



The Hunter's Blind

About NEFHRC Newsletter

This monthly newsletter is to help members keep updated on our club events, achievements, or other announcements that may be of interest. Please call or e-mail Karen VanDonsel at (828) 877-3254 or karenvandonsel@gmail.com if you have anything you would like to submit. Alternatively, you may contact Tom Gaddis at (904) 699-3084 or President@nefhrc.net.

Please feel free to submit pictures, announcements of events, brags, sale of dog or training equipment, litters, or any other announce-

ments for club members! The deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month.

If you have an idea for



a recurring feature article, please let us know. This newsletter is for you, our members. We want to include what you want. So, please help make this a great newsletter. Submit your articles, pictures, stories and ide-

Reminder

As a reminder, NEFHRC will not be holding a Fall 2017 Hunt Test. Due to various conflicts, a date was not available to hold the test at our preferred site.

Be on the lookout for announcements concerning our Spring 2017 Hunt Test. We are tentatively planning the Spring test for sometime in April at SSJ Farms.

NEFHRC

Coming Events

- 10/07-10/08/2017 Coastal Empire HRC
- 10/14-10/15/2017 Midlands HRC
- 10/21/2017 NEEFHRC Training Day
- 10/21-10/22/2017 Midsouth Boykin Spaniel
- 10/21-10/22/2017 SOWEGA
- 11/04-11/05/2017 Charleston Retriever Club
- 11/11/2017 Middle Georgia HRC
- 11/18/2017 NEFHRC Training Day

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Prompt Treatment for Blastomycosis In Dogs Is Key to

"This is a special dog," says Fred Kampo of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, referring to the black Labrador Retriever he calls "Stinger."

While everyone likes to think his or her Lab is special, Kampo's perspective is broader than most. A member of the Retriever Field Trial Hall of Fame, inducted in 2012, Kampo is president of The Labrador Retriever Club, the American Kennel Club parent club of the Labrador Retriever.

Last summer, FC-AFC B Bumble was on a serious roll. In June, the 6-year-old male, who had earned more points over the course of his career than any retriever his age or younger actively competing in field trials, churned through 10 grueling series to become one of 13 finalists from a starting field of 110 at the National Amateur Retriever Championship in Stowe, Vermont. A few weeks later in mid-July, Stinger topped a field of 82 in a hotly contested open all-age stake at the Mississippi Headwaters Retriever Club in Bemidji, Minnesota.

Two days after that impressive win – two days — this elite canine athlete could barely walk. Stinger was diagnosed with blastomycosis, a fungal infection that can occur systemically or locally, laying even the most robustly healthy dog low and sometimes with devastating, even deadly, consequences.

"The lameness was his first symptom," says Kampo, who's handled Stinger to the majority of his field trial wins. "There'd been no coughing or respiratory difficulty of any kind, which I'm told is typically the first sign a dog may have 'blasto.'"

In Stinger's case, the disease had attacked several of his vertebrae, and because his spinal cord was at risk, all off-lead activities were immediately curtailed. Crate confinement and walking on leash became the order of the day for the next five months.

Following an initial 10-day period in which he received the fungicidal drug itraconazole (ITZ) intravenously, Stinger was put on a daily oral dosage of ITZ. It had been a frighteningly swift fall from the top of the field trial world, but it could have been much worse.

Triggered by a Wet Environment

Blastomycosis is caused by a fungal mold, *Blastomyces dermatitidis*, associated with moist, slightly acidic soil and decomposing organic matter, such as wood and leaves. The mold releases microscopic spores into the air, and when these spores are inhaled, infection can result.

"When the spores get way down into the lungs is when it creates a problem," says Alfred M. Legendre, DVM, DACVIM, an infectious disease specialist at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine.

The warm, moist environment of a dog's lungs triggers a transformation of the spores into a yeast that can spread via the bloodstream or the lymphatic system to other parts of the body. Although rare, blastomycosis also can occur when spores are introduced to an open wound.

"*Blastomyces* is a pretty big organism in yeast form," explains Dr. Legendre. "The yeast is too big to get down deep into the lungs to cause disease."

