

Norwegian Lundehund Association of America

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Fact Sheet

Norwegian Lundehunds are among the rarest & most unique breeds of dogs in the world. Due to their isolation within the Lofoten Archipelago, primarily on the island of Værøy north of the Arctic Circle, the Lundehund remained genetically pure, as no other dog breeds were allowed on the island. This contributes to the scientific speculation on the possibility of this being the oldest pureblood breed of dog remaining in the world.

The Lundehund was kept as a bird hunting dog. Amazingly flexible, they proved uniquely adept at climbing the cliffs of Værøy in search of puffins. It is this specialty that gives them their name. In Norwegian, **Lunde** = puffin & **hund** = dog. Hence, the Puffin Dog.

During World War II and again in the early 1960's, distemper decimated the breed. As a result, there were **SIX** known Lundehunds in the world! Thanks to the love and hard work of breeders in the US and across Europe, this breed is flourishing once again — there are an estimated ~2,000 world-wide, ~250 of them in the US.

The Breed Standard calls for males to be 13"-15" at the withers & females to be 12"-14". The length of the body should be slightly longer than the height. Weight is proportionate.

Unique features of the Lundehund:

- The Lundehund is polydactyl... they have a **minimum** of 6 toes on each paw, all with a muscle & skeletal structure. The additional toes provided extra grip on cliff rocks.
- Unique shoulder structure enables front legs to splay out to each side (*as shown on the left*). This unique anatomical structure provides the ability to climb up rock crevices.
- Their ears can close front or back. This allowed them to keep debris out while caving.
- Flexible neck—can turn 180° either side & bend back to touch the forehead to spine



Breed Standard

http://www.akc.org/breeds/norwegian_lundehund/

General Appearance

The Norwegian Lundehund is a small rectangular and agile Spitz breed with unique characteristics not found in any other breed. Originating on remote islands of arctic Norway, the dog was used to wrestle and retrieve live puffin birds from the crevices of steep vertical cliffs. To enable the dog to climb, descend, and brake on these cliffs, unique structural characteristics have evolved and must be present as they define this breed: a minimum of six toes on each foot and elongated rear foot pads; an elastic neck that allows the head to bend backward to touch the spine, letting the dog turn around in narrow puffin bird caves; and shoulders flexible enough to allow the front legs to extend flat to the side in order to hug the cliffs. This shoulder structure produces a peculiar rotary movement. Finally, the ears close and fold forward or backward to protect from debris. The temperament is alert but not expected to be outgoing toward strangers.

Size, Proportion, Substance

Size: The desired height for adult males is between 13-15 inches and 12-14 inches for adult females. Size consideration should not outweigh that of type, proportion, movement and other functional attributes. Proportion: length of body is slightly longer than height at the withers. Depth of chest is approximately one half the height. Substance: The Lundehund should be athletic and agile, never coarse or heavy. Bitches are distinctly feminine but without weakness.

Head

The head is wedge-shaped, of medium width and clean. The skull is slightly rounded with prominent brows. There is a pronounced but not deep stop, and the bridge of the nose has a slight arch. The muzzle is of medium length and width, tapering gradually to the end of the muzzle. Length of the muzzle is approximately two-thirds the length of the skull. Nose and lips are black. Teeth: Scissors bite is preferred, but level and reverse scissors bite are permitted. Missing premolars on both sides of the upper and lower jaws are common and allowed. Eyes: almond-shaped, yellow-brown to brown with a brown ring around the pupil. Light eyes are preferred. Eye rims are dark and complete. Ears: medium-size, triangular, broad at the base, carried erect and very mobile. The ear leather can be folded and turned up, backward or at right angles so that the ear openings are clamped shut.

Neck

The neck is clean, of medium length and strong without being thick.

NOTE: The judge should never ask the handler to demonstrate the characteristic flexibility in the ring, as the dog can not relax sufficiently at a dog show.

Body

Level back, short loin and slightly sloping croup, slight tuck up. Ribs are carried well back, well-sprung but not barrel-shaped.

Tail

High-set, medium length with a dense coat. When the dog is moving, the tail may be carried trailing or in a graceful arch over the back with the tip touching the back. A tightly curled tail or one that falls too far to either side is undesirable. When at rest, the tail hangs with a slight curve.

Forequarters

Moderate angulation with very elastic shoulders so that the front legs can extend out to the side. The legs are straight with slightly outward-turned feet. The feet are oval with at least six fully developed toes, five of which should reach the ground. Eight pads on each foot. The additional toes consist of one three jointed toe, like a thumb, and one two-jointed toe along with corresponding tendons and muscles that give the foot a strong appearance.

Hindquarters

Moderate angulation in balance with the forequarters. Strong muscular upper and lower thighs. Feet: Oval, slightly outward turned with a minimum of six toes, of which four support the dog's weight. There are seven pads with the center pad elongated. When viewed from behind, the rear legs are close but parallel.

Coat

Double coat with a harsh outer coat and a dense, soft undercoat. The coat is short on the head and front of the legs, longer and thicker around the neck and back of thighs. It is dense on the tail with little feathering. The male typically has a thicker ruff around the neck. The Lundehund is presented naturally with no trimming.

Color

Fallow to reddish brown to tan with black hair tips and white markings or white with red or dark markings. More black hair tips with maturity. Dogs with a completely white head or with 50 percent of the head white should have complete dark eye rims and lashes.

Gait

Light and elastic. As the Lundehund is designed to climb steep cliffs and work into narrow crevices, the front assembly must be flexible and wide. This produces an elastic gait with a unique rotary front movement. He moves close but parallel in the rear.

Temperament

A Lundehund is alert, very energetic, loyal and protective. He can be wary of strangers but never aggressive toward people.

Effective July 1, 2008