

BLIND BANTER

Hoosier Creek Conservation & Retriever Association Quarterly Newsletter



DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

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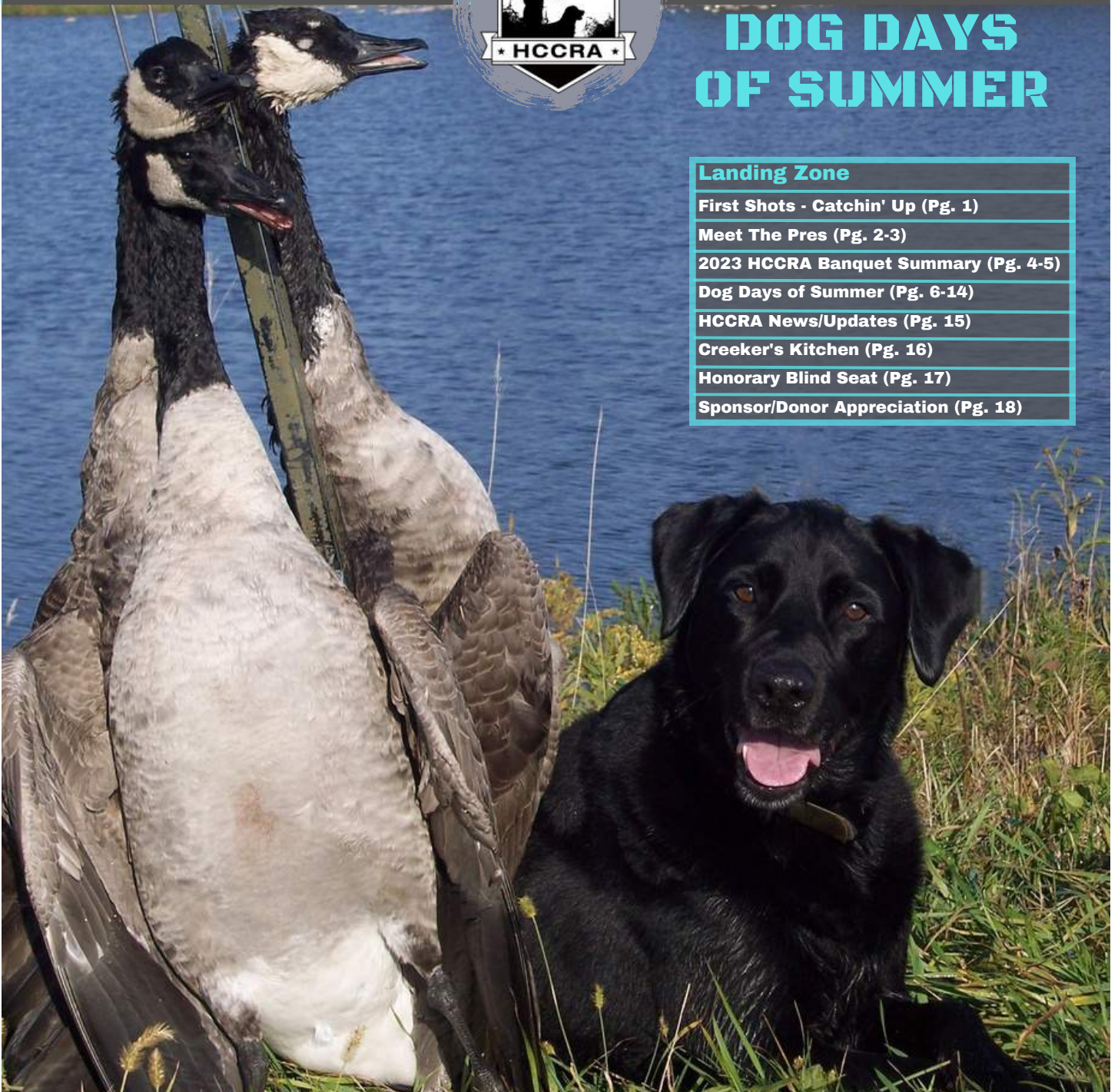
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CATCHIN' UP

The summer heat is upon us, but we are experiencing some occasional 40 degree nightly lows, which means we are within eyesight of the opening day of waterfowl season! With the goslings and ducklings all hatched, the wetlands full of vegetation, and the mosquitos buzzing, a new season of opportunity is here. HCCRA members across east-central Iowa have been taking their retrievers to the marshes to hone their skills, build experience, and create lifelong memories with their dogs. Visuals of puppies taking their first swims and the old veteran dogs working double blind retrieves can only mean one thing...

THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER ARE HERE

HCCRA moved full-speed ahead into retriever training and hunt tests after the smoke cleared from the 2023 Annual HCCRA banquet. The high winds and tornados from the March 31st storm events wreaked havoc on the HCCRA retriever hunt test equipment. The 80 mph winds blew HCCRA's trailer over destroying not only the trailer, but virtually all of the gear inside. HCCRA hosted the NAHRA hunt test about a month after losing all of the equipment, which is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the many HCCRA members who worked on removing, organizing, documenting, and replacing equipment just as mother nature finally allowed retriever training to begin in full-force. More info about the 2023 HCCRA hunt tests are included in Pages 6-14.



BLIND BANTER FORUM

Have a question for the HCCRA committee members about waterfowl hunting, dog training, upcoming/past events, or project details? Have a comment or question about a past newsletter article? Send us your thoughts at hccra18@gmail.com to get an answer in our next newsletter!

YOUNG HUNTER FEATURE

Are you 18 years old or younger and have a hunting, retriever training, or conservation story to tell? Are you a youth that learned something afield that you would like to share with the HCCRA community? Send us your stories or articles over to hccra18@gmail.com for a chance to be featured in the next newsletter!

