

Virginia Foxhound show.

Members of the breed's AKC parent club are often questioned about the breed's rarity and low registration numbers. There are mixed concerns and feelings among the small membership regarding the breed's popularity and future. Having traveled around the East Coast with English Foxhounds, their rare numbers remain a mystery to me. The breed stands out in a crowd with a beautiful, regal appearance that demands attention. People approach the hounds amazed and taken back to learn they are English Foxhounds, exclaiming that they are beautiful dogs and had never seen one before. More than the breed as defined, every English Foxhound has individual characteristics and behaviors that will help make him a successful companion—and they are also characteristics that can make him a challenge to live with or to train for a particular performance venue.

Through the domestic dog's development with man the species has shown more behavioral and morphological variation than any other land mammal. The English Foxhound, having been bred to hunt by scent in packs, will make working with the breed a challenge. Paired with the right owner and training method, the English Foxhound has been successful in agility, obedience, rally obedience, and tracking as well as the conformation ring. With their teddy-bear personalities, the breed can excel as therapy dogs and as house companions.

Even with strong instincts to follow their noses, in the long run the English Foxhound is a dog—*Canis lupus familiaris*—with the same characteristics of most dogs in terms of needing to be loved and craving human companionship. While attending a canine event, if you meet an English Foxhound amongst the many entries, revel in the moment of your treasured find, and get to know an English Foxhound.

—Kris Eckard, [gspointer@hotmail.com](mailto:gspointer@hotmail.com)

English Foxhound Club of America:  
[akc.org/breeds/english\\_foxhound](http://akc.org/breeds/english_foxhound)

## Ibizan Hounds

### Form, Function, or Fashion?

I have previously written on the diversity of the Ibizan Hound. There has always been a healthy range of type in the breed, with some hounds being more compact than others.

With the great flood of information now available to us, we are more aware of various types in the breed, and most of all the amazing videos of Ibizans hunting in their native land. Seeing the Ibizans flying over high brush in pursuit of rabbits was certainly an eye-opener for me, so I will address the standard and explain why these beautiful dogs are so correct. These wonderful hunting dogs, bred for the hunt and not show, are certainly beautiful creatures.

First, their general size and shape. The size limitations are for the most workable mass of a dog who is expected to be very agile and to leap high in the air and hunt for hours. This is not the swift, short chase of the Greyhound. The dog is only slightly longer, if at all, than his height. For agility and jumping a long body would be counterproductive. Fine, clean bone, dense and bladed as befits a fast, agile dog, is required. There should never any sign of heaviness.

The head is long and narrow but in the form of a cone. This gives the Ibizan the long jaw to snatch up a rabbit on the run but the delicacy to retrieve it alive. The eyes are set obliquely and are not large, giving good peripheral vision and keeping them not so much in danger of injury from brambles. The ears, the crowning glory of the Ibizan, are set high and are quite large. Ibizans use their sense of hearing to trace the rabbit through heavy, dry cover. The large ear also helps in cooling the dog as it leaps and runs.

The lovely, arched neck is used for reconnaissance in heavy cover. Though the neck is flexible and quite mobile, the characteristic high carriage allows for the lift in the movement. The shoulders are well laid back, but the upper arm is straighter, though not dead-upright, dropping straight from the point of the shoulder but set

slightly back, but well in front of the deepest part of the chest. This unique conformation allows for the springy lift and reach of the suspended trot.

The ribs are only slightly sprung, as this is a dog of speed that is expected to go airborne in pursuit of rabbits. A cumbersome body will not serve. The topline has a rise over the loin, denoting muscle and flexibility. The tuck-up does not appear as great as that of some other sighthounds because of the length and placement of the upper arm and a moderately deep chest. The sternum should have a little hollow on either side, as this is a hound of lean and spare body, not beefy as in some working breeds. The foot is an elongated oval with deep strong pads. This breed is expected to climb rock walls and land safely from high jumps. The legs have bladed bones and are lengthy; this is needed for hunting in high cover.

Considerations should be made for some variety within the breed, with a range of type from more robust to more leggy and sinewy. Within the parameters of the standard this is correct.

Similar to the variation of type within the Saluki breed, different locations with different geography led to development of an acceptable range of types.

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Ibizan Hound Club of the United States website: [ihcus.org](http://ihcus.org)

## Irish Wolfhounds

### Head Type Revisited

At the turn of the last century, Irish Wolfhound fanciers were provided a useful list of point values that were to assist judges and breeders with their selections. Having first appeared in the book *Dogs*, by Harding Cox, this merit point system, with a score of 100 representing the perfect dog, was tried for several years and found wanting. Cumbersome at best, the hound awarded the greatest number of points was found to be not necessarily the most typical animal. What is of interest is that in this system, the head of an

Irish Wolfhound was allotted 25 points, or one-quarter of the total possible for the dog.

