

## Certification

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### PURPOSE

The purpose of APLA's Certified Pointing Retriever Test (CPR) is to evaluate a combination of naturally occurring pointing traits, basic natural abilities, and basic trained behaviors in the upland field and in waterfowl retrieves. Natural abilities and trained behaviors are equally important components of a good hunting companion. To score well in this test the dog must respond to basic obedience commands and have had enough exposure to hunting upland birds and doing water retrieves to show beginning proficiency in each. There is no minimum age for dogs running this test. The test will have two working parts: Upland Work and Water Retrieves. Testing will be scored on a noncompetitive basis on a zero to five (0 to 5) scale in one half (1/2) point increments in each of seven (7) categories, for a maximum score of 35 points. Any dog scoring a one and one-half (1.5) or lower in any category of testing will fail immediately and will not be allowed to continue the test. The seven scoring categories are: NOSE, COOPERATION, DESIRE, SEARCH, POINT, LAND RETRIEVES, and WATER RETRIEVES. Nose, Cooperation, Desire, and Search. Retrieves will be evaluated throughout all parts of the test. Point will be evaluated in the Upland Field. A minimum total score of 21 of the 35 possible points is required in order to earn a qualifying score (i.e., pass the test).

### GENERAL OVERVIEW:

#### UPLAND

In the upland Field, each bird contact should be looked at as an opportunity to perform to the APLA's CPR standard, clearly showing natural pointing traits.

The Upland Field will consist of approximately 3 to 5 acres of light to medium cover (as available). Three (3) chukar will be placed at random throughout the Upland Field. The Handler must indicate to the Judge whether he himself wants to put up the birds, wants the Gunner to put up the birds, or wants to send in the dog to flush the birds after they are pointed. He must also indicate whether he wants any birds shot that the dog puts up without having pointed. The Handler and dog must hunt the entire field efficiently searching for multiple birds. Handlers will be allowed a maximum of 15 minutes to hunt the field. Multiple bird contacts are required **if upland conditions permit**. Once requirements are met in the Upland Field, time limit may be shortened at the judges' discretion or may be shortened for the safety of the dog (heat, injury, etc.).

The field party will consist of the Handler and dog, two (2) Judges, a designated Gunner, and at most one Apprentice Judge. Spectators may be present in a designated area. With the consent of the Handler, other designated individuals may accompany the field party, such as a photographer or one other "guest". Should those individuals "bump" a bird in the field or cause a dog to fail to hold a point, it is considered the responsibility of the Handler and the entry will not be considered for any type of protest or re-run. Guests in the field party may not give any type of verbal communication,

directive, or support to the Handler, and are required to remain in the holding area while birds are being planted. Guests providing the Handler with guidance or help risk the dog and Handler being disqualified. Certified dogs do not have to be steady to wing and shot (i.e., they do not have to wait for the judge to release them on the retrieve).

## **WATER**

The Water test will use open water (as available), providing retrieves of approximately 50 yards or less. The water may contain very light cover, but the bird should still be visible from the line. Decoys may be used outside the area of the fall but may not be in the route to the fall. Upon the Handler signaling readiness to the Judges, a duck call will sound and a dead duck will be thrown from a concealed location simultaneously with a gunshot. The throw will be into the water (with a splash) in a location that encourages both efficient water entries and water returns. This will be repeated in the same manner for a second retrieve.

## **THE SEVEN SCORING CATEGORIES**

### **NOSE**

Effective use of the nose across all bird contacts will be used to determine the overall quality of the nose. Scenting conditions (including direction, shifting, or absence of wind) will be taken into consideration by the Judges.

### **COOPERATION**

In all situations, the dog should respond to commands or signals given by the Handler. In the Upland Field, the Handler will determine the overall pattern of the search, but a well-trained dog will need little assistance in hunting within this general pattern. Scores will be heavily downgraded for a dog that runs with disregard to the Handler. Handlers at the CPR level can make a second attempt to send the dog once per upland retrieve and once for each water retrieve (not including cases of confusion as deemed by the Judges) and can recall the dog to re-send if needed. A No Go is called when the dog refuses to leave the handler's side after being released on both the initial send and the re-send attempt. If a No Go is called by the judges, then the dog would score a zero (0) in the Cooperation category and fail.

### **DESIRE**

The dog must demonstrate a desire to hunt, retrieve, and please its Handler. Desire can be evaluated through the enthusiasm, self-motivation and body language displayed by the dog as it performs its work. Scores will be downgraded for a dog that requires constant verbal encouragement to hunt or retrieve or for a dog that seems intimidated by the Handler.

### **SEARCH**

In the Upland Field, the Handler must determine the overall pattern of the search with the clear intent to find three birds. Within this overall pattern, the dog should demonstrate purpose and pattern while using its sense of smell, showing a natural

ability to locate birds on its own. On all retrieves, the dog should go quickly to the area of the fall, and search efficiently within the area of the fall. Aimless running, walking, or swimming will not be confused with searching either in the Upland Field or during Water Retrieves.

