

ESTRELA MOUNTAIN DOG

A Breed Standard is the guideline that describes the ideal characteristics, temperament, and appearance of a breed, and ensures that the breed is fit for function, with soundness essential. Breeders and Judges should, at all times, be mindful of features that could be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare, or soundness of this breed.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 31/03/2016

ORIGIN

Portugal.

UTILISATION

A livestock guarding dog, watchdog and companion dog; also used for draught work.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Since remote times, this dog has developed and settled in the Estrela Mountains area, its true origin being lost in time. Nevertheless, it can be considered one of the most ancient breeds in the Iberian Peninsula. It can be found from the foot of the mountains to the summit (approximately 2,000m), mainly in the summer, after the snow has melted, when the green pastures are much sought-after by the herds, because the excessive heat has dried the grass on the lowlands. The progressive recognition of the dog's aptitudes has led to its diffusion throughout the world since the second half of the 20th century.



GENERAL APPEARANCE

Large, Mastiff-type molossoid dog. There are two varieties of coat: long and short. Rustic, substantial, with brisk gait and an impressive attitude. The breed has a lively, calm, and expressive look; it is well-proportioned; well-made with harmonious appearance, which is traditionally how the breed has been recognised since a long time.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

Moderately long (sub-longilinear), tending to mediolinar [*ed. medium length*]. The depth of the chest is less than half the height at withers. The muzzle and skull should be approximately the same length; if not, the skull should be slightly longer.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Inseparable companion of the shepherd and faithful flock guardian, bravely protecting it against predators and thieves. Wonderful farm and house guard, distrustful towards strangers and typically docile to its master.

HEAD

Strong, voluminous, and long and slightly convex, seen in profile. Well-inserted and in good proportion to the body, with the skull in proportion to the foreface; all parts in perfect harmony. Smooth skin on the skull and cheeks.

Cranial Region:

Skull: Well-developed, rounded, with slightly divergent longitudinal superior cranium-facial axes [*ed. slightly divergent in the head planes*], convex profile, slightly developed superciliary arches, with slightly apparent frontal furrow, occipital protuberance not prominent.

Stop: Only slightly marked and at approximately equal distance to the tip of the nose and the occipital protuberance.

Facial Region:

Nose: Straight and in line with nose bridge; well-opened nostrils; large and black.

Muzzle: Long, tapering to the tip, without being pointed; tends to be straight but very slightly convex at the tip.

Lips: Well-developed, but not thick; well-overlapping, but not pendulous; mucous membrane of mouth, palate and edges of lips with intense black pigmentation.

Jaws and teeth: Clean-cut mouth with well-developed jaws; full dentition with strong, white, well-implanted, and close-fitting teeth, preferably with scissor bite; pincer bite acceptable.

Eyes:

Medium-sized, tending to small, oval-shaped, set level, equal in size, and well open, with a keen and calm expression; preferably dark amber in colour. Close-fitting lids with black rims. Eyebrows slightly apparent.

Ears:

Set on at medium height; hanging, carried falling backwards and laterally against the side of the head, with inner edge visible (so called rose-ear); thin, triangular, rounded at the tip; small in comparison to the body.

NECK

Short, straight, and thick; well-set and well-connected into the shoulders; with a slight dewlap, not exaggerated.

BODY

Topline: Straight. Almost level.

Back: Preferably short, well-muscled.

Loin: Short; broad; well-muscled; well-connected to the croup.

Croup: Slightly sloping; short, broad, and muscled. Height at croup should be equal or slightly superior to the height at the withers.

Chest: Broad; deep; well-sprung, without being cylindrical; well let down to the elbow or slightly below it.

Underline and belly: The underline should rise gradually but smoothly from sternum to the groin; belly not too wide, in proportion to the animal's substance and harmoniously connected to the body.

TAIL

Set on at medium height; long; thick; carried below the horizontal, scimitar-shaped, with a hook at the end. At rest, it hangs naturally between the thighs, reaching at least the hock; when excited and in motion, the tail rises above the horizontal, curving upward and forward, sideways, and downward, without being carried over the croup. It should be well furnished with hair and feathered in the long-haired variety.

LIMBS

Forequarters:

General appearance: Upright with strong bone and thick joints, moderately open angulation, with easy movement.

Forearm: Straight, parallel, long, with strong bone, and almost cylindrical in shape.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: Upright, strong bone, with thick joints, moderately open angles, with easy movement.

Hock joint: Slightly let down; moderately open, neither turned in nor out.

Metatarsus (rear pastern): Vertical, almost cylindrical. Possible presence of single or double dewclaws.

FEET

Proportioned, neither too round nor too long, between cat- and hare feet (not splayed); thick, tight toes with abundant hair between toes and pads; dark nails, preferably black, well-developed; pads thick and hard.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Sound and easy movement.

COAT

Hair strong, very abundant, slightly coarse, without excessive harshness, the texture is similar to goat hair. The undercoat is composed of fine hair, short, abundant, and entangled, normally lighter in colour than the outer coat.

- **Long-haired variety:** Straight or slightly wavy topcoat, uneven in some areas. It is shorter and denser on the limbs, below the elbows and hocks, as well as on the head; on the ears, it becomes gradually shorter from the base to the tip, becoming thinner and softer. It is longer on the tail, which is bushy, thick and feathered, around the neck and throat and on the buttocks, which are abundantly feathered, as well as the back side of the forearms.
- **Short-haired variety:** Short hair, evenly distributed over the body, slightly shorter on the head and limbs, without feathering.

COLOUR

The following colours are accepted and considered typical:

- **Solid:** yellow, fawn and grey in all ranges of colour intensity;
- **Wolf Grey:** fawn, yellow and grey tones, commonly in lighter and darker shades.
- **Brindle:** Fawn, yellow or grey base colour with blackish brindling. In the cranium-facial area, a dark-coloured mask is typical.

* White markings are admitted only at the extremities of the feet and a small extension on the lower neck and chest.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 65cm – 73cm (approx. 25½" – 29").

Females: 62cm – 69cm (approx. 24½" – 27").

Within 2cm tolerance at the upper limit.

Weight:

Males: 45kg – 60kg

Females: 35kg – 45kg

***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.

- Appearance: General bad appearance, thinness, or obesity.
- Height: Outside the limits set by the standard, but within 2cm tolerance at the upper limit.
- Head: Narrow, long, and pointed.
- Eyes: Light-coloured.
- Ears: Incorrectly set, too long, thick, or rounded tips. Hanging completely flat.
- Tail: Carried over the back. Absence of hook.
- Colour: Absence of dark mask.

Severe faults:

- Behaviour: Animals showing nervous unbalance with signs of shyness.
- Nose: Pale-coloured nostrils, partly unpigmented nose.
- Ears: Cropped.
- Tail: Docked or rudimentary.
- Coat: Hair somewhat different from the described type.
- Height: Males: under 65cm or over 75cm. Females: under 62cm or over 71cm

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Type: Atypical.
- Head: Very narrow, very long, and very pointed, completely lacking molossoid type.
- Jaws: Undershot or overshot.
- Eyes: Wall eyes or difference in size.
- Tail: Anurous [*ed: tailless*].
- Coat: Hair completely atypical.
- Colour: Any colour not mentioned in the standard. Albinism.

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FCI Standard No 173: CÃO DA SERRA DA ESTRELA (ESTRELA MOUNTAIN DOG)

FCI Classification: Group 2: Pinscher and Schnauzer, Molossoid type dogs, and Swiss Mountain and Cattle dogs

Section 2.2. Molossian breeds; Mountain type
Without Working Trial