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JANUARY 2002

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## BREED PROFILE

### In brief

#### Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever

**Country of origin:** Canada.

**Group:** Miscellaneous Class.

**Life span:** 12 to 14 years.

**Color:** Any shade of red; white on tip of tail, feet, chest, and/or blaze (between the eyes).

**Coat:** Water-repellent, medium-length double coat with a soft, dense undercoat.

**Grooming:** Brush weekly. Clip excess hair on paws. Dogs in the field might need burr removal and additional brushing.

**Height/weight:** Males 18 to 21 inches, 45 to 51 pounds; females 17 to 20 inches, 37 to 43 pounds.

**Trainability:** High.

**Activity level:** High.

**Known health problems:** Hip dysplasia and eye problems (including progressive retinal atrophy).

**Best home:** Indoors with an active owner who enjoys outdoor activities.

**Good with children:** Yes.

**Good with other pets:** Yes.

**National breed club:** Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club, Sue Van Sloun, director at large, P.O. Box 116, Westport Point, MA 02781; (508) 636-5386; [SVansloun@aol.com](mailto:SVansloun@aol.com); [www.nsdtrc-usa.org](http://www.nsdtrc-usa.org)

**Rescue:** Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Rescue, David Moore, rescue coordinator, (937) 987-0977; [damoore@erinet.com](mailto:damoore@erinet.com); [damoore46@yahoo.com](mailto:damoore46@yahoo.com); [www.nsdtrc-usa.org/rescue/rescuemain.htm](http://www.nsdtrc-usa.org/rescue/rescuemain.htm)

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# Canadian

# Siren

The alluring Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever entices prey to the water's edge.

By Ida Estep

The tree in Major's backyard barely drops an apple before he's on the move. Instinctively, the 9-year-old Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever fetches the apple for owner David Moore. The tree is Major's private "tennis ball tree," says Moore of New Vienna, Ohio. "[Tollers are] fetching fools."



ISABELLE FRANCAIS



Tollers love the water, making duck retrieval a natural. But first they toll, or lure, the prey.



The NSDTR is the smallest Retriever and one of the AKC's newest members.

The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever's name reflects its roots and purpose. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, hunters in Nova Scotia, Canada, crossed the Tolling Red Decoy Dog with Spaniels, Setters, Retrievers, and farm Collies; they wanted to create a dog that could toll (meaning "lure") prey as well as retrieve it. The Canadian Kennel Club recognized the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever in 1945. The long-named breed is the American

Kennel Club's smallest Retriever and one of its newest members, joining the Miscellaneous Class in September 2001.

These dogs love their job, in part because their work includes pleasure. Tollers act as decoys, attracting ducks by playing fetch along the water's edge. Their bright color and animation arouse curiosity and draw the ducks near the hunter. When the hunter downs a duck, the water-loving Toller swims out to retrieve it.

Though a hunting breed, Tollers make good family pets; they are focused, affectionate, outgoing, devoted, and calm around children. "Tollers have that little spark that says, 'I'm with you because I want to be with you,'" Paul Milbury, a breeder in Ipswich, Mass., says of the dogs that have shared his home for 22 years.

NSDTRs live peacefully with other animals. Moore's animal kingdom includes Major, 4-year-old Toller Sashi, two Dalmatians, two cats, and four rabbits.

"Tollers are compact bundles of energy," Milbury says of the highly motivated dogs. Jane Young knows that all too well. Her 5-year-old Foxy and 1-year-old Woody spend their days playing, yet they still require nightly runs.


That kind of energy makes Tollers well suited to obedience and agility. Their high intelligence can make training a challenge; while they learn quickly, they bore just as fast. Variety keeps training interesting.

The ideal Toller family, says Young of Mansfield, Mass., is active and committed to daily exercise that easily includes a bouncy red dog — or two. "[It's] hard to have just one," she says. 🐾

*Ida Estep is a free-lance writer and lives in Harvard, Mass.*

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