

# THE NORWEGIAN LUNDEHUND

## BREED COMPENDIUM

With Comments by Norsk Lundehund Klubb 2015

Group 5

FCI breed No: 265

1879 – 9

Approved by the Norwegian Kennel Club Standard Committee 2010



Fig. 1.





Fig.2.



Fig. 3 – 4 Lunde dogs doing their job, - retrieving puffins.







Fig. 5. Måstad approx. 1983.

## HISTORY

The Norwegian Lunde Hund is an ancient breed. Its anatomy probably makes it the most exceptional breed in the world. Its official English name is Norwegian Lunde Hund, which will be used in this compendium, but it is also known as the Norwegian Puffin dog, which is a direct translation of its Norwegian name.

The scientist Torbjørn Aasheim wrote to the Norwegian Lunde Hund Club in 1974:

*This breed has not only historical importance. It is not only a cynologic curiosity. It may represent the most valuable material for the future research as to how hereditary features are modified and how a (group) adjusts to a*

*special environment. Science today is not advanced enough to answer all these questions. It is the cynology of tomorrow we are referring to. The Norwegian dog breeders must now assume the responsibility for preserving the basis for this research. In the cynological world of Norway, the Norwegian Lunde Hund is the last exponent of unspoiled nature. It is our duty to take care of it as such.*

Today's Lunde Hunds all descend from dogs from the tiny hamlet Måstad on Værøy in the Lofoten archipelago. The breed is very old, - as long as there have been people on the islands of Northern Norway, there have also been Lunde Hunds. The first reliable description dates from 1591. The bailiff Erik Hansen Schønnebøl's account of his voyage to Northern Norway told among other things about the Lunde Hund and puffin hunting. He says the puffin nests in screes and burrows so that "one cannot easily retrieve the birds from the depth without having a small dog accustomed to crawling into the hole and pulling the birds out".

In the 16th and 17th century there are many reports of Lunde Hunds along the coast from Helgeland to Finnmark. The most famous one is from the poem "Nordlands Trompet" (The Trumpet of the North") by the poet-priest Peter Dass, describing puffin hunting on the island of Lovund around 1700. The poem, directly translated:

*But peasants, having a plan,  
knowing well how to rob the puffins,  
by using particular dogs  
which are of built flexible and small,  
able to crawl into the narrowest corner  
and pull out the puffin alive.*

Fig. 6. Måstad in 1936, still inhabited and with a large stock of Lundehunds.



Fig. 7. Måstad as it appeared in 2009. Today the hamlet is depopulated.



Fig. 8. Two Norwegian Lundehunds with their owners. The photo is taken in 1928 and shows black and white (tricolour) dogs, a colour combination that, regrettably, is non-existent in the breed today.



The importance of the Lundehund as a working/hunting dog is described several times in the 17th and 18th century. A good hunting dog was highly appreciated. From Fugløy in Gildeskål it is said that the value of a good Lundehund equals that of a cow. Earlier, Lundehunds could be found wherever there were puffins. But as net hunting became more common, the only dogs left in our times were at Værøy and Røst, where they were used to secure winter supplies of meat.

At the outbreak of WWII the hamlet Måstad had a population of 50 Lundehunds. These dogs came to the knowledge of the Christie's, who understood the importance of preserving the breed. Some dogs were sent to them and they started a breeding program at Hamar, in the south of Norway. 1943 distemper struck at Måstad, a catastrophe for the breed. Only one dog survived.

The Christie's however, succeeded in breeding so that they could send several dogs back to Måstad. These dogs together with a dog of different lineage became the foundation for a new flock that was growing relatively quickly.

After having sent the dogs north, distemper struck again, this time at the Christie's. Only one dog (Ask) survived at Hamar. He lived to become 9 years old. In 1960 Eleanor Christie again started her work, trying to save the breed. By that time Måstad was practically depopulated, except for one couple, Kathrine and Mondrad Mikalsen and their two dogs. These dogs provided Eleanor Christie with 3 littermates, the male Rune and the bitches Eir and Rind. Later, a half brother, Piljo, from the same mother, came to Oslo. His litter brother Bobb remained on Værøy. These 5 dogs plus an

adult male from Overhalla, Buster, are the ancestors of all Norwegian Lundehunds living today. Buster was also born on Værøy, but not closely related to the others.

The Norwegian Lundehund club was founded in 1962 by a group of enthusiasts, and great and important work was done to save the breed. Especially thanks to Eleanor Christie, we can today say that the breed is saved from extinction. Earlier, before WWII, there were also black (tricolours) and white Lundehunds, but these colours are no longer to be seen.



Fig. 9. The bitch Eir with her five weeks old puppy, Tussa. Eir is the ancestress of all of today's Lundehunds.





