

THE CANINE JOURNAL

*Official Publication of the
Royal N.S.W. Canine Council Ltd.
October 1994*



The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever

by Peter Sandow

The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever is Canada's only true home bred dog. First recognised by the Canadian Kennel Club in 1945, the breed has been known since 1870. It is the smallest of the retrievers, males standing 48-51 cm and females 45-48 cm. Tollers are ideal apartment sized dogs.

Historical Comparisons

Although basic North American stock was used in the development of the two other breeds with Canadian names, the Labrador and the Newfoundland dogs were developed and first registered in England, where they were influenced by crossing with other breeds before they were registered. The Newfoundland dog, which is basically a very old breed, probably originated with the Bear dogs of the ancient Vikings. The Newfoundland was introduced to England in the 1700s where it was crossed with the English Mastiff and possibly the Great Pyrenes (from whence comes the white colouring of the Landseer type of Newfoundland) before being first recognised by the English Kennel Club.

The following is a brief history of the five other retriever breeds officially recognised in Canada. The Labrador and Chesapeake Bay retrievers began their development early in the 1800s. Both were influenced by the Newfoundland dog and the Chesapeake by a coon hound type dog. When the Labrador of the early 1800s was introduced to England, it was crossed with the English Flat Coated Retriever and possibly the Curly Coated Retriever. The Labrador was first registered by the English Kennel Club in 1909. The Golden Retriever began its development in 1858 with the Russian Tracking dog, or as is now believed, from the crossing of Flat Coated with the Tweed Spaniels. The oldest retrievers, the English Curly Coat and the Flat Coat were officially

recognised in 1854 and 1860. It is likely that these two breeds influenced the development of all other retrieving breeds.

Tollers are used in England on large expanses of lakes called decoys to lure ducks into the nets for tagging for research purposes.

As a breed the Toller is nearly as old as other popular retrievers. The Golden began its development only two years earlier and the Labrador just a few years before that. The Toller was not more popular in the past

because of the restrictive distribution practices of the original and most of the subsequent breeders, who did not usually allow females to leave their kennels. The main breeders were avid duck hunters who did not want competition in the lakes and on the marshes. The Toller was not at any stage of its development influenced by breedings from any other country.

The most commonly quoted account of the breed's origins is that in the Little River District of Yarmouth County, Nova Scotia, in 1860 a Mr James Allen obtained from the Captain of a schooner, a Liver Coloured Flat Coated Retriever to which he mates a short Labrador-like dog. Bitches from the litter were bred to a brown Cocker Spaniel and very shortly afterward a crossing with the Irish Setter introduced the fox red colour of

continued over page 31



Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers have also been known as The Little River Duck Dog or The Yarmouth Toller.

from previous page

today's Toller. It is possible that the Collie or Shetland Sheepdog was introduced to produce the heavily feathered tail and the herding instincts which the Toller possesses. Further, the possibility of breedings with the Brittany spaniel and the Golden Retriever cannot be ruled out.

The idea was a dog that resembled the red fox; small, playful, intelligent, with the retrieving ability inherent in the sporting group. When ducks see a fox playing on the shore of a lake or other body of water, they will approach him, much like a swallow approaches a crow, or a crow approaches an owl. Whether they do this to tease or drive off is unknown, but they will sometimes approach from great distances in the water and even from the air as long as the fox is visible. The fox seems to be aware of this advantage as the ducks will sometimes come close enough to be caught. Sometimes two foxes will work together, one playing on the shore, the other hiding in the grass. When the ducks approach, the fox hiding in the grass will leap out and catch one of the ducks and the two foxes share the meal. Walt Disney Productions have made a movie about the red fox which included the filming of this phenomenon.

