).
1 Jun-30 Sep	Helmeted Guinea fowl (5).

N-WEST PROVINCE – Gazetted – Same as last year

All year	Rock pigeons (No limit), Red eyed dove (20), Cape turtle dove (20), laughing dove (20) (licence required).
1 May-30 Sep	Francolin: Red-billed (3), Crested (5); Partridge: Coqui (5), Guinea fowl (10).
1 May-30 Aug	Partridge: Shelleys (5), Redwing (5); Quail: Harlequin (5), Common (10); Rameron Pigeon (5).
1 Apr-31 Jul	Partridge: Orange River (5).
1 Apr-15 Jul	Namaqua Sandgrouse (5).
1 Nov-31 Apr	Sandgrouse: Burchells (5), Double-banded (5).
1 May-31 Jul	Duck: White-faced (4), Yellow-bill (4), Cape Teal (4), Red-bill (4), Cape Shoveler (4), Southern Pochard (3), Knob-bill (4), Spurwing (4).
1 Jun-30 Sep	Swainsons Francolin (5), Natal Francolin (3).
1 Jan-31 Jul	Egyptian Goose (4).
1 Jan-31 Mar	Shelduck (2).
Note:	A Maximum combined total of 10 land birds & 10 waterfowl per day.

LIMPOPO – Gazetted – Same as last year

All year	Rock Pigeons (licence) (50), Red-eyed Turtle Dove (50)
1 May- 30 Sep	Guinea fowl (10), Crested Francolin, (6), Shelley's (2); Natal francolin (6).
1 May - 31 Jul	Egyptian (6) & spurwing (4), white-faced whistling duck (6), Yellow-bill duck (4), red-billed teal (4).
1 Jun- 30 Sep	Swainson's francolin (8).
Note:	Total combined daily bag of (10 land & 10 water birds)

WESTERN CAPE <https://www.capenature.co.za> – Gazetted

1 Jan-31 Dec	Spurwing (3) & Egyptian goose (10), rock pigeons (and Cape turtle dove, Laughing dove, Red eye dove, Speckled Pigeon) (40 in total), guinea fowl (10),
1 Jan-30 Jun	Yellow-billed duck (5), red-billed teal (10), shelduck (5), Cape teal (10), Cape shoveler (5), southern pochard (5) (10 in all total combined).
1 May-31 Jul	Greywing Partridge (3); Red-necked Francolins (3); Cape Franc. (6). 1 March-30 April – Common quail (2).

NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE – Gazetted – Same as last year

All year	Egyptian Goose (10); Red eyed, Laughing, Cape turtle Doves (10 each) and Rock Pigeons (50).
1 April-31 Dec	Helmeted Guinea-fowl (10);
1 Jan-31 Mar	Shelduck (5).
1 May-31 Aug	Spurwing (5).
1 May- 30 Jun	Orange River Partridge (5), Red-billed Francolin (5), Cape Francolin (5), Natal Francolin (5), Swainsons Francolin (5), Grey-wing Partridge (5).
1 May-31 Aug	Northern Cape Excluding Namaqualand Magisterial District Yellow billed duck (10), Red-bill Teal (10), Cape Teal (10), Cape Shoveler (10), Southern Pochard (10). Namaqua Sandgrouse (10). Burchell's Sandgrouse (5).
1 Apr-15 Jul	Namaqualand Magisterial District Yellow-billed duck (10), Red-billed Teal (10), Cape Teal (10), Cape Shoveler (10), Southern Pochard (10).
1 Jan -31 Mar	
1 Jan-30 Apr	
Note:	A maximum combined total of 10 land birds & 10 waterfowl per day.

EASTERN CAPE – Gazetted

1 Jan-31 Dec	Red eyed, Laughing, Cape turtle Doves and Rock Pigeons. (need licence).
1 Jun-31 Jul	Rameron Pigeon (Olive Pigeon) (5).
1 Jan-31 Mrt	Shelduck (4).
1 Feb-30 Sept	Egyptian Goose (15).
1 Mrt-30 Sept	Spurwing (5).
1 May-31 Aug	Red-billed Teal (3), Yellow-billed Duck (3), White-faced duck (2), Southern Pochard (2), Cape Teal (2), Cape Shoveler (2).
1 May-30 Sept	Guinea fowl (5).
1 Oct-30 Nov	Quail (10). (Note: Different in former Ciskei)
1 May-31 Jul	Red-Wing Partidge (2).
1 May-31 Jul	Grey-wing (4), but in Queenstown (2), Orange River Partridge (4), Red-Necked Francolin (4).
1 Jan-31 Dec	Exotic Anseriformes

KZ-NATAL – Not yet gazetted – New Biodiversity Bill to come 2022

31 May-31 Aug	Ordinary Game Licence Required for all. Common Quail, White-faced Duck, Red-billed Teal, Yellow-billed Duck, Egyptian Goose, Spurwing, Helmeted Guinea fowl, Rameron Pigeon. Francolin: Red-necked, Natal, Swainsons. Partridge: Grey-wing, Red-wing, Coqui, Crested & Shelleys..
Note:	A Maximum combined total of 10 land birds & 10 waterfowl per day.

