

= Labrador Retriever =

The Labrador Retriever , also Labrador , is a type of retriever @-@ gun dog . The Labrador is one of the most popular breeds of dog in the United Kingdom and the United States .

A favorite disability assistance breed in many countries , Labradors are frequently trained to aid the blind , those who have autism , to act as a therapy dog and perform screening and detection work for law enforcement and other official agencies . They are prized as sporting and hunting dogs .

A few kennels breeding their ancestors , the St. John 's water dog , were in England . At the same time , a combination of the sheep protection policy in Newfoundland and rabies quarantine in the United Kingdom , led to the gradual demise of the St. John 's water dog in Canada .

In the 1830s , the 10th Earl of Home and his nephews the 5th Duke of Buccleuch and Lord John Scott , had imported progenitors of the breed from Newfoundland to Europe for use as gundogs . Another early advocate of these Newfoundland dogs , or Labrador Retrievers as they later became known , was the 2nd Earl of Malmesbury who bred them for their expertise in waterfowling .

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 modern Labrador 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 considered to be the ancestors of modern Labradors .

= = Early descriptions = =

Several early descriptions of the St. John 's water dog exist . In 1822 , explorer W.E. Cormack crossed the island of Newfoundland by foot . In his journal he wrote " The dogs are admirably trained as retrievers in fowling , and are otherwise useful The smooth or short haired dog is preferred because in frosty weather the long haired kind become encumbered with ice on coming out of the water . "

An early report by a Colonel Hawker described the dog as " by far the best for any kind of shooting . He is generally black and no bigger than a Pointer , very fine in legs , with short , smooth hair and does not carry his tail so much curled as the other ; is extremely quick , running , swimming and fighting and their sense of smell is hardly to be credited "

The first St. John 's dog was said to be brought to England in or around 1820 , but the breed 's reputation had already spread to England ; there is a story that the 2nd Earl of Malmesbury saw a St. John 's dog on a fishing boat and immediately made arrangements with traders to have some of these dogs imported to England . These ancestors of the first labradors so impressed the Earl with their skill and ability for retrieving anything within the water and on shore that he devoted his entire kennel to developing and stabilizing the breed .

In his book Excursions In and About Newfoundland During the Years 1839 and 1840 , the geologist Joseph Beete Jukes describes the St. John 's water dog . " A thin , short @-@ haired , black dog came off @-@ shore to us to @-@ day . The animal was of a breed very different from what we understand by the term Newfoundland dog in England . He had a thin , tapering snout , a long thin tail , and rather thin , but powerful legs , with a lank body , ? the hair short and smooth . " wrote Jukes . " These are the most abundant dogs in the country ... They are no means handsome , but are generally more intelligent and useful than the others ... I observed he once or twice put his foot in the water and paddled it about . This foot was white , and Harvey said he did it to " toil " or entice the fish . The whole proceeding struck me as remarkable , more especially as they said he had never been taught anything of the kind . "

= = Name = =

The foundational breed of what is now the Labrador Retriever was known as the St. John 's water dog , St. John 's dog , or Lesser Newfoundland . When the dogs were later brought to England , they were named after the geographic area known as " the Labrador " (they were known as

Labrador Retrievers because they " retrieved " in the Labrador Sea) or simply Labrador to distinguish them from the larger Newfoundland breed , even though the breed was from the more southern Avalon Peninsula .

The progenitors of the Labrador retriever were actually from Newfoundland and Labrador exceptionally , the breed known as the Newfoundland was created near the same time in Labrador . The two breeds ' names and origins were mixed once moved into England and the Americas . The dog from Labrador became the large , long furred dog we see and know today , and the dog from Newfoundland became the Labrador .

