

**North Central Wisconsin Chapter
of
North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association**



Member Handbook

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**NORTH AMERICAN VERSATILE HUNTING DOG ASSOCIATION
2025 NCW CHAPTER OFFICERS & DIRECTORS**

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MEMBERSHIP & DUES

North Central Wisconsin Chapter of NAVHDA

Memberships expire on December 31st of each year, regardless of when dues were paid.

- Individual \$25
- Spouse/Child \$5/each

IMPORTANT!!

MEMBERSHIP RATES INCREASE MARCH 31, 2025

- Individual \$45 (+processing fees if paid online)
- Spouse/Child \$20/each (+processing fees if paid online)

Sign up online at ncwnavhda.org or fill out the NCW NAVHDA Membership Form, make check payable to NCW NAVHDA, and mail to the current Chapter Treasurer.

In addition to having access to training equipment, Chapter Members have the privilege of purchasing training birds through the club. (This is not the case for many NAVHDA chapters!)

Being a NCW Chapter member gives you advanced notice and access to registering for test days. Chapter test days can fill up quickly – this can be an issue with Natural Ability puppies close to “aging-out” (16 months). Before we release our official test days for posting on the NAVHDA International website and opening test registration to non-NCW-members, we do our best to prioritize OUR chapter members needs first.

NAVHDA International membership is also required for chapter membership and participating in chapter events.

NAVHDA International

Memberships expire one year from the date your application was processed and need to be renewed on an annual basis. You will receive an International Member Number upon acceptance. Sign up or maintain your NAVHDA International membership at navhda.org/membership. (New Member \$65, Spouse \$35, Junior \$30)

International membership is separate from the NCW CHAPTER membership and is managed by NAVHDA International. NCW NAVHDA cannot accept International membership dues on your behalf.

We require proof of International membership and will verify your International member number and status upon signing up or renewing NCW Chapter membership. Failure to renew your International membership will prevent your participation in any Chapter events including training and testing. *NCW membership fees will NOT be refunded for any reason.*

International dues cover important “behind the scenes” costs like insurance for chapter training and tests. The official monthly magazine (VHD) is included with your annual International membership.



WHAT DO I BRING TO TRAINING DAY?

There are many tools used for training hunting dogs. The lists below will help you to know what should bring any time you join us on chapter training days.

MUSTS FOR HUMANS

- Positive attitude
- Hunter orange hat or vest if you are going to walk fields with live fire
- Bird crate and bird bag
- Plastic garbage bags to take dead birds with you
 - members are to clean up dead birds - there is no disposal system available on the training grounds
- \$5, a dish to share for lunch, and something to drink for yourself
- Weather-appropriate clothing - rubber boots, rain gear, extra socks, gloves
- Cash or check to pay for your birds

GOOD TO HAVE

- Tick/bug spray
- Sunscreen
- Camp/Folding Chair
- Waders or hip boots
- E-collar (Garmin, SportDog)
- Hearing protection

FOR THE DOGS

- Be sure your dog is current on all vaccinations
- Extra water and bowl
- Water bottle to carry into the field for your dog
 - We recommend the green Gatorade sport bottle
- Tie-out stake (check out uglydoghunting.com)
- Regular collar w/name tag - 1" wide nylon or leather preferred
 - Collar should be able to fit with only enough room for two fingers to slip between the collar and the neck of the dog. This will prevent escapes and unfortunate accidents!
- Leash
- Rubber bumpers (encouraging retrieving instinct, teaching to swim)
- Check cord and gloves to prevent rope burns
- Dog first aid kit**

IF YOU ARE SHOOTING OVER YOUR DOG...

- Break-open shotgun
 - required for safety
 - not to be loaded until in the field
- Shotgun shells (lead for field, steel for ducks/water work). If you aren't bringing a gun and want someone else to shoot for you, please bring cash for ammunition donation**

****All gunners for training day must be approved by a chapter officer.**

WE SUGGEST picking up an inexpensive plastic tub to hold all your training equipment. Keep your training permit and DNR duck tags in an envelope and tape it to the lid of the tub so it is always available in case a warden stops by. The tub keeps clutter to a minimum in your vehicle and ensures you have all your training equipment with you.