Other game birds can be shot under a SPECIAL PERMIT during the open season, please contact KZN Hunting & Extension Department on 033 845 1652.

PLEASE NOTE that all members must still consult the respective provincial ordinances, as we do not list species that are not traditionally gamebirds. All exotic Anseriformes are open all year. Contact the office for gazettes

Please Note: You have to return your licence to the respective provinces, after each season, stating on the licence all the relevant details as asked. This applies to provinces who require this, such as NW Prov, and is stated as such on your licence.

**DEDICATED ACTIVITIES (Act 60/2000) - ANNUAL MEMBER'S REPORT**Fax to: 086 211 5111 or e-mail to: anel@wingshooters.co.za

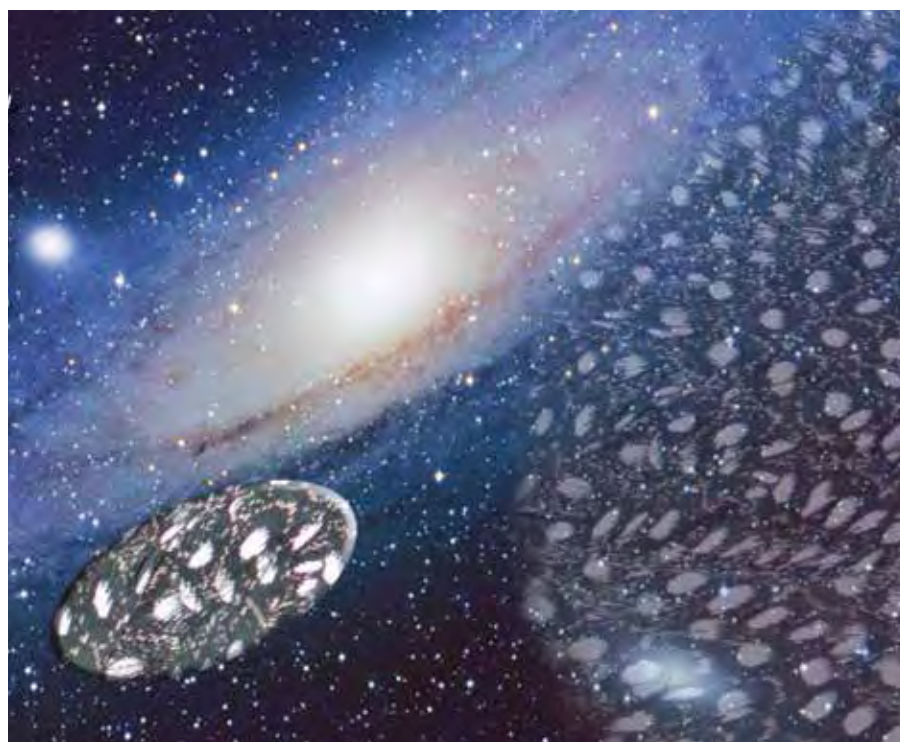
Year of Report:	PROVINCE			
Member's Surname:				
First Name:	DISTRICT			
Initials:				
ID Number:	FARM / CLUB			
Signature or e-mail				
	DATE			
RIFLE SHOOTING	☐	☐	☐	
HANDGUN SHOOTING	☐	☐	☐	
SHOTGUN SHOOTING	☐	☐	☐	
GAMEBIRD HUNTING	☐	☐	☐	
PLAINS GAME HUNTING	☐	☐	☐	
OTHER HUNTING or RELATED activities also count towards activities, such as reloading, HuntEx show visit, etc.				
Activity Description 1:				
Activity Description 2:				
Activity Description 3:				

Please note that this report completed by you is an affidavit under oath

The Guineafowl Guide

TO THE GALAXIES

The Andromeda Galaxy (picture) is like an 'island in space', made of more than a hundred billion stars. Lying 2,5 million light years away, it's the closest large neighbour galaxy to our own Milky Way galaxy. There are some 200 billion galaxies in the Universe. But 75% of our Universe is made of something that we cannot see. The scientists don't know what it is and what it is made of. They call it 'dark matter' and 'dark energy' because it does not emit light and is invisible. They also think that there may be at least seven dimensions in addition to our four dimensions of space plus time. In order to rationalise these complex concepts, they use simple visualisations — Schrödinger, for instance, used a cat which was dead and alive at the same time (but in which dimension?). The late Dr Raoul van der Westhuizen argued that quantum chromodynamic physicists and string theory mathematicians may understand the Universe better if they know more about the nature of guineafowl. Maybe wingshooters can teach them something...