= = Historical landmarks = =

The first written reference to the breed was in 1814 (" Instructions to Young Sportsmen " by Colonel Peter Hawker) , the first painting in 1823 (" Cora . A Labrador Bitch " by Edwin Landseer) , and the first photograph in 1856 (the Earl of Home 's dog " Nell " , described both as a Labrador and a St. John's dog) . By 1870 the name Labrador Retriever became common in England . The first yellow Labrador on record was born in 1899 (Ben of Hyde , kennels of Major C.J. Radclyffe) , and the breed was recognised by The Kennel Club in 1903 . The first American Kennel Club (AKC) registration was in 1917 . The chocolate Labrador emerged in the 1930s , although liver spotted pups were documented being born at the Buccleuch kennels in 1892 . The first dog to appear on the cover of Life Magazine was a black Labrador Retriever called ? Blind of Arden ? in the December , 12th , 1938 issue . The St. John 's dog survived until the early 1980s , the last two individuals being photographed in old age around 1981 .

= = History of subtypes = =

Yellow and chocolate pups would occasionally appear (although often culled) , until finally gaining acceptance in the 20th century . The first recognized Yellow Labrador was Ben of Hyde , born in 1899 , and Chocolate Labradors became more established in the 1930s . , There is also a significant difference between show Labs , which tend to be short legged and very heavy , and field Labs which have a more functional and athletic build . Generally these two subtypes have different general features such as facial or body types .

= = = Yellow (and similar shades) = = =

In the early years of the breed through to the mid @-@ 20th century , Labradors of a shade we would now call " yellow " were in fact a dark , almost butterscotch , colour (visible in early yellow Labrador photographs) . The shade was known as " Golden " until required to be changed by the UK Kennel Club , on the grounds that " Gold " was not actually a color . Over the 20th century a preference for far lighter shades of yellow through to cream prevailed , until today most yellow Labradors are of this shade . Also fawn has been a common colour in the yellow lab variety .

Interest in the darker shades of gold and fox red were re @-@ established by English breeders in the 1980s , and three dogs were instrumental in this change : Balrion King Frost (black , born c . 1976) who consistently sired " very dark yellow " offspring and is credited as having " the biggest influence in the re @-@ development of the fox red shade " , and his great @-@ grandson , the likewise famous Wynfaul Tabasco (b . 1986) , described as " the father of the modern fox red Labrador " , and the only modern fox red Show Champion in the UK . Other dogs , such as Red Alert and Scrimshaw Placido Flamingo , are also credited with passing on the genes into more than one renowned bloodline .

Yellow Labradors

= = = Chocolate Labradors = = =

Jack Vanderwyk traces the origins of all Chocolate Labradors listed on the LabradorNet database (

some 34 @, @ 000 Labrador dogs of all shades) to eight original bloodlines . However , the shade was not seen as a distinct colour until the 20th century ; before then according to Vanderwyk , such dogs can be traced but were not registered . A degree of crossbreeding with Flatcoat or Chesapeake Bay retrievers was also documented in the early 20th century , prior to recognition . Chocolate Labradors were also well established in the early 20th century at the kennels of the Earl of Feversham , and Lady Ward of Chiltonfoliat .

The bloodlines as traced by Vanderwyk each lead back to three black Labradors in the 1880s ? Buccleuch Avon (m) , and his sire and dam , Malmesbury Tramp (m) , and Malmesbury June (f) . Morningtown Tobla is also named as an important intermediary , and according to the studbook of Buccleuch Kennels , the chocolates in this kennel came through FTW Peter of Faskally (1908) .

Chocolate Labradors

= = Description = =

= = = Appearance = = =

Labradors are medium @-@ large , with males typically weighing 65 to 80 lb (29 to 36 kg) and females 55 to 70 lb (25 to 32 kg) . Labradors weighing close to or over 100 lb (45 kg) are considered obese or having a major fault under American Kennel Club standards , although some Labradors weigh significantly more . The majority of the characteristics of this breed , with the exception of colour , are the result of breeding to produce a working retriever .

