

## CHESAPEAKE BAY RETRIEVER

*A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.*

Most recent changes to this Standard has an effective date of 01/01/2025

### ORIGIN

United States of America.

### UTILISATION

Retriever equally proficient on land and in the water.

### BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

*[ed. For interest, from the AKC Website: The Chesapeake Bay Retriever]:*

Chesapeake Bay is long and shallow, with a low capacity for storing heat; thus the water is icy cold. The bay is located along the 'Atlantic Flyway', a flight path taken by ducks and geese to their winter homes. Every year the bay hosts a third of all migratory waterfowl wintering on the East Coast. Old-time sportsmen that lined both shores of the Chesapeake Bay during the 19th century, hoping to exploit this duck hunter's paradise, built a Retriever well-suited to the bay's frigid waters. They set the basic breed type of the Chesapeake Bay Retriever based on Newfoundlands, Irish Water Spaniels, and Hounds of undetermined origin. The thick, oily, double coat of the 'Chessie' is both insulating and waterproof; it repels moisture much the way a duck's feathers do. His broad chest acts a plow against the ice floes, and powerful hindquarters and large webbed feet enable him to swim tirelessly against the slashing winds that whip across the bay.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

### GENERAL APPEARANCE

Equally proficient on land and in the water, the Chesapeake Bay Retriever was developed along the Chesapeake Bay to hunt waterfowl under the most adverse weather and water conditions, often having to break ice during the course of many strenuous multiple retrieves. Frequently the Chesapeake must face wind, tide and long cold swims in its work. The breed's characteristics are specifically suited to enable the Chesapeake to function with ease, efficiency and endurance. In head, the Chesapeake's skull is broad and round with a medium stop. The jaws should be of sufficient length and strength to carry large game birds with an easy, tender hold. The double coat consists of a short, harsh, wavy outer coat and a dense, fine, wooly undercoat containing an abundance of natural oil and is ideally suited for the icy rugged conditions of weather the Chesapeake often works in. In body, the Chesapeake is a strong, well-balanced, powerfully built animal of moderate size and medium length in body and leg, deep and wide in chest, the shoulders built with full liberty of movement, and with no tendency to weakness in any feature, particularly the rear. The power though, should not be at the expense of agility or stamina. Size and substance should not be excessive as this is a working retriever of an active nature. Distinctive features include eyes that are very clear of yellowish or amber hue, hindquarters as high or a trifle higher than the shoulders, and a double coat which tends to wave on shoulders, neck, back and loins only.

### IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- Height from the top of the shoulder blades to the ground should be slightly less than the body length from the breastbone to the point of buttocks.
- Depth of body should extend at least to the elbow. Shoulder to elbow and elbow to ground should be equal.

### BEHAVIOUR & TEMPERAMENT

The Chesapeake is valued for its bright and happy disposition, intelligence, quiet good sense, and affectionate protective nature. Courage, willingness to work, alertness, nose, intelligence, love of water, general quality and, most of all, disposition should be given primary consideration in the selection and breeding of the Chesapeake Bay Retriever. Extreme shyness or extreme aggressive tendencies are not desirable in the breed either as a gun dog or companion.

## HEAD

### Cranial Region:

**Skull:** Broad and round.

**Stop:** Medium stop.

### Facial Region:

**Nose:** Medium shorts.

**Muzzle:** Approximately the same length as the skull, tapering pointed but not sharp.

**Lips:** Thin, not pendulous.

**Jaws/Teeth:** Scissors bite is preferred, but a level bite is acceptable

### Eyes:

Are to be medium large, very clear of yellowish or amber color and wide apart. Intelligent expression.

### Ears:

Are to be small, set well up on the head, hanging loosely, and of medium leather.

## NECK

Should be of medium length with a strong muscular appearance, tapering to the shoulders.

## BODY

Of medium length, neither cobby nor roached, but rather approaching hollowness from underneath as the flanks should be well tucked up.

**Topline:** Should show the hindquarters to be as high as or a trifle higher than the shoulders.

**Back:** Short, well coupled and powerful.

**Chest:** Strong, deep and wide. Rib cage barrel, round and deep.

## TAIL

Of medium length; medium heavy at the base. The tail should be straight or slightly curved and should not curl over back or side kink.

## LIMBS

### Forequarters:

**General appearance:** There should be no tendency to weakness in the forequarters. They are medium in length and straight, showing good bone and muscle. The front legs should appear straight when viewed from front or rear.