It was as early as 1687 when the proverbial apple dropped on Newton's head, that the laws of gravity were formulated and scientists thought they finally understood how the Universe works.

But in 1905 Albert Einstein published his earth-shaking laws including the theory of Special Relativity, which abolished the separate concepts of space and time and which was followed by his theory of General Relativity, which predicted that even light is curved by gravity, thereby introducing a totally new perception of how the universe works.

It turned out to be one of the most revolutionary discoveries in the history of physics. It even predicted the conditions for the existence of black holes, in which gravity is so great that not even light can escape from it.



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But Einstein himself realised that it was not the full picture and that his understanding of gravity was not complete. In desperation, he even came up with the idea of anti-gravity, which he later discarded as a mistake (scientists now think he was right).

The problem was that at microscopic and sub microscopic distances, even down to the Planck distance of 10-35 cm, the properties of gravity did not conform to Einstein's laws.

One of the results of Einstein's calculations was the discovery that light was not a beam but came in pieces called photons. It took scientists years to accept this, but eventually this led to the discovery of the quantum

particle. For more than 30 years, scientists grappled with new theories of quantum mechanics, which tried to explain the laws that govern the properties of strange subatomic particles such as quarks and gluons and mesons and why there is no antimatter in the universe.

It was only recently, in 1982, that scientists finally proved by experiment that a pair of photon particles conformed to the predictions of quantum mechanics, indeed that they were 'teleporting'.

The scientists came to the conclusion that a particle could have many apparently conflicting properties (such as different directions of spin,

superstring theory could not answer these big questions.

Today, there is growing consensus amongst scientists that part of the answer lies in 'quantum gravity' or in the yet to be discovered 'M-theory', which will explain the existence of at least 11 dimensions, some as close as a 1 cm from 'our' visible dimension. Of course this is all old news to experienced wingshooters.

They'll tell you that the controversial 'Copenhagen Interpretation' is perfectly correct: 'Guineafowl do not exist until you observe them'. And the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, which states that one can only know one of the two states of a particle is obviously right, namely that if you know where guineafowl are going to, you cannot also know where they are or, conversely, if you know where they are, you don't know where they're going.

In fact, they'll readily confirm over a glass of claret that guineafowl, like quantum particles, come in pairs: If you see one, there is always a second one nearby. Indeed, on the subject of particle entanglement and teleportation, a guineafowl is actually two entangled birds, one black and one white, which is why GSPs find it difficult to hold them on point and end up chasing them madly into another dimension. And any Labrador or Spaniel owner will tell you how he witnessed 'dead-in-the-air' guineafowl that mysteriously disappeared after hitting the ground... into the 5th dimension, no doubt. Or how shot guineafowl in the back of a Discovery disappeared into the 11th dimension, leaving just a few feathers behind...

So what is the advice for the wing-shooter who bags some guineafowl? Tip your hat to Einstein, say thanks to St. Hubertus, prepare the birds for a sumptuous dinner by candle light, invite some friends over for a leisurely evening and let gravity cause the birds to disappear into your nether dimensions. After dinner, discuss with your friends the nature of the mysterious dark matter and antigravity over a glass (or two) of fine Cognac, until the concepts of time and space finally merge...



— Originally published in Wingshooter

Vol 11 No. 4 - 2006



image: André van der Westhuizen

*“on the subject of particle entanglement and teleportation, a guineafowl is actually **two entangled birds**, one black and one white.”*

or polarities or directions of movement) at the same time. They even managed to set up experiments in which a particle collided with itself.

Quantum reality indeed! But in the end the scientists still cannot reconcile the two sets of laws that tell us how the Universe works: namely the set of laws for gravity – Einstein's general theory of relativity – and the second – quantum theory – which explain the other three fundamental laws of nature (electromagnetism and the strong and weak nuclear forces).

Even successive new theories such as quantum chromodynamics and



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The Annual Report of March 2020 shows 601 rangers trained. Whilst others claim to train many people, their training simply comprises anti-poison information, whilst we enable trainees to respond appropriately as first arrivals/responders at a toxic wildlife crime scene; in a scenario where mistakes lead to loss of court cases. Another significant observation is that poisoning of elephants in and around Hwangwe National Park, Zimbabwe has decreased annually since Zimbabwe Republic Police trainees conducted roadblocks, and confiscated almost 6 tonnes of Sodium cyanide from Zama-zama miners and their associates. Whilst there is no direct link to our training we feel this assumption is plausible.

