



Labrador Retriever Club of Greater Boston

Beginning Retriever Training

Retriever Jargon

Air: To allow the dog to empty his bowels and bladder.

Angling: To cross terrain or enter water on a diagonal line. As opposed to squaring, which is the tendency of a dog to cross land features and enter water in a perpendicular manner.

Area of the Fall: The area in which a retriever may legitimately hunt for a marked retrieve. Hard to define numerically, somewhere around 10% of the distance to the retrieve but dependent on the terrain, whether the mark is a go bird or memory bird, etc.

Attrition: A training technique in which the dog is given repeated opportunity to respond correctly to a cast. If the dog refuses a cast, it is called back to the point of infraction, and the cast is repeated.

Back:

1. A directional signal given with a raised arm and hand directing the dog away from the handler
2. The verbal command given to the dog to have him leave the handler – generally used as the command for a blind retrieve. Less commonly used on marked retrieves, where the use of the dog's name is standard.

Balk: Refusal to leave the handler when sent on a retrieve.

Bank Runner: A dog that avoids water by running around the shore. Also a test that tempts the dog to run the bank.

Baseball: A drill for teaching directional casts for the dog to take right and left “overs” and straight “back casts.

Bird Boy: The person who places the bird for a blind retrieve or throws the bird or bumper for the dog to retrieve.

Birdy: Describes a dog with a very high desire to retrieve birds.

Blind:

1. A retrieve on either land or water where the dog does not know where the location of the bird or bumper is, but the handler does---the handler must direct the dog to the location through whistles and casts.
2. A structure used by hunters to hide themselves or for the gunners to hide behind when a mark is retired.
3. A structure used behind the line where a dog and handler stay until their time to retrieve

Blink: A retriever's refusal to pick up a bird or dummy it has found.

Bolter: A dog who runs away from his handler during competition or during training.

Break: A dog trying to leave on a retrieve without being sent.

Bubba Gunner: A gun in the field or on the line that shoots at a marked retrieve but is not located at one of the throwing stations.

Bugging: Occurs when a dog is looking left and right when his handler tries to line him up for a blind retrieve, as opposed to locking in into the desired direction. As a result, the dog may refuse to go when sent, or take off into a (to you) random direction.

Bulldog: A bird thrown or shot while the dog is returning from a previous retrieve. It is done to see if the dog will drop the bird he is carrying and switch to the new bird. In addition, it is a diversion for further retrieves. It can be used in Master Hunting Tests and is used on occasion in field trials.

Bumper: Sometimes known as a dummy. It is a plastic or canvas object, usually with a rope attached so it can be thrown, used to simulate a bird.

Burn: Apply pressure by giving stimulation with the e-collar.

Bye Dog: A dog that is not entered in a test but used in a series that includes an honor to provide the last working dog with an opportunity to honor.

Call Backs: A list of those dogs remaining in the field trial or hunting test after each series is run.

Cast: A directional signal given to the dog, with the arm and hand, and/or voice, after he has been stopped on the whistle.

Cast Refusal: The dog refusing to respond to the direction or cast given by the handler.

Chaining: Creating a reliable series of behaviors from simple or complex behaviors. Can be back-chaining (starting with a complex behavior and going backwards one step at a time until the desired behavior is formed) or forward chaining (starting with simple behaviors and building their complexity). This is a term used in behavioral theory which can be applied to dog training. Each item in the chain is a stimulus to the next item or response in the training sequence.

Channel Blind: A long and narrow body of water the dog must swim without coming to shore, unless directed to by the handler, in order to reach the bird or bumper.

Check Down: The ability of a dog to correctly judge a short mark after retrieving one or more long marks. The initial long marks make it likely that the dog will over-run the short mark.

Cold Blind: A blind the dog has never run before.

Cold Honor: A test situation, in which a dog has to honor for another dog before, not after it has completed its retrieves.

Controlled Break: This is when the dog makes an attempt to break and is immediately brought under control by the handler.