OTHER/OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Blank pistol and blanks
- Canoe, kayak or duck skiff with paddles and life vests
- Shotgun popper shells (Kent Field Blanks)

Our Chapter has equipment to support our training days. Bird launchers and pop-up/backing dogs are available to checkout by members for a small fee so you can continue your training outside of scheduled club training days.

- Automatic bird launchers (pigeon and duck)
- Honor dog for practicing backing/honoring
- Bird throwers for retrieve of duck work (winger)
- A skiff that can be used at the various water sites
- Single shot shotguns to be used on training and test days
- Heeling stakes
- Decoys
- Bumpers

NCW MERCH

Hats and shirts with the NCW Chapter logo, check cords, wonder leads, collars, bird bags, and other training gear are for sale at training and testing days.

TRAINING DAYS

There are generally three areas of training we work on: Field, Water, Obedience*

Field work includes

- Bird and gunfire introductions for puppies
- Developing independence and range
- Pointing
- Steadiness to flush, wing, shot, and fall
- Retrieving

In advanced situations, field work expands into backing other dogs when they are pointing, and honoring while another dog is retrieving.

Water work includes

- Swimming
- Duck search
- Steadiness by a blind
- Marked retrieves

In advanced situations, water work expands into blind retrieves and double marked retrieves.

***Obedience** is not explicitly taught on our training days, but it is required in everything we do. The most obvious example of obedience on a training day would be heeling (your dog keeps pace and walks side-by-side with you).

A Typical Training Day

The first few spring training days begin at 8am. Summer training begins at 7am. Check for updates and announcements on Facebook, reminder emails from the Secretary, and/or the NCWNAVHDA.org website.

7am or 8am The agenda for the day and important announcements are made. Use the clipboards at the pavilion to sign up for the area you want to work in for the day.

PLEASE SIGN THE ATTENDANCE LOG! We keep track of how many people attend our training days. This shows the DNR that the Mead Dog Training Grounds are being well-utilized by the public.

8:30am Split into groups based on your dog's level of training (remember to sign up on the clipboards before the meeting begins). Each group will have experienced members available to help you. Some fields may also have gunners. Everyone is welcome even if you are not training for a test.

Each group will have the option to work on water skills after the field – weather permitting.

Noon Break for lunch. Bring a dish to pass and \$5 to cover the main course – provided by a volunteer Chapter member. Please consider volunteering to prepare the main course – you will be reimbursed for your expenses. (Deli sandwiches, burgers/hotdogs/brats, sloppy joes...)

Afternoon Continue to run field and water. Time for special training needs will be addressed as needed.

FIELDS

Handlers are encouraged to walk with all dogs in the fields! This is the best learning experience for handlers AND dogs. This allows handlers to see new situations and allows dogs to acclimate to crowds.

Puppy/Natural Ability Field: Young dogs ready for introduction to birds and basic hunting skills. There is no gunfire on this field so even the smallest pups can participate. Older dogs that will benefit from basic skills are also welcome.

Intermediate Field: Dogs who have advanced beyond Natural Ability and are beginning to train for the Utility Test or Gun Dog Test. Gun fire will be introduced, as well as more advanced hunting skills.

*Please let the field leader know if your dog has **NOT** been exposed to gunfire.*

Utility Field: Dogs who are training for the Utility Test. *Please do not bring your dog to this field if he/she is not fully acclimated to gunfire.*

FIELDS/GROUND MANAGEMENT – MEAD GROUNDS ASSOCIATION

The Mead Grounds Association (MGA) is a 501(c)(3) volunteer organization that acts as the “go-between” for the various dog clubs that utilize the Mead Dog Training Grounds and the DNR Manager of the Mead Wildlife Refuge.

The MGA maintains the scheduling for use of the Mead Dog Training Grounds.

The current dog clubs represented in the MGA include:

- NCW NAVHDA
- Muddy Waters Retriever Club
- Central Muddy Waters Retriever Clube
- Deutsch Langhaar-Gruppe Nordamerika (DL-GNA)

In coordination with the DNR Manager of the Mead Wildlife Area, the MGA built the existing outhouse, shelter, bird pen, walkways and viewing stands. Funds and labor were donated by the clubs, and occasional state grants aided in the larger buildings. The MGA pays for grass mowing around the shelters and Pool 5, and has funds available for building repairs, pumping the outhouse, and maintaining the wooden structures.