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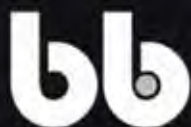
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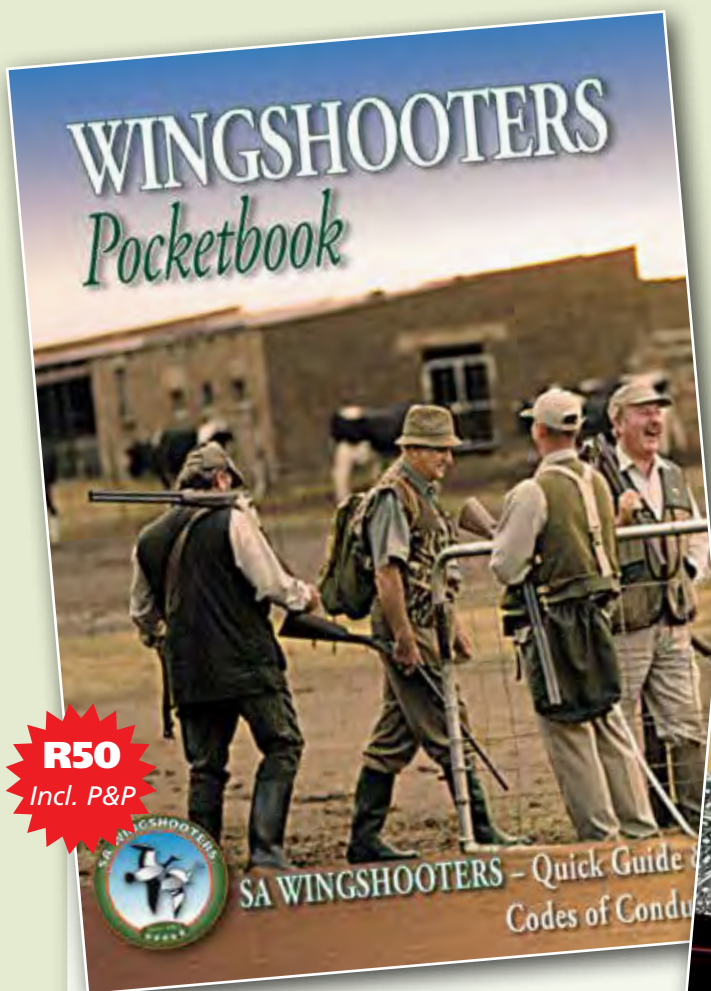
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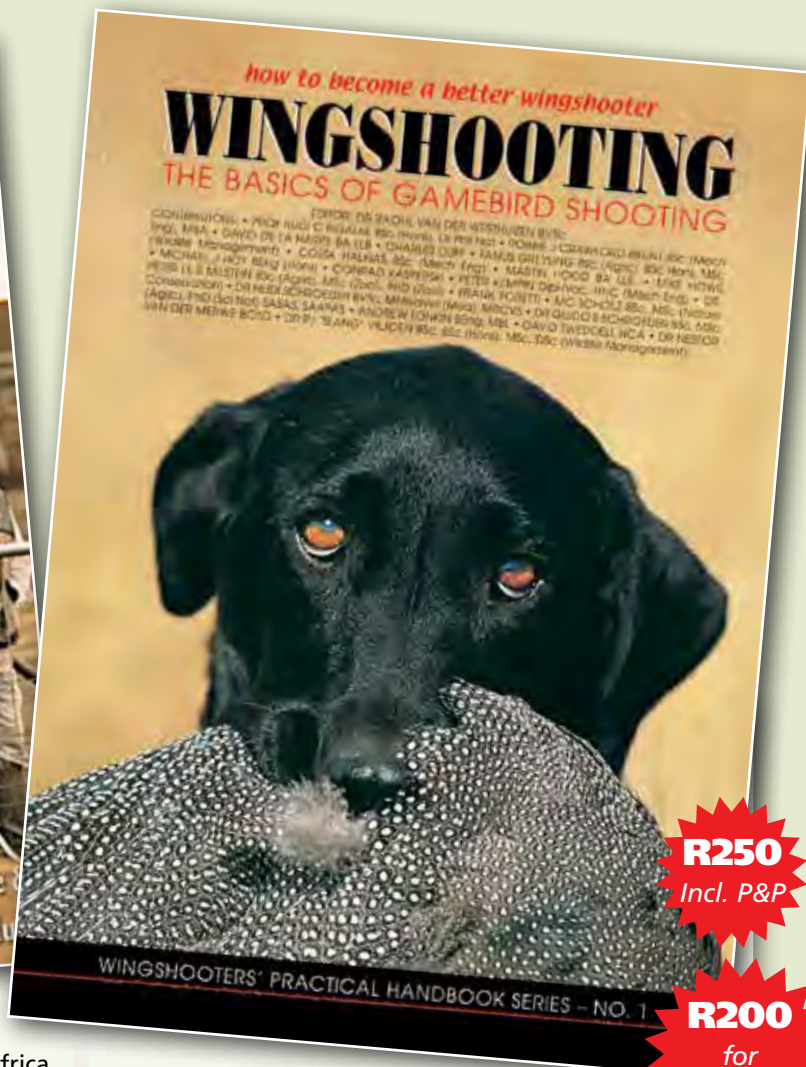
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For the first time, this book brings together the collective know-how and experience in game bird shooting of many of the leading wingshooters in Southern Africa — be they scientists, field trialists, gun dog experts, veterinarians or lay people — who all share the passion for wingshooting and the joy of the great African Outdoors. The section on shotgun marksmanship alone makes the handbook worth having. In this section the greatest South African sporting clay shooter ever and 20 times Springbok tells how to shoot any target under any condition. The handbook is edited by the co-founder and first chairman of the SA Wingshooters Association, Raoul van der Westhuizen.