Cover: Grass, brush or any other vegetation which may conceal the bird from the dog on land or in the water, or present an obstacle that the dog would prefer to go around rather than through.

Creep: The dog moving forward on the line while marking, without actually breaking. If the dog has crept too far forward, many judges will ask you to have the dog return to heel position before being sent for the mark.

Cripple: A wounded live bird that is still able to walk away. Also called Runner.

Cue: A signal to the dog. Often used to mean a verbal signal such as “dead bird” indicating a blind, “way out” for a long bird, or “easy” for a short check down bird. Swinging the handlers gun can be a non-verbal cue to the dog to look out for another bird in the direction the gun is pointing.

Delayed Bird: This is a bird which is shot after a dog returns to the line after retrieving one or more birds of a multiple mark. The dog is then sent for this delayed bird before returning to the line to complete retrieves of the birds remaining in the field.

Diversion: A mark or blind which is included in a test in order to divert the dog. This makes the test more difficult as the dog can be sent for another mark or a blind after picking up the diversion. A dry shot also can be used as a diversion.

Double: A marking test in which two separate birds are thrown, each in a different location prior to the dog being sent to retrieve.

Double Blind: Two back-to-back blind retrieves.

Dragback: A scent trail left by dogs returning with birds, especially through high cover where the birds' scent is left on the vegetation.

Dry Shot: A shot by a gun without a bird being thrown or a flyer being shot.

Dummy: Same as a Bumper.

Entry:

1. The place where the line to the blind or mark enters the water. If this entry is at an angle, it can be called an angle entry.
2. Used to describe the method by which the dog enters the water such as a large flying leap, a hesitant way of entering, etc.

Factor: What influences a dog's performance on a marked or blind retrieve. This includes, for example, terrain, wind, diversion shots, and the suction created by previously retrieved marks.

Fall: Where the bird that is shot or thrown lands.

Flaring: Occurs when the dog is veering off the direct line to a mark or blind in order to avoid an obstacle, or avoids running close by a gun.

Flat Throw: Also known as a square throw---a bird or bumper which is thrown perpendicular to the line from the dog to the gun. It is neither thrown back nor in towards the line. From the dog's point of view, it is a throw 90 degrees from the bird boy.

Flyer: A live bird thrown and shot for a marked retrieve.

Flowerpot: Also known as a Momma/Poppa throw. Two marks are thrown from one gun station, one to each side.

Flushing: This is when there are live birds in the field and the dog is sent to find them and "flush" them into the air so the birds can be shot by the gunners. This occurs during upland hunting. Occasionally judges will simulate this condition during hunt tests.

Force Fetch: A training method which convinces the dog he must retrieve when told to retrieve. The word "fetch" is considered a command, not a request.

Freezing: This is the dog's refusal to give up the bird to the handler. The dog appears to have its jaws locked on the bird and ignores all commands to release it.

Go-Bird: In a multiple marked retrieve, the last bird down, to which the dog is typically sent first. In a setup with a delayed bird, you have more than one Go-Bird.

Guns/Gunners: The persons who throw and/or shoot the birds during trials or training.

Handle: Directions given by the handler to the dog such as handling on a blind. The handler does this by blowing a whistle which is giving the dog a sit command. When the dog sits and watches the handler, the handler then will give a cast or command of one kind or the other to the dog.

Happy Bumper: A bumper thrown in play or as a reward or encouragement for the dog.

Hardmouth: A dog that is very rough on, abuses, or eats the birds when sent to retrieve. This is a disqualifying fault.

Head-Swinging: Occurs when a dog sitting on the line looks away from one fall to another, prior to the next bird thrower calling, often in anticipation of that next bird. As a result, the dog may not mark the first bird well.

Holding Blind: An enclosure for the dog and handler to stand behind while waiting to go to the line during a trial or hunting test. It is to prevent the waiting dog from seeing the tests before running them.

Honoring: A dog remaining in place on the line while another dog is sent for the bird or birds. The honoring dog must not interfere with the working dog.