Fig. 10. A Norwegian Lundehund catching a puffin in a scree on Måstad. The picture is from 1972.

### **THE FUNCTIONS OF THE LUNDEHUNDS**

The function of the Lundehunds was to retrieve puffins from burrows in screes and cliffs. The anatomy is particularly well adapted to moving on rugged grounds and crawling into the narrow passages where the birds nest. The anatomy of the feet with their large surface gives a very good grip, not only for climbing but also when braking going down steep and stony screes.

The outer ears may fold so that dirt does not penetrate, probably also an aid in locating the birds.

Extraordinary flexibility of shoulder and neck joints helps the dog crawl into the narrow crevices and also in turning when retrieving the birds.



Fig 11. Puffins nesting in a steep scree. Today the birds are considered an endangered species and legally protected.



Fig. 12. A puffin with fish in the beak on its way to the nest to feed its chick after successful fishing in the sea. The puffin matures slowly and starts breeding at about 5 years of age. They only lay one egg. This is one of the reasons why they are so vulnerable.



Fig. 13. The puffins' nests are in passages they dig in the peat, or in caverns in scree.



## Standard and Comments by the Norwegian Lundehund Club



Fig. 14. A typical bitch with correct proportions and correct tail.



Fig. 15. A typical male with correct proportions and correct tail.

## **STANDARD**

**FCI nr 265, Approved by the Norwegian Kennel Club 04.06. 2009**

**Origin:** Norway

### **Utilization:**

By his anatomical peculiarities this dog is predestinated to puffin-hunting on the steep rocks around the fjords and along the shore.

### **Classification FCI:**

Group 5 Spitz and primitive types.  
Section 2 Nordic Hunting Dogs.  
Without working trial.

### **General appearance:**

Spitz type dog, small, rectangular, supple, rather lightly made; morphological characteristics different according to sex.

### **Behavior/character:**

Alert, energetic, lively.

### **Head:**

Clean-cut, medium width, wedge shaped.

### **Cranial region:**

#### **Skull :**

Slightly rounded with prominent superciliary arches.

#### **Stop :**

Pronounced, but without excess.

## **COMMENTS**

*The Norwegian Lundehund is a very old, indigenous breed with an exceptional anatomy. Its purpose is to retrieve puffins from their nesting burrows.*

*It should be very flexible and have a friendly disposition. It is never low to the ground or squarely built.*

*The head should not be coarse, nor snipy.*





Fig.16. An excellent masculine head shape. Correct eye and under jaw. A very typical alert expression due to the rather light eye colour.



Fig. 17. A feminine head of excellent type.

## STANDARD

### Facial region :

#### Muzzle :

Wedge shaped of medium length.  
Nasal bridge slightly convex.

#### Jaws / Teeth :

Scissor bite preferred, but a pincer bite or a moderate prognathism of the lower jaw is permitted. The absence of premolars on both sides, in each jaw, is accepted.

## COMMENTS

*The jaws should be well developed to facilitate the retrieval of birds. A level bite, reverse scissor bite or moderate undershot is tolerated, as is an uneven bite and lack of premolars.*

*The lack of genetic variations in the breed makes it difficult to breed away from such problems, but a severely undershot dog should be downgraded.*





Fig. 18. An acceptable undershot.