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For Dedicated Activity Reports & Firearm Licence Renewal Notices –

Firstly, It's nearing the end of the season, thus all Dedicated members need to send in their dedicated hunting activity report. **It's a legal (Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000) requirement for Dedicated Hunters and Dedicated Sports persons.** You can send any hunting activities report, whether it was plains game, bird hunting or range shooting and includes rifles, shotgun, handgun use, etc. You only need to list two (2) activities for the year. Remember to send us a report before end October, as we have to send a 'members activity report' to the SAPS every year in November, listing all the members who did not send in a report.

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Once we've approved your registration request, you can 'Login' and start to use this service for your dedicated reporting and to list your firearms renewal dates for our renewal reminder service. Call the office if you don't know what to do! Tel: 071 132 5450.

You can also enter your dedicated hunting/sport shooting activities report online, on our website! Go to www.wingshooters.org.za and click on the "Dedicated Hunters" menu and complete the form right at the bottom of the page. It's quick and easy!

Or, if you prefer to remain old school you can download the form from the "All Downloads" page on our website. You can fax it to 086 211 5111 or 071 132 5450. You can also send us the same one you might have done for another association you belong to... it needn't be our form.



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NATIONAL RETRIEVER FIELD TRIAL CHAMPIONSHIP

3-4 SEPTEMBER 2022 IN KWAZULU-NATAL

By Carolyn Baker

SO, WHAT IS ALL THE FUSS ABOUT?

In South Africa, a National Retriever Field Trial Championship is held every two years. This event, run under the auspices of KUSA, showcases the performance of a select group of Retrievers – mostly Labradors, Golden Retrievers and Flat Coated Retrievers - that are bred especially to retrieve fallen game during hunting and wing shooting. Designed to test a Retriever's working ability, field trialling is a highly competitive sport that is based on a relationship of mutual trust and respect between handler and dog. It is often this partnership and almost unspoken bond that separates champion dogs from their counterparts.

While in their nature to retrieve, not all Retrievers are equally driven or capable of competing in a field trial or participating in a day's shooting. Successful field trial dogs usually come from working lines – and have been bred selectively to maximise their working ability and biddable nature. While good breeding is the foundation, the journey to the Championship is long and arduous. Each one of the competing dogs has, over several years, entered a number of field trials and won various stakes, to demonstrate their ability.

There is a ripple of excitement amongst the committee members of the Natal Gundog Club, following their award by the Field Trial Liaison Council of the Kennel Union of South Africa (KUSA), to host the National Retriever Field Trial Championship this year.

Given that most field triallers can only aspire to compete in this event at some stage during their trialling career, and with only a select few ever becoming eligible to do so, it is appropriate to examine the many and varied elements that make up a Championship Stake.

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RETRIEVER FIELD TRIALS AND THE JOURNEY TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP



Retriever Field Trials are designed to simulate, under competition, conditions which are similar to those encountered in a natural shooting situation. At a field trial, a dog will be expected to be steady at the handler's side while being shot over, and when commanded to do so, to go out and seek fallen game, returning with it to the handler's side and delivering tenderly to hand.



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Young dogs under the age of 18 months are eligible to compete in, firstly a Puppy Stake and then a Junior Stake. Thereafter there are three stakes in increasing order of difficulty – the Maiden Stake, Novice Stake and finally the Open Stake. At each level, further demands are made on handler and dog that test the Retriever's natural ability and a series of learned abilities. Dogs must qualify to compete in the Championships and eligible dogs are Field Trial Champions (those that have won a previous KUSA Championship or won two Open Stakes) and dogs that have been placed first or second in an Open Stake held in the preceding two years. So, successful performance in an Open Stake is mandatory. There is also a third way to qualify – and that is through holding the title of Grand Master Hunting Retriever[1].

Undoubtedly, without the tremendous support from all of our Platinum, Gold and Silver sponsors, events such as this would be incredibly hard to organise. Their generosity and interest has been overwhelming – and we salute them all.

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1]SOUTH AFRICAN HUNTING RETRIEVER (SAHR) AWARDS

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WHAT HAPPENS IN A FIELD TRIAL?