It is generally conceded that the most important point in the type of any show dog is the head, as it is the index to the breed, and although few Irish Wolfhounds are employed today in their original role as a hunter of large and fierce game, they should still have the long, strong head called for in the standard, with the frontal bones very slightly raised and very little indentation between the eyes. The muzzle should be moderately pointed, with jaws of sufficient length and strength to cope with his quarry when he overtakes it, and the skull should not be too broad and is flat rather than round, with the occiput distinct in young hounds.

Ears have a great deal of influence on head type, and a badly carried ear can spoil the appearance of an otherwise good head. The ears should be small and Greyhound-like in carriage, set on rather high, as the ancients would have it: *An eye of sloe with ear not low*. The heavy ear hanging flat to the head is foreign to the Irish Wolfhound and was introduced by the use of Great Dane blood during the restoration of the breed.

In an article that appeared in the 1933–34 English yearbook, Mr. I. W. Everett, who bred the world-famous Felixstowe Irish Wolfhounds, set down some thoughts on type given him by the late Captain Graham:

“His head should show greater proportion of strength to the size of him than the Deer-hound. His ears should be carried in repose tucked behind him as a Greyhound’s and when looking at objects in the distance should be semi-erect. His eyes should at least harmonize with his general color, a usual preference being given to the dark rather than light eyes. His muzzle, distinctly not square, it should have the appearance of being undercut rather than square, until the teeth are inspected when it is seen the teeth are level. The head should be of good

length in proportion to the hound, with a very small drop before the eyes and frontal bones little raised. His throat should be clear of loose skin or dewlap. His skull, although not coarse, should give one the impression of strength.

“To finish up a nice typical head, a reasonable amount of eyebrow, muzzle hair and beard, completed by the neck being set into the head nice and high up and showing a reasonable crest.”

In essence, the Irish Wolfhound should always remain the giant, rough-coated Greyhound in appearance, with his head in keeping with the Greyhound characteristics. The Irish Wolfhound’s head should convey a feeling of immense strength and majestic beauty, reflecting the noble spirit contained within.

—Lois J. Thomasson,  
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Irish Wolfhound Club of America  
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## Norwegian Elkhounds

The following was written by Dr. Nina P. Ross.

### Hunting With Elkhounds

Legend paints the Norwegian Elkhound as a picturesque character throughout his history. He trots down through the centuries as a fearless guardian, a devoted companion, a utilitarian farm dog, and a skilled hunter. To validate at least a portion of the saga, he is still using his skills as a hunter in his native Norway. His expertise in tracking and holding *elg* at bay for the hunters is another indication of his devotion to his master. In Norway, the hunting season for *elg* is between September 23 and October 31, with a one-week break beginning the first of October.

Elghound field trials are commonplace, offering an opportunity for dogs to win prizes for first, second, and third place. To become a hunting champion, the dog must achieve two first prizes in a field trial, one having been achieved

on a two-day field trial and one first prize based on quality in a dog show. The Big Game Committee of Norway passed a law that went into effect on January 1, 1994, requiring all hunting teams to have at least one dog approved for tracking wounded animals.

The dog’s eagerness for the hunt must be strong enough to keep him working all day. Each dog has his own way to show the hunters that an *elg* is nearby. Some do this by standing up on their hind feet; others let their tails fall down from the curled position. Still others stand with their hackles up—this has nothing to do with bad temper. Gray Elkhounds used for hunting and showing should be good-natured and friendly, easily handled in the show ring, and eager to go hunting.

During a hunt, the dog’s purpose is to track the *elg*, hold it at bay by barking, and wait for the hunter to close in. The hunters, as well as the dogs, must be prepared physically and mentally for the stress of a hunt. The entire pursuit takes hours of trekking over hill and dale for hunters and dogs. Not only must the dog show eagerness for the hunt, interest in finding *elg*, willingness to obey his master, calmness and self-assurance in approaching *elg*, and the ability to stop and hold the *elg* at bay by barking, he also must have the stamina to start the procedure all over again.

Although hunting is done on a smaller scale in the United States, the official Norwegian Elkhound standard focuses on the requirements for hunting. Dogs must be in good physical condition. They must be intelligent, bold, and energetic. Their coats must be smooth lying and weather resistant. Their feet should be small, with tightly closed toes and thick pads. The dogs must have a compatible relationship with their master as a result of spending time together.

Breeders can preserve the hunting instinct by controlling the outcomes in their breeding programs to a greater extent through selective breeding programs. Even though Norwegian Elkhounds are known to be sound and