MEET THE PRES



Longtime HCCRA member, contributor, volunteer, and 50/50 raffle ticket salesman extraordinaire Eric Steffes was unanimously elected to fill the vacant President position on the HCCRA Board of Directors on June 13, 2023. For the past several years, Eric has had a significant role in planning, organizing, and running HCCRA events. His hard work and dedication to serving local waterfowl conservation was definitely noticed by all the HCCRA members casting their votes. The position had previously been vacant, and key duties were handled by Vice President Jeremy Stolba who has been the leader of HCCRA for the past several years. When asked about working with Eric as the new HCCRA President, Jeremy said 'I'm very excited to see Eric in the new role, he has already been a huge part of the success of HCCRA and I'm looking forward to seeing what new ideas and impacts he brings to the organization'. As a part of this election, the Game Steward position was also filled by the unanimous election of Robert Pearson, who will be featured in our next Blind Banter issue! HCCRA wanted to get into the nitty gritty details about what makes Eric Steffes so committed to the organization and local waterfowl conservation efforts, so we sat down with him for a Q&A interview to familiarize the HCCRA community with the new president. If you see Eric at our next HCCRA event, please congratulate him and thank him for his efforts!

Q: So Eric, how long have you been involved with HCCRA?

A: I started helping out in 2016.

Q: Is there a certain event/aspect of HCCRA that is a favorite of yours?

A: Although it's hard to not have the banquet be my favorite event of the year, all the stuff we do with the kids or getting them involved is at the top of the list. Seeing all the kids learn and enjoy the outdoors, whether it be helping with wood ducks houses, hunt tests, or our youth hunting weekend is always a good time!

Q: Have you waterfowl hunted your entire life?

A: I started waterfowl hunting back in the early days of high school with some good buddies that invited me along. I always grew up around fishing, deer hunting, and pheasant hunting but never had much opportunity for waterfowl until then and have been hooked ever since!

Q: What is your favorite type of waterfowl hunting?

A: My favorite type of waterfowl hunting, if I had to pick, would be mallards over water in a boat. Something about good buddies together in a blind cooking breakfast and watching dogs do their thing is always a good time. Although you can never rule out a good mallard hunt over a dry field!



MEET THE PRES



Q: Do you have a retriever you take hunting with you?

A: My dog now is a 5 year old black lab, Gus. We enjoy most of our hunting weekends in the duck boat during season and the occasional fishing trip in the off season. We also love going around to hunt tests when we get the time.

Q: Everybody has a few hunting memories that really stick in their minds, what is your favorite?

A: My favorite hunting memory, although I have a bunch with my buddies that can't be forgotten, has to be the time I took my 3.5 year old daughter on her first duck hunt. She would always watch duck hunting on TV with me before bed when we had the chance. One day she asked if she could go, so I texted a buddy to see if he wanted to tag along knowing I wouldn't be shooting a gun. She packed up a snack bag for the boat and headed to a nearby wetland. We knew it would be short lived, but all she wanted to see was "her" dog go get the ducks. Fortunately for us, a few cooperated that day and she got to witness a few retrieves, with one being a cripple that Gus had to hunt down in some short smart weed. I will never forget that giggle as Gus was running down that spoony!



2023 HCCRA Board

President - Eric Steffes

Vice President - Jeremy Stolba

Secretary - Mark Groth

Treasurer - Zachary French

Game Steward - Robert Pearson

Gun Captain - Charlie Reid

AKC Chairman - Mike Ernster

NAHRA Chairman - Dake Dietrich

Conservation Steward - Eric Harris



2023 HCCRA BANQUET SUMMARY



The annual 2023 HCCRA Banquet held on March 25th at the Amana RV Park proved yet again that HCCRA members are an absolute **FORCE** to be reckoned with. The devotion of HCCRA members is unmatched when it comes to raising local dollars for local ducks, local habitat, and local youth opportunities. A record-setting 420 members attended the banquet for a night of fundraising, entertainment, food, and fun. These hunters and conservationists raised a whopping **\$23,280** in a single night on raffles, games, and auctions. An additional **\$8,250** was raised through the successful 8-gun raffle. That means over \$30,000 was raised for local conservation efforts by likeminded east-central lowans to #keepitlocal! The food from Billy's Chicken Shack was incredible as always, the number of prizes to win throughout the night was the most ever, and the donations from local businesses, craftsmen/women, and artists was incredible to witness. The local waterfowl community proved to be thriving.



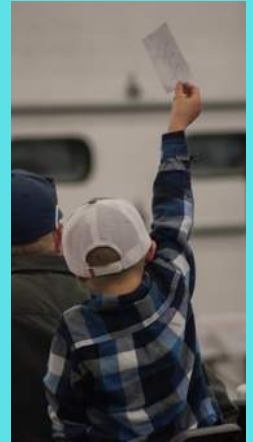
HCCRA prides itself on working hard to build relationships with our devoted and generous donors to provide high-quality prizes and great odds for members to walk away with a variety of outstanding items. These sponsors (listed on Page 19) helped to provide an incredible banquet lineup. Forty-one guns were raffled off throughout the night, ranging from a Beretta to a Browning to a .45 Tommy Gun! Prizes from Tanglefree, Redneck, Blackstone, Boss Shotshells, Divebomb, Lucky Duck, Momarsh, Avery/Banded, RNT Calls, Stahl's Kalls, and Pacific Calls were given away through a variety of raffles. Local items such as a limestone bench from Country Stone Masons, handmade leather wallet and game strap from D & Sons Custom Leather Goods, custom ice fishing rods from Kramer Custom Rods & Tackle, an upland hunt from Legacy Acres Hunting Club, a bourbon barrel table from TSTR Woodworking, and hand-carved decoys from Tim Lawson were all highlights in the auction. Justin Hegtvedt provided his fast-talkin' skills and efforts to make the cried auction possible.