A Field Trial Stake comprises a number of different series, each of which may require the Retrievers to pick up two, three, four or more different birds. Traditionally the Championship Stake is held over two days, and the dogs are expected to complete five or six series comprising a total of about 20 to 25 retrieves (pick-ups).

In each field trial stake a panel of judges consider the merits of each dog's performance, taking into account the stipulated natural abilities (intelligence, attention, nose, perseverance, game-finding ability, marking ability, courage and soft mouth) and trained/learned abilities (memory, steadiness, directional control and delivery to hand) that are designated for that particular stake and that are essential qualities in any successful Working Retriever. Open Stake dogs are assessed for the full array of these natural and taught abilities. However, what separates the top dogs from the "pack" is their combination of these natural and trained abilities that contribute to that elusive quality, so admired by Field Triallers, that of "style".

A "stylish" dog completes retrieves with speed, efficiency and enthusiasm, while responding quickly and obediently to any directions from the handler. The dog appears to work effortlessly throughout each retrieve and is generally a pleasure to watch.

Traditionally, field trials are intended to reflect field shooting, so Judges set a course that tries to replicate a realistic shooting setting.

This is not always easy, because a field trial is a competition, in which each dog will be expected to complete the same set of 'exercises' for comparative assessment. This makes course setting particularly tricky - just imagine going out on a shoot and expecting a bird to fly in exactly the same direction and fall in exactly the same place multiple times! For this reason, judges setting the courses make very sure that when live birds are used that they designate an adequate AREA OF FALL so that the guns can ensure that the birds land in that specific area for every competitor.

While many of the retrieves do require live game, many of them also rely on saluted 'cold game' (SALUTES), particularly when the series demands that a bird lands in a specific place and in a specific sequence.





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In addition to the judges there are a number of other officials associated with field trials: there are the Guns; Field Trial Managers and Throwers; Pick-up Dogs; and at an Open Stake and Championship Stake, a KUSA representative. Each has a specific role during the trial, and all have to be fully informed of the course that the Judges have set, to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

While the Judges are the designers and directors of each series, it is the Field Trial Manager, Guns and Throwers that must co-ordinate to ensure that birds fall in the designated area so that each dog is faced with a very similar scenario.

The skill and experience of this team is a vital ingredient to the success or failure of any field trial.

CHAMPIONSHIP STAKE 2022

The forthcoming KUSA Championship will be hosted by the Natal Gundog Club on the 3rd and 4th September 2022, on Baynesfield Estate near Pietermaritzburg.

The Club, which will have its 50-year anniversary next year, has a long history of promoting field trialling activities, and last hosted the Championship in 1998 on a farm in Tala Valley. That year fifteen Retrievers qualified to enter the trial 10 Labradors and 5 Golden Retrievers. This year it is expected that at least 11 dogs of those already qualified, will participate, and further qualifiers may emerge over this current trialling season leading up to the weekend of the Championship, should they be successful in winning or coming second in an Open Stake. As the venue is relatively accessible to travellers from Gauteng and the Cape, it is anticipated that the weekend will be well supported, so a full programme has been planned, beginning with a Draw Dinner on the Friday night and culminating in a Prize Giving Lunch following the completion of the Stake on Sunday.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

One of the many mantras of field trial people is the importance of using a retriever when out shooting. Not only does this ensure that all fallen game is retrieved, but it also means that should any bird be wounded it is quickly retrieved and humanely dispatched. Similarly, field trials adhere to the strictest protocols when it comes to dispatching game and all management of game is conducted in accordance with the guidelines laid down by animal protection organisations.

Course setting by the Judges in conjunction with the Field Trial Managers takes place during the days before the trial, so the final set of series that will make up the Championship Stake 2022 is at this stage unknown. Nevertheless, the following two scenarios reflect the sort of challenges that will be facing the top Retrievers and their Handlers in September.

LAND SERIES SCENARIO



THIS SERIES, THAT WAS RUN IN THE LAST CHAMPIONSHIP STAKE HELD IN THE EASTERN CAPE, COMPRISES FIVE PICK-UPS AND WAS DESIGNED TO TEST A HOST OF THE RETRIEVERS' ABILITIES

THE LINE shows where the HANDLER and dog set up to see the first three birds fall. An experienced handler facing this series will carefully settle his dog at heel in such a way that he is able to MARK each bird. The dog is required to remain QUIET AND STEADY at the handler's side until all three birds are down and the line judge calls the handler's number to release his dog. Any command or restraint from the handler before being released by the judge, would result in immediate disqualification.

The series tests memory, courage, obedience and the lining and handling ability of both dog and handler. Memory is important since the third bird down (D saluted guinea-fowl) is the fifth and final retrieve. Initially the handler must direct the dog's attention from the guinea-fowl to give a clear LINE to bird E (live pigeon). Ignoring the SUCTION of the guinea-fowl, the dog must show courage to push through the heavy cover and a fence, into the open field, orientate and retrieve the pigeon.

