

Weimaraner

Breed Organization

Weimaraner Club of America
Corresponding Secretary: Ellen Dodge
P.O. Box 489
Wakefield, RI 02880
Website: www.weimclubamerica.org

Native Country

Germany

Other Names

Grey Ghost, Weimaraner Voerstehhund

Breed Appearance

The Weimaraner is a silver-grey breed of dog developed originally in early 19th century for hunting. Early Weimaraners were used by royalty for hunting large game, such as boar, bears, and deer. As the popularity of large game hunting began to decline, Weimaraners were used for hunting smaller animals, like fowl, rabbits, and foxes. Rather than having a specific purpose such as pointing or flushing, the Weimaraner is an all purpose gun dog. The Weimaraner is loyal and loving to his family, an incredible hunter, and a fearless guardian of his family and territory. The name comes from the Grand Duke of Weimar, Karl August, whose court enjoyed hunting.

The Weimaraner is elegant, noble, and athletic in appearance. All parts of the dog should be in balance with each other, creating a form that is pleasing to the eye. It must be capable of working in the field, regardless of whether it is from show stock or hunting stock, and faults that will interfere with working ability are heavily penalized.

The tails, which may be amber or gray, are kept short. In some cases, tails are docked and dewclaws are removed, the tail usually docked at birth to a third of its natural length.

Breed Description

Head: Chiseled, in proportion to body size. Very slight stop. Straight nosebridge, often slightly curved. Long, powerful muzzle. Large, flesh-colored nose, darkly pigmented. Powerful jaws. Well-muscled cheeks.

Ears: Set on high, fairly long, slightly rounded at the tip. Turned slightly forward and folded when the dog is alert.

Eyes: Round, very slightly slanted. Light to dark amber. Puppies have light blue eyes.

Body: Slightly elongated. Nobly carried, muscular, well-knit neck. Well pronounced withers. Powerful, well let-down, long chest. Well-curved ribs. Firm, muscular, somewhat long back. Long, moderately sloping croup.

Tail: Set on fairly low, powerful, covered with abundant hair. Hanging down at rest. Carried level to the ground in action. Docked by between one-half and two-thirds its length.

Hair: - Shorthaired variety: short, dense, very thick, lying flat. No or very little undercoat. - Longhaired variety (rare): supple, with or without undercoat. Smooth and slightly wavy. Culotte and feathering. Handsome plume on the tail.

Coat: Silvery grey, brownish-grey, mouse grey, or any intermediate shade. Head and ears generally lighter in color. Minimal white spotting is allowed on the chest and toes. Sometimes there is a more or less pronounced dark stripe down the middle of the back known as an "eel stripe".

Size: Dog: 59 to 70 cm. (23-27.5 in). Bitch: 57 to 65 cm.

Weight: Dog: 30 to 40 kg. (66-88 lb). Bitch: 25 to 35 kg. (55-77 lb).



History

Today's breed standards developed in the 1800s, although the Weimaraner has existed since at least the 1600s in a similar form. It is believed that Continental pointing breeds and mastiffs were its ancestors. The breed was created exclusively for the nobility and alike. The aim was to create a noble-looking, reliable gundog. As ownership was restricted, the breed was highly prized and lived with the family. This was unusual, as during this period, hunting dogs were kept in kennels in packs. This has resulted in a dog that needs to be near humans and that quickly deteriorates when kennelled. The Weimaraner was an all purpose family dog, capable of guarding the home, hunting with the family, and of course, being loving and loyal towards children. Interestingly enough, when the dog was still used for hunting, its instinctual hunting method is to attack the prey's genitals to bring it down.

Originally, Germany was possessive of its skilled all-purpose gundog, but released a pair in the 1950s to America where the breed quickly became popular. Although slower than many other gundogs, such as Pointers, the Weimaraner is thorough and this made it a welcome addition to the sportsman's household. Furthermore, its happy, lively temperament endeared it to families, although it is perhaps too lively for families with young children. Unfortunately, with the rise in popularity, some careless matches were made and some inferior specimens were produced. Since then, both in Britain and America (where the breed remains popular) breeders have taken care to breed for quality and purpose.

Behavior

This enthusiastic dog with a remarkable nose was originally a hound but became a pointer in the nineteenth century. He is a diligent, systematic tracker, though a bit slow, and a confident pointer and water dog. He can track wounded game and retrieve all sorts of quarry. He has a strong predisposition toward guarding and defending. He is a very pleasant companion and needs firm training.

Health

The Weimaraner is a deep-chested dog, which makes them a breed which is high on the list of dogs affected by bloat (gastric torsion). This a very serious condition that causes death when left untreated. It occurs when the stomach twists itself, thereby pinching off the routes of food traveling in or out. Symptoms include a dog showing signs of distress, discomfort, and a swollen stomach. Immediate medical attention is imperative when bloat occurs and surgery is usually the only option. One way to help prevent bloat is to spread out the Weimaraner's feedings to at least twice daily and to avoid any rigorous exercise right after feedings. Weimaraner owners might never see this problem in their dogs but should be familiar with the ailment and keep emergency vet numbers handy. Hip dysplasia is a major concern among Weimaraners, as with most large breeds of dog. It is generally recommended to acquire Weims only from breeders who have their dog's hips tested using OFA or PennHIP methods.

