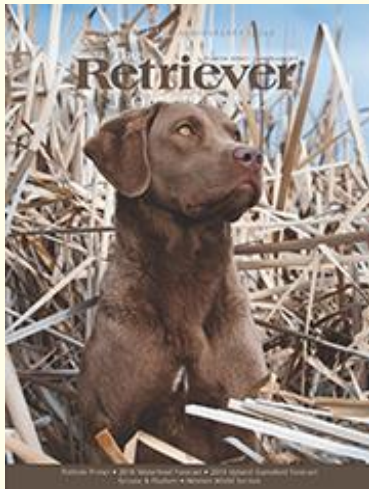


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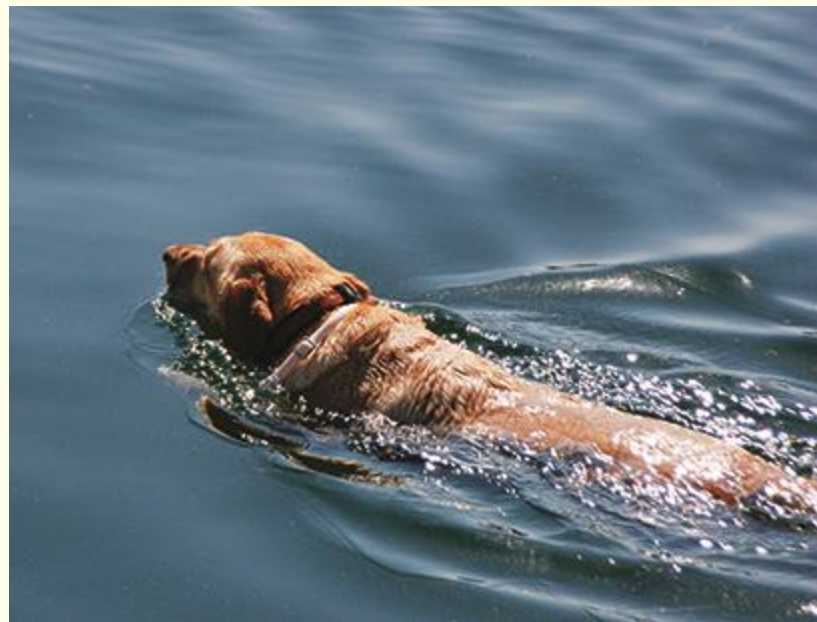
October 2016

Water Dangers Q&A

by Dr. Ben Character

Q: While hunting pheasants, my Lab is constantly wallowing in and drinking from mud puddles on the two-tracks. Some of them look pretty disgusting, but they appear to be just from rainwater. Should I be worried he can pick up a parasite?

A: Yes, maybe. The answer to this question all depends on the environmental conditions and source of the water in the mud hole. Even clear mountain streams can contain disease-causing microorganisms, so we should certainly be concerned with water sources that contain high amounts of organic matter.



There are about five major infectious organisms that are considered “water borne.” These include: Giardia (protozoa), Leptospirosis (bacteria), campylobacter (bacteria), coccidia (protozoa), and cryptosporidiosis (protozoa). Most of these create the clinical sign of diarrhea. The exception is



leptospirosis, which causes a kidney infection that can lead to renal failure.

Most of these organisms are transmitted from fecally contaminated waters (again, leptospirosis being the exception coming from urine contamination). So, if you are hunting near an active cattle farm, there would be a higher chance of the water being contaminated versus if you were hunting grain field edges. Wildlife feces is another source of fecal contamination.

One last potentially harmful water contaminant is that of pesticides and other agriculture chemical runoff. Unless there was a spill that resulted seriously high levels, these toxins usually build up slowly over time before causing a problem. Therefore, this risk is higher for dogs that will be constantly around areas of potential runoff versus dogs that might just be in the area for a quick trip.

Dr. Ben Character also provides advice on other water dangers including drinking water, algae, and tetanus. The complete article appears in the October/November 2016 issue of The Retriever Journal. If you are not a subscriber, become one by visiting our [Store](#).