

Certification Program Objectives

The objectives of the HCA hunting certification process are to:

- Promote Harrier hunting in the United States
- Encourage the preservation of working instincts, abilities, and functional conformation in all Harriers
- Recognize Harriers demonstrating competence hunting suitable quarry under natural conditions

Certification

The HCA awards three hunting titles. These titles include, Entered to Hare (EH), Entered to Fox (EF), or Entered to Rabbit (ER). All Harriers meeting the criteria for certification will be awarded an HCA Hunting Certificate suitable for framing. Upon receiving a hunting certificate, a picture of the Harrier in a natural hunting setting will be published (complementary) and the certification announced in the HCA newsletter. This is an HCA title for members only. The American Kennel Club does not recognize HCA titles.

An honorary hunting title of Entered in Pack (EP) may be given to Harriers that have been imported from one of the hunting packs in the UK, Australia, or New Zealand if they have completed at least one full season of hunting with their pack prior to their exportation to the US. The purpose of this honorary title is solely to allow the imports to compete in the Hunting Class at the Harrier National Specialty. An HCA Hunting Certificate will not be awarded for this honorary title, however, a letter stating the hound qualifies for the honorary title will be issued. Owners of imports that wish to enter the hound in the Hunting Class at the National Specialty must provide basic proof that the hound has met this requirement by providing the HCA Secretary with the hound's date of birth and the actual date the hound arrived in the US, prior to the closing date of the Specialty show.

Hunting Certification Criteria

During a hunting certification test, a Harrier must demonstrate its ability to hunt suitable quarry (hare, fox, or rabbit) under natural conditions. Each criterion must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the attendant judge, in order for the HCA to issue a hunting certificate. Criteria are:

- Exhibit ability to cast for scent and seek quarry,
- Demonstrate the ability to mark fresh scent or live quarry with voice,
- Pursue quarry with drive and determination demonstrating instinct and working ability.
- Quarry viewed and recorded as hare, fox, or rabbit by the attendant judge, and
- Harrier and handler work together cooperatively to demonstrate hound's tractability and control in the hunt field

A Harrier will be handled in the hunting certification by the registered owner. Additional persons including the judge may assist in keeping hounds away from roads and hazards or from rioting after deer, coyotes or other unintended animals. Owners unable to perform hunt field demands may apply for a hardship allowance. Hardship applications requesting a substitute handler should be directed to the HCA Secretary.

Criteria Definition

1) "Exhibit ability to cast for scent and seek quarry." Hound should show eagerness and activity. Hounds that simply follow the handler are unacceptable. A hound should recognize promising cover and work to explore attentively regardless of hazards or discomfort. It is not necessary that quarry be located by scent. Game may be jumped from cover or the hound may be directed or cast to a spot where the quarry was viewed. No maximum time limit applies, hounds should work until game is found.

2) "Demonstrate the ability to mark fresh scent or live quarry with voice." For an "entered" hunting certification, any use of voice is acceptable so long as the hound is not silent and does not speak falsely. The intent is to proclaim a find to the huntsman and the rest of the pack, but not to require a Harrier to speak constantly when running a line.

3) "Pursue quarry with drive and determination demonstrating instinct and hunting ability" Once a fresh track is located, or quarry jumped, it should be pursued diligently. Game must be pursued not merely followed, and actions should indicate a determined effort to reach the quarry. The speed of the chase is subject to terrain and scenting conditions. It is not necessary to catch the quarry and there is no minimum time or distance required.

4) "Quarry viewed and recorded as hare, fox, or rabbit by the attendant judge." Quarry must actually be seen and identified.

5) "Harrier and handler work together cooperatively to demonstrate hound's tractability and control in the hunt field." Hounds must be under control and respond to handler's commands. They should be able to work a reasonable distance away from the handler. Novice hounds that require a few minutes to get under control are acceptable. In a pack, hounds cannot demonstrate any form of aggression while working. Certification will be disallowed, if in the view of the judge the aggression limits the hound's ability to work in a pack.

Judges Requirements

Individuals with a working knowledge of scent hound hunting must witness the certification process. These individuals are referred to as "hunting judges". Persons who meet the following criteria are authorized to judge the HCA hunting certification.

- Approved AKC or ARHA (American Rabbit Hound Association) scent hound field trial judges, or
- Master, Huntsman or Whipper-in for a formal registered hound pack.

A judge may not certify a hound if they or any member of his immediate family or household has owned, sold, held under lease, boarded, trained, or handled the hound within one year prior to the date of the certification. A judge may not certify a hound they have bred.

HCA members in good standing, who are able to demonstrate they have a working knowledge and understanding of traditional Harrier hunting and the qualities required in a working pack hound may apply to the HCA for permission to judge. A letter and personal vitae stating the member's qualifications may be sent to the HCA Secretary for review and approval by the Board of Directors.

Eligibility

Any Harrier registered with the American Kennel Club whose owner is a member of the HCA is eligible to apply for certification as a hunting Harrier.

