

Soon, if not already, you will find your puppy no longer comes when called if something is more interesting than you or your treats. You'll also discover your arms have become too short to reach him and he can easily outrun you. Since it would be detrimental to his hunting skill development to keep him leashed all the time, such as on a check cord or long line, I highly recommend you utilize a remote training collar (an e-collar).

REMOTE TRAINING COLLAR (E-COLLAR):

An e-collar I've used for training or hunting with just one dog is a Garmin Delta (Upland Model). This has all the features you'll need in an e-collar: continuous and momentary stimulation, tone, vibration, bark limiter and beeper. It is fairly inexpensive when compared to other models with the same features. My only complaint is that it is difficult to use when hunting with multiple dogs, because you have to scroll through the LCD screens to switch to another dog. Fairly recently, Garmin came out with a similar model that does not use LCD screens, the Sport Pro. I have not used this model myself, but from everything I see/read about it, I think it's a very good, economically-priced unit. The one problem I see with it (and it would be a huge problem for me, if I wanted to use it for hunting) is the lack of a beeper. It's very common for me to lose track of a pointing dog in heavy cover and without a beeper, I'd have no way to locate her. Probably the best collar for both training and hunting with one or multiple dogs, but more expensive, is the Garmin Pro 550 model. This is the e-collar I personally use. The Pro 550 is ideal for yard work (obedience) training and any other training where low levels of continuous stimulation are used to reinforce previously taught commands. The Beeper is easily attached to your dog's e-collar and is controlled by your e-collar's remote. It can be turned on/off by the remote and has a point-only beep setting, so you don't have to listen to it beep continuously. When you need to find your dog, simply press the "locate" button. Most Munsters will stay plenty close for you to hear the beep. Press it again in a couple of seconds and you'll be able to tell whether or not the dog is moving and if he's moving toward or away from you.

I am frequently asked if I think a combination GPS Tracking/Training collar is worth the higher price tag. Often I hear, "If I find my lost dog even one time, it would be worth the money." If your dog is stolen, the thief will simply turn off the GPS collar or dispose of it. In my opinion, unless you hunt in heavy cover (i.e. woodcock, ruffed grouse) or in open country (i.e. western state chukar, grouse, quail) where you often cannot see your dog, your money would be better spent on training birds/equipment and a few trips to a local hunting preserve. That said, as of this writing, the Garmin Pro 550 Plus unit only costs about \$250 more than the same unit without GPS. This is a reasonable extra cost if you'll be hunting in heavy cover/open country once or twice a year. If you have newer model collar in good condition to trade-in, the extra price could be minimal.

I can say with almost 100% certainty, your dog will not get lost when you are hunting or taking him for an off-lead run. This breed is so highly cooperative, that if you train him properly (and probably even if you don't), he's never going to run away. Even an 8-week-old puppy is quite capable of back-tracking to your truck. You leave a veritable scent "highway" everywhere you go. The mistake people make is to go looking for their dog. Your dog will track back to where he last saw you and if you're not there, that's when trouble starts. Young dogs will often leave the track and begin searching for their owner. If you're in your truck, driving around the field's perimeter, there's no way your dog can find you. If you get separated from your dog, stay put and call his name and/or whistle periodically. If you cannot stay there any longer, leave your jacket and/or his crate/dog bed on the ground. When you return, he'll probably be there waiting.

You can buy e-collars at many places online, including Amazon, Gun Dog Supply and Lion Country Supply, as well as directly from the manufacturers. It can pay to shop around for sales. If you already have a collar you'd like to trade in, or you'd like to save some money by purchasing a refurbished unit, check out what's available at the Collar Clinic (<http://www.collarclinic.com>). We are big fans of their collar repair service. There's nothing worse than being out in the middle of a field the first day of hunting and finding out the hard way your e-collar isn't working! Every year before the start of hunting season we thoroughly test our collar systems. If something isn't working correctly, we send the system into the Collar Clinic for repair. They do a great, fast job at a reasonable price.

It is VERY important you learn how to properly use the e-collar before putting it on your dog. When used correctly, an e-collar is a wonderful, humane and effective training tool. There's also no quicker way of ruining a good dog than an e-collar in the wrong hands. If you are the type of person who easily loses your patience or temper, then you shouldn't use an e-collar for training your dog. The Joan Bailey method of training does not utilize an e-collar and it is also an extremely effective method of training, so an e-collar is not an absolute necessity.

I use a low-stimulation method of training with the e-collar, which is also sometimes called "Avoidance Conditioning." I have training articles on my web site at http://brushdale.com/training/Obedience_and_Commands that will help you get started. I also recommend the books/DVDs by Robin MacFarlane you can purchase at Gun Dog Supply (<https://www.gundogsupply.com>) and the many free articles and videos by Robin posted at <https://www.gundogsupply.com/robin-macfarlane-how-to-train-your-dog.html>.