TRIALLING LANGUAGE

As with any sport there are a host of terms that are specifically used to describe certain aspects of the retrieves and the way that a handler manages his dog. Here are a few of the terms you are most likely to hear at a trial.

Area of the Fall – Used to describe the place where a bird has fallen or the designated area where the Judge requires the bird to land.

Blind Retrieve – An unseen bird. The dog is directed to an area where he must scent and retrieve hidden game.

Break – A dog "breaks" when it goes for the bird before being sent. Any dog breaking is disqualified.

Cast – Giving the dog a specific direction either from the handler's side or after the dog has stopped to the whistle.

Deliver to hand – The dog must carry the bird lightly and gently until the handler signals the dog to release the bird to hand. Any chewing or crushing of the game is called HARD MOUTH. This is a serious fault and will result in the dog being eliminated from the competition.

Diversion – This is caused when a diversionary bird is thrown as the dog goes out or returns from a retrieve. If the dog picks up the diversionary bird before the nominated bird he is disqualified.

Field Trial – A working competition for retrievers. The Kennel Union of South Africa (KUSA) licenses individual clubs to hold retriever field trials.



The second live pigeon is a relatively easy memory test running out with the line of the contour. However, the same contour in the blind retrieve will tempt the dog to fade towards guinea-fowl D. So, taking a good line and holding it through obstacles is an essential learned skill and often separates out the very best dogs as much less handling is required to retrieve the bird.

Then the dog, having negotiated the obstacles and been HANDLED into the area where the blind is placed (third pick-up), is given a whistle command to hunt the area and find the bird. WIND DIRECTION is a vital element of any blind retrieve and the handler must endeavour to put his dog downwind of the bird. On return a saluted pigeon (A) is shot to land across the water in close proximity to the first live bird fall area.

The dog must mark the saluted pigeon fall and return to the handler with the blind. While the dog has seen the fall, the handler must treat the retrieve as a memory blind as the dog's sight picture from the line will be different.

However, this retrieve poses further challenges. While the direct line to the fourth pick-up (bird A) is across the water, most dogs will RUN THE BANK following the contour of the water and then have to deal with the suction of the live pigeon B area of fall. This will require handling and while this is an important learned skill for blind retrieves and forgotten marks, it results in a loss of points; particularly on a marked retrieve.

The fifth and final bird to be retrieved (the saluted guinea-fowl D) requires an excellent memory (given the elapsed time since the bird fell) and the ability for the dog to work on his own out of sight of the handler in moderate cover behind the trees. Any memory lapse and the dog overshoots the area of fall and the dog maybe hunting anywhere without the handler being able to stop it!

- Gun** – By invitation only. An experienced marksman who is invited to shoot at a trial.
- Handling** – To direct a dog to fallen game using whistle, voice or arm signals.
- Handler** – The person who works the dog.
- Line ("The Line")** – This is the area designated from which the Handler sends his dog.
- Line** – An imaginary straight line from "the line" to the bird on either a marked or blind retrieve.
- Mark** – The fall of a bird which a dog should watch, remember and retrieve when asked to do so.
- Nomination** – When a Judge requests the handler to retrieve game in a specific order.
- Nose** – A dog's ability to scent game particularly in thick cover.
- Open Stake** – The most demanding field trial stake, open to all registered retrievers.
- Pick Up** – A retrieve
- Series** – A group of retrieves made up of marks and blinds.
- Steady** – Describes a dog remaining calm by his handler's side until ordered to retrieve.
- Style** – As the word implies a good dog is a pleasure to watch. He is alert, eager, enthusiastic and willing to please. A stylish dog is fast, goes "straight out and back" and delivers the bird to hand effortlessly.
- Suction** – Any factor such as thick cover, turbulent water or strong wind that causes a dog to deviate from a line to a marked or blind retrieve.
- Thrower** – A person who throws a bird to be retrieved.
- Wind Direction** – An extremely important factor. A successful handler will always direct his dog downwind of the bird.



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WATER SERIES SCENARIO



FOUR PICK-UP SERIES

Single dog in line

Bird Order

A Live guineafowl

D Saluted duck

C Blind (duck)

B Saluted pigeon on blind outswim

Pick-up Order

A Live guineafowl

C Blind (duck)

B Saluted pigeon

D Saluted duck

In this series, situated around a small relatively steep-sided dam, the judges set four pick-ups designed to test CONTROL and the dogs' COURAGE, PERSEVERENCE and of course their willingness to enter water multiple times. All relatively short retrieves, it appears deceptively simple. However, the line is set back from the water, which tests the dog's DRIVE and willingness to enter water without hesitation. All too often, when the handler is some distance away, a dog that is unhappy working through water, will show this reluctance by hesitating at the water's edge and then must be coaxed into the water. Further, the steep sides of the dam, particularly the exit point for the blind, will test the dogs' determination and courage.