2023 HCCRA BANQUET SUMMARY



Youth involvement is a huge area of importance for HCCRA. After all, the youth of today will be the driving force of waterfowl success in the future and they will be the ones to keep the tradition and lifestyle alive for generations to come. HCCRA tries to generate youth interest in the world of waterfowling throughout the year with a dedicated youth hunt, youth calling contest, and other youth events. This year, a record shattering **45 youth members attended** the banquet, which is a huge accomplishment for the HCCRA group! Each youth member received a great prize, and a chance at 9 guns dedicated to the youth raffle. Dean Downer even lathed a hand-carved duck call to be given away at the youth table!



With all the excitement and entertainment from the no-cost heads/tails gun giveaway, the new ladies raffle table, the pallet of decoys, and unveiling of the brand new 2023 Can - Am Defender XT to be raffled off at the 2024 HCCRA banquet, it was easy to get caught up in the activities. However, the presentation by HCCRA Environmental Chairman Eric Harris really drove the mission of HCCRA home. He shared details regarding the impacts HCCRA is making in the community, including installing and maintaining 156 nesting boxes as of 2023, that had a 55% utilization rate last nesting season! That is an incredible number compared to national and local averages. Additionally, details regarding the upcoming Tick Pond restoration project were shared as well. None of this would have been possible without the dedication and generosity of HCCRA members. HCCRA thanks you all for an incredible 2023 Banquet.

DOG DAYS OF SUMMER



The hot summer air leaves many a waterfowl hunter lounging in the air conditioning, dreaming about past memories from time afield, and thinking forward to mornings in the blind. To-do lists of tasks requiring completion before the Fall flight begins may even come to mind. As far as HCCRA is concerned, every day not spent with our retrievers is a day of honing skills, building drive, and reaching potential that isn't being utilized. The Dog Days of Summer are the perfect time to spend these days with our dogs to learn new commands, build on relationship and trust, and refamiliarize the dog with retrieving situations. Whether preparing for hunt tests or readying for the upcoming waterfowl season, summer months are some of the most critical times to spend with our retrievers. The remainder of this article will discuss events HCCRA has hosted already this summer, results from many HCCRA members in various hunt tests, and retriever advice from HCCRA members of various experience levels.

2023 HCCRA HUNT TESTS

ANNUAL SPRING NAHRA HUNT TEST

On May 6th and 7th, HCCRA (led by HCCRA NAHRA Chairman Dake Dietrich) hosted the Annual Spring NAHRA Hunt Test. There were entries in all four stakes on both days at the test held at Hawkeye Wildlife Area in North Liberty. On May 6th, HCCRA had a total of 14 dogs enter the test with 10 earning ribbons. On May 7th, 17 dogs entered the test with 7 earning ribbons.



SENIOR - MAY 6, 2023 (JUDGES: TODD FRANCISCO & DAKE DIETRICH)

FLIGHT	CALL NAME	DOG	OWNER/HANDLER	RESULTS
2	MAGGIE	SHOHOLA MAGGIE DUBH	KEITH STROYAN	PASS
3	EMBER	GMHR MUR TOUCHED BY THE SUN'S MOON SHADOW	JOE GROHS DVM	PASS
4	LIBBY	WR DAYBREAK FIBBERTIGIBBET WCQ SH	STEVE JOHNSON	PASS
6	CAOIMHE	SHOHOLA CAOIMHE	KEITH STROYAN	PASS
7	SUMMER	GMHRCH II GMUR TOUCHED BY THE SUN'S SUMMER BREEZE MH	JOE GROHS DVM	PASS
1	KARMA	WR WUR TOUCHED BY THE SUN'S MOON LIGHT JH	JOE GROHS DVM	
5	VENUS	MHR TOUCHED BY THE SUN'S FIRST LIGHT	JOE GROHS DVM	
8	NANNIE	SHOHOLA NANNIE DEE	KEITH STROYAN	

INTERMEDIATE - MAY 6, 2023 (JUDGES: TODD FRANCISCO & DAKE DIETRICH)

FLIGHT	CALL NAME	DOG	OWNER/HANDLER	RESULTS
1	SNAP	INDIAN HILL TOO HOT TO HANDLE GINGER SNAP JH	KIRK RICE	PASS
2	HEVI	DORAS HARD ROCKIN HEVI-METAL SON	JOEL LOBBERECHT	PASS
3	ACE	SR CR'S START THAT TAB JH	COLTON BRADLEY	PASS

HUNTER - MAY 6, 2023 (JUDGES: TODD FRANCISCO & DAKE DIETRICH)

FLIGHT	CALL NAME	DOG	OWNER	HANDLER	RESULTS
1	IVY	DRZYCIMSKI'S IVY	COLE DRZYCIMSKI	COLE DRZYCIMSKI	PASS
2	JOVIE	SR ODESSA'S READY TO ROCK BON JOVIE	BLAIR DICKEY	HALEY VAN SOELEN	PASS

STARTED - MAY 6, 2023 (JUDGES: BRUCE MOUNTAIN & BRANDON SMITH)

FLIGHT	CALL NAME	DOG	OWNER/HANDLER	RESULTS
1	HARLEY	CH IRONSTONE'S MISTRESS OF MISCHIEF WD	TAMARA ALEXANDER	

DOG DAYS OF SUMMER



SENIOR - MAY 7, 2023 (JUDGES: BRUCE MOUNTAIN & BRANDON SMITH)