The idea of using a dog to "toll" or decoy (from the Middle English "Toll" = entice)

According to 1991 edition of The Atlas of Dog Breeds of the World, by Bonnie Wilcox DVM and Chris Walkowicz, "The white tip of the tail is highly prized since it can be seen from a distance by the fowl, much like the white tip on Reynard's tail!"

or attract ducks was not new as tolling dogs of no particular breed had been used in Europe as far back as 1625 to lure waterfowl into nets. Interest in the idea of a tolling dog in Nova Scotia probably came from the Arcadians or Micmac Indians of the area who are believed to have had a fox-like dog which they used to catch or net ducks. When in action, the tolling dog makes no sound and unlike the fox does not try to catch the ducks nor go into the water; it is simply the playful antics and presence that attracts the ducks. The hunter will set up a blind and if the ducks are out of range will allow his Toller, which is at all times under his control, to play along the edge so as to attract the birds within range. The hunter does not shoot the ducks whilst on the water, but will stand or somehow cause them to rise thus making them vulnerable and lessening the chances of wounded birds. After the shoot the Toller goes to work in his second capacity as a retriever and an able and courageous one he is. A 40 lb Toller bitch is recorded to have retrieved seven Canadian geese on rough seas with her face full of quills!

Playfulness is the keynote to the makeup of a good Toller as he must play with sticks thrown by the hunter from the blind, running for long periods if necessary up and down the shore, flourishing his plumed tail all the while. The Toller is a natural retriever and teaching this can be achieved by standard methods, very little training is

normally required. Almost any eight or nine week old chosen at random from a litter will show an immediate desire to retrieve any small object thrown for it.

The Toller is an all round dog; an excellent retriever, an enthusiastic tireless hunter, and an intelligent, easily trained house pet.



ACUPUNCTURE FOR ANIMALS

Acupuncture and gold bead implants for

- any type of arthritis
- hip dysplasia
- back and neck problems
- epilepsy
- nervous show dogs

**Dr Bill Hood B.V.Sc,
Dip.Vet. Acupuncture
39 President Ave,
Kogarah 2217**

(02) 5884588

NOVA SCOTIA DUCK TOLLING RETRIEVER

(Canadian Kennel Club)

Country of Origin - Canada

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Toller is a medium-sized, powerful, compact, balanced, well-muscled dog; medium to heavy in bone. Lack of substance in the adult dog is undesirable. He has a high degree of agility, alertness and determination. Many have a slightly sad expression until they go to work, when their aspect changes to intense concentration and excitement.

CHARACTERISTICS

Developed in Nova Scotia in the early 19th century to toll (or lure) and retrieve waterfowl. The tolling dog runs, jumps and plays along the shoreline in full view of a flock of ducks, occasionally disappearing from sight and then quickly reappearing, aided by the hidden hunter, who throws small sticks or a ball for the dog. The dog's playful actions arouse the curiosity of the ducks swimming offshore, and they are lured within gunshot range. The Toller is subsequently sent out to retrieve the dead or wounded birds. A strong and able swimmer, he is a natural and tenacious retriever on land and from water, setting himself for springy action the moment the slightest indication is given that retrieving is required.

TEMPERAMENT

The Toller is highly intelligent, easy to train, and has great endurance. His strong retrieving desire and playfulness are qualities essential to his tolling ability. Any shyness in adults is highly undesirable.

HEAD AND SKULL

The head is clean cut and slightly wedge-shaped. The broad skull is only slightly rounded, the occiput not prominent and the cheeks flat. A good measurement for an average male would be 14 cms (5.5 ins) between the ears, tapering to 3.8 cms (1.5 ins) at the bridge of the nose. Length of head is approximately 23 cms (9 ins) from nose to occiput, but the head must be in

proportion to body size. The stop is moderate, an abrupt stop is undesirable. The muzzle tapers in a clean line from stop to nose, with the lower jaw strong but not prominent. Dish - or down-faced heads are undesirable. The underline of the muzzle runs almost in a straight line from the corner of the lip to the corner of the jawbone, with depth at the stop being greater than at the nose. Nose tapers from bridge to tip, with nostrils well open. Colour should blend with that of the coat, or be black. Lips fit fairly tightly, forming a gentle curve in profile, with no heaviness in flews. The pigment of the nose, lips and eye rims to be flesh-coloured, blending with coat, or black. Bright pink nose undesirable. Butterfly nose highly undesirable.

