

You'll get your limit with...

LITTLE RIVER DUCK DOGS...

The Labrador Retriever, the Chesapeake Bay Retriever and the Spaniel are generally considered Canada's "big three" in bird dogs, but if you were to take any of these on a hunting expedition to Nova Scotia's Yarmouth County, the residents would stop and stare. They have their own breed in Yarmouth County, and there is nothing quite like it in all Canada. Duck hunters in this "county of lakes" have learned to depend exclusively on the Little River Duck Dog—known in official circles as the Nova Scotia Tolling Dog. To these canines, duck hunting is as simple as wagging their tails—and that is one of their tricks of the trade.

Tolling dogs were patterned after the fox, which with a wave of its bushy tail lures the ducks, then pounces on one for a breakfast.

Shortly after the turn of the present century a group of Little River hunters got together and decided on an experiment which would make the old fox sit up and take notice.

The sportsmen cross-bred a Collie, Chesapeake and Spitz. The pups were cross-bred again and again until the Little River Duck Dog came into being.

The Collie had the stability and the bushy tail needed, the Chesapeake was a good retriever, was cool on the job and had a good coat, and the Spitz provided the playfulness so needed in the Little River dog.

Some breeders used an Irish Setter in creating the Little River dog, but the usual combination was the Chesapeake, Spitz and Collie.

Between 1925 and 1930 the Little River Duck Dog started coming into its own in the canine social register. Owners began strict breeding programs and a "thoroughbred" was developed.

In 1944 two Halifax sportsmen requested the Canadian Kennel Association to recognize the toller as a registerable breed. The following year their suggestion was accepted and the dog was tagged the Nova Scotia Tolling Dog.

From the puppy stage, they are trained to retrieve sticks, run and frolic. In most Yarmouth County farms these dogs grow up with domesticated ducks, hence are not aroused when a flock of wild birds follows them around.

The dogs stand about 18 inches high, have a high-riding tail, and a coat the color of the red fox. They also have an undercoat, almost completely water-repellant.

Another good feature is that they seldom lose control of themselves while tolling and hardly ever bark when in action.

Occasionally a flock of geese, tolled from the air will startle the dog with their large flapping wings. Frightened, the dog generally begins barking, but this seldom happens.

The duck however, is different. They too are inquisitive, but also very cautious, and will land in the water a "safe" distance from the

dog before closing in slowly.

Perhaps a good example of their abilities can be described in an account of a hunting expedition to Martock Lake, 20 miles from Yarmouth.

Two of these tollers accompanied a five-man party to the lake on an early morning journey. The party split up, a dog and three hunters on one shore of the lake, and a dog and two men on the opposite bank.

Blinds were set up with brush and fir boughs, and after only a brief wait a flock of ducks descended upon Martock Lake, but far out of gunshot range.

However, for the hunters—dog owners Paul and Fred Armstrong, and Dr. W. C. O'Brien, Chester Gray and Stanley Hatfield—the situation was under control.

Paul Armstrong began tossing sticks for his five-year-old toller "Dusty". As the dog made a dash for one, Paul would toss another in the opposite direction. After a few more sticks Dusty needed no more prompting.

He began a pattern run—similar to a figure eight—nose to the ground, bushy tail swaying from side to side. Occasionally he dashed into the chilly waters of the lake, then raced to shore to continue his pattern run.

Within three minutes the flock of ducks was swimming toward the dog, but Dusty completely ignored their presence. The ducks were about 20 feet from the shoreline when the three hunters rose from the blind, called "Here Dusty".

The dog broke for the blind, the ducks took flight, three shots rang out and eight ducks dropped to Martock Lake. Dusty did the retrieving.

On the opposite shore Fred Armstrong had his three-year-old female "Tootsie" on the run. The ducks were headed in their direction and the hunters were preparing for an overhead shot.

But the birds changed direction and headed into the woods. But in a few minutes they were back, and became attracted by the waving tail of Tootsie. The hunters remained patient and in a few minutes the ducks were swimming near the shore.

At the right moment two shots broke the stillness of the air and six ducks tails pinned down.

"Had the sun been brighter, more ducks would have been attracted by the dogs. As it was they tolled a couple of hundred birds. With these dogs you can toll dogs any day of the week, in any type of weather", says Fred Armstrong.

Yarmouth hunters, like the five-man party mentioned, have learned to respect the Little River Duck Dog.

Their advice: Take one along and be guaranteed of your limit in this part of Nova Scotia.

FPW Feature
by
Harold Shea



Fred and Paul Armstrong of Yarmouth watch as their dog begins its crazy race before the blind. Soon the ducks will be lured into range.

TOMATO P

by THELMA CARLET
From a stray seedling in a bed of Calla Lillies in 1951, there has developed a variety that appears to be a world tomato plant.

The variety is therefore known to Cecil G. Le Poidevin of the Le Poidevin Greenhouses, Osoyoos, B.C., where the growing and preparing for crop. Mr. Le Poidevin told probably just a plain Ear contends there is nothing about it and that it is just honest ordinary tomato.

But here is what it is doing. Up until March of last year, when I interviewed Le Poidevin, this plant was a stem length of just over a foot. It has since produced just over 100 tomatoes from 47 trusses. The estimated weight of production is about 100 pounds.

Of the 1952 crop there are a carry over during the months which ripened from time. The owners produce and three-quarter pound tomatoes for Christmas and a pound for New Year's Day followed throughout January and February. The last of the tomatoes were ripened off in mid-February. On February 15 of this