Funds are raised by each dog club to contribute to the MGA, usually a minimal fee of \$2 per dog tested. Clubs typically contribute additional funds so the MGA has a cash flow of about \$2,000/year to pay for the maintenance requirements.

A long-term plan is in the works to identify other improvement opportunities; with the intent of gaining approval at the State level for projects for the next 15 years.

The MGA maintains an executive board consisting of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Additionally, the MGA has 8 board members who serve annual terms to advise and vote on MGA business, who act on behalf of the dog clubs.

Most importantly, the MGA helps manage competing club interests to best serve all member clubs and the public.

USING THE TRAINING GROUNDS AND TRAINING DAYS

Handler protocol and etiquette on the training grounds:

- Find out who's doing what in the field or water site before you use it.
- Wait your turn or use a different field/water site to train on if your name is further down the list. Some training days can have upwards of 70 people/dogs.
 - It may seem confusing if you're a new member on training day – but there is a system to keep it all moving. The only way everyone will get their training done and have an enjoyable, safe day is when we follow the running lists on club training days.

The grounds are open to training your dog on non-chapter days. Please check with the Mead Grounds Association (MGA) for other club training days. The list of training and events on the Mead Dog Training Grounds is posted on the ncwnavhda.org website.

COMMON COURTESY & RULES

SAFETY for dogs and humans is our number one priority.

- Be respectful and cognizant of others and their unique needs and circumstances.
 - Harassment/bullying, threats of or acts of violence will not be tolerated.
- All dogs that are not actively running a field or the water **WILL BE ON A LEASH.**
- Respect each dog's personal space. Do not walk along the back sides of vehicles where dogs are staked out. Not all dogs are friendly or appreciate their personal space invaded.
- Ask owners/handlers if it's OK before approaching a dog. Not all dogs are friendly.
- Blaze orange or pink is required in the field at all times.
- Young children must always be supervised.
- Break-action guns are the only firearms allowed. The gun must be unloaded and in the open position until the dog is on point and the handler is in the ready position.
 - 20 or 12 gauge, 2 ¾" size 6, 7, or 7.5 steel shot ammunition is recommended/preferred for field work (pigeons, chukar).
 - 20 or 12 gauge, 2 ¾" size 2 steel shot ammunition is recommended/preferred for water work (ducks).
- If your dog tends to bark, consider bringing a bark collar or ask one of the senior members. This is an effective method to train your dog to be silent in consideration of others.
- Keep the grounds clean. Clean up after yourself and take your trash home.
- Pick up all dead birds from your training and dispose of them.

As a training club, we expect the ethical treatment of dogs AND birds. Provide water, shade, proper containment/crates for training days and at home.

We are privileged to have the Mead Dog Training Grounds to train and test on. Unethical behavior by even ONE member can result in the loss of this privilege.

The Mead Dog Training Grounds are located at **200684 County Road O, Mosinee, WI** - 6.8 miles north of Junction City, WI, just north of the Eau Pleine River bridge. The entrance to the grounds is on the west side of County O and is marked with a fire number and sign.

CLUB EQUIPMENT

Club equipment is available for use to all club members. Equipment is kept in the large NCW NAVHDA trailer. Launchers and pop-up/backing dogs can be checked out by members for use between training/test days for a small fee.

It is the member's responsibility to return the equipment by the beginning of training/test day.

Equipment is to be returned in working condition – fully charged and ready to use.

Failure to return equipment for training days will result in loss of equipment use privileges.

Equipment Available for Rent

Dogtra Launchers

8 sets available

Sets included 3 launchers +1 remote, stored in a wood case

Rental fee: \$20/month

Innotek Backing Dog

Rental fee: \$30/month

You must receive instruction for care and usage from a club officer/director

- Equipment is to be checked out with a club officer/director and fee paid at the time of checkout
- Equipment is to be logged in the Equipment Checkout Binder upon checkout and return
- Equipment must be checked back in with a club officer/director

YOU NEED BIRDS TO TRAIN A BIRD DOG

What kind of birds do I need?

