

How to pick a breed of dog

As someone gets interested in hunting, a common progression is to purchase the right equipment and gear to go hunting. Then one soon wants to have their own hunting dog instead of hunting with their friends dog.

There are different styles of hunting and there are different species of animals to hunt. If you are hunting upland birds, the most common species are Pheasants, Quail, Chukar, Ruffed Grouse, Woodcock , Sharptail Grouse and Hungarian Partridge.

One may also be hunting the Waterfowl species, ie ducks and geese.

Therefore, it is important to know what species of birds you will most likely pursue in order to know what breeds one should focus their search.

This article will focus on the upland bird dog primarily with some carryover into the waterfowl dog options.

There are two styles of dogs used for Upland birds, Pointing and Flushing. The pointing breeds are quite popular due to the dog pointing a bird and allowing the hunter to get prepared prior to the bird flushing. Since the pointing breeds should point birds and stay on point until the hunter arrives, the dog can cover ground outside of gun range. These dog will range different distances depending on the cover that is being hunted. Each hunter tends to learn to be comfortable with a particular range for their dog to hunt.

Flushing dogs are designed to hunt for game and produce it for the gun without actually stopping and waiting on the hunter to get ready. This style requires the dog to be within gun range in order for the hunter to have an opportunity to shoot the game. The hunting range is also determined by the cover one is hunting. More open fields will allow a flushing dog to range bigger and the hunter to be able to see game that's produced and giving a reasonable shooting opportunity. In timbered areas, a flusher will need to be searching closer to the hunter in order for a reasonable shot opportunity to be presented to the hunter.

I could break down the different breeds of pointing and flushing dogs but the descriptions would start sounding similar. So, how does a person pick the right breed of hunting dog?

- 1) Go hunting with someone with bird dogs and see if you like his dogs.
- 2) Go to a club training day and watch the different breeds and see if a breed catches your attention.
- 3) Go to a conservation group event and learn what breeds of dog people have and hunt. You may get invited to tag along on a hunt and see how the dogs perform.
- 4) Go to conservation areas and ask if you can walk with a hunter to see how his dogs hunt. Offer to not take a gun and just observe and learn about hunting with a dog.
- 5) Look for breeders in your area and see what breeds they own. See if you can observe the dogs in a training session.
- 6) Look for Hunting Dog events in your area and go observe the dogs that are competing. Most competitors are willing to share information about their dog.

There are ways to do research to find folks that have hunting dogs and learn about their breed of choice. If you click on the other pages of this website, you can learn about different dog organizations that are hosting hunting dog tests or trials near your home. It's good to attend these events and meet folks that have owned and trained their dogs to particular skill levels. One of them might be a great mentor for you and your new hunting companion.

Most folks tend to lean towards the breed of dog that was the best trained dog they observed. All the breeds have good dogs to choose from. Try to keep an open mind as to the training level you are observing. Try not to compare the best trained dog with the worst trained dog. The better trained dog will be more pleasing to watch and the handler will probably be fun to observe as well.

Just because someone has been breeding for "xx" number of years doesn't mean they are producing pups that will be best for you. After narrowing down the breed of dog that interests you, then you need to pick a breeder that is producing the dogs that you like. You will want to get information such as the pedigree, health certifications, and references.

Remember that all puppies are cute and it takes a strong mind to not grab a pup from the first opportunity. Sometimes this can work out great and sometimes it may not be the best.