



# LABRADOR RETRIEVER

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The Labrador Retriever, or simply Labrador, is a British breed of retriever gun dog. It was developed in the United Kingdom from fishing dogs imported from the colony of Newfoundland (now a province of Canada), and was named after the Labrador region of that colony. It is among the most commonly kept dogs in several countries, particularly in the European world.

The Labrador is friendly, energetic, and playful. [2] It was bred as a sporting and hunting dog but is widely kept as a companion dog. It may also be trained as a guide or assistance dog, or for rescue or therapy work.[3]

In the 1830s, the 10th Earl of Home and his nephews, the 5th Duke of Buccleuch and Lord John Scott,[4] imported progenitors of the breed from Newfoundland to Europe for use as gun dogs. Another early advocate of these Newfoundland fishing dogs was the 2nd Earl of Malmesbury, who bred them for their expertise in waterfowling.[4]



During the 1880s, the 3rd Earl of Malmesbury, the 6th Duke of Buccleuch, and the 12th Earl of Home collaborated to develop and establish the Labrador Retriever breed. The dogs Buccleuch Avon and Buccleuch Ned, given by Malmesbury to Buccleuch, were mated with bitches carrying blood from those originally imported by the 5th Duke and the 10th Earl of Home. The offspring are the ancestors of all modern Labradors. [5]



# HISTORY

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The Labrador breed dates back to at least the 1830s, when St. John's water dogs bred by European settlers in Newfoundland were first introduced to Britain from ships trading between Canada and Poole in Dorset. These were then bred with British hunting dogs to create what became known as the Labrador Retriever. Its early patrons included the Earl of Malmesbury, the Duke of Buccleuch, the Earl of Home, and Sir John Scott.



Early writers have confused the Labrador with the much larger Newfoundland and the Lesser Newfoundland, with Charles St. John even referring to the Lesser Newfoundland as the Newfoundland. Colonel Peter Hawker describes the first Labrador as being not larger than an English Pointer, more often black than other colours, long in its head and nose with a deep chest, fine legs, and short and smooth coat, and did not carry its tail as highly as the Newfoundland.<sup>[6]</sup> Hawker distinguishes the Newfoundland from both the "proper Labrador" and St. John's breed of these dogs<sup>[6][7]</sup> in the fifth edition of his book *Introductions to Young Sportsman*, published in 1846.<sup>[7]</sup>

By 1870 the name Labrador Retriever had become common in England.<sup>[8]</sup> The liver (now usually called chocolate) Labrador emerged in the late 1800s, with liver-coloured pups documented at the Buccleuch kennels in 1892;<sup>[9]</sup> the first yellow Labrador on record was born in 1899 (Ben of Hyde, kennels of Major C.J. Radclyffe).<sup>[10]</sup> The breed was recognised by the Kennel Club in 1903.<sup>[11]</sup> The first American Kennel Club (AKC) registration was in 1917.<sup>[12]</sup>

# CHARACTERISTICS

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There is a great deal of variety among Labradors. The following characteristics are typical of the conformation show bred (bench-bred) lines of this breed in the United States and are based on the American Kennel Club standard.[2] Significant differences between UK and U.S. standards are noted.



## SIZE

Labradors are a medium-large breed. They should be as long from the withers to the base of the tail as they are from the floor to the withers. The AKC standard includes an ideal weight for dogs of 25–36 kg (55–80 lb) and for bitches as 25–32 kg (55–70 lb).[2] The guidelines for height vary between the AKC, which gives 55 to 62 centimetres (21.5 to 24.5 in) for dogs and 55 to 60 centimetres (21.5 to 23.5 in) for bitches,[2] The Kennel Club which advises that dogs should be 56 to 57 centimetres (22 to 22.5 in) with bitches between 55 and 56 centimetres (21.5 and 22 in),[13] and the FCI which quotes a range of 56 to 57 centimetres (22 to 22.5 in) for dogs with bitches ideal at 54 to 56 centimetres (21.5 to 22 in).[14]

## COAT

The Labrador Retriever's coat should be short and dense, but not wiry. The coat is water-resistant, so the dog does not get cold when taking to the water in the winter. That means that the dog naturally has a slightly dry, oily coat.

Acceptable colours are black, yellow, and chocolate.[15]



## HEAD

The head should be broad with slightly pronounced eyebrows. The eyes should be kind and expressive. Appropriate eye colours are brown and hazel. The lining around the eyes should be black. The ears should hang close to the head and be set slightly above the eyes.



## JAW

The jaws should be strong and powerful. The muzzle should be of medium length and should not be too tapered. The jaws should hang slightly and curve gracefully back.

## BODY

The body should have a powerful and muscular build.



The tail and coat are designated "distinctive [or distinguishing] features" of the Labrador by both the Kennel Club and AKC.[2][13] The AKC adds that the "true Labrador Retriever temperament is as much a hallmark of the breed as the 'otter' tail."<sup>[2]</sup>

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