The condition is not contagious. "It doesn't spread dog to dog, or dog to person," Dr. Legendre says. "When dogs and their owners have simultaneously developed blasto, it is because they were exposed to the spores at the same time."

Dogs and humans are the most commonly infected species, with dogs 10 times more likely to develop the disease than humans. Geographically, blastomycosis is most prevalent in the valleys of the Mississippi, Ohio and St. Lawrence rivers, the Great Lakes states and certain parts of Canada. According to the Centers for Disease Control and

Prompt Treatment for Blastomycosis In Dogs Is Key to Recovery

Prevention, Wisconsin has the highest reported incidence of blastomycosis for humans, with rates in some northern counties 10 to 20 times above the national average.

In the case of a dog like Stinger, who's traveled all over the country to compete in field trials, it's hard to know precisely where or when he contracted the infection, especially since signs of the disease may not occur for weeks or months. Coincidentally, Kampo has a cottage in northern Wisconsin to which he often takes Stinger.

Exposure to areas that have been recently excavated has been shown to increase the risk of blasto in humans, presumably because it liberates large quantities of spores into the air, but the real risk of blastomycosis is proximity to water or moisture. Multiple studies have shown that dogs living within 400 meters of water are vastly more likely to develop blastomycosis than other dogs. Indeed, there's some evidence to suggest that the shores of beaver ponds tend to be blasto "hotspots," or what epidemiologists call "enzootic areas."

Regardless, the *Blastomyces* organism flourishes only under certain environmental conditions. This helps explain why dogs such as Labradors and other hunting dogs that spend a lot of time outdoors are more susceptible to blastomycosis than those that are largely indoor dogs.

Statistically, males are slightly more likely to develop blasto than females, with peak susceptibility to the disease occurring at 2 years of age. Although there's some indication that dogs may be able to recover spontaneously without treatment from mild cases of the affliction, this has not been established as a fact, says Dr. Legendre.

Early Diagnosis & Treatment Are Key

A dog exhibiting clinical signs of blastomycosis requires immediate veterinary attention. A confirmed diagnosis should be treated promptly and aggressively to increase the likelihood of a full recovery. There's no "wait and see" with blasto because no matter how mild the signs may be, the disease has life-threatening potential and thus should be taken seriously.

The first thing most owners notice in dogs infected with blasto is that they begin breathing "hard," as if they're having difficulty getting air into their lungs. This labored respiration is typically accompanied by dry, raspy chest sounds and sometimes by intermittent coughing. Many owners also notice a decline in their dog's energy and stamina levels.

Other clinical signs of blastomycosis include limping or lameness; "oozy" skin lesions on the nose, mouth or paw pads, though other areas can be affected as well; inflamed eyes; and enlarged lymph nodes. The challenge for veterinarians to diagnose the disease is that other conditions can produce similar signs. In areas where there is not a lot of blasto, the disease may not be on a veterinarian's radar.

"People who travel to hunt or compete with their Labrador and recognize any of these signs should tell their veterinarian where they've been," Dr. Legendre advises. "If you live in Kansas but you've hunted in Wisconsin, your veterinarian needs to know."

Diagnosis of blastomycosis is made from blood testing combined with a biopsy to identify the organism. A more recently developed urine antigen test has been successful in detecting extremely low levels of an infection. Once a definitive diagnosis of blastomycosis has been made, treatment with anti-fungal drugs should start immediately.

The standard fungicide used to treat blasto is itraconazole, though fluconazole can be used as well. The disadvantage of ITZ is that it ranges from \$8 to \$12

per tablet, with a Labrador-sized dog typically requiring two or three doses a day for at least 90 days. Fluconazole is less expensive but not as effective, requiring a longer period of administration to achieve the same result.

If treated promptly after an infection occurs, about 70 to 75 percent of dogs recover. About 20 to 25 percent of dogs experience a relapse, typically within six months of the completion of antifungal therapy. Thus, periodic evaluations are recommended after an infection to be sure the condition has resolved.