Certification Process

Applications for hunting certification shall be completed using the attached form and submitted to the HCA Secretary. A picture of the hound (suitable for publishing) in a natural hunting situation must accompany the certification form. The hound must be off-lead and the picture should not include people in the publishable area. The Secretary shall review the application against the following criteria for acceptance:

- Application is submitted by an HCA member,
- Harrier is registered with AKC
- Form has been accurately completed and signed by attendant judge
- Verify judges qualifications against HCA requirements

The Secretary shall complete a review within 14 days of receipt and issue a determination of either "acceptable" or "insufficient" for each application.

The Secretary will forward accepted applications to the HCA Board of Directors for certification within 14 days of receipt. The HCA Board of Directors has 30 days to review and either accept or reject the application. A majority of the Board of Directors must approve the application in order for a Harrier to achieve hunting certification.

Rejected applications will be returned to the applicant within 45 days of receipt by the HCA. Rejected applications will note specific deficiencies and the justification for rejection. The applicant may appeal this process one time. Appeals are directed to the Board of Directors through the HCA Secretary.

Applications determined "insufficient" will be returned to the applicant within 30 days of receipt by the HCA. A request for additional information or clarification will accompany the returned application. Additional information or revised applications may be resubmitted to the HCA secretary.

Hunting Certificates, suitable for framing will be issued by the HCA and mailed to the applicant. The applicant is requested to submit a picture of the dog in a natural hunting situation to be published in the next available HCA newsletter announcing the dog's certification.

Guidelines for Judging

Traditional Harrier hunting is done in large packs of ~30 hounds accompanied through open country by a professional huntsman, whippers-in, and a large field of hunt followers. Suitability for this original purpose should be kept in mind. However, the handler and hound are not required to conform to traditional standards so long as they can demonstrate the Hunting Certificate Criteria.

Harriers are a versatile scent hound suitable for many working conditions. The HCA Certification process is designed to accommodate as many types of terrain, handling, and hunting approaches as possible. Handlers may use any commands, signals or other means to actively encourage and

direct the hounds. A horn, whip, and extra handlers (whippers-in) are traditional, but any method is acceptable so long as the hounds are not abused in any way. Electronic shock collars are not acceptable, but location collars may be used.

Hounds may be worked individually, or in a pack. Harriers in a pack must be positively identified by numbers, colored collars, or other means acceptable to the judge. Hounds in a pack should work together, but judging criteria are the same as for a single hound. Each hound must demonstrate all the criteria to receive certification.

A Hunting Certification may be conducted on foot, horseback, or even from a vehicle. Wild game in natural terrain is preferred. Fox or rabbit pens may be used, but should be large (20-100 acres) and conform to all local regulations. Released animals must be turned loose at least one day prior to hunting and in an area with sufficient cover.

A Harrier that passes this "entered" level of certification should be ready to begin a hunting career and contribute to a successful day of sport. It is not required to be a fully trained and seasoned hunter.

Guidelines for Contacting Judges

Any member of the HCA may arrange to participate in a Hunting Certification. Prior approval by the HCA is not required. To ensure a successful test, the member should obtain a copy of the Hunting Certification Application Form and familiarize themselves with the hunting criteria and certification process. A copy of the Hunting Certification Application Form may be obtained from the HCA Secretary or the [HCA website](#). Questions or clarifications on the hunting certification process may be directed to any member of the HCA hunting committee.

Members are responsible for obtaining hunting licenses, following local and state regulations, and obtaining landowner permission prior to the test. Upon request, the HCA Hunting Committee will assist members in identifying candidate judges for their region. The member is responsible for contacting the candidate judge and ensuring they meet the HCA criteria for hunting judges. The member and the judge shall mutually agree on a location, date, and time for the certification test. A location familiar to the handler and hounds where game abounds is preferable. HCA members are encouraged to invite other members and Harrier owners to participate. It is expected that all participants should contribute towards payment of the expenses.

Judge's compensation should be discussed and agreed to by both parties prior to the certification. As a guideline, compensation should be provided for personal expenses incurred as a result of the event. Allowable expenses covered by the participating members include: food, travel, lodging, kennel help during their absence, and other reasonable expenses. Members should demonstrate utmost respect, courtesy, and hospitality to hunting judges at all times.

A Hunting Certification Application Form and hunting criteria definitions should be provided to the judge for review prior to the certification. No limitations or restrictions in communication are imposed between the member and the judge during the test. Both the judge and the member should view the hunting certification process as an educational opportunity for both the member and the hound to improve their hunting skills.

IMPORTANT: The judge is an impartial party functioning as the HCA's certifying official. Pressure or undue influence on the certifying official by any member of the HCA will result in a rejection of the hound's application for a hunting certificate.

If in the judge's opinion, the hound satisfactorily met the hunting criteria, the application is completed and provided to the member at the completion of the test. The member is responsible to forward the original application and one copy to the HCA Secretary for review and approval.