

## **Introducing the Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs (RATG)**

This Test has evolved from the various Gundog Working Tests that were run by different states. A copy of the rules is available on the ANKC website; however I thought I would take the opportunity here to provide a brief outline of what is involved.

RATG is a test of basic obedience and basic retrieving. They are a way for handlers to demonstrate that their Gundog has basic retrieving ability. Dogs must be over six months old and the tests are open to registered Gundogs (full and limited registers) and also to what we have called associate Gundogs within the rule book; this means pure bred Gundogs without papers that are registered on the associate register may also compete in this discipline. The tests are designed so that they might be held at either Obedience Trials or perhaps Show events depending on the area that is available.

Titles are awarded at two levels. Success at the novice level will make the dog eligible to have the title NRA (Novice Retrieving Ability) and success at the open level will give eligibility for the ORA title. (Open Retrieving Ability).

The club conducting the event can choose to use either (qualifying) retrieving dummies supplied by the handlers or pigeons. There are strict requirements as to the size and weight and colour of retrieving dummies.

Novice level consists of four exercises; walking to heel for 20 -30 metres; a recall of approximately 20 metres; single mark retrieve of approximately 50 metres; single mark retrieve of approximately 70 metres (in a different area to the first retrieve).

Open level also consists of four exercises; walking to heel for 20-30 metres with at least 3 turns; one minute stay with recall from 30-40 metres incorporating a stop on command; Walk-Up Retrieve of approximately 50 metres; either a Double Mark Retrieve or a Double Rise Retrieve.

Points are awarded for each exercise and also for the style and action of the dog. To gain a Pass Certificate a dog must receive at least 50% in each exercise and an overall score of at least 75%.

Depending on how the RATG is structured around the other activities that are taking place on the same day, a dog may do the exercises one after the other or, alternatively, all dogs may do each exercise then move on to the next exercise etc.

Judges will be drawn from both the obedience and retrieving disciplines.

If you have any interest in the RATG check out the rules in more detail on the ANKC website and contact your club secretary to find out when your club has a RATG scheduled.

Trevor Stevens

Chair RAFT Committee