Prompt Treatment for Blastomycosis In Dogs Is Key to Recovery

"The actual percentage of relapse could be lower," says Dr. Legendre. "This is because the urine antigen test is capable of detecting much lower levels of infection than was previously possible. Instead of stopping treatment when a dog is symptom-free, veterinarians now are able to continue treatment until the patient is truly infection-free. Most dogs do quite well with treatment. They can be expected to make a full recovery and return to doing all the things they did prior to the onset of symptoms."

The exceptions, he notes, are dogs in which blastomycosis has spread to the brain — they usually succumb to the disease, unfortunately — and dogs with severe lung involvement. In these cases, the fungicide can trigger an inflammatory response when the blasto yeast die off, making the initial days of treatment a critical period.

"Most dogs with a severe lung infection from blasto die within the first seven days of treatment," Dr. Legendre says. "If they're able to survive long enough to get past the pneumonia, their prognosis improves significantly. Some dogs may have decreased lung capacity as the result of scarring, however."

Because blastomycosis is caused by an organism that occurs naturally in the environment, it is virtually impossible to eliminate the risk of infection. Early diagnosis and treatment are key to success.

"You should keep an eye on your dog and be aware of the signs of blastomycosis," Dr. Legendre says. "If you notice anything that strikes you as suspicious, be sure to take your dog to the veterinarian."

Back in Stinger's camp, the mood is upbeat. Last December, he was cleared for limited off-lead activities. "Stinger is looking awfully perky these days," Kampo says.

The retriever's prominent field trial record makes him a valuable stud dog, and after a temporary hiatus due to concerns about his spinal health, he's back to having his semen collected and banked on a regular basis. He's scheduled for a CT scan to evaluate his spinal condition.

"Stinger's veterinarians believe he can compete again, and I hope they are correct," Kampo says.

Purina appreciates the support of the Labrador Retriever Club Inc. and particularly Fran Smith, DVM, PhD, DACT, the LRC health chair, in helping to identify topics for the *Purina Pro Plan Labrador Retriever Update* newsletter.

Recognizing Signs of Blastomycosis

Clinical signs of the fungal infection blastomycosis may occur as early as a few weeks after exposure or may take several months to become evident. Being aware of the signs, particularly if your dog has been in an endemic area, is important in order to start treatment as soon as possible.

- Coughing, labored breathing or respiratory disease
- Fever
- Depression or change in performance and drive
- Limping or lameness
- Skin lesions on the nose, mouth or paw pads, with or without draining
- Inflamed eyes
- Enlarged lymph nodes
- Swollen and painful joints
- Multiple skin lesions with or without draining tracts

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Below is a listing of all pet health related articles that have appeared in *The Hunter's Blind*, along with the issue in which the article appeared. If you need to refer to a particular article, you can download the specific issue on the Newsletter page of the club's web site (<http://www.nefhrc.net/newsletters/>). If you have any problems or questions, please e-mail Karen VanDonsel at Webmaster@nefhrc.net.

Article	Issue Included
Living With a Blind Dog: Helpful Tips	03/01/2016
Ear Infections (Otitis Externa) & Ear Cleaning in Dogs	04/01/2016
Food Allergies and Food Intolerance	10/01/2016
First Aid for Snake Bites in Dogs	05/01/2016
Ruptured Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL)	08/01/2016
Burns: First Aid for Pets	09/01/2016
Choking: Using the Heimlich Maneuver in Dogs	11/01/2016
Dog Emergencies: Contact Your Veterinarian When Your Dog Shows These Signs	11/01/2016
An Evacuation Kit for Your Dog	06/01/2016
Heatstroke (Hyperthermia)	07/01/2016
Arthritis (Degenerative Joint Disease, Osteoarthritis)	12/01/2016
Causes and Management of Arthritis & Other Joint Diseases in Dogs	01/01/2017
Hip Dysplasia in Dogs: Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention	02/01/2017
Heartworm (Dirofilaria Immitis) Infection & Prevention	04/01/2017
Mast Cell Tumors	05/01/2017
Kennel Cough (Infectious Tracheobronchitis) in Dogs	08/01/2017
Canine Influenza (Dog Flu)	09/01/2017
Blastomycosis	10/01/2017



NORTHEAST FLORIDA HUNTING RETRIEVER CLUB
www.nefhrc.net

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
_____ **New Member** _____ **Renewal**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE Home: _____ Other: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

DOG BREED: _____ CALL NAME: _____

Club dues are \$50.00 for both individual and family membership. The dues include the cost of the NEFHRC decal.

