

Focus On The Field

By: Rich Mayer

On Saturday January 28th, the club got off to a fantastic start as 18 dogs from as young as 7 months to as old as ?? got a chance to hunt the cover at the David Sarnoff Preserve in Riverhead. The club was blessed with gorgeous weather which gave everyone a chance to mingle with other club members, some of which they hadn't met before.

For many of the dogs it was their first time in the field and first encounter with Quail. All the dogs showed good potential with several of the young pups demonstrating strong desire after encountering their very first bird. Amazing to watch those little puppy light bulbs light up.

For dogs who experienced the sights and smells of the field for the first time it was an overwhelming load on their senses. To get those dogs focused in the field they need to run in that environment frequently so smells and other distractions in the field become second nature and they can concentrate on hunting good objectives and scenting game. Handlers must build confident dogs that hunt boldly and independently. Beyond just getting exposure to birds and the field environment each handler must begin to outline their own program for gun introduction. Junior dogs must demonstrate their ability to be around gunfire and to handle the noise. Folks that want to participate in spring AKC events need to start that process **once they've built sufficient prey drive to shoot around the dog. Gun introduction should never be rushed. Remember commandment # 5.**

In closing I'd like to thank all of the families that came to the first VCLI training day. I hope each of you learned something and caught the field bug just a little. I can guarantee that as you see your dog progress the addiction can get more severe. That's a good thing. I'd like to acknowledge Erin and Matt who are 2 of the clubs junior handlers. Great job! I'd like to thank Stephanie Fisher for helping connect with all the club members and coordinating handlers and dogs in the parking area. I'd also like to thank Joe Diaz for his help working with some of the dogs and handlers in the birdfield.

Please put the weekends of February 25/26 and March 18/19 on your calendar as those dates were the most accommodating for the majority of you. As soon as you can confirm to me your attendance and how many birds you want please send me a mail. The cost will once again be \$15 per dog including 2 Quail. We will also limit the event to club members only as with 15-20 dogs it will take into the mid afternoon to run all the club dogs I expect to attend.

Anyone that would like to talk about specific things to keep their dog progressing and focused on the field please feel free to give a call. My # is 631-368-3184.

Point It Out: The "Pointing Dog Journal" is a monthly publication that offers very informative training articles and bird dog stories. They can be reached at 1-800-447-7367.