FLIGHT	CALL NAME	DOG	OWNER/HANDLER	RESULTS
1	NANNIE	SHOHOLA NANNIE DEE	KEITH STROYAN	PASS
12	ACE	SR CT'S START THAT TAB JH	COLTON BRADLEY	PASS
4	CAOIMHE	SHOHOLA CAOIMHE	KEITH STROYAN	PASS
6	JOKER	MHR HARVEST MOON'S WILD CARD	DAKE DIETRICH	PASS
10	SUMMER	GMHRCH II GMUR TOUCHED BY THE SUN'S SUMMER BREEZE MH	JOE GROHS DVM	PASS
2	VENUS	MHR TOUCHED BY THE SUN'S FIRST LIGHT	JOE GROHS DVM	
3	LIBBY	WR DAYBREAK FIBBERTIGIBBET WCQ SH	STEVE JOHNSON	
5	EMBER	GMHR MUR TOUCHED BY THE SUN'S MOON SHADOW	JOE GROHS DVM	
7	KARMA	WR WUR TOUCHED BY THE SUN'S MOON LIGHT JH	JOE GROHS DVM	
8	TIC	GMHR I COUNTY LINE CHIED TICKLES JH SH	JESSE FURMAN	
9	MAGGIE	SHOHOLA MAGGIE DUBH	KEITH STROYAN	
11	DIESEL	HRCH PRAIRIE CREEK POWERSTROKE CODE	DAKE DIETRICH	

INTERMEDIATE - MAY 7, 2023 (JUDGES: BRUCE MOUNTAIN & BRANDON SMITH)

FLIGHT	CALL NAME	DOG	OWNER/HANDLER	RESULTS
2	HEVI	DORAS HARD ROCKIN HEVI-METAL SON	JOEL LOBBERECHT	PASS

HUNTER - MAY 7, 2023 (JUDGES: BRUCE MOUNTAIN & BRANDON SMITH)

FLIGHT	CALL NAME	DOG	OWNER	HANDLER	RESULTS
3	IVY	DRZYCIMSKI'S IVY	COLE DRZYCIMSKI	COLE DRZYCIMSKI	PASS
1	JOVIE	SR ODESSA'S READY TO ROCK BON JOVIE	BLAIR DICKEY	HALEY VAN SOELEN	
2	MOLLY	SR UHLY'S MOLLY WANT A QUACKER	JESSE FURMAN	JESSE FURMAN	SCRATCH

STARTED - MAY 7, 2023 (JUDGES: TODD FRANCISCO & EMILY JULIN)

FLIGHT	CALL NAME	DOG	OWNER/HANDLER	RESULTS
1	HARLEY	CH IRONSTONE'S MISTRESS OF MISCHIEF WD	TAMARA ALEXANDER	



ANNUAL AKC HUNT TEST

On May 20th and 21st, HCCRA (led by HCCRA AKC Chairman Mike Ernster) hosted the Annual HCCRA AKC Hunt Test. There were entries in all three stakes at the test held at Hawkeye Wildlife Area in North Liberty. A total of 67 dogs were entered into the hunt test, with 43 earning ribbons.

DOG DAYS OF SUMMER



MASTER - MAY 20, 2023 (JUDGES: ADAM ACKERMANN & TROY SHEEDER)

FLIGHT	DOG	OWNER	HANDLER	RESULTS
1	GLOR LORAL HEY MACHO MAN	GREGORY JOHNSON	DEREK RANDLE (P) KRISTEN INGRAM (P)	PASS
2	TOPBRASS PENNY PICK IT UP	DAVID & CRYSTAL CARROUM	KRISTEN INGRAM (P) DEREK RANDLE (P)	PASS
3	HRCH MHR PRAIRIE CREEK POWERSTROKE CODE	DAKE DIETRICH	DAKE DIETRICH (A)	PASS
5	(A) HRCH RYDER MUDDY RIVER	ANTHONY WAKELAND	ANTHONY WAKELAND (A)	PASS
6	(A) OGF BOJI QUEEN	DOUG DODGE	DOUG DODGE (A)	PASS
7	RED ROCKS KC	BRICE MANGOLD & RICK BULLOCK	RICK BULLOCK (P)	PASS
8	ACADEMY'S PRETTY WOMAN'S MIDNIGHT MAGIC	BETH WALIZER	KRISTEN INGRAM (P) DEREK RANDLE (P)	PASS
10	(A) PRINCESS CHAROLETTE OF HORSE LAKE	DARRIN & TAMARA DUNN	DARRIN D DUNN (A)	PASS
13	(A) HRCH DREAM CHASER'S GUSSIED UP FOR FALL	RYAN KELLY	RYAN P KELLY (A)	PASS
15	SELLER'S SUZIE Q	DENNIS SELLERS	KRISTEN INGRAM (P) DEREK RANDLE (P)	PASS
16	(A) HR TNT LIVIN ON A PRAYER *** MH	TROY & TUCKER TILLERAAS	TROY TILLERAAS (A)	PASS
17	IOWA POINTING LABS MATTIX'S RIZZO	GARRY MATTIX	RICK BULLOCK (P)	PASS
18	(A) MURRAY'S MILA MARIE SH	JAY MURRAY	JAY MURRAY (A)	PASS
19	RFC'S LONGSHOT'S MILLER LIGHT	CODY SORENSON	CODY SORENSON (P) ERIC W SPECKERT (P)	PASS
20	HOLLAND FARM'S CRACKLIN' ROSIE	TYLER PEEPLES	BRETT KIBLER (P) CODY SORENSON (P)	PASS
21	ACADEMY'S LONG HUNTER DANIEL BOONE	TIM MITCHELL	KRISTEN INGRAM (P) DEREK RANDLE (P)	PASS
23	(A) OGF CHARLES GOODNIGHT MH QA2	DOUG DODGE	DOUG DODGE (A)	PASS
26	CHARLOTTE "CHARLIE" HOGG	NATHAN HOGG	CODY SORENSON (P) BRETT KIBLER (P)	PASS
27	(A) OGF AMARILLO RIA MH	DOUG DODGE	DOUG DODGE (A)	PASS
28	RED ROCK'S CHUNK MH	RICK & SANDY BULLOCK	RICK BULLOCK (P)	PASS
29	WILEY MALLARD ONE COOL DUDE	FRANCIS BAYLISS	BRETT KIBLER (P) CODY SORENSON (P)	PASS
30	(W) HARVEST MOON'S MALEFICENT MOON	TRICIA STOLBA	JEREMY STOLBA (A)	PASS
31	GOLDENEYES ONLY BUY AVERY MH	DALE BRETT	KRISTEN INGRAM (P) DEREK RANDLE (P)	PASS
33	RFC'S LONGSHOT MILD ALE SH	MATTHEW BIERE	BRETT KIBLER (P) CODY SORENSON (P)	PASS
34	IOWA POINTING LABS MCDOWELL'S TEXAS	CODY MCDOWELL	RICK BULLOCK (P)	PASS
35	(A) HRCH RIDGETOPS ISLAND BOY	JOE HOWARD	JOE HOWARD (A)	PASS