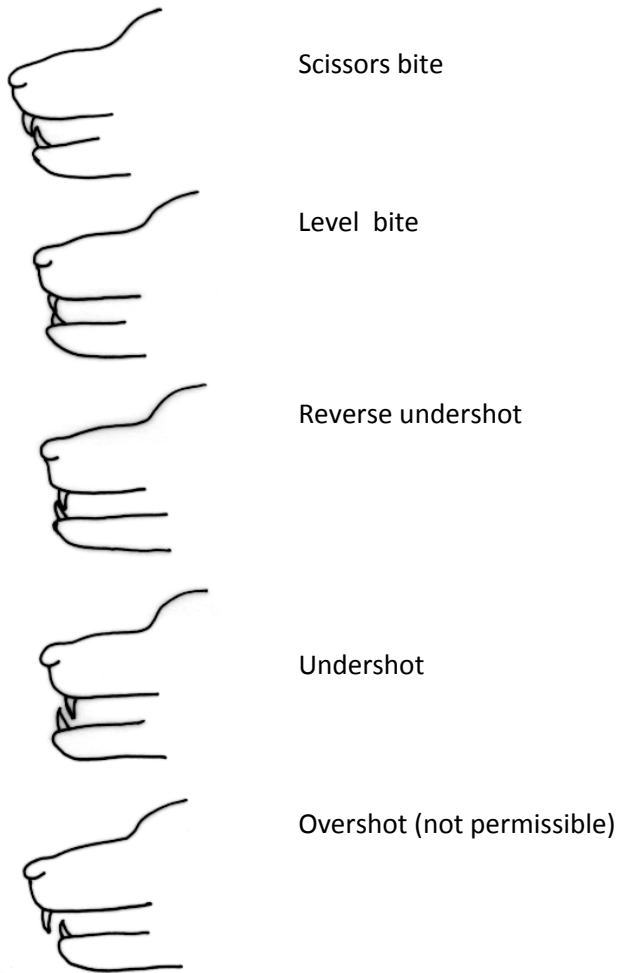


Fig 19. Different bites that can occur in the breed. Overshot is not permissible. A dog with heavy undershot cannot get excellent.

## STANDARD

### Eyes :

Slightly sloping and not protruding; the iris is yellowish brown; the pupil is encircled by a dark halo.

### Ears :

Triangular ears of medium size, broad at the base, carried erect and very mobile. The cartilage of the ear lobe has the faculty of being able to retract itself so that the ear folds itself and flops in a specific manner, either backwards or in right angle upwards, so as to close the auditory passage.

### Neck:

Clean-cut, of medium length, quite strong with a relatively well furnished collar.

## COMMENTS

*The Lundehund should have rather light eyes (yellowish brown iris) to give the desired alert expression. Round eyes are wrong, as are protruding eyes, more prone to damage working in the scree.*

*The ears of the Lundehund have a unique muscle that enables them to fold and close the ears when entering the burrows, thus protecting them against dirt and moisture. The turning and folding of the ears probably also is help in locating the birds.*

*The head is carried relatively low. The two last vertebrae (atlas/apsis) are shaped so that the dog can bend backwards so that the head touches the back. To do so is vital when turning in the narrow burrows.*

***NB! This should NEVER be demonstrated in the ring!***





Fig. 20. A masculine head with correct eye openings.



Fig. 21. This photo shows the folded and shut ear. It is important to protect the inner ear when the dog enters the scree.

## STANDARD

### Limbs:

#### Forequarters:

General appearance :  
Moderately angulated.

Forearm :  
Straight.

#### Forefeet :

Oval shaped, turning slightly outwards, with at least six toes - of which five must rest on the ground. Eight pads on each foot. The two inner toes, formed respectively by 3 and 2 phalanges and endowed with a ligamentary and muscular system, make the foot look solid.

## COMMENTS

*Very flexible and elastic shoulder muscles. The Lundehund has joints that allow the forelimbs to extend at nearly 90 degrees from the body, **but this must NEVER be demonstrated in the ring!***

*The forefeet turn slightly outwards to give room for the extra toes.*

*The Norwegian Lundehund is a polydactyl. Instead of the normal 4 digits, the Lundehund normally has 6 digits, all fully formed, jointed and muscled, with tendons going up the inside of the leg, partly responsible for its wide front gait.*

*Some specimen may have more, others less than 6 digits per foot, but less than 6 on front feet should lead to downgrading.*

*The extra toes help the dog climbing up and down crevices in screes and cliffs.*

*In countries where a written critique is given for each dog, the judge should comment on development and function of extra toes. 6 toes is one of the most distinguishing traits of the breed.*



Fig. 22. Excellently developed extra toes.



Fig. 23. This photo shows a dog with untypical extra toes. A dog with this kind of toes is not champion quality.



Fig. 24. X-ray of forefeet.



Fig. 25. Excellently developed extra toes.



Fig. 26. More than six toes are acceptable, but six toes are preferred.



Fig. 27. A Lunde Hund track in snow.



## STANDARD

### **Body:**

Rectangular.

### **Top line:**

Straight.

### **Back :**

Strong.

### **Croup :**

Slightly sloping.

### **Chest :**

Long, of medium width, relatively well let down and spacious, not barrel shaped.

### **Belly :**

Slightly drawn up.

### **Tail :**

Set high, medium length, well covered with hair but without flag. Carried either in a ring or slightly rolled over onto the back, or hanging. The tip must neither be too much over, nor falling to one side.

## COMMENTS

*The dog should be fit for function, - that is; able to retrieving puffins from their burrows. That means the dog should rather be slender than barrel shaped in chest. A dog with a barrel shaped chest will have difficulties manoeuvring the narrow passages.*

*A croup that falls too much away is a fault.*

*The tail can be carried either lifted or hanging down. If carried high, it should be carried over the back with the tip towards the middle, never firmly curled or down the side of the thigh.*



Fig. 28. A typical bitch, with correct tail



Fig. 29. A correct male with good proportions, and correct carried tail.



Fig. 30.



Fig. 31.



Fig. 32.