**Shoulder:** Should be sloping with full liberty of action, plenty of power and without any restrictions of movement.

**Pastern:** Slightly bent and of medium length. Dewclaws may be removed.

### Hindquarters:

**General appearance:** Good hindquarters are essential. They should show fully as much power as the forequarters. There should be no tendency to weakness in the hindquarters. Hindquarters should be especially powerful to supply the driving power for swimming. Legs should be medium length and straight, showing good bone and muscle. The hind legs should look straight when viewed from the front or rear. Dewclaws, if any, must be removed from the hind legs.

**Stifle:** Well angulated.

**Hock:** The distance from hock to ground should be of medium length.

## FEET

Well webbed harefeet, of good size with toes well-rounded and close.

## GAIT / MOVEMENT

The gait should be smooth, free and effortless, giving the impression of great power and strength. When viewed from the side, there should be good reach with no restrictions of movement in the front and plenty of drive in the rear, with good flexion of the stifle and hock joints. Coming at you, there should be no sign of elbows being out. When the Chesapeake is moving away from you, there should be no sign of cow-hockness from the rear. As speed increases, the feet tend to converge toward a center line of gravity.

## COAT

### Hair:

Coat should be thick and short, nowhere over 1 1/2 inches (4 cm) long, with a dense, fine, woolly undercoat. Hair on the face and legs should be very short and straight with a tendency to wave on the shoulders, neck, back and loins only. Moderate feathering on rear of hindquarters and tail is permissible.

The texture of the Chesapeake's coat is very important, as the Chesapeake is used for hunting under all sorts of adverse weather conditions, often working in ice and snow. The oil in the harsh outer coat and woolly undercoat is of extreme value in preventing the cold water from reaching the Chesapeake's skin and aids in quick

drying. A Chesapeake's coat should resist the water in the same way that a duck's feathers do. When the Chesapeake leaves the water and shakes, the coat should not hold water at all, being merely moist.

#### **Colour:**

The colour of the Chesapeake Bay Retriever must be as nearly that of its working surroundings as possible. Any colour of brown, sedge or deadgrass is acceptable, self-coloured Chesapeakes being preferred. One colour is not to be preferred over another. A white spot on the breast, belly, toes, or back of the feet (immediately above the large pad) is permissible, but the smaller the spot the better, solid coloured preferred. The colour of the coat and its texture must be given every consideration when judging on the bench or in the ring. Honorable scars are not to be penalized.

### **SIZE AND WEIGHT**

#### **Height at withers:**

**Males** should measure 23 to 26 inches; (58 - 66cm).

**Females** should measure 21 to 24 inches; (53 - 61cm).

Oversized or undersized animals are to be severely penalized.

#### **Weight:**

**Males** should weigh 65 to 80 pounds (29,5-36,5kg).

**Females** should weigh 55 to 70 pounds (25-32kg).

***N.B.** Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.*

### **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, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

#### **Disqualifying faults:**

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Specimens lacking in breed characteristics.
- Teeth overshot or undershot.
- Declaws on the hind legs.
- Coat curly or with a tendency to curl all over the body.
- Feathering on the tail or legs over 1 3/4 inches (4,5 cm) long.
- Black coloured.
- White on any part of the body except breast, belly, toes, or back of feet.

The question of the coat and general type of balance takes precedence over any scoring table which could be drawn up. The Chesapeake should be well proportioned, an animal with a good coat and well balanced in other points being preferable to one excelling in some but weak in others.

### **SCALE OF POINTS**

• Head, including lips, ears and eyes	16
• Neck	4
• Shoulders and body	12
• Hindquarters and stifles	12
• Elbows, legs and feet	12
• Colour	4
• Stern and tail	10
• Coat and texture	18
• General conformation	12
	100

### **APPROXIMATE MEASUREMENTS**

#### **INCHES**

- Length head, nose to occiput 9 ½ to 10

• Girth at ears	20 to 21
• Muzzle below eyes	10 to 10 ½
• Length of ears	4 ½ to 5
• Width between eyes	2 ½ to 2 ¾
• Girth neck close to shoulder	20 to 22
• Girth at flank	24 to 25
• Length from occiput to tail base	34 to 35
• Girth upper thigh	19 to 20
• From root to root of ear, over skull	5 to 6
• Occiput to top shoulder blades	9 to 9 ½
• From elbow to elbow over the shoulders	25 to 26

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**FCI Standard No. 263: CHESAPEAKE BAY RETRIEVER**

**FCI Classification: Group 8 – Retrievers, Flushing Dogs, Water Dogs**

Section 1 - Retrievers  
With working trial.

