

Arctic Bird Dog Association  
4Q 2022 GM Membership Meeting  
November 17th, 2022

The meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m.

**In attendance:**

Hilde Stappens	Dori Hollingsworth
Chuck Stielstra	Carol Hedges
Trigg Davis	Scott Breitsprecher
Sue Davis	Tom Watson
Dan Branvold	Jeanne Holifield
Jeff Lipscomb (joined late)	Mike Kasterin
Rose Manafo	

**Last GM meeting minutes review and approval:**

- Approval postponed until next meeting, will be posted to website.

**President's Report**

Decent participation in most events this year, decreases mostly due to rain. Hilde is looking to find volunteers to take on some of the tasks that she has been handling. Wants to maintain energy moving forward

**Secretary's report**

N/A

**Treasurer's report**

- Membership is down about 10% over this time last year.
- Bird payments are up, mainly due to fees charged to cover increased costs, but no loss taken on overall bird program.
- Big increase in revenue from hunt tests and clinics/classes up over \$6000 from this time last year.
- \$5,000 profit this year compared to a little bit of a loss this time last year.

As of October 31, 2022, ABDA has a healthy bank account at this time and is in good financial shape. Per Hilde, the final invoice received in November for the birds will actually leave the club at a loss.

**Committee reports:**

- Hunt test
  - o Spaniels: Mike Kasterin. Well-attended hunt test in July, with 9 dogs qualifying both days.
    - Mike announced that he would not be running the hunt test this year and would like the club to assist in any way possible.
    - Mike has recruited a judge from Washington for the 2023 hunt test.

- Pointing: Hilde Stappgens. Attendance fairly low due to weather, but there were a number of passing scores. Combined with a day of training before and a day of private training after.
- Membership (Hilde):
  - Drop in membership for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to 93 members.
  - Membership is a rolling 12 month; there's usually a spike in membership during bird orders, and also right before the Chukar Challenge.
- Nominating committee: Bud Rice, Tim Gallagher, Gretchen Clark
  - 2023 board positions to be filled: Vice President (Bud Rice outgoing) and Treasurer (Carol Hedges outgoing)

### **Unfinished business**

- Training Birds: 2022 summary, projections for 2023
  - Bird vendor is very busy, and not always communicative. Shipments might begin in May, when he supplies field trials in Washington, via air-conditioned truck to Seattle from Billings.
  - Bird cost is roughly \$26 per bird. This does not take into account the fatalities during shipping, or in the bird pen, along with escapees. The vendor charges a flat fee for shipping, no matter if the shipping is via Seattle or Billings. There isn't much hope to charge less than this in 2023.
  - Hilde has requested a preliminary order of 1400 birds for 2023.
- Fall membership survey results
  - Not as many answers as hoped, but some good, detailed feedback. Will pass on information to various committees.
  - Some offers for help, and some ideas for training and events
  - Very apparent that newer members are being left to their own devices, so work is needed in this area.

### **New business**

- Rick Merizon, – Alaska Board of Game and small game update
  - Population assessment from spring breeding surveys:
    - Rough grouse numbers remain low across the state. Tok saw a modest rebound, but other populations are low. The snowshoe hare population has crashed, and the two are closely tied together, so grouse populations expected to rebound.
    - Sharptail grouse were up in Delta, down in Tok. Fewer sharptails seen this year over last year.
    - Rock/willow ptarmigan – about the same as last year. Denali Hwy populations slightly up over last year. Significant rebound in willow ptarmigan over all areas of the state, and greater chick survival rates (6-6.5 chicks per brood).
    - Summer brood surveys – 25 volunteers statewide, walking nearly 100 kms – provided the most valuable data set on upland birds.
  - Board of game updates:
    - Two board of game meetings this year – Region 1 (Southeast Alaska) and Region 2 (Southcentral Alaska)

- Region 1 – meeting in Ketchikan January 20<sup>th</sup> – January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Public comment due by January 6<sup>th</sup>.

Prop 36 seeks to reduce grouse bag limit to three per day on the Juneau/Douglas road system

Prop 37 same for ptarmigan.

These proposals were submitted by a member of the public; there are no significant biological concerns for these populations at this time. Official statements forthcoming.