As with some other breeds , the Conformation (typically " Show " , " English " or " bench ") and the Field (typically " Working " or " American ") lines differ , although both lines are bred in both countries . In general , however , Conformation Labradors tend to be bred as medium @-@ sized dogs , shorter and stockier with fuller faces and a slightly calmer nature than their Field counterparts , which are often bred as taller , lighter @-@ framed dogs , with slightly less broad faces and a slightly longer nose . However , Field Labradors should still be proportional and fit within American Kennel Club standards . With Field Labradors , excessively long noses , thin heads , long legs , and lanky frames are not considered standard . These two types are informal and not codified or standardised ; no distinction is made by the AKC or other kennel clubs , but the two types come from different breeding lines . Australian stock also exists ; though not seen in the West , they are common in Asia . These dogs are also very good with children .

The breed tends to shed hair twice annually or regularly throughout the year in temperate climates . Some Labradors shed considerably ; however , individual Labradors vary . Labrador hair is usually short and straight , and the tail is quite broad and strong . The webbed toes of the Labrador Retriever make them excellent swimmers . The webbing between their toes can also serve as a " snowshoe " in colder climates and keep snow from balling up between their toes ? a condition that can be painful to other breeds with hair between the toes . Their interwoven coat is also relatively waterproof , providing more assistance for swimming .

= = = Official breed standards = = =

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 . Significant differences between UK and US 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 . Males should stand 22 to 24 inches (56 to 61 cm) tall at the withers and weight 65 to 80 lb (29 to 36 kg) . Females should stand 22 to 24 inches (56 to 61 cm) and weigh 55 to 70 lb (25 to 32 kg) . By comparison under UK Kennel Club standards , height should be 22 to 22 inches (56 to 56 cm) for males , and 22 to 22 inches (56 to 56 cm) for females .

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 water in the winter . That means that the dog naturally has a slightly dry , oily coat . Acceptable colours are black , yellow , and chocolate .

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 set slightly above the eyes .

Jaws : 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 . The AKC adds that " true Labrador Retriever temperament is as much a hallmark of the breed as the ' otter ' tail . "

= = = = Colour = = = =

Labrador Retrievers are registered in three colours : black (a solid black colour) , yellow (considered from cream to fox @-@ red) , and chocolate (medium to dark brown) . Some dogs are sold as silver pure @-@ bred Labradors , but purity of those bloodlines is currently disputed by breed experts including breed clubs and breed councils . Some major kennel clubs around the world allow silver Labradors to be registered , but not as silver . The Kennel Club (England) requires that they be registered as " Non @-@ recognised . ? Occasionally , Labradors will exhibit small amounts of white fur on their chest , paws , or tail , and rarely a purebred Lab will exhibit brindling stripes or tan points similar to a Rottweiler . These markings are a disqualification for show dogs but do not have any bearing on the dog 's temperament or ability to be a good working or pet dog .

Puppies of all colours can potentially occur in the same litter . Colour is determined primarily by three genes . The first gene (the B locus) determines the density of the coat 's eumelanin pigment granules , if that pigment is allowed : dense granules result in a black coat , sparse ones give a chocolate coat . The second (E) locus determines whether the eumelanin is produced at all . A dog with the recessive e allele will produce only phaeomelanin pigment and will be yellow regardless of its genotype at the B locus . The genes known about previously have had their number increased by the introduction of the K locus , where the dominant " black " allele KB is now known to reside . Black or chocolate Labradors therefore must have the KB allele . Yellow Labradors are determined at the E locus , so the K locus is irrelevant in determining their colour . Variations in numerous other genes control the subtler details of the coat 's colouration , which in yellow Labradors varies from white to light gold to a fox red . Chocolate and black Labradors ' noses will match the coat colour .

According to a 2011 study , 13 out of 245 Labradors studied were heterozygous for the M264V mutation responsible for the melanistic mask , and one was homozygous . Within the breed , this trait is not visible .

