

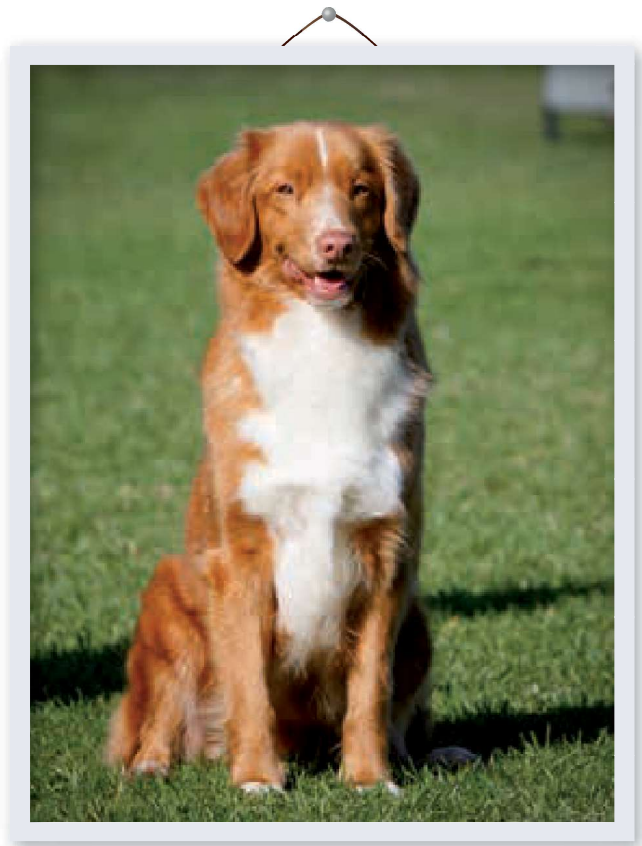


Driven Achievement

The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever

Dogs Queensland Exclusive 

Written by Emma Simon and
Lorraine Sanney



The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever, affectionately known as a Toller, is the smallest of the retrieving gundogs. They make up for this with a massive drive, intelligence, personality and willingness to work.

They originated in the 1800s in Nova Scotia, an island off the east coast of Canada however their exact origin is surrounded in myth. It is generally thought that a liver Flat Coat Retriever with possibly Irish Setter and Cocker Spaniel were combined with local farm Collies to produce the breed we see today.

The Collie influence can be seen with some of the “herding traits” noted in the breed today. Although other tolling dogs in Europe (such as the Kooikerhondje) bear a strong resemblance, they are not thought to be in the background of the Toller.

Local Canadian hunters wanted a small agile gundog who was a good swimmer. They also wanted a dog who was strong and capable of carrying a large goose with the ability to handle the marshy terrain in the area. They were also required to play happily on the shoreline or riverbank to attract or lure the birds to within range of the hunter.

The ‘Tolling’ ability is what sets them apart from other breeds.

This shows in their very animated retrieving style and their showy high tail carriage with an occasional flash (of white feet, chest, tail tip or lighter feathering) to attract the interest of the ducks.

There is a fair amount of misunderstanding regarding colour and markings in the Tollers. There is no requirement for white markings and NO they do not have to have a white tail tip! The standard reads “Various shades of red or orange with lighter featherings and underside of tail, and usually at least one of the following white markings, tip of tail, feet (not exceeding beyond the pasterns), chest, and blaze.

A dog of otherwise high quality is not to be penalised for lack of white. The pigment of the nose, lips and eye rims should match, and be flesh-coloured blending with coat, or be black.”

The purpose of the white markings, combined with the jaunty attitude and high tail carriage, is to encourage the curious birds to come in for a closer look but white markings are not essential in the art of tolling.

They can be disqualified for too much white, including white on shoulders, around ears, on back of neck, across back or flanks.



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The coat can be any shade of red or orange and this can include maskings/shadings and red sabbling but NOT black.

Due to the tollers compact size, agility, strong drive with a biddable nature, they are very versatile across a range of dog sports.

Tollers have excelled in retrieving, agility, obedience, flyball, tracking, lure coursing and dock diving. They have also participated in Search and Rescue and Assistance programmes.

Despite having this incredible drive, they are quite happy to laze around with their owners waiting for their time to run or play so make fantastic pets for an active family.



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