

Karelian Bear Dog

Origin and Purpose:

The Karelian Bear Dog is a native of the area once known as Karelia in Northern Europe but which, since 1946, has been known as the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic, where for centuries he hunted moose, roebuck and hare, and fought the wolf. Over the last decades, the principal breeders of Karelians, the Russians, have tried to strengthen the breed to give it the power and aggressiveness needed to fight bears. Thus the Karjalankarhukoira (this being its original Finnish name) has become a Russian bear dog through crossing with the Utchak Sheepdog, an intrepid animal who has no fear of fighting wild beasts. The Karelian Bear Dog not only warns the hunter of the presence of bear, but does not hesitate to attack him and put him to flight.

General Appearance:

The Karelian Bear Dog is medium sized, of robust build, strong, slightly longer than high, has a thick coat, cocked ears, is of an inbound character, brave and persevering; its senses, particularly scent, are sharp, wherefore it is suitable for big-game hunting.

Size

Height at withers - Dogs, 21-1/4 - 23-1/2 inches (54-60 cm); Bitches, 19-1/4 - 21-1/4 inches (49-54 cm).

Coat and Colour

Outer coat straight and stiff, undercoat soft and dense. Outer coat on the neck, back and rear parts of the thighs longer than elsewhere. Colour black, preferably slightly brownish or dull, mostly with distinct white markings or spots on the head, neck, chest, abdomen, and legs. So far allowed but not desirable are: dewclaws, white colour with black markings, wolf-grey colour or spots.

Head

Shaped as a blunt wedge, fairly broad at the forehead and cheeks. **Forehead** slightly arched, stop gently sloping, protuberances above the eyes only slightly developed. The **muzzle** is high and its bridge preferably straight only slightly tapering towards the nose. **Nose** black and well developed. Lips thin and tight fitting. **Eyes** rather small, brown. Look alert, often fiery. **Ears** cocked, pointing slightly outward, medium sized and fairly blunt at the points.

Neck

Muscular, medium sized, curving, covered with thick coat.

Forequarters

Sturdy, shoulders relatively sloping and muscular. Elbows pointing straight backward. Forearm straight, pastern only slightly bent. Paws thick, high and roundish.

Body

Sturdy; back with well-developed muscles nicely sloping without bulges or hollows. Chest spacious, extending approximately to the level of the elbow. Abdomen slightly drawn up.

Hindquarters

The knee pointing straight forward, hock straight backward. Thighs look very broad due to the profuse coat, particularly in their upper parts. Front line of leg curving without sudden bends. Hock comparatively straight. Hind paws slightly longer and lower than forepaws.

Tail

Of medium length, usually arched, a full arch is most desirable.

Faults

Weak bones, snipey muzzle, curly or wavy coat, bat-like ears, domed forehead, light or walleyes, loose skin under the neck, too deep chest, barrel-like chest, straight shoulders and straight hocks, flat paws, straight or whiplike tail, unusual colours and savage disposition towards humans.