= = = = = Nose and skin pigmentation = = = = =

Labrador colouration is controlled by multiple genes . It is possible for recessive genes to re @-@ emerge in later generations . Also , there can sometimes be unexpected pigmentation effects to different parts of the body . Pigmentation effects appear in regard to yellow Labradors , and sometimes chocolate , and hence the majority of this section covers pigmentation within the yellow Labrador . The most common places where pigmentation is visible are the nose , lips , gums , feet , tail , and the rims of the eyes , which may be black , brown , light yellow @-@ brown (" liver " , caused by having two genes for chocolate) , or several other colours . A Labrador can carry genes for a different colour , for example a black Labrador can carry recessive chocolate and yellow genes , and a yellow Labrador can carry recessive genes for the other two colours . DNA testing can reveal some aspects of these . Less common pigmentations (other than pink) are a fault , not a disqualification , and hence such dogs are still permitted to be shown .

The intensity of black pigment on yellow Labradors is controlled by a separate gene independent of the fur colouring . Yellow Labradors usually have black noses , which may gradually turn pink with age (called " snow nose " or " winter nose ") . This is due to a reduction in the enzyme tyrosinase which indirectly controls the production of melanin , a dark colouring . Tyrosinase is temperature dependent ? hence light colouration can be seasonal , due to cold weather ? and is less produced with increasing age two years old onwards . As a result , the nose colour of most yellow Labradors becomes a somewhat pink shade as they grow older .

A colouration known as " Dudley " is also possible . Dudleys are variously defined as yellow Labradors which have unpigmented (pink) noses (LRC) , yellow with liver / chocolate pigmentation (AKC) , or " flesh coloured " in addition to having the same colour around the rims of the eye , rather than having black or dark brown pigmentation . A yellow Labrador with brown or chocolate pigmentation , for example , a brown or chocolate nose , is not necessarily a Dudley , though according to the AKC 's current standard it would be if it has chocolate rims around the eyes (or more accurately of the genotype eebb) . Breed standards for Labradors considers a true Dudley to be a disqualifying feature in a conformation show Lab , such as one with a thoroughly pink nose or one lacking in any pigment along with flesh coloured rims around the eyes . True Dudleys are extremely rare . Breeding in order to correct pigmentation often lacks dependability . Because colour is determined by many genes , some of which are recessive , crossbreeding a pigmentation non @-@ standard yellow Labrador to a black Labrador may not correct the matter or prevent future generations carrying the same recessive genes . For similar reasons , crossbreeding chocolate to yellow Labradors is also often avoided .

== = Show and field lines == = =

As a result of specialised breeding there are significant differences between field and trial @-@ bred and show @-@ bred lines of Labradors . In the United States the former are sometimes mistakenly referred to as " American " and the latter as " English " although both field and show types are bred in both countries . In the United Kingdom they are called " Field " and " Show " . Dogs bred for hunting and field @-@ trial work are selected first for working ability , where dogs bred to compete in conformation shows are selected for their conformation to the standards and characteristics sought by judges in the show ring .

While individual dogs may vary , in general show @-@ bred Labradors are heavier built , slightly shorter @-@ bodied , and have a thicker coat and tail . Field Labradors are generally longer legged , lighter , and more lithe in build , making them agile . In the head , show Labradors tend to have broader heads , better defined stops , and more powerful necks , while field Labradors have lighter and slightly narrower heads with longer muzzles . Field @-@ bred Labradors are commonly higher energy and more high @-@ strung compared to the Labrador bred for conformation showing while conformation breeds are calmer in energy , and as a consequence may be more suited to working relationships than being a " family pet " . Some breeders , especially those specialising in the field type , feel that breed shows do not adequately recognise their type of dog , leading to occasional debate regarding officially splitting the breed into subtypes .

In the United States , the American Kennel Club (AKC) and the Labrador 's breed club have set the breed standard to accommodate the field @-@ bred Labrador somewhat . For instance , the AKC withers @-@ height standards allow conformation dogs to be slightly taller than the equivalent British standard . However , dual champions , or dogs that excel in both the field and the show ring , are becoming more unusual .

