

Which Birds Should I Buy?

Pigeons

Strong flyers, run very little, smell very strong. Occasionally a dog won't point them and some dogs may have diminished intensity on pigeons which will come back when you introduce the dog to game birds. Pigeons are very hardy and easy to care for. They can be purchased or you can catch them yourself. You can contact a farmer and ask him if you can trap or net them at night in their barn for your dog training usage. Homing pigeons can be a solid investment if you have a place to keep them.

Quail

Captive quail are usually weak flyers, and should be used shortly after purchasing them. They tend to run very little. Quail are very easy to plant and keep and generally the least expensive game bird to use.

Chukar

Captive chukar are hardy, strong flyers. They do tend to run if not used in traps or planted hard. Typically expensive in the spring (birds sold in the spring have to be overwintered and feed is costly) with the price going down substantially on birds purchased in July and August (young of the year).

Pheasants

Other than training and running the NA track NAVHDA we generally don't use them. Full grown pheasants are expensive to purchase and maintain and need to be kept in large pens. They often run after planting.

Ducks

NAVHDA dogs will need ducks. If you just want to train for upland hunting and will never duck hunt or test UPT or UT, the need for ducks goes down. Ducks are easy to care for, but expensive to buy and feed. They can be thrown in the swamp/water areas for your dog to find and retrieve. But you must retrieve all ducks you put out - see section on permits.

How many birds should I buy?

On a typical chapter training day expect to go through 3-5 upland birds (pigeons, quail, chukar). Each time you take your dog out for a training session in the field expect to go through the same number of birds. Its always useful to have one or two birds in reserve in case something goes poorly in the field that you want to correct.

When duck training, most people will go through 2-3 ducks. Some dogs bring their ducks back alive (nice!) but many will dispatch the duck during their return.