Hunt: The way a dog goes about locating a marked retrieve, e.g., a short hunt, tight hunt, wide hunt, etc.

Indented Triple: A set up of marked retrieves in which the middle bird is closer to the line than the outside birds.

Key Bird: The bird in a multiple mark which is likely to prove the most difficult bird for the dog to retrieve successfully.

Line:

1. The most direct path from where the dog is set up to the blind or mark. ("There is a ditch and a small stream of water on the line to the blind").
2. This is the spot designated by the judges from which the dog is sent for retrieves or blinds. ("Dog to the line!")

3. The part of a blind retrieve in which the handler sets up the position of a dog toward the bird. ("Take your time lining up the dog")
4. The dog running on a direct path from his handler to either a blind or a mark. ("Fido really lined that mark")
5. A long leash.

Line Manners: The dog's behavior while coming to the line; while on the line waiting for the marks to be thrown or while waiting to be sent on a blind; upon returning to the line with the bird; and when leaving the line after delivering the bird(s).

Live Gun: A person who shoots the flyer.

Lock-In: When a retriever focuses his attention intently on a fall or when lined for a blind retriever, before being sent. Opposite of head-swinging.

Loose Hunt: A marked retrieve in which the dog spends too much time out of the area of the fall. A loose hunt disturbs too much cover and can be penalized in a test.

Mark:

1. The fall of a bird or bumpers, watched by the dog, which he should remember and retrieve when so ordered. Multiple marks can consist of two, three, or four birds (double, triple, or quad). As a verb, it can state the dog can (or cannot) mark well.
2. A cue to the dog to tell it to watch for the fall of a bird.

Marker: A good marker is a dog who can remember the falls in a series and take a direct line to the bird.

Memory Bird: In a multiple marked retrieve, the first bird thrown, which is typically the last bird to be retrieved although handlers can choose to pick up birds in any order.

Mixed Bag: A setup in which more than one species of birds is used, or birds and bumpers.

Momma-Poppa: Same as flowerpot.

Multiple: A setup in which more than one mark is thrown.

Nick: Apply pressure by giving brief stimulation with the e-collar.

No Bird: This is when a bird is either shot or thrown and the dog is not sent for the bird because it is felt by the judges to be an unfair mark. The dog is then allowed to return to the line (or first return to the holding blind) and rerun this set of marks, either right away or after waiting for a few more dogs to run the setup.

No Go: Same as Balk.

Over: The dog moves in a lateral direction (left or right) upon being given that direction in a cast by the handler using his arm and hand and/or verbal command. Also used to designate the verbal command used by a handler for that purpose.

Pattern: Drills repeated by the dog to teach specific routines such as casting or taking lines.

Pick-Up:

1. The manner in which the dog picks a bird off the ground.
2. When handlers call their dogs in after they failed a part of the test. Will lead to elimination. ("They picked up their dog.")

Picture: What the dog sees from the line.

Pin: The dog going directly to the bird without a hunt.

Point: A piece of land protruding into a body of water. Dogs running blind may be expected to swim by the point or have to get on the point.

Poison Bird: A bird thrown as a mark which the dog is told to ignore in order to run a blind(s) first. On some occasions, the dog is then sent to pick up this mark after running the blind(s).

Pop:

1. When the dog stops on a retrieve or a blind and turns and looks to the handler for direction without a whistle having been blown.
2. The firing of a gun at the same time a bird is thrown to simulate the shooting of a bird.

Popper: Any type of blank shotgun shell, and the gun used to shoot them.

Primary Selection: In a multiple marked retrieve, the decision by a handler to pick up a bird first that is different from the last bird down, a choice called Primary Selection. Usually to pick up the shortest bird first, or to retrieve a cripple.

Quad: A marking test in which four separate birds are thrown, each in a different location prior to the dog being sent to retrieve.

Quartering: Covering the ground in a systematic method looking for game.