ANNUAL CLUB DUES ARE DUE JANUARY 1ST OF EACH YEAR.

Please make checks payable to NORTHEAST FLORIDA HUNTING RETRIEVER CLUB.

Mail the check and both pages to:

Barry Sales, NEFHRC Treasurer
11869 Remsen Road
Jacksonville, FL 32223
(904) 923-2813

Areas where I'd like to help with the Club:

RELEASE

WHEREAS the undersigned desires to release certain parties from any damages that may arise, directly or indirectly, as the result of his/her participation in club activities offered by the Northeast Florida Hunting Retriever Club, fully realizing the inherent danger in any type of sporting event of this nature.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of being allowed to participate in said activities, the undersigned does hereby release and forever discharge Northeast Florida Hunting Retriever Club, its officers, directors, members, participants, spectators, and all landowners whose land they may be using, from and all manner of actions, causes of such actions, claims and demands whatsoever, in law or in equity, which may arise now or in the future because of, or pertaining to, the undersigned's participation in any of its activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereto affixed my hand the date and year written below.

DATED AND SIGNED THIS _____ day of _____.

(Name Printed)

(Name Signed)

All club members are urged to also become members of the national HRC. To do so, complete the form found on our website and send to: UNITED KENNEL CLUB – HRC, 100 East Kilgore Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49001. Annual National HRC dues are \$25.00 (individual) and \$30.00 (family). This membership includes the *HUNTING RETRIEVER* magazine.

If currently a member of the National HRC, enter Membership # _____ and Expiration Date _____.

We're on the web!
<http://nefhrc.net>

NEFHRC is sanctioned by the United Kennel Club, Inc. We are a club devoted to the training of bird hunting dogs for the purposes of hunting and hunt tests. As the UKC says, we are a club "*Conceived by hunters for hunters.*"

NEFHRC

Always for the dogs!

Club Officers and Contacts

- ⇒ President—Tom Gaddis
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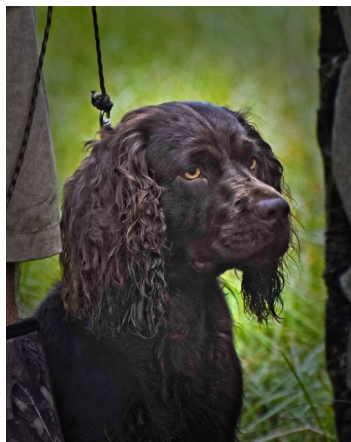


September Training Day

NEFHRC held its September 2017 training in spite of the area still recovering from Hurricane Irma. We had a good turnout and were able to use the church property off Belfort Road. The temp and humidity were high and higher. The large field was only partially cut due to rain but it made for a good double to test marking and a blind run through high cover into a clearing. With no breeze, the dogs had to take a particularly perfect line otherwise they had a bit of a hunt which was good experience and worked perfectly using ducks. The second set-up was more challenging and consisted of a long mark from high ground into water, out onto a point and then into more water and up a bank. Just to make sure the dogs were getting this concept the blind took a similar line but kept the dogs just off the point (when possible). The younger dogs and handlers walked up closer to the mark to cross only one piece of water and up the opposite bank. There were just enough people and energy to run two set-ups. Remember hunt test and hunting season are upon us, so take advantage of our club training days every month.



Barry & Kodiak



Moose



Don & Annie

OCTOBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
01	02	03	04	05	06	07 Coastal Empire
08 Coastal Empire	09	10	11	12	13	14 Midlands HRC
15 Midlands HRC	16	17	18	19	20	21 Training Day MidSouth Boykin SOWEGA
22 MidSouth Boykin SOWEGA	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

NOVEMBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			01	02	03	04 Charleston Retriever
05 Charleston Retriever	06	07	08	09	10	11 Middle Georgia
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 Training Day
19	20	21	22	23 THANKSGIVING DAY	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		