EYES

Set well apart, almond shaped, medium sized. Large, round eyes undesirable. Colour amber to brown, any other colour undesirable. Expression is friendly, alert and intelligent. Flesh around the eyes should be the same colour as the lips.

EARS

Triangular, of medium size, set high and well back on the skull, with the base held very slightly erect, well feathered at the back of the fold, hair short at the rounded tips.

MOUTH

A perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. Upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws. An overshot bite of more than 3 mm (0.125 ins), and undershot bite and a wry mouth are all highly undesirable. Jaws are strong enough to carry a sizeable bird, and softness in mouth is essential. Full dentition is required.

NECK

Strongly muscled and well set on, of medium length, with no indication of throatiness.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders should be muscular, with the blade well laid back and well laid on, giving good withers sloping into the short back. The blade and upper arm are roughly equal in length. Elbows should be close to the body, turning neither in nor out, working cleanly and evenly. The forelegs should appear as parallel columns, straight and strong in bone. The pasterns are strong and slightly sloping. A dog that is down in pastern is undesirable. Dewclaws may be removed.

BODY

Deep-chested with good spring of rib, brisket reaching to the elbow. The back is short and straight, the topline level, the loins strong and muscular. Roached or sway backs and slack loins are undesirable. The ribs are well sprung, neither barrel-shaped nor flat. Tuck-up is moderate.

HINDQUARTERS

Muscular, broad and square in appearance. Rear and front angulation should be in balance. Thighs are very muscular, upper and lower sections being approximately equal in length. Stifles are well bent and hocks well let down, turning neither in nor out. Dewclaws must not be present.

FEET

The strongly-webbed feet are of medium size, tight and round, with well-arched toes and thick pads. Splayed or paper feet are undesirable. Lack of webbing is highly undesirable. Feet should turn neither in nor out.

TAIL


Following the natural very slight slope of the croup, broad at the base, luxuriant and heavily feathered, with the last vertebra reaching at least to the hock. The tail may be carried below the level of the back except when the dog is alert, when it curves high over, though never touching the body. A tail that is too short, kinked or curled over touching the back is undesirable. The tail carried below the level of the back when gaiting is undesirable.

GAIT/MOVEMENT

The Toller combines an impression of power with a springy, jaunty gait, showing good reach in front and a strong driving rear. Feet should turn neither in nor out and the legs travel in a straight line. As speed increases, the dog should single-track, with the topline remaining level. At work, the dog has a speedy, rushing action, with the head carried out almost level with the back and heavily feathered tail in constant motion.

COAT

The Toller was bred to retrieve from icy waters and must have a water-repellent double coat of medium length and softness with a softer, dense undercoat. Hair on the muzzle is short and flat. The coat may have a slight wave on the back, but is otherwise straight. Some winter coats may form a long loose curl at the throat. Featherings are soft at the throat, behind the ears and

continued over page 

BREED STANDARD CONTD ...

at the back of the thighs, and forelegs are moderately feathered. An open coat is undesirable.

COLOUR

Various shades of red or orange with lighter feathering and underside of tail. Any other colour is highly undesirable. Silvery coat, grey in coat or black areas in coat are all highly undesirable. At least one of the following white markings is usual - tip of tail, feet (not extending beyond the pasterns), chest, and blaze. A dog of otherwise high quality is not be penalised for lack of white, but white on shoulders, around ears, on back of neck, across back or flanks is highly undesirable.

SIZE -

Ideal Height:

- ◆ Dogs over 18 months
48-51 cms (19-20 ins)
- ◆ Bitches over 18 months
45-48 cms (18-19 ins)

3 cms (1 in) over or under the ideal height is allowed. More than 3 cm (1in) over or under these heights is undesirable.

Weight should be in proportion to the height and bone of the dog.

Weight:

- ◆ Adult Dogs
20-23 kg (45-51 lbs)
- ◆ Adult Bitches
17-20 kg (37-43 lbs)

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.