Rat Trap: Device used for holding a bird and keeping it afloat for a water blind.

Recast:

1. A second attempt to send the dog from the line for a mark.
2. For blind retrieves, the repeat of a cast after dog refused the first cast.

Refusal: A retriever's deliberate disobedience, either when sent to go or in response to a whistle call or cast.

Rerun: Another opportunity to run the test setup, typically after a No-Bird was called.

Retired Gun: Where the gun disappears from sight after having thrown or shot a bird. This changes the picture for the dog.

Runner: Same as Cripple.

Scallop: A retriever turning to go back to his original line after a short distance on an over or angled back cast.

Scent:

1. The smell of a bird
2. As a verb, when the dog picks up the scent of a bird and changes his search pattern.

Secondary Selection: In a Triple, after retrieve of the Go Bird the handler may choose to pick up a bird different than the second bird down. Typically used to pick up the closest bird next.

Selection: The handler's choice of a particular bird in a multiple marked retrieve, specifically if it is different from what the dog naturally wants.

Setup Dog: A dog used by judges to design a test. They run the dog on the planned setup to identify any issues with it.

Sight Blind: A blind the dog can see before being sent or a blind which was first thrown as a mark. This is a way to start young dogs on their blinds.

Single: A marked retrieve, in which the dog is sent right away for the bird thrown, as opposed to a multiple marked retrieve, where the dog has to remember more than one fall.

Sluice: Shooting a bird once it is down on the water, to prevent it from swimming or flying away once the dog is sent.

SOB: Short for "Stumble on Bird". When a dog finds a marked retrieve after a long, loose hunt, and clearly without a memory of where the bird was.

Square Bird: See "Flat Throw".

Squaring: The tendency of a dog to cross ditches and roads and to enter water perpendicular to the shore / edge.

Steady: A dog that waits patiently and quietly and does not leave to retrieve until commanded to do so.

Step On a Bird: A perfect job on a marked retrieve, with little or no hunt. See Pin.

Sticky: A retriever's refusal to release a bird on command. Not related to Hard-Mouthed. Most Sticky dogs are not Hard-Mouthed, and vice versa.

Style: A dog's manner of retrieving, running blinds, water entry, etc., which indicates his strong desire and his attitude. A stylish dog is a pleasure to see working.

Suction: The pull created by a factor that entices a dog to veer off the straight line when a dog is sent for a mark or on a blind retrieve.

Switch: In a multiple marking test, leaving the area of one fall after hunting there unsuccessfully, to go to the area of another fall. It is also a switch to drop one retrieved bird to pick up another. This could occur, for example, during a diversion bird when the dog on his way in to the line drops the bird he has just retrieved to pick up the bird thrown as the bulldog.

Test Dog: A non-entered dog run before any of the entered dogs. This allows the handlers to see the planned test, and the judges to fine-tune the setup. Typically different from the setup dog.

Thrower: A person who throws birds in a test. May also be called "Gun".

Trailing: This is when there is a crippled bird that is running or moving out of the area. The dog picks up its scent and tracks/trails it down, fetches it, and brings it back to the handler.

Triple: A marking test in which three separate birds are thrown, each in a different location prior to the dog being sent to retrieve.

Walk-up: Used to simulate hunting. Handler and dog do not wait on the line for the birds, instead, with the dog at heel, handler continues to walk forward until the birds are thrown or shot. Usually as the birds are in the air, the handler may tell the dog to sit, but cannot send the dog until the judge so orders.

Water Refusal : The dog not entering the water after being sent for a mark or a blind where the line to the mark or blind is through water.

Whistle Refusal : The dog failing to respond to the whistle when blown by the handler.

Includes definitions from:

- Bonny Georgia Griffith, Hunt Test Hints for Newbies, <http://www.wordsatwork.net/caper-hunttest.html>
- James B. Spencer A Primer on Retrievers Gun Dog Magazine October 1989
- Input from many members of GBFieldTraining mailing list. Thanks!