

What Does a Dog See?

By Melissa Heeter

Dogs see fast moving objects against a contrasting background or the direct opposite. Dogs can see unique shaped objects bouncing or rolling on the ground, or flying in the sky. Like for example, a Kong Toy that is a funny unique shaped object bouncing on the ground, being thrown in the sky, or in the water. The Kong Toy has a unique shape whether it is on the ground, in the sky or in the water. The ground, the sky, and water are usually the solid bland colors and the Kong Toy is always a funny shaped and you can choose a different shade of color than the background.

The best object to see for a dog is an object that is a different shade of color than the background it is being thrown against. Especially, if the object is multi colored (like, swirled colored) with a different color pattern than the background it is being thrown against. The perfect example is the Cool Kong Toy as its dangling on a string, has it is three round shapes of three different sizes, and some are multi colored toys. So, this is a perfect object for dogs to see on land, in the air, or in the water. Dogs see many different shades of colors and two colors dogs can not tell the difference between is yellow and orange. So, dogs are not actually colored blind, but they see different shades of color. So, when choosing to throw into the sun a darker color disc is better, because it has a darker shade and a darker shadow on it from the sun. Personally, I usually never chose to throw into the sun, but it depends on the other weather conditions, and if the sun is on the side my dog turns to catch the disc.

Another good example is the rubber bumper for hunting and retrieving trials. The best rubber bumper to teach your dog to fetch is a dark orange with ripples/bumps on the bumper (unless it is fall and the leaves are colored then use any solid color bumper). So, again the first example is a dark odd color/shade, funny shaped object with a funny ripples texture look for the dog to see better and pick it out on the ground.

This year at a tournament I noticed that someone used a yellow disc for Toss & Fetch and the person made a bad throw to the sideline and near the yard markers. The disc was yellow and the yard markers were yellow so the dog could not easily distinguish between the flat motionless disc and the yard marker. The dog could not find the disc at all and the person had to run all the way to the disc setting next to the yard marker and point to the disc, then dog found it. This was a good dog with lots of drive so it seemed that the dog just could not find the disc. From my experience I suggest that people use white discs, or colored discs, like pink, blue, green, black, red, or purple, but not yellow or orange. The yellow and orange the dog can not distinguish between the yard markers colors, if the colors are too similar and most yard markers are usually yellow and orange and so is a motionless disc. A Dark orange is a good color only if the yard markers are not orange or yellow. The translucent discs are hard to see unless you are throwing against the snow, because translucent discs do not create a dark solid shade or color in the sun. I have also noticed that a dog can become used to looking for one color disc, a particular shade of disc, and if a person does not periodically change disc colors a dog may miss a few more then normal until they get used to looking for any shade of disc.

Most dogs do best when they are chasing an object (Prey) that closely suits their breed purpose. Some dogs are site hounds, some dogs are scenting dogs, herding dogs, and some dogs retrieving hounds, etc and each breed meets its full potential when they are performing their breed's purpose.

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