== Temperament ==

The AKC describes the Labrador 's temperament as a kind , pleasant , outgoing and tractable nature . Labradors ' sense of smell allows them to home in on almost any scent and follow the path of its origin . They generally stay on the scent until they find it . Navies , military forces and police forces use them as detection dogs to track down smugglers , thieves , terrorists and black marketers

. Labradors instinctively enjoy holding objects and even hands or arms in their mouths , which they can do with great gentleness (a Labrador can carry an egg in its mouth without breaking it) . They are known to have a very soft feel to the mouth , as a result of being bred to retrieve game such as waterfowl . They are prone to chewing objects (though they can be trained to abandon this behavior) . The Labrador Retriever 's coat repels water to some extent , thus facilitating the extensive use of the dog in waterfowl hunting .

Labradors have a reputation as a very even @-@ tempered breed and an excellent family dog . This includes a good reputation with children of all ages and other animals . Some lines , particularly those that have continued to be bred specifically for their skills at working in the field (rather than for their appearance) , are particularly fast and athletic . Their fun @-@ loving boisterousness and lack of fear may require training and firm handling at times to ensure it does not get out of hand ? an uncontrolled adult can be quite problematic . Females may be slightly more independent than males . Labradors mature at around three years of age ; before this time they can have a significant degree of puppy @-@ like energy , often mislabelled as being hyperactive . Because of their enthusiasm , leash @-@ training early on is suggested to prevent pulling when full @-@ grown . Labradors often enjoy retrieving a ball endlessly (often obsessively) and other forms of activity (such as agility , frisbee , or flyball) .

Although they will sometimes bark at noise , especially noise from an unseen source (" alarm barking ") , Labradors are usually not noisy or territorial . They are often very easygoing and trusting with strangers and therefore are not usually suitable as guard dogs .

Labradors have a well @-@ known reputation for appetite , and some individuals may be highly indiscriminate , eating digestible and non @-@ food objects alike . They are persistent and persuasive in requesting food . For this reason , the Labrador owner must carefully control their dog 's food intake to avoid obesity and its associated health problems (see below) .

The steady temperament of Labradors and their ability to learn make them an ideal breed for search and rescue , detection , and therapy work . They are a very intelligent breed . They are ranked # 7 in Stanley Coren 's The Intelligence of Dogs . The AKC describes the breed as an ideal family and sporting dog . Their primary working role in the field continues to be that of a hunting retriever .

= = = Exploration = = =

Labradors do not typically jump high fences or dig , but because of their personalities , some Labradors climb and / or jump for their own amusement . As a breed they are highly intelligent and capable of intense single @-@ mindedness and focus if motivated or their interest is caught . Therefore , with the right conditions and stimuli , a bored Labrador could " turn into an escape artist par excellence " .

Labradors as a breed are curious and exploratory and love company , following both people and interesting scents for food , attention , and novelty value . In this way , they can often " vanish " or otherwise become separated from their owners with little fanfare . Many dogs are also stolen . Because of their curious nature and ability to " vanish , " along with the risk of being stolen , a number of dog clubs and rescue organizations (including the UK 's Kennel Club) consider it good practice that Labradors be microchipped , with the owner 's name and address also on their collar and tags .

= = = Use as working dogs = = =

Labradors are an intelligent breed with a good work ethic and generally good temperaments . Common working roles for Labradors include : hunting , tracking and detection (they have a great sense of smell which helps when working in these areas) , disabled @-@ assistance , carting , and therapy work . Approximately 60 ? 70 % of all guide dogs in Canada are Labradors ; other common breeds are Golden Retrievers and German Shepherds . Labrador Retrievers have proven to have a high success rate at becoming guide dogs . A study was recently done on how well four different

breeds (Labrador Retriever , Golden Retriever , Labrador Retriever / Golden Retriever Mix , and German Shepherds) trained to become guide dogs . In this experiment , German Shepherds had the highest chance of not completing it . Labrador Retrievers and Labrador Retriever / Golden Retriever Mix had the highest success rate . However , German Shepherds and Golden Retrievers had a higher success rate after going through longer training than the training required for Labrador Retrievers .