NOTE

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



CONSIDER YOURSELVES

"Tolled"

My experiences with Duck Tollers in Australia

by Denise Sandow

I've been "in dogs" since 1964, essentially a Hound person but married into the Gundog group. My husband Peter has been a Curly Coated Retriever man for 56 years and my friend and partner, former Canadian Marilyn Kellie, shares his passion for the tallest of the Retrievers, the Curly Coat. So what hope did I have when the pair of them, over a convivial glass following a "Curly weekend", got to talking about Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers?

"Why don't you get yourself a truly Canadian dog?" challenged Peter. "Dammit, I will!" replied Marilyn, and so began our involvement with the "Little Duck Dogs", the smallest of the Retrievers. (In stature only - truly, a big dog.)

As a shooter of many years Peter had a passing interest for some time, but the study of the breed's origins, contacting kennels, joining the Breed Clubs of Canada and the USA were all part of the three year preparation for Marilyn's importation of



Ch Missionviews Shilo of Kelmark (Imp Can)

At the help of her parents near Vancouver and to have a more personal contact with breeders, all of whom jealously guarded the breed, especially the bitches. The Toller was confined to the regions around Nova Scotia because the hunters would only sell dogs to other shooters. Show people are still taboo to many Gundog enthusiasts.

The late Dr Harry Spira was of great assistance in our earliest enquiries, relating his experiences overseas. Also Mrs Helen Furber has been an invaluable help, providing photographs and show catalogues whenever she encounters Tollers in Europe and Scandinavia (where the breed is strong).

After a budget blowout of 250 percent Marilyn was able to view her own first Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever in Quarantine at Eastern Creek (Sydney) in April 1991. Missionviews Shilo of Kelmark (Imp Can) had arrived from five months in Hawaiian quarantine where his carer had fallen in love with him and wanted a puppy. He was a very fluffy, quite square shaped (later improved), "dippy" red & white puppy. All the breed characteristics were there: the serious expression, the strutting walk, the keenness to play or work - a very determined but soft natured, friendly dog.

Bridie - Ardunacres Jetlag to Kelmark (Imp Can) - came one month later due to a hold up in Vet results on her eye check-up. What a difference! Definitely a different coat (we later realised it was much more correct), a deep auburn red; like a fox in shape (very desirable); the head shorter and stronger. Altogether a softer nature but again ready to do anything, provided the request was a gentle one. No strong arm tactics with this breed.

By this time the breed was recognised in Australia due to representations by Dr Spira and Herb Fields with the ANKC Breed Standards committee, so the Tollers were launched into the show world immediately.

Shilo managed to lessen Marilyn's endearment to him by escaping from the "Curly-proof" yard in Newcastle during a petrol strike. After using up precious petrol cruising around insanely searching for him, she stopped to refill at the nearby petrol station and found Shilo out the back with the local Canine Boys!

He appeared not to have suffered any injury so she proceeded to his first show on the way to Brisbane Royal, a small country show to break the ice. The judge No

Challenged! Marilyn was suicidal and I was mildly surprised at the boldness of the judge who had made such a strong statement on a breed he had never seen before. (It must be said that Shilo was 14 months old and still not mature).

At the Royal, the Canadian judge declared him "Sound dog, good representative of the breed, a little soft in topline". We agreed and immediately set about building up Shilo's exercise as he had been confined to close quarters for nine months and needed work. It is interesting to note that the topline which worries a lot of doggy people is quite typical of the breed. In photos of some top BIS All Breeds winning Tollers, the topline is level in movement with the head extended (foxlike) but the short back is level in repose with a rise over the rump not unlike the Chesapeake Bay Retriever.

We are still learning but it seems to us that this breed doesn't "finish" until four years of age, as in many of the Gundogs, with growth spurts in between. Some stages have the appearance of over length. We check the ribbing up and if this is good, wait a bit. The mouths are in and out of scissor and undershot as baby puppies. Up until 12 months I can be content to wait if the puppy displays a soft mouth, retrieving ability and has adequate breadth of jaw, as this usually comes right with time.

Coats are baby soft as puppies, but develop an oily dense and flat top coat in the Junior stage, not too fluffy and stand off which has been brought about by breeding flashy stand off "Show Coats" entirely unsuitable for the working Toller's purpose. Feathering and breaches bleach out with age prior to seasonal shedding which is quite dramatic in both sexes.