DOG DAYS OF SUMMER



MASTER - MAY 20, 2023 (JUDGES: ADAM ACKERMANN & TROY SHEEDER) - CONT.

FLIGHT	DOG	OWNER	HANDLER	RESULTS
38	TNT CURSE OF THE BLACK PEARL	ANNE ROACH	KRISTEN INGRAM (P) DEREK RANDLE (P)	PASS
40	RED ROCK'S GETTING FANCY MNR MH	SANDY & RICK BULLOCK	RICK BULLOCK (P)	PASS
41	MARRIETTA'S DIESEL BY GMC'S BLACK SMOKE DURA MAX MH	STEVE SELTRECHT	STEVE SELTRECHT (A)	PASS
44	RED ROCK'S TUFF MH MNR	RICK & SANDY BULLOCK	RICK BULLOCK (P)	PASS
45	HPK'S PARADISE CITY	NATE HAMBLIN	NATE HAMBLIN (A)	PASS
47	ACADEMY'S BUY A LADY A DRINK	TIM MITCHELL	KRISTEN INGRAM (P) DEREK RANDLE (P)	PASS
12	KHOCO 3-RING GUN	MICHAEL BROWN	RICK BULLOCK (P)	SCRATCH
22	NOIX CREEK SAUK TRIBE CHIEF	CHARLES GREEN	GLENNON MCCREERY (P)	SCRATCH
24	RED ROCK'S GOT A MOHAWK MH	RICK & SANDY BULLOCK	RICK BULLOCK (P)	SCRATCH
32	MAVERICK'S BIG SHADOW	GLENNON MCCREERY	GLENNON MCCREERY (P)	SCRATCH
4	(A) BLACK WIDOW IX	KEITH PAULI	KEITH E PAULI (A)	
9	(A) TNT DAUGHTER OF AN ISLAND GIRL	TROY TILLERAAS	TROY TILLERAAS (A)	
11	HPK'S WHISTLEPIG STRAIGHT RYE MANHATTEN	NATE HAMBLIN	NATE HAMBLIN (A)	
14	EMMITTS OUTLAW MISSING IN ACTION	GREG JOHNSON	GREGORY JOHNSON (A)	
25	(A) CH HRCH CEDAR FOG'S WICKED MAGIC CD RA MH WCX	EMILY PEGUES & AMANDA KAISER	EMILY PEGUES (A)	
36	(A) OGF CHIEF PETA NOCONA	DOUG DODGE	DOUG DODGE (A)	
37	FERN HILL TRIPLE ECHO REMY	BRUCE MILLER	CODY SORENSON (P) BRETT KIBLER (P)	
39	(A) THISTLE ROCKS SEBASTIAN REDMOON RISING MH	ARTHUR CASSIDY	ARTHUR CASSIDY (A)	
42	(A) THUNDERSTRUCK JUMPING JACKSON	DAVID BESSINE	DAVID BESSINE (A)	
43	(A) OGF MARY ANN GOODNIGHT QA2	DOUG DODGE	DOUG DODGE (A)	
46	(A) BROWN DOG ACRES' GOTTA HAVE FAITH	DARIN DUNN	DARIN DUNN (A)	
48	(A) TNT ONCE BITTEN TWICE SHY	TROY TILLERAAS	TROY TILLERAAS (A)	
49	IOWA POINTING LABS MCDOWELL'S BOOMER	CARRIE MCDOWELL	RICK BULLOCK (P)	



DOG DAYS OF SUMMER



JUNIOR - MAY 20, 2023 (JUDGES: ALLYN D FOSTER & ROBERT RIGGS)

FLIGHT	DOG	OWNER	HANDLER	RESULTS
1	BLACKHAWKS EBONY NIGHT SKYE	JANET MATTSON	KEN MATTSON (A)	PASS
3	TWENTY ONE'S DIAMOND DOLLY	HAYLIE TRENTZ	HAYLIE TRENTZ (A) TODD STERRETT (P)	PASS
4	DUKE THE TANK FRENCH	ZACH FRENCH	ZACH FRENCH	PASS
5	BLUE PRAIRIES BYE BYE BIRDIE BELLE	MIKE PETERSON	MIKE PETERSON	PASS
8	BLACKHAWKS NSE INTO THE WIND RACER	KEN MATTSON	KEN MATTSON (A)	PASS
9	MUDDY RIVER ROUGH RIDER NASH JH	BRADY ERNST	BRADY ERNST (A)	PASS
11	ARROWHEADS KENNEYS THE MADAM OF BARONESSA	CHRIS KENNEY	CHRIS KENNEY	PASS
2	CAPTAIN THOR'S TOPSAILS SKYFALL KATE	ADAM CLATT	ADAM CLATT (A)	
6	PYRO PUPS FLOWING EMBER	ROB BEVINS	ROB BEVINS (A)	
7	REDROCKS HAZEL KNOXY JEWEL	TAMARA ALEXANDER	JOE WILCOXEN (A)	
10	THIS STORMS NOT FOR EVERYONE	DAN THILGES	DAN THILGES (A)	