Pigeons

Pigeons fly and pigeons stink. They are the most common bird for starting and continuing your bird dog training. ***Homing pigeons are an excellent investment if you have a place to keep them at home.

Chukar

Chukar are introduced closer to testing days. Chukar are used for the field portions of Natural Ability, Utility, and Invitational testing.

Pheasants

Pheasants are used only in Natural Ability for the Tracking portion of the test. NCW only orders pheasants the last training day (Mock Test Day) before test weekends.

Ducks

Ducks are primarily used while training for the Gun Dog Test (GDT) or Utility (UT). You must retrieve all ducks that have been put out for your dog.

How many birds do I need?

Pigeons and/or chukars

Expect to use 3-5 birds each time you run the field.

Pheasants

One or two pheasants on Mock Test Day is sufficient for most dogs.

Ducks

Ducks are not needed for Natural Ability. However, ducks can be used for training in the Tracking portion of the NA test.

When training for UT or GDT, more ducks are required – 2 ducks per training day, minimum.

Where can I get birds?

You can order training birds on the ncwnavhda.org website for pick up on training days. Orders must be placed 10 days prior to the training day. Only NCW Chapter members may place orders for birds.

Bird prices fluctuate depending on sources and time of year. Prices listed below are typical ranges.

Pigeons	\$5.00 - \$7.00 each
Chukar	\$12.00 - \$18.00 each
Ducks	\$18.00- \$20.00 each
Pheasants	\$12.00- \$18.00 each

You must be a current NCW Chapter member to order birds.

Orders must be placed at least 10 days in advance.

Orders must be picked up by 8am on the training day.

DOG TRAINING PERMITS

You will need a "Wisconsin Bird Dog Training Permit" to train with game birds.

A bird dog training license allows you to purchase, possess, release into the wild, hunt and use approved captive reared species for dog training purposes only.

These species include captive-bred bobwhite and other species of quail of the subfamily *odontophorinae*, gray partridge, chukar partridge, red-legged partridge, mallard duck, ring-necked and reeves pheasants.

Individuals issued a bird dog training license are subject to the following requirements:

Captive wild bird identification:

- All bobwhite quail, pheasants and gray partridge used for dog training to be released and killed under the authority of a dog training license shall, prior to release, be tagged around the leg with a bird dog training leg band supplied by the DNR.
- Captive mallards used for dog training shall be identified by one of the following methods prior to six weeks of age:
 - Removal of the hind toe from the right foot; Or
 - Tattooing of a readily discernible number or letter combination thereof on the web of one foot.

You Must Retrieve All Ducks You Put Out

The licensee and persons assisting them may not have on their persons while engaged in dog training any unused department dog training bird bands. Wild birds and birds that are not banded or identified as required above, may not be killed during training exercises.

Your permit allows you to shoot only your birds. You cannot hunt birds left behind from other training. If you shoot 3 birds, you need to have brought and released 3 birds.

The "Permit" allows you to use game birds for training on any lands you have permission. State and Federal lands have restrictions on running dogs at certain times. Authorized State dog training grounds are exempt.

VOLUNTEERING

It's important to remember that everyone involved in the NCW NAVHDA organization is a volunteer. No individual is paid for any role they play in training, testing, or judging. The following list encompasses what positions are needed and what their roles are for successful test days.

Test Day Volunteers

Test Secretary

Responsible for all the paperwork – taking test entries, scheduling running days, and communicating with handlers before test. Responsible for sending test dates and contact information to NAVHDA International for use in VHD.

Test Coordinator

Responsible for management of the Test. Sees to the arrangements for grounds and birds, assigns tasks, and stays updated on progress. Responsible for lining up judges and arranging travel, food, scorecards, and clipboards. (Typically, the Chapter Vice President.)

Permit Secretary

Responsible for acquiring necessary permits from the DNR. (Chapter Treasurer)

Field Marshal

The field Marshal stays with their team for the entire day - making sure the handlers are prepared and ready for every portion of the test. **It is their job to keep the test moving smoothly.** They will identify and hand out running orders to the handlers on their team. If a double test is being run there will be one field Marshal for each team. They are responsible to gather all equipment needed for the test and make sure it is on hand and ready. (ammo, guns for handlers, etc.)