The name has proved a difficulty for many ring stewards. So we assure them that Tollers, Duck Tollers or Nova Scotians is quite acceptable. On a few rare occasions the mocking call for the "short legged Golden Retrievers" is ignored and the silent opinion of the ignorance of the ring steward remembered. This breed is in no way like the Golden, their purpose is entirely different. Bob Curtis (who has had some experience with judging the breed in Canada) says in his lecture "The

Art of Judging" that "Form follows Function". Tollers are a decoy dog and delight in their task. Bred small to hide in the hunter's blind, they instinctively love to find a "cubby house" or to squat with children in doll houses and the like. Their Tolling mimics the antics of the hunting pattern of the red fox - playing along the shoreline to decoy the curious water fowl. Foxlike in outline, playful in nature, they are bred for a different purpose than the Golden and are not at all like them.

The breeding of the first Australian Tollers was not without its share of drama. Bridie loved Shilo - Shilo loved Bridie. Bridie was bossy - Shilo was determined to woo her BY HIMSELF (no holding his bitch thank you). We gave up and tried again next season. Same performance. This little redheaded bitch had it all her own way - play without pay! However we finally managed and Bridie produced four large puppies from 8 ounces to 13 ounces, all of whom were carefully placed from a long list of enquirers. Peter, Marilyn and I had determined that we would "guard" the breed, selling only to those folk we believed to have an affinity.

Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers are a soft natured breed. I have not witnessed any sign of aggression nor have I read of any in the breed literature available. They are great companions, eager to work, but not incessantly "pushy". Obedience, Agility and Field Trial work is their forte. If they have a fault it is that they will work for anyone, so happy to be with people are they.

We are more than pleased with our rare and charming redheads.



Ch Ardunacres Jetlag to Kelmark (Imp Can)

A Tale Of Two Tollers ...

By Sara Coombes

We first met a Toller at Nambucca Showground in April 1993. I had been looking for a child sized dog for quite some months but nothing seemed quite right. Either they were too small or too much coat care or not quite the right shape. We had been through most of the breeds and ruled them out one way or another but were still looking and asking questions of all the breeders of breeds new to us.

Flicking through the catalogue I noticed this long named retriever so I thought I'd see what one looked like. When I found out where they were I asked to be introduced to them. Out came this little red dog with a doleful expression and those deep liquid eyes that say "take me home and I'll love you". However as soon as his owner started talking to him his whole expression lit up and his tail went up over his back waving like a flag.

He was such a happy dog I was sold. He was just the right size, big enough for me and my German Shepherds and small enough to fit under the children's bed to play cubbies with them! Coat care OK, a bit of washing and brushing and mostly drip dry. Robust enough to play tag with the GSDs and yet light enough not to pull the children over if they took him for a walk. The big plus for me was their retrieving skills as I like my dogs to be easy to teach even if it is only party tricks. I was keen to have a dog with a reputation for obedience skills even if the children never wanted to end up competing in that field.

Having decided that this was the dog for me, I was then to discover that there were only two in Australia at that time. So we sat down to waiting and praying that not only would "Bridie" (Ch Ardunacres Jetlag to Kelmark (Imp Can)) and "Shilo" (Ch Missionviews Shilo of Kelmark (Imp Can)) have pups soon but that Denise Sandow and Marilyn Kellie would entrust us with one of their precious parcels. Bridie finally became a mum in August of that year and in November our Halifax (Kelmark Fox O Fundy) came to live with us.

He was a clown right from the start with a tendency to walk along the back of the lounge and drop onto sleeping Shepherds, then run off! My husband likened him to the cat with an ability to pounce and retreat not to mention his balancing feats. He started out the way he meant to go on with demanding equal shares of lap sitting time and playing dress-ups with the kids. He not only initiated games with the children but then kept on going back for more when most dogs would have chucked in the towel long ago.