SENIOR - MAY 21, 2023 (JUDGES: ALLYN D FOSTER & ROBERT RIGGS)

FLIGHT	DOG	OWNER	HANDLER	RESULTS
2	ARROWHEAD'S EVERLY CATTLEFEEDERETTE	RYAN KROGH	TODD STERRETT (P)	PASS
5	SWAMPCOLLIE'S RAYA IS A RIOT	JON MCWILLIAMS	TODD STERRETT (P)	PASS
6	KOEPKE'S BLACK SKYE SH CGC	SHANNON KOEPKE	SHANNON KOEPKE (A)	PASS
7	ARROWHEAD'S COMING IN HOT	JEFF GUDENKAUF	TODD STERRETT (P)	PASS
1	THUNDERSTRUCK JUST BOSCO	DAVID BESSINE	DAVID BESSINE (A)	
3	TNT ONCE IN A BLUE MOON	JJ WOMBACHER	JJ WOMBACHER (A)	
4	CEDAR RIVER HONEY HOLE SWEET AS A GEORGIA PEACH	MICHAEL ERNSTER	MICHAEL ERNSTER (A)	



DOG DAYS OF SUMMER



HCCRA SPORTING DOG TRAUMA CLINIC



- September 13th @ 6:00 PM, 117 Walford Rd Cedar Rapids, IA,
- Sign up for this incredible clinic on the hccra.club website (Cost = \$80; Food & Drinks Provided)
- Christine Wilkin, DVM with River Basin Equine Veterinary Services will be running this clinic
- Limited space, so sign up soon! This is a very useful course for all sporting dog owners!

HCCRA MEMBER/RETRIEVER ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- Jeremy Stolba's Chocolate Lab 'Millie' earned her AKC Master Hunting Retriever Title
- Dake Dietrich's Black Lab 'Diesel' earned his NAHRA Master Hunting Retriever Title
- Dake Dietrich's Chocolate Lab 'Joker' earned his NAHRA Grand Master Hunting Retriever Title
- Keith Stroyan's Black Lab 'Caoimhe' passed at the 40th Anniversary of the NAHRA Invitational in Cranesville, PA

HCCRA wants to congratulate these members on their remarkable accomplishments. The devotion and motivation these members show in their retriever training and the skills their retrievers display in hunt tests are a testament to HCCRA's mission. The tight-knit retriever training community within HCCRA is a hard-working inclusive resource that strives to improve each member and retriever.

HCCRA RETRIEVER NEWS



HCCRA is now a Club Affiliate of the Hunting Retriever Club which is huge news for the organization! Being affiliated with HRC will tap into a huge resource for dog handlers and provide many additional opportunities for retriever training and hunt tests. Keep an eye out for upcoming HRC news, opportunities, and resources on our Facebook page. HCCRA is excited about the new opportunities that involvement with HRC will provide for its members.

HCCRA APPRECIATION



Hosting a hunt test takes a lot of planning, preparation, effort, and **PEOPLE** to have a successful event. HCCRA would like to thank all the individuals that had a role in helping host the 2023 HCCRA hunt tests. There were 98 dogs that entered this year's tests! A special thank you and sincere appreciation goes out to all the judges, volunteers, dog owners, and dog handlers that chose to help and participate in this year's events. Without you, one of HCCRA's most important components wouldn't be possible. We thank you all as we anxiously await next year's HCCRA hunt tests!

HCCRA RETRIEVER ADVICE

HCCRA is composed of a diverse group of members, which is one of the many things that makes HCCRA such a unique and enjoyable organization. HCCRA has young members (as shown by the 45 youth attendees at the 2023 Annual HCCRA Banquet) and it has members that were around when the merger of the Eastern Iowa Hunting and Retriever Association and Hoosier Bay Delta Waterfowl Chapter occurred to formally create what is now HCCRA .

HCCRA has members that are in the duck blind daily and it has members whose only waterfowl experience was on the Annual HCCRA Youth Hunt. Then HCCRA has members that have been training retrievers for decades and members that are just looking to start the process with their first puppy. The diverse range of experience, knowledge, and insight from members make HCCRA an incredible resource for each other. This section of Blind Banter is dedicated to providing tips, suggestions, and drills that were learned through the experiences of retriever training by several HCCRA members of various experience levels.

Bobby Pearson - HCCRA Game Steward

- Bobby is a newer HCCRA member and a 'beginner' dog handler per his standards. When asked what advice, tips, or drills he would give other dog handlers in the HCCRA community, he said "Everything revolves around obedience." Bobby said that much of his beginning field training is also useful for home settings. Bobby's favorite training has been 'Place Sit'. A 'Place Sit' is training using an item such as a rubber/plastic mat for the dog to sit on, and training the dog to identify that item with a 'Place' command. Bobby said this was critical in the beginning stages of training, since after establishing the 'Place' command, he could command the dog to a desired location. This works while training, in the duck blind, or in the home. Bobby said he trained this command through "repetition and forceful return to the 'place'". He would stand near the place mat, and have someone else force the dog to the mat when the 'Place' command was used. He also used treats to coax the dog to the mat, which helped reinforce the command.
- Another command Bobby said is easy to forget about as training progresses is 'Heel'. Though a simple and fundamental command, Bobby said 'Heel is *always* something needed in all settings." He frequently uses the command and uses a leash to force his dogs into heeling whenever needed to reinforce the comment. Lastly, Bobby said the "Recall" to whistle is also essential for dogs of any experience level. His dog naturally picked up on the 'Recall' to whistle since Bobby would blow the whistle as the dog would grasp the duck or bumper. The dog then associated the whistle as a command to look and/or return to him.
- However, Bobby's primary words of advice were to "Use to the guys in the HCCRA group." Bobby expressed how valuable it has been to his training to discuss ideas and issues with experienced handlers who are very knowledgeable and willing to help at any time.



