

News from the JGHV Director of Testing

Hunting dog handler courses - Hunting dog training for non-hunters

This topic was already covered once in the *Jagdgebrauchshund* issue 10-1996. At that time the text began with the words: "We hunting dog people have long noticed that many dogs "without a profession" are poorly understood by their owners, are underused, and therefore just do what they want. Dogs like this are more of a nuisance in the woods and fields than those that perform a task". Of course, I could have copied the whole report from the issue 10-1998 and published it again after 25 years, because many hunting dog people no longer have this issue or never received it at that time. I would like to revisit the topic from today's perspective in cooperation with Ms. Anja Blank, an Associate Member of the JGHV Executive Board. Ms. Blank leads the " Working Group Training ". The JGHV is currently breaking new ground by recommending appropriately qualified training instructors. However, this training includes not only the trainer, but also qualified dogs recognized by the *Jagdgebrauchshundeverband* and qualified dog handlers.

The qualified hunting dog—its keeping, training and further handling are matters exclusively reserved for hunters - without any exception!

As hunters, we have a legal obligation to our game and, in particular, to animal welfare.

It is our duty to make proficient dogs available for hunting. However, this is only possible if all conditions are met.

It starts with the right dog handlers, who are in possession of a valid hunting license.

The proficient hunting dog, however, does not simply fall from the sky, but must be appropriately shaped, trained and handled. The shaping and training are only possible in the right hunting grounds, where the dog's trainer is authorized to hunt. This in turn is only possible with a valid hunting license.

The shaping and training of a hunting dog includes, in addition to all the important socialization phases (home, car, family, environment, etc.), contact with live and dead game, training walks in the field, where the dog develops his use of nose, but also discovers game with his eyes, has positive experiences with the shot, working on tracks and trails, etc. All this is possible only if the dog is handled by a hunter, because only the hunter has the right to search for game, to pursue it, and to shoot it before the dog.

It is therefore not possible to train and test dogs on a hare track, which will never be used for hunting in their lifetime or have to demonstrate tracking work as a prerequisite for breeding.

The same applies to field work with pointing. Here, too, game is sought for the dog, his pointing ability is awakened, encouraged, and tested. This only makes sense if the dog is then used for hunting in the field or if it is required as a breed-specific prerequisite for breeding. Everything else is sport!

A similar picture can be seen with water work or in the work on the live duck. Here the Test Regulations - Water of the JGHV, which are valid for all member clubs of the JGHV, sets clear guidelines.

Test Regulations-Water Part A (7) Dogs a) Only dogs whose handlers are in possession of a valid hunting license are admitted. Exceptions are only permitted for special hunting and breeding reasons. They must be justified.

Especially the last paragraph should be read carefully and followed. According to this, there is only an exception if the dog in question is to be used for **hunting and breeding** purposes. There is **no "or"** here, **both** must be fulfilled! The same applies to the work on the blood track, in the search for wounded, hoofed game or in the training of earthdogs. In these cases, animal welfare is paramount.

All this training of the dogs may only be done if the dog handler is in possession of a valid hunting license.

The entire training, initial instruction, and testing of our hunting dogs must always serve the hunt in all areas and can therefore, with very few exceptions, only be carried out by hunters.

Actually, it should be self-evident to every JGHV member club, every hunting dog trainer, every training instructor of dog handler courses, that they only train dogs for hunting. Of course, there are always justifiable exceptions (e.g. handlers in youth hunter training), but they must remain exceptions.

Hunting dog training is part of the hunt and can and may only be done with a valid hunting license. Let's do it for our game and also for our standing in public. We have to follow clear paths. This begins with the sale of the puppy only to hunters – without exception. This already determines the next steps to a certain degree.

We should explain the basic principle of training to non-hunters who want to take part in a hunting dog handler course and refer them to other dog schools. There are good **alternatives** to spend time with the dog, e.g. agility, dogscooting, mantrailing, obedience, etc. The absolutely wrong way is to train dogs in hunter training courses and allow them to work on live or dead game, if they will never be used for hunting again.

What motivates hunting dog owners without a hunting license to do a hunting dog training course? The issue of working their dogs to the full or the idea of competition?

Good basic obedience is also important for non-hunters. But this can be achieved just as well at a good dog school.

Here the dogs are made ready for everyday life, have sufficient social contact, and are exercised at the same time. For a family dog (even with its roots in hunting) this is usually sufficient. Those who still want more and want to pursue the idea of competition will find sufficient opportunities in dog sports. As a hunting dog trainer, they may know a good dog school in their area and provide contacts!

Tracking work, field work (searching, pointing), work on the live duck, work in blood tracking, work in the ground, etc. is solely the responsibility of the hunting dog, which is owned by the hunter and handled by the hunter.

Any diversion from this way is dog sport and is harmful to our game, hunting, and the entire hunting dog breeding of all JGHV breed clubs.

Bottom line: hunting dogs should be exclusively reserved for hunters!

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