The field Marshal has radio access to judges and bird planters. The field Marshal ensures all equipment is picked up and returned to the right place and ready for the next test day.

Assistant Field Marshal

This person assists the field Marshal in all assigned duties.

Judges

Becoming a NAVHDA judge is a long, demanding process and is completely on a volunteer basis. Judges are only reimbursed for their travel expenses. The time, energy, and requirements for becoming a judge are done for the "love of the dogs". Judges are required to attend a NAVHDA workshop every year. They are required to handle and pass a dog they have trained in either a Natural Ability, Utility, Gun Dog Test, or Invitational test every four years. Additionally, they must handle and pass a dog in UT, GDT, or Invitational every eight years. NAVHDA judges are brought up for review annually by the Executive Council and qualified individuals are reappointed for the following year.

Lunch Volunteer

Prepares main course for lunch – reimbursed by the Chapter for expenses.

Gunners

- Gunners must be international chapter members and be a local chapter member
- They will have read the NAVHDA Aims Programs Test Rules and abide by them
- Gunners must be mature adults who regard safety above marksmanship and are physically able to keep up with the handler.
- Gunners should:
 - Have handled a dog in a NAVHDA utility test
 - Participated as a gunner in a minimum of three training sessions under a member that has gunned for a utility test

The gunners are also responsible to fire the two blank rounds required during the natural ability field portion of the test.

Blank Ammunition Gunning Natural Ability tests use only blanks while dogs are in the field.

Live Ammunition Gunning GDT and UT testing - blank ammunition is used for Water Work and live ammunition is used for Field Work. Live Ammunition Gunning at a NAVHDA Test or training is a serious responsibility. All "Live Ammunition Gunners" are required to read the sections on gun safety in the NAVHDA Aims, Programs, Test Rules book. Safe, intelligent, accurate shooting are primary concerns.

Distraction Gunner (Remaining by Blind/Steadiness by the Blind)

This person will fire a blank from a single barrel break action shotgun at the command of the judging team. He or she should bring hearing protection. This person should be familiar with the Steadiness by the blind and retrieve sequences for the Utility and Gun Dog tests. The distraction gunner answers directly to the Field Marshal and judging team.

Bird Steward

Responsible for care of the birds from point of delivery to the field. Sees that birds are where they are needed when they are needed. Birds must be kept fed and watered and protected from the elements to perform well in the field. It is impossible to have a good test if the birds are weak and fail to fly. Dead birds for drags and water work should be kept cool, dry, and covered to avoid attracting flies.

Bird Planters

There should be two or more Bird Planters per field per day. They will be carefully instructed in the proper way to plant the kind of birds being used. Don't assume that anybody who comes along knows how to plant a bird properly. Birds must be planted in such a manner that they will be alert and ready to fly when a dog approaches. Bird Planters take direction from the Senior Judge on where to put birds and must watch Judges for a signal that may indicate they need an extra bird.

Duck Thrower (Winger)

Responsible for setting up decoys in the Remaining by Blind/Steadiness by the Blind sequence, setting up the winger and performing test throw(s) of duck to ensure proper execution. This person is responsible for reloading ducks for the duration of the test day and collecting/returning decoys to the trailer at the end of the day.

Duck Handler – Search for Duck

One duck handler is needed for the day at the duck search. They make sure that the ducks needed are at the site in a location down-wind, away from the dogs and their handlers.

The Duck Handler will have two large bird bags, a single barrel, break action shotgun, blank ammo, steel shot ammo, skiff, paddle, and lifejacket.

At the direction of the judge, they will go out in the skiff and place the duck in the marsh. Upon returning, the skiff should be pulled away and hidden downwind so it will not distract the handler or dog. Once the dog is far enough away from shore and in the marsh, they should get the next duck ready. (Primary feathers on one side should be pulled and discarded in a garbage bag.)

At the end of the day, they are responsible for getting the equipment gathered and back to the NCW trailers.

Grounds Clean Up

It is essential that we leave the grounds better than we find them, be it on public or private land. Cans, bottles, shell casings, bird waste, wastepaper, and any other litter should be picked up and removed.