

**POINTING DOG EXAMINATION
REGULATIONS
DURING HUNTING IN MARSHES, MEADOW AND FIELD**

Examinations take place both during the hunting season and after the end of the hunting season. Pointing dog examination evaluates the following: smell, distance of the dog's scent, reliability and type of hunting, speed of search, manner of search, endurance, pointing, work style and behaviour, which includes reaction to a flushed bird and a shot, attitude and obedience.

- **Nose** – a dog's innate ability to perceive the smell of prey in the air and react to it. It can be strengthened and improved during the training process.

Nose distance – olfactory acuity, which is determined by the distance at which the dog is able to recognize prey. It is determined by dog-specific work, where judges can determine the distance from the point of the dog's first sense of smell (catching the scent) to the location of the game (flight place of the bird).

Comments:

1. The sudden perception of prey "downwind" does not affect the evaluation of the smell distance, points are not reduced for this.
2. Tracking (even with the head up) no matter how far the bird flew, does not indicate the smelling (olfactory) distance.

Reliability of nose– the ability of a dog to distinguish the scent of game birds from other smells that are in his perception zone, including tracks and the scent left by a bird that has just left the site. A brief inspection of the area just left by the bird or a short stop is allowed and does not affect the reliability rating.

Scenting method (manner) – a specific way the dog "processes" the smell of the game, ability of the dog to use air currents to sense the bird from a distance.

- **Search speed** – the speed of movement of the dog while searching for prey. A fast, energetic and smooth gait that is not reduced during the examination is highly valued. The search speed can be different and various for the same dog, depending on the terrain. In waterweeds, sloughy areas, meadows, also in places where birds gather (bird roosting and feeding places), the dog can reduce its pace compared to the pace on a smooth, firm marsh, field or meadow.

- **Search manner** – the manner in which the examination area is surveyed. Searching in parallels with loops at the ends, which are preferably done against the wind, is recognized as the best. The dog's movement crosses the path of the handler, who is moving ahead, against the wind. The dog's search parallels should be close enough to each other, within the approximate smell distance. When moving in parallel, the dog must move away from the handler at a steady distance of 40-100 m, depending on the wind, terrain and breed of the dog. The dog must not leave unexamined areas, walk behind the handler or repeatedly inspect the areas that have been previously inspected (without special instructions from the handler). Loops thrown downwind may be considered a mistake. A precise and methodical search may be required in open areas or areas with little bushes. In overgrown areas, the search width should be reduced so that the dog does not lose sight of the handler. If there is a wind from the side relative to the handler's direction of travel, a well-bred dog shall combine the correct way of searching with following the tracks downwind, therefore crossing the direction of the handler's movement at an angle. It is desirable for the dog to be able to reduce

the width of the search and change its direction at the command of the handler, which ensures a correct indication towards the displaced bird.

- **Following** – movement of a tense (excited) dog in the direction of the source of the smell, with the aim of directly determining the type of smell and the location of its source. Following starts from the moment the scent is picked up and continues until the dog stops and makes a point, stops, or continues searching. Dog's work without following cannot be an obstacle to evaluating a dog with a diploma.
- **Pointing** – stopping of the dog and making a point (stance) in a tense and expressive pose in front of the found game. This is the main distinguishing characteristic of different breeds of pointing dogs when hunting. The posture must be shown by the dog without flushing bird independently until the handler's command. If the bird is running, the dog can independently move in its direction without the handler's command, but without flushing up the bird and retaking the stance. When evaluating this characteristic, all points made by the dog during the examination are evaluated, except for the empty ones.
- **Flushing** – movement of the dog from the pointing posture at the handler's command to flush the found bird to its flight. Flushing is one of the core elements of the dog's work, which ensures the successful extraction of game.
- **Staying** – dog must stay in place after the bird is flushed and shot is made. A couple of steps are allowed, but the further dog goes/runs, the lower the evaluation for staying. Maximal allowed distance for chasing is 5 m (in competitions with CACT award) / 10 m (in tests).
- **Working style** – expressiveness and harmony of all movements, which ensures efficient work of the dog.
- **Behaviour** – skills for work, developed in training, which determine the degree of readiness of the dog for independent work in tests, to be evaluated as work characteristics. Behaviour consists of reaction to the flushed bird and a shot, attitude and obedience.

