

I am self-employed and fall/winter are my slow seasons. Therefore, Charley hunts almost every day from the opening of the grouse season in California in late September (I think!) until the end of chukar season in Nevada, which is February 5. Charley has 253 miles on the Garmin Astro since the third week of December, which does not include all hunting days. These are chukar hunts on varied terrain that typically involve rocky scree slopes and hundreds of feet in elevation gain and loss. If you've ever chukar hunted you know the country isn't usually flat. He has never had any problem with his feet when chukar hunting. However, he does not do well in cactus country (Montana).

I've also hunted quail, pheasant, ruffed grouse, sooty grouse, sage-grouse, sharp-tails, and huns with him. He's also waterfowl hunted in Canada, mainly with him in a lay-out blind, which was challenging as Charley would prefer to watch the honks and ducks come in, but everyone else thought Charley's yellow eyes would scare them off. I've duck hunted here locally a few times with him, but he definitely does not like to break ice, so early season is best.

Charley is tough. Towards the end of the season, we spent six days in a row chukar hunting with a friend from Montana. The friend kept expecting Charley to poop out but he's in great condition, has good drive and stamina and never quits. During Charley's first year chukar hunting he galloped everywhere. During subsequent seasons he trots more than he gallops. This is actually good energy conservation on his part because we can be hunting for up to 6 hours; the dog obviously doesn't know how long each day will be, but he never runs out of gas. Interestingly, when we hunt other species such as pheasants, he tends to run faster...the ground is also more typically flat than chukar hunting ground.

Charley's range is pretty much 75-200 yards, but the other day he was out at 440 yards. I know the distance because I run him with the Garmin Astro collar. At 440 yards he was on point for about 5 minutes; we were trying to get to him but when you have to hike up and down steep draws it is hard to get to the dog in time if the birds aren't holding. The birds were out in an open grassy area and they left after 5 minutes.

Charley holds point forever (more than 15minutes) when birds aren't flying away and he waits for us to get to him. Then he will relocate on the birds if they have walked off, which the chukars have often done. He doesn't creep on them until we are there. I like him to creep when the birds are running, otherwise, if he held point and the birds are 200 feet away you have no way of knowing which direction the birds have gone and that can be bad, especially when you are in hilly country as you will see from some of the videos.

Moreover, chukars run and do not always hold, from the time a dog first goes on point, the chukars can move more hundreds of yards. When Charley relocates on point it is because the birds are running. He doesn't typically move when the birds are holding.

While I trained Charley to be steady to shot and fall for the NAVHDA UT test (which he got perfect scores on the upland components), for hunting he breaks on shot. I want the dog to move forward with the hunter, as you will see on some of the videos, sometimes the cover is real tall and a dog would have a hard time marking a shot bird if it stays behind 100 feet. The dog can better mark the fall of a bird, if he's close to the action.

Charley hunts both air and foot scent. With running birds that have high-tailed it a ½ mile away using foot scent is actually pretty good, so I think. The other day we were out for an end-of-the-

day hunt and Charley tracked fresh bird tracks (could tell because of fresh scat) down slope 550 feet elevation, along a valley, and then back up the hill about 500 yards, when the Garmin said he was on point. We were watching him from up above until we lost sight of him as he began heading back uphill. Using the Garmin, we were able to walk parallel and slightly below where he was before trudging up to where he was on point, and got into the covey of birds that were holding just dandy, along with the Chucklet.

Charley is excellent at tracking and finding running wounded chukars. Some of the most spectacular work he has done is when he finds a wounded bird that ran and hunkered down in jumble of rimrock a hundred yards from where it landed after being shot or one that has coasted several hundred yards away, way, way out of sight. Having one's dog return with a bird under such conditions is inspiring.

Charley's main drawback is that when there are no birds around he turns to hunting rabbits (or lizards during the warm season) and doesn't really cover the ground. But then there are no birds around, so there is no point in covering the ground...I'm sure that's what he thinks. Interestingly, several of the times Charley is 'not hunting' I have been with someone else hunting their GWP or English Setter. Although their dogs were running all over the place, they did not find any birds...so perhaps Charley has a super nose and knows when not to waste energy. When there is bird scent he hunts hard and strong.

In one video, Charley is pointing right at a sagebrush, and then reaches in on command to get the bird. That was a wounded single that went more than ¼ mile (not typical distance of most wounded birds) from where it was first shot. The wounded bird was initially flushed from the lab who didn't catch it (it flew too high and fast), before flying again, and then being found with Charley.

Some of the videos I'll show you depict how far off birds can be pointed and held, and what happens when the lab absolutely loses it and I don't have the e-collar transmitter!

A little background on Charley in general; he is a high-prey drive dog. He was stalking and catching bullfrogs at 7 months. The dog is driven and spends his days hunting lizards, frogs, mice, ground squirrels, rabbits, etc. I live in ranching country and he does not lie about, he needs something to do. But he is a Weimaraner and does not run off, he just spends his time engaged in something while I work in the home office, or pestering me to engage with him in something, for example, bringing me all manner of items that he knows I cannot ignore him ...pillows, books, flashlights, items from the pantry, etc. He is not cat friendly. I tried repeatedly since he was 12 weeks old using a friend's cat who is not afraid of dogs to get him to ignore/tolerate cats. Although I have been successful using this method with other Weims I have had, it did not work with Charley. During the feral cat dispersal season he will tree and bay cats and will try to kill them. I did use the e-collar to successfully break him from chasing and bringing down deer.

#### SENTENCES ABOUT ME AND DOG

I work as a wildlife biologist and regularly use Charley in my work, particularly on sage-grouse surveys. The dog gets an enormous amount of field and hunting time. He is obedient and well trained. Moreover, he was easy to train, and very enthusiastic and willing. He is smart and learns very easily. He is very protective. He is not aggressive with other dogs, including other intact males. He sleeps under the covers at night when it is cold.

One last thing regarding Charley's Natural Ability score..that was with no training as I didn't realize you could train for it. He had been exposed to a couple chukars and loved to go swimming, but nothing like what I would do now with a new puppy in terms of preparing for the test.

Something I wrote to Dawna:

I wish you could hunt behind him on chukar sometimes...the dog is really pretty darn amazing...hunting yesterday on one side of a canyon...dog goes on point 300 feet below us, then his tail starts to rapidly wag and he starts tracking...that means the birds have walked off... so Chuckie, nose to ground follows the track several nasty steep rocky hundreds feet down to the dry creek bed then heads up the other side of the canyon, scents the air and starts up the even worse steeper slope opposite of where Matt and I are watching from. Matt is pooped, but it's obvious from Charley that he is on birds so I start down toward the creek bed and the other side of the canyon. By the time I start up the other slope Charley is about 200 yards above me slowly tracking the birds up a very nasty steep pure pile of scree bordered by tall sagebrush. Pearl (the lab)and I are slowly following him cause it's so steep. Every now and again, Charley points, and then moves... I can tell that he can occasionally see the birds but that they are moving on. Predictably, just as we near the top of the scree and it kinda flattens out, he locks on point. I sneak up and freaking 30 birds blow up...hover in the air, saying shoot me, I miss gloriously on the first shot, gun jams, no more shots can be taken, but I can see where the birds fly to. Matt actually followed me upslope, and if I had known that I could have waited and he could have shot and he would have brought down birds...although he was still ten minutes below us. Anyway, he got two birds earlier, both of which the Chuckster retrieved. He is such a pleasure to watch when he hunts and he is so 'on' for hunting chukar is pretty damn cool.