## **POINT**

The dog should search, locate and point naturally as many of the birds as possible in the Upland Field. Judges are to allow for all styles of point but for top scores, the point must be intense and unmistakable. Intensity shows that the dog has confidence that he or she has located the bird, but intensity should not be judged on a time limit. The wind could fluctuate or the distraction of the Judges and Handler approaching could change the dog's intensity level.

To establish point, the dog must become motionless in a standing position (movement of the head or tail is allowed). The dog must clearly establish a natural point on its own prior to any type of command, signal, or cue given by the Handler. The dog must remain on point for a minimum of five (5) seconds. Only after the judge has started the five (5) second count may the Handler give a quiet, non-intimidating, steadying command. The dog may reposition itself while on point, but upon re-establishing point, a new five (5) second count will begin. Repositioning which results in a staunch point indicating that the dog has confidence in bird location will not lower scores. A bird must be produced from the point for the point to be scored. Creeping on point or willful flushing of birds, unless commanded to flush, will result in a lower pointing score. Birds that are determined by the judges to be running and are flushed within gun range will not lower the dogs pointing score.

The ability of the dog to locate and point birds in the Upland Field will depend on the overall Upland Conditions, including (but not limited to) wind, scenting conditions, and how well the birds are holding. It is the responsibility of the Handler to organize the overall hunt to maximize both the number of bird contacts and the likelihood of birds being successfully pointed when found. The Judges will evaluate the dog's entire body of work in the Upland field, including evaluating for the natural pointing trait, after seeing enough of the day's Upland work to evaluate overall Upland Conditions, which may change throughout the course of the day. Failure of the dog to locate and point birds may be due to inadequacies in any or all of the following Categories: Nose, Point, Search, Cooperation, or Desire.

## **LAND RETRIEVES**

Scoring in this category will reflect work performed in the Upland Field. Retrieves should be efficient. A scoreable retrieve is one that is delivered to within one reasonable step of the Handler, but a higher score will be given to dogs delivering to hand. The dog should mark the fall; however, the Handler may assist the dog with hand or whistle signals. The Handler may reposition himself a short distance, but only enough to get a reasonable view of the flight or fall of the birds or to keep his dog in view. On those occasions when the gunner fails to down a successfully pointed bird due to a safety or any other

circumstance and the dog gives chase and makes a completed retrieve, the retrieve may count. Should the dog not complete the retrieve for any reason, or the dog remained steady to the flight of the bird, then a simulated retrieve will be performed. For the purpose of the simulated retrieves only, the dog may be restrained by a slip lead until the Judge's signal is given. The dog must retrieve all cleanly killed game and all birds from simulated retrieves that it sees fall within the boundaries of the Upland Field. CPR dogs do not have to be steady to wing and shot (i.e., they do not have to wait for the judge to release them on the retrieve).

All retrieved birds will be examined for evidence of hard mouth. Should a dog exhibit hard mouth, it will receive a zero (0) in Retrieve. Evidence of crushed bone structure, canine tooth penetration or audible crunching while the dog has a bird in its mouth are sufficient to result in a 0 score in Retrieve.

### **WATER RETRIEVES**

Efficient and willing swims to and back with the duck should be completed by the dog. Judges are looking for retrieving desire and swimming abilities as well as the efficiency of a reasonably direct line. Bank running and water entry other than in a reasonably direct line from the Handler will severely downgrade the dog's score. The dog is required to complete two (2) single marked water retrieves, delivering to within one reasonable step (on dry land) of the Handler. (For top scores, delivery to hand is required.) Judges will signal the Handler to send the dog shortly after the duck hits the water. The Handler may quietly speak to his dog in a non-intimidating fashion while waiting for the Judge to signal him to make the retrieve. The dog may not leave the Handler's side until this signal is given. For the purpose of the Certified Water Retrieves only, the dog may be restrained by a slip lead until the Judge's signal is given.

All retrieved birds will be examined for evidence of hard mouth. Should a dog exhibit hard mouth, it will receive a zero (0) in Water. Evidence of crushed bone structure, canine tooth penetration or audible crunching while the dog has a bird in its mouth are sufficient to result in a 0 score in water retrieves.

### **TITLES (Certification)**

A dog that earns a qualifying score will be given a qualifying score ribbon. Two qualifying scores are required to be awarded the title of Certified Pointing Retriever (CPR). Additional qualifying scores in Certification tests will be awarded a ribbon, but no additional title is earned.

**"Approved by the Board July 26, 2019, effective January 1, 2020. Amended by the Board October 21, 2020" Amended by the Board February 19, 2025**

Change log:

Change "re-send" to second attempt – Feb 2025

Clarification on retrieving birds that are not shot - Dec 6,2023