Reaction to a flushed bird and a shot – the dog's calm behaviour is evaluated when the bird is flushed in its flight, and during the shot, when the dog stays in place, lies down or sits down. The dog shows no fear of the shot.

Common attitude – determines the correctness of the dog's behaviour in the entire complex of examination. The need for regulatory commands in searching for game and working with the found bird is evaluated.

Obedience – determined by how quickly and accurately the dog fulfils all the commands of the handler, which are given by a whistle, gestures or in another way.

- In the examination, the work of pointing dogs is evaluated according to the following scale of maximum points. (Tab. No. 1):

Nose			Search		Work on bird			Style		Behaviour			In total Score
Distance	Reliability	Manner	Speed	Skill	Following	Pointing	Staying	Gait, movement	Pointing	Reaction to a flushed bird, to a shot	Common attitude	Obedience	
10	10	5	10	10	5	5	10	5	5	5	10	10	100

- A diploma on working qualities for pointing dogs is awarded upon receiving the following minimum number of points. (Tab. No. 2)

Evaluation of the hunting qualities of a dog	Diploma		
	I st degree	II nd degree	III rd degree
Total score no less than:	80	70	60
Of that, including:			
1) for nose (in total)	20	18	16
A) distance	8	7	6
B) reliability	7	6	6
2) for pointing	4	4	3
3) for behaviour (in total)	18	16	14

- A maximum of two attempts are given to evaluate the working characteristics of the pointing dogs and to handle/process the bird. At least in one case, the judge commission must be able to determine the distance from the place where the dog perceives the scent or from the place of making a point (if there is no following) to the place where the bird indicated by the dog takes to flight. The time for testing the dog's working abilities is determined by the judges' commission, but it shall not exceed 30 minutes.

Comments:

- Since different birds have smells of different intensity, birds are divided into two groups for determining the olfactory distance:
1st group – great snipe, common snipe, black grouse, hazel grouse, common pheasant;
2nd group – common quail, corn crake, grey partridge, spotted crake.
- An encounter with a game bird is considered to be flushing the bird up to its flight or approaching the bird without smelling it during the search within the scent of the dog working

downwind; or at a distance of 6 m for birds belonging to group 1 and 4 m for birds belonging to group 2 if the olfactory distance is not determined.

- Empty point – a firm and expressive posture (stance) with emphasis, but without flushing the bird to its flight.
- Flushing birds "downwind" is equivalent to empty points (stances) and shall not count as a bird encounter. This may be considered a disqualifying error.
- Smelling (catching the scent) – when the dog feels and distinguishes the smell of game from many others, for further processing.
- Gripping – the starting moment of catching the scent.
- Testing the dog's reaction to the shot is mandatory (usually empty cartridges).

• **A dog shall be removed from examination without a rating in the following circumstances:**

- if it refuses to start a search within 3 minutes;
- if it goes in steps for 5 minutes;
- if it is suspected that the dog has fallen ill (the dog stops searching, lies down, barks often, runs away from the handler in the shade, etc.);
- if the obedience or common attitude required for the examination is not sufficient;
- if the dog chases the bird further than 5 m (in competitions with CACT award) / 10 m (in tests) from the place where the dog was at the time of the bird flushing;
- if the dog is afraid of a shot;
- if the handler wants it, with the permission of the judges' commission, if the dog is searching for no longer than 10 min. and has not yet found a bird;
- if the dog flushes the bird without the characteristic point;
- if the dog does not smell the bird several times within the minimum olfactory distance;
- if several empty points have been observed;
- if there is constant work with non-game birds;
- if the dog does not show a sense of smell, i.e., three demonstrated cases of lack of nose;
- if the handler does not comply with the commission's instructions.

• **Examination does not take place:**

- if the air temperature in the shade is more than +30 C;
- in case of no wind – in windless conditions;
- in conditions of gusty or strong wind (more than 10 m/sec.)
- if there is prolonged and heavy rain, also before or during the storm;
- before sunrise and after twilight.

The table of approximate rating points in pointing dog tests on marsh, meadow and field game is given for optimal conditions: wind 5-6 m/sec, constant direction, air temperature +15 ..+18°C, relative air humidity sufficient (more than 75%).