HCCRA RETRIEVER ADVICE

Zach French - HCCRA Treasurer

Zach is a longtime HCCRA member and has been heavily involved with HCCRA's retriever training groups and hunt tests in recent years. When asked for lessons he has learned and suggestions he had for other dog handlers, he had the following to say:



"Duke is my first dog that I have owned and trained myself. With that came a lot of learning and time that I was not prepared for. A main lesson I learned when it came to training and moving Duke from a beginner to an intermediate dog, is to be ready to take a step or two back in the dog's training. Duke has frustrated me more times than I can count but I realize it is because I did not finish one step before moving on to the next. The other tip is to train every possible day you can. It is easy to think that since Duke did good one day that he has the training step down, but that's not always the case. For hunt tests, you're going to hear this from a lot of people, but train one step above the test you are running. If your dog is running senior, train like a master. Do not let your dog break the rules. If the dog breaks at the line, marks a different bird than you line up on, or does not heel up properly, then stop and reset.

As far as hunting goes there a couple things that I have learned to make a hunt the best for my dog:

1. Make sure the decoy spread is not just set up for the ducks but also good for the dog. It is important that the dog does not have too many obstacles in the way while trying to find birds. It also can help to handle the dog from the water.
2. Trust your Dog. Your dog knows that its job is to find the bird that was shot. So trust that your dog will use its training and instincts to find the bird.
3. Make sure your dog has just as good of a view as you do. They need every chance possible to see the bird drop."



HCCRA RETRIEVER ADVICE

Mike Ernster - HCCRA AKC Chairman

Mike is also a longtime HCCRA member and is the HCCRA AKC Chairman. Mike has been incredibly active in HCCRA's retriever training and hunt tests for many years and is always willing to help other dog handlers as much as possible. Mike was asked what advice he would give to other dog handlers of any experience level, and he had the following to say:



"As far as getting dogs ready for the season, I would say most people don't start training pre-season soon enough. Some don't train at all. Dogs need to be reintroduced to what their job is before opening day. This is usually easy and fun training to a seasoned retriever. There should be an emphasis on obedience. Sit and heel should be worked on while training and kept to a standard around the house. Those commands never get better once the steel starts flying. I would also add that young pups that are new to hunting need to be introduced to a lot of factors. Decoys, duck calls, gun shots, and boat rides need to be introduced before the big day. I'd introduce one thing at a time while training until they're comfortable with them all."

Dake Dietrich - HCCRA NAHRA Chairman

Dake is another tenured HCCRA member and is the HCCRA NAHRA Chairman. Dake is a familiar face around HCCRA retriever training events and hunt tests, as well as other hunt tests across the Midwest. Dake was asked what his biggest piece of advice for other dog handlers was, and he recommended the following:



"There may be an offseason for hunting, but there should never be an offseason for dog training. The whole reason I became involved in hunt tests was to keep my dogs active outside of hunting season. I would encourage participating in hunt tests or training events for all dogs and handlers. It's a great way to learn and keep the training going."





CAN-AM RAFFLE

Who wouldn't want a chance to win a brand new 2023 Can – Am Defender XT all while supporting HCCRA's mission of raising money for local waterfowl conservation efforts?! With help from CR Metro Harley-Davidson Suzuki Can-Am, HCCRA is making this chance a reality. Committee members are currently selling raffle tickets (1 for \$10 or 6 for \$50) until tickets are sold out. HCCRA supporters will be anxiously awaiting to hear their name called at the drawing to be held at the 2024 Annual HCCRA Banquet on March 30th, 2024. If you are at the banquet and your ticket is drawn you will receive an additional \$150 just to sweeten the deal! Seek out any of the HCCRA Committee members, email the organization at hccra18@gmail.com, or visit the website at hccra.club to purchase tickets. Also, HHCRA is hosting a UTV Night at Shuey's on September 2nd and will be selling Can-Am Raffle Tickets and having a 50/50 Raffle! Check out our Facebook page for details! All proceeds go directly to local youth, retriever, and waterfowl conservation efforts.



A Special Thanks to Metro Harley-Davidson Suzuki Can-Am



TICK POND UPDATE

HCCRA is still moving forward one step at a time for the proposed Tick Pond Project in North Liberty, Iowa. Due to the project site being located on land owned by the Army Corp of Engineers, managed by the Iowa DNR, and containing natural wetlands, there are many steps and processes that HCCRA has to navigate prior to breaking ground. Eric Harris, HCCRA Conservation Chairman, is leading the permitting process for the project. He has been diligently working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which is required for work on governmental land. Additionally, the archaeology study has also been started. However a recent Supreme Court Case (Sacket vs. EPA) has led to new jurisdictional wetland regulations and has slowed the process. However, continuous progress is being made on the front-end paperwork and governmental processes for this project. HCCRA is incredibly excited to start earthwork to improve another local wetland! Projects like this wouldn't be possible without member involvement and donations. The restoration of Tick Pond will be a huge asset to waterfowl hunters and retriever owners in the HCCRA community. Stay tuned to future Blind Banter releases for updates on the project status!

CREEKER'S KITCHEN



Creeker's Kitchen is devoted towards the culinary art of waterfowl, and providing the HCCRA community with a diverse range of recipes to try with their harvested birds. If you have a favorite recipe, feel free to email it to us for a chance to be featured in the next issue.

