

RETRIEVER (LABRADOR)

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.

Most recent changes to this Standard has an effective date of 01/07/2025

ORIGIN

Great Britain.

UTILISATION

Retriever.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

[ed. from FCI Breed Standard No. 122]:

It is popularly thought that the Labrador Retriever originated on the coast of Newfoundland, where fishermen were seen to use a dog of similar appearance to retrieve fish. An excellent water dog, his weather-resistant coat and unique tail, likened to that of an otter because of its shape, emphasise this trait. Comparatively speaking, the Labrador is not a very old breed, its breed club having been formed in 1916 and the Yellow Labrador Club having been founded in

1925. It was in field trialling that the Labrador found early fame, having been originally introduced to these shores in the late 1800s by Col Peter Hawker and the Earl of Malmesbury. It was a dog called Malmesbury Tramp that was described by Lorna, Countess Howe as one of the 'tap roots' of the modern Labrador.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Strongly built, short-coupled, very active; broad in skull; broad and deep through chest and ribs; broad and strong over loins and hindquarters.

CHARACTERISTICS

Good-tempered, very agile (which precludes excessive body weight or excessive substance). Excellent nose, soft mouth; keen love of water. Adaptable, devoted companion.

TEMPERAMENT

Intelligent, keen, and biddable, with a strong will to please. Kindly nature, with no trace of aggression or undue shyness.

HEAD & SKULL

Skull broad with defined stop; clean-cut without fleshy cheeks. Jaws of medium length, powerful, not snipey. Nose wide, nostrils well developed.

Eyes:

Medium size, expressing intelligence and good temper; brown or hazel.

Ears:

Not large or heavy, hanging close to head and set rather far back.

Mouth:

Jaws and teeth strong with a perfect, regular, and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

NECK

Clean, strong, powerful, set into well-placed shoulders.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders long and well laid back, with upper arm of near equal length, placing legs well under body. Forelegs well-boned and straight from elbow to ground when viewed from either front or side.

BODY

Chest of good width and depth, with well-sprung barrel ribs – this effect not to be produced by carrying excessive weight. Level topline. Loins wide, short-coupled, and strong.

HINDQUARTERS

Well-developed, not sloping to tail; well-turned stifle. Hocks well let down, cow hocks highly undesirable.

FEET

Round, compact; well-arched toes and well-developed pads.

TAIL

Distinctive feature, very thick towards base, gradually tapering towards tip, medium length, free from feathering, but clothed thickly all round with short, thick, dense coat, thus giving 'rounded' appearance described as 'otter' tail. May be carried gaily but should not curl over back.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Free, covering adequate ground; straight and true in front and rear.

COAT

Distinctive feature, short, dense, without wave or feathering; giving fairly hard feel to the touch; weather-resistant undercoat.

COLOUR

- The only correct colours are whole black, yellow, or liver/chocolate. Yellow range from light-cream to fox-red; livers/chocolates range from light to dark.
- * Small, white spot on chest and the rear of front pastern permissible.
- * Any other colour or combination of colours unacceptable.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 56cm – 57cm (approx. 22" – 22½")

Females: 55cm – 56cm (approx. 21½" – 22")

***N.B.** Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.*

FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

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When judging this breed at FCI International Shows, use:

FCI Standard No. 122: LABRADOR RETRIEVER

FCI Classification: Group 8 – Retrievers, Flushing Dogs, Water Dogs

Section 1 - Retrievers

With working trial.