- Region 2 – meeting in Kenai March 17<sup>th</sup> – March 21<sup>st</sup>. Public comment due by March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Prop 162 seeks to extend the ptarmigan season in Unit 15C (SW portion of the Kenai peninsula) from August 31<sup>st</sup>, from March 31<sup>st</sup>.

The department is concerned about extending this season, because of the relatively small size of ptarmigan in that area, particularly in the Caribou Hills area, and because of the significant rebound that has been seen in that population.

Question from member Carol Hedges – how are spruce grouse populations in the Susitna drainage?

- Response from Rick: spruce grouse are the most heavily harvested upland game bird in Alaska and are notoriously hard to assess for population. Overall, this area's population is doing just okay. The State has initiated a broad fall harvest assessment. The population is threatened by the spruce bark beetle, which has all but wiped out the white spruce stands in the valley, where the spruce grouse have their habitat.

Question from member Chuck Stielstra – is there adequate participation in the state-wide wing survey?

- Response from Rick: yes, but there's always use for more wings. This year is on track to meet sample size goals. Free wing envelopes and postage-paid return envelopes are available.

Additional federal excise funding has been leveraged thanks to large amounts of volunteer hours garnered. This year, several willow ptarmigan were collared, and more collars have been purchased, thanks largely to brood survey volunteer hours.

#### - Gun safety training

- Jeff Lipscomb has asked Morgan Hagelun to teach field gunning safety; suggested dates are July 29/30. Morgan also willing to teach a training seminar while in Alaska, which will be at no charge to the club.
- Mike Kasterin suggests that each gunner in the field must complete rigorous gun training before being in the field, and well before the start of the season.
- Hilde suggests posting the writeup by Ralph Kushman on the club Facebook page; Mike suggests in April to garner more attention.
- Hilde also suggested a group training event on gun safety at Birchwood, at the club's expense, made available to all who are interested in order to fill the club's need for gunners.

- Volunteer(s) to manage the bird program going forward.
  - Hilde will not be able to manage the 2023 bird program. Asking for volunteers to assist. Suggests that a committee for this purpose would be best.
  - Chuck Stielstra committed to handling the communication with the vendor and the pickup and transportation of the birds but asks for someone else to handle the record-keeping.
- Need event chairs and committee members for all 2023 events.
  - Alaska's largest dog show is the weekend of July 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup>.
  - Pointing novice class – Dan Branvold will be able to teach it.
    - Possibility of running classes on 2 nights 12 participants each, in the same six-week period, usually first week of May. Done by Memorial Day with fieldwork.
    - Challenges with getting field time organized with NAVHDA clubs
    - Flushing dog classes are on Thursdays.
  - NAVHDA members Scott and Dori are agreeable to better communication within the clubs regarding field usage. NAVHDA training days on the Eagle River field will be May 17 – July, on Wednesdays.
    - Monday, Tuesday and Thursday are the most viable training days for ABDA.
    - Dan agrees to April 18<sup>th</sup> – May 23<sup>rd</sup>.
  - Per HILDA, the Alaska Mental Health Trust, who owns the Eagle River field, will issue permits but not coordinate usage, or release information on other permit-holders. There's no way to know who is using the permit on what days.
  - Mike Kasterin would like to have someone else run it. Hilde suggests asking Gretchen Clark.
  - Family field day - Hilde will ask Tim Gallagher to chair this event.
  - Chukar Challenge - Bud Rice agreed to chair this event, but will need assistance.
  - Training day – July 8<sup>th</sup>
  - Pointing Hunt test - looking for co-chair with Sue Davis, will need a volunteer
    - August 12th
  - Flushing Hunt test – looking for event chair.
    - Current date of July 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> conflicts with NAVHDA hunt test and the dog show.
  - Flushing hunt test in Delta Junction- Jeff Lipscomb confirmed chair
- Bylaws committee
  - Hilde expressed a need for a committee to review the club bylaws, to review and cleanup inconsistencies. No volunteers committed.
- Better email communication method.
  - Looking for someone to find new email/messaging system that's less cumbersome than the current one used by the club. No volunteers committed.
    - Scott Breitsprecher stated would contact Hilda with information in the next few weeks.
    - Dori Hollingsworth suggested using Slack

**Next GM Meeting:** January 9th, 2023, Location: TBD

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.