Labradors are powerful and indefatigable swimmers noted for their ability to tolerate the coldest of water for extended periods of time . Their ability to work quietly alongside hunters while watching for birds to fall from the sky , marking where they land , and then using their outstanding nose to find and retrieve dead or wounded birds has made them the king of waterfowl retrievers . They are also used for pointing and flushing and make excellent upland game hunting partners .

The high intelligence , initiative and self @-@ direction of Labradors in working roles is exemplified by dogs such as Endal , who during a 2001 emergency placed an unconscious human being in the recovery position , retrieved his mobile phone from beneath the car , fetched a blanket and covered him , barked at nearby dwellings for assistance , and then ran to a nearby hotel to obtain help . A number of Labradors have also been taught to assist their owner in removing money and credit cards from ATMs with prior training .

The breed is used in water rescue / lifesaving . It continues in that role today , along with the Leonberger , Newfoundland and Golden Retriever dogs ; they are used at the Italian School of Canine Lifeguard .

= = Health = =

Labrador pups generally are not brought to the home before they are 8 weeks old . Their life expectancy is generally 10 to 12 years , and it is a healthy breed with relatively few major problems . Notable issues related to health and well @-@ being include :

= = = Inherited disorders = = =

Labradors are somewhat prone to hip and elbow dysplasia , especially the larger dogs , though not as much as some other breeds . Hip scores are recommended before breeding and often joint supplements are recommended .

Labradors also suffer from the risk of knee problems . A luxating patella is a common occurrence in the knee where the knee dislocates and goes back into place .

Eye problems are also possible in some Labradors , particularly progressive retinal atrophy , cataracts , corneal dystrophy and retinal dysplasia . Dogs which are intended to be bred should be examined by a veterinary ophthalmologist for an eye score .

Hereditary myopathy , a rare inherited disorder that causes a deficiency in type II muscle fibre . Symptoms include a short stilted gait or " bunny hopping , " and in rare cases ventroflexion of the neck accompanied by a kyphotic posture .

There is a small incidence of other conditions , such as autoimmune diseases and deafness in Labradors , either congenitally or later in life .

Labradors often suffer from exercise induced collapse , a syndrome that causes hyperthermia , weakness , collapse , and disorientation after short bouts of exercise .

Out of all dog breeds it is the Labrador Retriever that is most likely to obese . This obesity has been attributed to a specific gene mutation . See the Obesity sub section below .

= = = Obesity = = =

Labradors like to eat , and without proper exercise can become obese . Laziness is a contribution to this . Obesity is a serious condition and can be considered the number one nutritional problem with dogs . A study shows that at least 25 % of dogs in the United States are overweight . Therefore , Labradors must be properly exercised and stimulated . A healthy Labrador can do swimming wind

sprints for two hours , and should keep a very slight hourglass waist and be fit and light , rather than fat or heavy @-@ set . Obesity can exacerbate conditions such as hip dysplasia and joint problems , and can lead to secondary diseases , including diabetes . Osteoarthritis is very uncommon in older , especially overweight , Labradors . A 14 @-@ year study covering 48 dogs by food manufacturer Purina showed that Labradors fed to maintain a lean body shape outlived those fed freely by around two years , emphasising the importance of not over @-@ feeding . Labradors should be walked twice a day for at least half an hour .

It has been shown that out of all dog breeds , it is the Labrador Retriever that is most likely to obese . In a 2016 published study it was shown that out of 310 Labradors , most were missing all or parts of the POMC gene . This gene plays a part in appetite regulation as well as indication of the amount of one 's stored fat . The study concluded that the absence of that gene had a significant impact on Labrador weight and appetite . The POMC gene mutation is present in only one other breed - the Flat @-@ coated Retriever .

