Ask C.O.

ONTARIO'S CONSERVATION OFFICERS DECIPHER THE LAW

Q: **Some gun-dog owners are under the impression that they are legally able to pursue game birds outside of the open hunting seasons in order to train their dogs, like having them point or flush grouse in the spring and summer, as long as no birds are harvested or injured. However, I understand that this would meet the definition of hunting during a closed season, and be an illegal practice. Is this legal?**
Nathan Schoelier, St. Marys

A: You are correct that this would constitute hunting and would therefore generally be illegal during the closed season for game mammals and game birds. However, a person could obtain an authorization to conduct closed season dog training on varying hare, cottontail, or game birds other than wild turkey. Field trials during the closed season also require this authorization. Authorizations are valid for a specified period of time and location. Participants may not kill or capture any wildlife, nor can they carry firearms. Applications can be submitted to the MNRF office for the area where the dog training or field trial is being requested.

Q: **Can I carry a .22 rimfire rifle for hunting squirrels while bowhunting for deer during a bows-only deer season?**
Scott Bisson, Brantford

A: If you are hunting deer during a bows-only season for deer, then the only type of firearm that you may use or carry with you is a bow. You can hunt squirrel (provided that squirrel season is open) with the bow.

ANSWERS BY:
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