This Quarter's Recipe: [Honker Hibachi](#)

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 Goose Breasts (or any fowl)
- 2 Cups of White Rice
- 1 Large Carrot
- 1 Bell Pepper
- 1 Large Onion
- 1 Head of Broccoli
- 1 Cup of Sesame Oil
- 1/2 Cup of Soy Sauce
- 2 Tbsp Sesame Seeds
- 1/3 Stick Butter
- 2 Large Eggs
- 1 Tbsp Cayenne Pepper
- 1 Cup of Avocado Oil
- 1 Tbsp of Minced Garlic
- 1 Bottle of Choice Marinade



PREP PROCESS:

RICE

- Prepare the White Rice at least 4 hours prior to starting your Honker Hibachi cooking
- Bring 4 cups of water to a boil at a medium heat in a covered pot and add 1/2 teaspoon of salt and 2 cups of White Rice at the time water reaches boil.
- Let rice simmer while covered for 20 minutes.
- Remove rice from burner and let cool to room temperature after 'fluffing' with a fork.
- Once cooled, put rice in a covered bowl in the refrigerator for 4 hours.

GOOSE BREASTS

- Tenderize 4 Goose Breasts (or any fowl) with a meat mallet
- Cut Goose Breasts into small chunks (1" x 1")
- Marinade Goose Breasts in your preferred concoction at least 4 hours prior to starting your Honker Hibachi cooking.

VEGETABLES

- Finely chop/slice Carrots, Bell Pepper, and Onion
- Cut bite size pieces of Broccoli from head
- Mix vegetables together with Minced Garlic, Sesame Seeds, and 1/4 Cup of Sesame Oil

HIBACHI COOKING PROCESS:

1. Warm flat-top griddle to a medium heat.
2. Apply avocado oil to griddle top as needed to maintain oiled cooking surface.
3. Place 2 cups of previously prepared White Rice on a section of griddle top.
4. Cook for approximately 5 minutes, turning rice and adding sesame oil as needed until rice turns light brown.
5. Create opening in middle of rice pocket and add two eggs. Let eggs simmer until starting to solidify, and turn rice over top repeatedly to mix egg fragments into rice.
6. Place vegetable mix on the griddle, separate from the rice. Let cook for 4 minutes, then rotate.
7. As vegetables are cooking, create opening in middle of rice/egg mixture pocket and add 1/3 stick of butter. Once butter melts, turn rice over top repeatedly to evenly mix. Add Cayenne Pepper during mixing for seasoning.
8. Add marinated Goose Breast chunks to griddle, separate from Rice and Vegetable mixture.
9. Continue adding sesame oil and soy sauce to rice and vegetables until cooked and soft, rotating often.
10. Flip goose breast chunks after cooking for approximately 5 minutes on medium heat.
11. After cooking goose breasts on both sides for 5 minutes, and turning vegetables and rice often, combine all components together. (Do not overcook the fowl, breasts are best served with a bit of pinkish/red in the middle)
12. Add Sesame Seeds and a light amount of soy sauce after combined.
13. Let Honker Hibachi cool for 3 minutes prior to serving.
14. Start planning your next hunt so you can do it all over again!



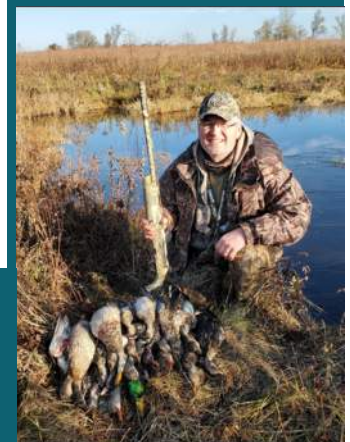
HONORARY BLIND SEAT



When we think about waterfowl hunting and the lifestyle we all love, we often think about decoying mallards, the smell of gunpowder, watching the sunrise over a spread of diver decoys, or the piercing sound of a goose call. While all of these thoughts and moments are major contributors in why we love the world of waterfowl hunting, we might not always immediately think of one of the largest components...the people. We all have one or several individuals in our life that provided mentorship, companionship, and fellowship in our waterfowl experiences. Perhaps they are your current hunting buddy or maybe a grandfather that took you on your first duck hunt. We all know someone that has made a profound impact on us as individuals, and also on the quality of waterfowl and waterfowl hunting itself. This section is dedicated to highlighting specific individuals who have improved waterfowl hunting and have left a lasting legacy on the waterfowl community. This quarter's Honorary Blind Seat is reserved for:

TIM LAWSON

Tim Lawson has a knack for incorporating waterfowl into nearly all aspects of his life. Growing up near Manchester, Tim taught himself how to carve wooden duck decoys at age 18 to insert his passion for waterfowl into an occupation in his early years. His name may sound familiar to you, and that is likely because he has donated three hand-carved duck decoys over the last two years to help raise money for the mission of HCCRA. Though carving more casually now and working a retail job, he is known around the workplace as 'Timmy Tuesday' since from the first day of the duck season to the last, Tim only works one day a week so he can spend the majority of his time in the marsh. Tim thoroughly enjoys spending time with youth in the field and teaching many of life's valuable lessons through aspects of waterfowling while in the duck blind. He had just finished up chemotherapy treatment from his third bout with cancer around the time he carved the two teal decoys for the 2023 Annual HCCRA Banquet. Though battling cancer throughout the past 6 years, you'd never know it based on his determination to spend as much time hunting, carving, and studying waterfowl as possible. Tim has been a devoted conservationist since a teenager when he volunteered and eventually headed local waterfowl conservation chapters. Whether erecting wood duck houses, excavating small seasonal potholes for nesting habitat, or teaching the tradition of conservation stewardship to young hunters, Tim Lawson is a role model for what waterfowl hunters and conservationists alike should strive for.





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