= = Appearance around the world = =

In the United States , the breed gained wider recognition following a 1928 American Kennel Gazette article , " Meet the Labrador Retriever " . Before this time , the AKC had only registered 23 Labradors in the country , in part because US and UK hunting styles had different requirements . Labradors acquired popularity as hunting dogs during the 1920s and especially after World War II , as they gained recognition as combining some of the best traits of the two favourite United States breeds as both game finders and water dogs .

Outside North America and Western Europe , the Labrador arrived later . For example , the Russian Retriever Club traces the arrival of Labradors to the late 1960s , as household pets of diplomats and others in the foreign ministry . The establishment of the breed in the Commonwealth of Independent States (former USSR) was initially hindered by the relatively small numbers of Labradors and great distances involved , leading to difficulty establishing breedings and bloodlines ; at the start of the 1980s , home @-@ born dogs were still regularly supplemented by further imports from overseas . Difficulties such as these initially led to Labradors being tacitly cross @-@ bred to other types of retriever . In the 1990s , improved access to overseas shows and bloodlines is said to have helped this situation become regularised .

= = = Demography = = =

The Labrador is an exceptionally popular dog . For example , as of 2006 :

Widely considered the most popular breed in the world .

Most popular dog by ownership in Australia , Canada , Israel . New Zealand UK , and USA (since 1991) ,

In both the UK and USA , there are well over twice as many Labradors registered as the next most popular breed . If the comparison is limited to dog breeds of a similar size , then there are around 3 - 5 times as many Labradors registered in both countries as the next most popular breeds , the German Shepherd Dog and Golden Retriever .

Most popular breed of assistance dog in the United States , Australia and many other countries , as well as being widely used by police and other official bodies for their detection and working abilities . Approximately 60 ? 70 % of all guide dogs in the United States are Labradors (see below) .

Seven out of 13 of the Australian National Kennel Council " Outstanding Gundogs " Hall of Fame appointees are Labradors (list covers 2000 ? 2005) .

There is no global registry of Labradors , nor detailed information on numbers of Labradors living in each country . The countries with the five largest numbers of Labrador registrations as of 2005 are : 1 : United Kingdom 2 : France and United States (approximately equal) , 4 : Sweden , 5 : Finland . Sweden and Finland have far lower populations than the other three countries , suggesting that as of 2005 these two countries have the highest proportion of Labradors per million people : As there is no global registry for Labradors , it is difficult to ascertain whether there is simply a smaller

percentage of people formally registering their animals in countries like the United States , or whether the number of animals per capita is actually smaller .

OFA statistics suggest that yellow and black Labradors are registered in very similar numbers (yellow slightly more than black) ; chocolate in lesser numbers .

Note : The number of registrations is not necessarily the same as the number of living dogs at any given time .

= = = US Military Working Dogs (War Dogs) : Labrador Retrievers in the Vietnam War = = =

The Vietnam War is the only war in American history in which US war dogs , which were officially classified by the military as " military working dogs , " were not allowed to officially return home after the war . Classified as expendable equipment , of the approximate 4 @,@ 000 US K @-@ 9s deployed to the Vietnam War , it is estimated that only about 200 US war dogs survived Vietnam to be put into service at other outposts stationed overseas . Aside from these 200 or so , the remaining canines who were not killed in action were either euthanized or left behind .

The predominate canine selected by the US Military during the Vietnam War was the German Shepherd Dog , which was utilized in the roles of Scout Dogs , Sentry Dogs , Mine Detection Dogs , and the US Navy used Water Dogs to detect enemy under water divers in South Vietnam . The Labrador Retriever was the military 's choice for their Combat Tracker Teams (CTTs) . Combat Tracker Teams consisted of one Labrador and four men : the handler , an observer , a security man , and the team leader . Labradors were selected by the military for tracking because of their distinct smelling qualities , and were utilized to locate wounded US servicemen , enemy patrols , and downed allied airmen in Vietnam . The US Army Labrador Retrievers received their combat training at the British Army 's Jungle Warfare School in Malaysia .

