

SHOOTER SEEKS SCIENTIFIC SHOT-STRING SOURCE

I am looking for some information slightly off the beaten path, and would greatly appreciate any help or direction that you might be able to provide. I have recently been introduced to the wonderful world of skeet shooting, and have developed a fascination with the age-old questions regarding the effects of pattern size, shot string length and time of flight. Do you have any information that I might be able to review, or can you direct me to an appropriate literature source, that can clearly and scientifically demonstrate the effects of the various shot shell components (such as shot charge, powder charge, wad type or shot type) as well as gun variables (such as barrel length, forcing cone taper, bore size and choke diameter) on shot string and overall patterning performance?

How does one research the literature and investigate the answer to the following questions: What are the effects on shot string length from firing a load of 7/8 ounce No.9 shot from a 28-inch barrel with cylinder chokes from 12 gauge versus a 20 gauge? Is there a systematic way to evaluate changing one variable at a time (barrel length, gauge, choke, load, shot size, wad type, etc) to determine the effects on shot string and pattern efficiency? — W. Granville Batte, Jr., M.D., Durham, North Carolina

Before offering a source for your information, we would like to point out that skeet is a shooting game, with an emphasis on game, so don't try to overanalyze what is designed to be fun recreation.

That said, one of the best studies on shot string, pellet performance and just about everything involving shotguns can be found in the book *Shotgunning: The Art and the Science*, by the late Bob Brister. The book was published in 1976 by Winchester Press of 205 East 42nd St., New York, NY 10017, and is considered the shotgunner's bible by many of those involved in the shooting sports.

Not only does Brister provide details about his own

exhaustive tests on patterning variables and shotgun shell performance in a variety of shooting situations, he offers information from earlier examinations of the subjects by shotgun authorities such as John Olin of Winchester-Western, considered the father of high-performance, short shot-string loads produced in the United States. While the book is nearly 30 years old, it remains a highly regarded source of information in the shotgun shooting community.

We understand that Brister, former shooting editor of *Field & Stream* magazine and former outdoor writer for the *Houston Chronicle*, was working on an updated version of the book at the time of his death last year, and it's unlikely the project will ever be completed.

You should be able to order a copy of the book from the publisher or from Amazon, or you might even find a copy at bookstores which carry works on shooting sports. In the meantime, just try to have a little fun on the skeet course and remember Rule 13 — You got to love it! — *Ralph Winingham*



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