As always, the live bird (A) is collected first, followed by the blind (C), the saluted pigeon (B) and finally the saluted duck (D).

The saluted pigeon (B) that goes up as the dog heads out across the water to collect the blind (C) is a DIVERSION, to test the dog's ability and motivation to maintain a straight line in water across the dam towards the blind.

Such a diversion, often pulls the dog off the line given and then requires considerable corrective handling. Care would need to be taken not to overcorrect a straying dog, since it might then be interpreted as a command to collect the saluted duck (D), the second bird down.

The third pick-up, the diversion pigeon (B), presents the handler with two challenges: first he must be prepared for his dog straying towards the fall area of the guineafowl (A), the first pick-up; and second he must bear in mind that the dog marked this bird from the water and the picture that the dog sees from the line is quite different.

The final pick-up, the saluted duck (D), tests the dog's enthusiasm for water, courage to push through thick reeds, up a steep bank and over the dam wall into the area of fall where he must work out of sight. A flawless performance on this series tells the judges that the dog is driven, shoot-savvy and courageous.

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PLANNING FOR THE CHAMPS WEEKEND IN SEPTEMBER

Hosting the National Field Trial Championship is a big deal. It requires loads of forward planning and co-ordination. Two of the most important considerations are securing a venue and appointing all the officials. In searching for a venue, we have been very lucky to have access to the beautiful Baynesfield Estate. Preliminary visits to the venue have revealed that the ground is sufficiently varied to enable the judges to set an interesting and challenging stake. Four judges are required on the panel and the nominations presented to the Field Trial Liaison Council have recently been approved. It is for the club to identify suitably experienced Field Trial Managers, Guns and Throwers. While these appointments take care of the planning associated with setting the course, the not insignificant infrastructure for the trial also needs attention as do arrangements for accommodation and catering for the weekend.

The Championship Stake is a special event with a limited entry, so competitors are not given details of their running order until the Draw Dinner, the night before the trial. This adds to the excitement associated with the weekend and is an evening that everyone looks forward to. Similarly, the Prize Giving Lunch on the final day signals the end of a serious amount of hard work by everyone and provides the perfect opportunity to conclude the weekend and celebrate all those that participated – and especially the winners. Roll-on September!



For the first time, the winners will be awarded a medal, specially designed for the Championship Stake. Featuring a retriever holding the ubiquitous yellow billed duck, it is set to become a feature of this prestigious event in the future.

"Hosting the National Field Trial Championship is a big deal"...

... and the Natal Gundog acknowledges the fantastic support offered by all of the sponsors

NATAL GUNDOG CLUB



Field Chair: CM Baker

Secretary: CJ Rymill

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CLUBS RUNNING RETRIEVER FIELD TRIALS

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- **Cape Field Trial Club (CFTC)** - runs two retriever trials each year
www.cftc.org.za
Email: info@cftc.org.za
- **Cape Gundog Club (CGC)** - runs one retriever trial each year
Email: Kirstenflack11@gmail.com
- **Hottentots Holland Kennel Club (HHKC)** - runs one retriever trial annually
www.facebook.com/Hottentots-Holland-Kennel-Club-108706144910505/

EASTERN CAPE

- **Walmer and Suburban Kennel Club (WSKC)** - runs one retriever trial each year
www.facebook.com/Eastern-Cape-Gundog-Association-841580542565218
Email: ecga@web.co.za

KWAZULU-NATAL

- **Natal Gundog Club (NGC)** - runs one or two retriever trials each year
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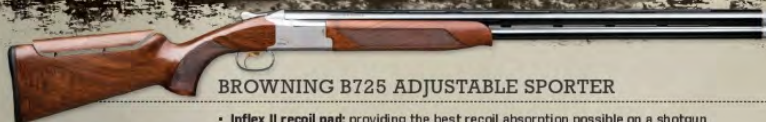
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- **Golden Retriever Club (GRC)** - runs one retriever trial each year
https://goldenretrieverclub.co.za/wp/
Email: info@goldenretrieverclub.co.za
- **Gundog Club (GCR)** - runs one retriever trial each year
Email: smithj.goldens@gmail.com
- **Labrador Retriever Kennel Club (LRKC)** - runs one retriever trial each year
https://www.labclub.org.za/
Email: tonyw@tut.ac.za
- **Transvaal Field Trial Association (TFTA)** - runs one retriever trial each year
Email: charles@chardale.co.za
- **Working Gundog and Conservation Club (WGCC)** - runs one retriever trial each year
Email: paula.jordie@gmail.com
- **Working Retriever Club (WRC)** - runs one retriever trial each year
Email: wyne@icon.co.za

Most clubs run at least one retriever trial annually. Invariably held over a weekend, the clubs usually offer all five stakes: Puppy, Junior, Maiden, Novice and Open.



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