Of the over 4 @,@ 000 US war dogs serving in the Vietnam War , 232 were killed in action , and 295 US servicemen deployed as " dog handlers " were killed in action . Dog handler Robert W. Hartsock was awarded the Medal of Honor . Six Labrador Retrievers were killed in action while assigned to the 62nd and 63rd US Army Combat Tracking Teams . During the course of the war the US Army lost 204 dogs , while the US Marine Corps and US Air Force lost 13 and 15 dogs , respectively .

In November 2000 , President Bill Clinton signed into law an amendment that allowed retired US military working dogs (war dogs) to be adopted by personnel outside of the military , leaving the Vietnam War as the only war in US history in which American war dogs never returned home .

= = Famous labradors = =

As both the most popular breed by registered ownership and also the most popular breed for assistance dogs in several countries , there have been many notable and famous labradors since the breed was recognized .

A selection of a few of the most famous labradors within various categories includes :

Assistance dogs

Endal , a service dog in Britain . Among other distinctions , " the most decorated dog in the world " (including " Dog of the Millennium " and the PDSA ? s Gold Medal for Animal Gallantry and Devotion to Duty) , the first dog to ride on the London Eye and the first dog known to work a ' chip and pin ' ATM card . By Endal 's death in March 2009 , he and his owner / handler Allen Parton had been filmed almost 350 times by crews from several countries , and a film of a year in Endal 's life was in production .

Police , military , rescue and detection dogs

Zanjeer (" Chain " , or " Shackles ") , a detection dog who detected arms and ammunition used in 1993 Mumbai (Bombay) serial explosions . During his service , he helped recover 57 country @-@ made bombs , 175 patrol bombs , 11 military grade armaments , 242 grenades and 600 detonators . His biggest contribution to the police force and the city was the detection of 3 @,@ 329 kg of RDX . He also helped detect 18 Type 56 rifles and five 9mm pistols .

Lucky and Flo , twin Black Labrador counterfeit detection dogs who became famous in 2007 for " sniffing out nearly 2 million counterfeit DVDs " on a six @-@ month secondment to Malaysia in 2007 . Following the multimillion @-@ dollar , 6 @-@ arrest Malaysian detection , they became the first dogs to be awarded Malaysia 's " outstanding service award " and software pirates were stated to have put a £ 30 @,@ 000 contract out for their lives .

Sarbi , an Australian special forces explosives detection dog that spent almost 14 months missing in action (MIA) in Afghanistan before being recovered safe and well in 2009 .

Jake (rescue dog) a well @-@ known American black labrador who served as a search and rescue dog following the September 11 attacks and Hurricane Katrina .

Pets

Former President of the United States Bill Clinton 's Labradors Buddy and Seamus .

Russian President Vladimir Putin 's Labrador ' Koni ' .

Fiction and media

Brian Griffin from the animated TV sitcom Family Guy is a white Labrador Retriever .

Bouncer in Neighbours , and Luath in The Incredible Journey , are also famous Labradors on TV .

Marley is an American Labrador featured in Marley & Me , a best @-@ selling book by John Grogan , and a subsequent film based on Grogan 's life and times with Marley .

On the BBC children 's television series Big Barn Farm , Digger is a yellow Labrador puppy .

Rowdy on Scrubs is a taxidermy golden Labrador Retriever involved in various gags on the show .

Vincent on Lost is a white Labrador Retriever .

Pharaoh , Isis , and Tiaa are yellow Labrador Retrievers in the television series Downton Abbey .

Brandeis , a yellow Labrador Retriever , is a minor character on Sesame Street who finds employment as a Mobility assistance dog .

Mascots and advertising

Since 1972 , a yellow Labrador pup known as the Andrex Puppy has been an advertising symbol for Andrex (Cottonelle) toilet tissue .

Michigan State University has an ongoing tradition of Zeke the Wonder Dog . The original " Zeke " as well as the current " Zeke IV " was a yellow Lab , as " Zeke III " , and " Zeke II " were black Labs .