Fig. 30, 31 and 32. Correct carried tails.

## STANDARD

### Hindquarters :

#### General appearance:

The position of the hindquarters is somewhat close.

#### Upper thigh:

Strong and muscular.

#### Stifles:

Moderately angulated.

#### Lower thigh:

Strong and muscular.

### Hindfeet :

Oval shaped, turned slightly outwards, with at least six toes - four of which must rest on the ground. Seven pads on each foot, the one in the middle, the most important one by its size, being attached to the inner pads corresponding to the two inner toes. When the dog is standing up on a flat surface, the weight of the body must be evenly distributed on the pads.

## COMMENTS

*Standing and moving narrow behind is typical for the breed.*

*More than 6 digits is not a fault. 5 digits are acceptable on the hind feet.*

*The extra toes on the hind feet are normally less developed than those on the forelegs and variations from the ideal, both regarding number and placement, should not be penalized.*





Fig. 33. Well developed hindfeet. The extra toes on the right hindfoot are especially excellent.



Fig. 34. Acceptable extra toes on hindfeet.



Fig. 35. X-ray of hindfeet.

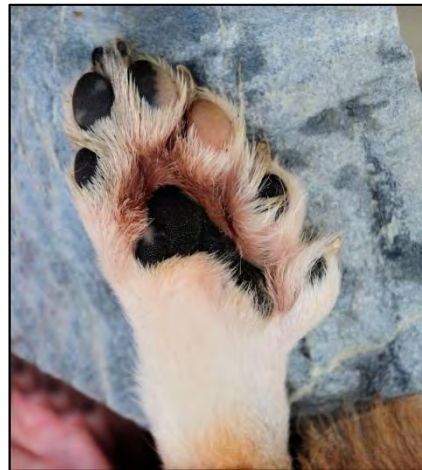


Fig. 36. Well developed extra toes on hindfoot.



Fig. 37. The pads on the hindfeet are visible from behind when the dog stands on level ground. The dog only puts weight on its toes.

## STANDARD

### Gait/Movement:

Light and elastic. An external rotary action of the forelegs and somewhat close action behind is characteristic of the breed.

### Coat:

#### Hair:

Dense and rough, soft undercoat. Short on the head and the front of the legs, more abundant at the level of the neck, rear of the buttocks (thighs) and on the tail, but without flag.

#### Colour:

Always combined with white: from red to fawn, coat more or less sprinkled with hairs with black tips; black; grey; white with dark patches. The adult usually has more marked black tips in the coat than the younger dog.

## COMMENTS

*In judging the movements of the Lundehund, one must consider that this dog is built to climb efficiently up and down steep cliffs and screes. The extra pads on both fore- and hind paws must then touch the surface to aid the dog in climbing. The extra toes help getting a grip, both in ascent and descent. The wide front with extra flexibility enables climbing safely up and down crevices, as the forelegs can grip at a 90 degrees angle to the body. On flat surfaces, the Lundehund will show typical rotating front movements, due to tendons and muscles from the extra digits on the inside of the legs. Hind movements are narrow.*

*White dogs with tan patches (i.e. tan with black hair tips) around the eyes and on ears may appear and are fully acceptable. White markings on body should preferably be symmetrical. White or half white head without pigmentation around the eyes is not acceptable and should be downgraded.*





Fig. 38. Typical wide and rotating front movement.



Fig. 39. Typical narrow movement behind.



Fig. 40. This photo shows a dog with acceptable white colour.



Fig. 41. A dog with this kind of markings, white around one or both eyes with no pigmentation, is not preferred and cannot get excellent.



## STANDARD

### Height and weight:

Height at withers: Male : 35 - 38 cm.  
Female : 32 - 35 cm.

Weight: Male : about 7 kg.  
Female : about 6 kg.

### 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.

### Eliminating faults :

- Aggressiveness.

Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioral abnormalities shall be disqualified.

### N.B.:

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

## COMMENTS

*A small, flexible, lithe, rectangular dog is to be preferred. The dog should be able to get into the burrows, thus not coarse, as this makes it not fit for function.*

*Oslo, 09.10.11 Norsk Lundehund Klubb.*

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#### List of photographers:

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| Fig. 3: Roar Torsteinsen                         | Fig. 25: Arild Espelien                  |
| Fig. 4: Roar Torsteinsen                         | Fig. 26: Roar Torsteinsen                |
| Fig. 5: Roar Torsteinsen                         | Fig. 27: Ingvild Svorkmo Espelien        |
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| Fig. 18: Ingvild Svorkmo Espelien                | Fig. 38 and 39: Ingvild Svorkmo Espelien |
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Fig. 42.





Fig. 43.



Fig. 44.