

Q. I'm struggling with the idea of entering hunting season #2 with a dog that chases birds. I will be putting him on wild birds for the first time. Is there anything that should concern me about him chasing, without correction, when hunting?

A. Simply use your recall combined with the e-collar. If he takes off chasing a flying bird, command him to come and if he doesn't turn and start coming, use the e-collar to make him. For now, make him come all the way back to hand. I know it's time consuming and a hassle, but that way he's being corrected for disobeying your command, not for chasing the bird. The concern is that a correction while on birds can be misconstrued by the dog. So make the correction about disobeying your command and you'll be fine. He doesn't need to chase a bird into the next county.

For training, you might want to combine your recall command with a second command such as "hen" or "no bird," which you'll eventually use instead of the recall. Use the new command first, followed by the recall command, such as "no bird, come." After a few times having to return all the way to hand, you should be able to drop the recall command and he'll still break off the chase. That way you don't have to force him all the way back to hand and he can get right back to hunting.