Needless to say we were well and truly "tollered" by this breed so decided to look around to find a female pup for the second

child. Having parents in England, it seemed a good idea to get them started on the hunt for a girl and armed with an address for Janet Morris, they started to enquire about pups for us. Janet had two bitches due to whelp around Christmas and the New Year so we booked a pup and sat back to wait for news of the birth, realising it might be a few years before the right pup came along.

I had vaguely mentioned we would like a bitch in whelp if possible, but had no real thought of this idea coming to fruition - a bit like asking for Hen's Teeth. During this time Janet was talking to Miss Geraldine

continued over page 43



Lyonhouse Agnes (Imp UK) in Fancy Dress at the Royal Easter Show. Photo by Barbara Killworth.

ack, the owner of the dogs, and the first person to import the Tollers into the UK. He had been encouraged in the early stages of breeding by Avery Nickerson who sent a bitch in whelp from Canada to the UK to whelp and thus established her kennel very quickly.

He decided to give the Aussies a head start and offered us "Fluffy" (Lyonhouse Agnes) to arrive on Christmas Eve and due to whelp on January 11th, 1994. We were both stunned and delighted but held our breath until she got here in one piece.

It all seemed too good to be true. With great precision and only one day late, Fluffy produced seven healthy pups with very little trouble and Australia's population of Tollers doubled overnight.

We picked up our "bulk pack" from quarantine on February 22nd, bringing them home to get to know them and work out how Tollers grow. On February 25th we had a disaster with our Shepherd bitch who was caesared and then went into shock, leaving us with six pups to raise while we hoped she would at least survive.

Fortunately Fluffy came to the rescue and took over the second lot like an old hand. She was however quite pleased to hand them back 24 hours later when mum was recovered enough to get on with the job!

Since her arrival, Fluffy has settled in like one of the family, outswimming the GSDs and demanding her fair share of the sticks and balls. She lures the ducks up on regular occasions and is quite unimpressed with our inability to shoot them for her. She made her debut at the Sydney Royal for the Fancy Dress Parade where she dressed as the Hunter and led by her four-year-old Duck (my daughter) did a controlled circuit of the arena. Halifax, our first Toller, had a Canadian Goose in tow (my older daughter) and again showed off to perfection.

We are constantly surprised by our little redheads. They have an endless capacity to charm and have converted some of the most ardent dog haters into loving them.



Kirchoff Gallopin Gourmet (iid) giving new meaning to the word "cute".

Maybe it's their sense of humour or their sad and doleful eyes, but whatever it is they certainly "tolled" us.



HARBOURLIGHTS SCOTIA DUKE OF LYONHOUSE

No apology is made for reproducing this picture, since Duke, now aged eight years, has for the second time won the top honours at the United Retriever Club Championship Show, from the biggest entry to date in the United Kingdom.

LYONHOUSE
NOVA SCOTIA DUCK TOLLING RETRIEVERS
PROUDLY OWNED BY GERALDINE FLACK

Founded on the World famous HARBOURLIGHTS Kennels of the late Avery Nickeson, Yarmouth County, Nova Scotia. LYONHOUSE is the only importer of HARBOURLIGHTS dogs.

By the wins and achievements of its stock or stock sired by dogs carrying the LYONHOUSE affix, LYONHOUSE remain in the front rank of the breed, and the premier kennel in this country, a fact proved by results.

Puppies are often for sale, and there is a first-class team of stud dogs, all of which carry a current Eye and Hip Certificate.

Available now is one dog and one bitch pup out of LYONHOUSE. Elisabeth Stuart by Winfren Vulpecula Rory of LYONHOUSE. Jem Hamish's Girl of LYONHOUSE is also in whelp to Duke, a repeat breeding which produced so many good Tollas.

Enquiries welcome; Janet Morris, Black Beech, Goytre, Pontypool, Gwent, NP4 0AA. England

Telephone: 0873 880271 Fax: 0873 856436

And in Australia: Sara & Tim Coombes

PO Box 450, Wauchope 2446

Ph/Fax (065) 85 6345 Mobile: (015) 29 8545

Proud owners of LYONHOUSE Agnes (Imp UK).