Other health issues include:

- Cryptorchidism
- Elbow dysplasia
- Distichiasis
- Von Willebrands Disease
- Entropion
- Hypothyroidism
- Hypertrophic osteodystrophy
- Pituitary dwarfism
- Hypomyelinogenesis
- Renal dysplasia
- Progressive retinal atrophy

Advice

Weimaraners are fast and powerful dogs, but are also suitable home animals given appropriate training & exercise. These dogs are not as sociable towards strangers as other hunting dogs such as Labradors and Golden Retrievers. Weimaraners are very protective of their family and can be very territorial. They can be aloof to strangers, and must be thoroughly socialized when young to prevent aggression. They are also highly intelligent, sensitive and problem-solving animals, which earned them an epithet "dog with a human brain". From adolescence, a Weimaraner requires extensive exercise in keeping with an energetic hunting dog breed and prized for their physical endurance and

stamina. No walk is too far, and they will appreciate games and play in addition. An active owner is more likely to provide the vigorous exercising, games, or running that this breed absolutely requires. Weimaraners are high-strung, requiring appropriate training to learn how to calm them and to help them learn to control their behavior. Owners need patience and consistent, firm (yet kind) training, as this breed is particularly rambunctious during the first year and a half of its life. Like many breeds, untrained and unconfined young dogs often create their own fun when left alone, such as chewing house quarters and furniture. Thus, many that are abandoned have behavioural issues as a result of It should never be forgotten that the Weimaraner is a hunting dog and therefore has a strong, instinctive prey drive. Weimaraners will sometimes tolerate cats, as long as they are introduced to the cats as puppies, but many will chase and frequently kill almost any small animal that enters their garden or backyard. In rural areas, most Weimaraners will not hesitate to chase deer or sheep. However, with good training, these instincts can be curtailed to some degree. A properly trained Weimaraner is a wonderful companion that will never leave its master's side.

Function

Hunting dog, watchdog and defense dog, companion dog.isolation and inferior exercise.

Physical Characteristics - General Canine Information

Many dogs, such as the American Water Spaniel, have had their natural hunting instincts suppressed or altered to suit human needs. Modern dog breeds show more variation in size, appearance, and behavior than any other domestic animal. Within the range of extremes, dogs generally share attributes with their wild ancestors, the wolves. Dogs are predators and scavengers, possessing sharp teeth and strong jaws for attacking, holding, and tearing their food. Although selective breeding has changed the appearance of many breeds, all dogs retain basic traits from their distant ancestors. Like many other predatory mammals, the dog has powerful muscles, fused wristbones, a cardiovascular system that supports both sprinting and endurance, and teeth for catching and tearing. Compared to the bone structure of the human foot, dogs technically walk on their toes.

Sight: Like most mammals, dogs are dichromats and have color vision equivalent to red-green color blindness in humans.

Different breeds of dogs have different eye shapes and dimensions, and they also have different retina configurations. Dogs with long noses have a "visual streak" which runs across the width of the retina and gives them a very wide field of excellent vision, while those with short noses have an "area centralis" - a central patch with up to three times the density of nerve endings as the visual streak — giving them detailed sight much more like a human's.

Some breeds, particularly the sighthounds, have a field of vision up to 270° (compared to 180° for humans), although broad-headed breeds with short noses have a much narrower field of vision, as low as 180°.

Hearing: Dogs detect sounds as low as the 16 to 20 Hz frequency range (compared to 20 to 70 Hz for humans) and above 45 kHz[22] (compared to 13 to 20 kHz for humans), and in addition have a degree of ear mobility that helps them to rapidly pinpoint the exact location of a sound. Eighteen or more muscles can tilt, rotate and raise or lower a dog's ear. Additionally, a dog can identify a sound's location much faster than a human can, as well as hear sounds up to four times the distance that humans are able to. Those with more natural ear shapes, like those of wild canids like the fox, generally hear better than those with the floppier ears of many domesticated species.

Smell: Scent hounds, especially the Bloodhound, are iconic for their keen sense of smell. Dogs have nearly 220 million smell-sensitive cells over an area about the size of a pocket handkerchief (compared to 5 million over an area the size of a postage stamp for humans). Some breeds have been selectively bred for excellence in detecting scents, even compared to their canine brethren. What information a dog actually detects when he is scenting is not perfectly understood; although once a matter of debate, it now seems to be well established that dogs can distinguish two different types of scents when trailing, an air scent from some person or thing that has recently passed by, as well as a ground scent that remains detectable for a much longer period.

The characteristics and behavior of these two types of scent trail would seem, after some thought, to be quite different, the air scent being intermittent but perhaps less obscured by competing scents, whereas the ground scent would be relatively permanent with respect to careful and repetitive search by the dog, but would seem to be much more contaminated with other scents. In any event, it is established by those who train tracking dogs that it is

impossible to teach the dog how to track any better than it does naturally; the object instead is to motivate it properly, and teach it to maintain focus on a single track and ignore any others that might otherwise seem of greater interest to an untrained dog. An intensive search for a scent, for instance searching a ship for contraband, can actually be very fatiguing for a dog, and the dog must be motivated to continue this hard work for a long period of time.

The meaning of "intelligence" in general, not only in reference to dogs, is hard to define. Some tests measure problem-solving abilities and others test the ability to learn in comparison to others of the same age. Defining it for dogs is just as difficult. It is likely that dogs do not have the ability to premeditate an action to solve a problem.

Coat Color: Domestic dogs often display the remnants of counter-shading, a common natural camouflage pattern. The general theory of countershading is that an animal that is lit from above will appear lighter on its upper half and darker on its lower half where it will usually be in its own shade. This is a pattern that predators can learn to watch for. A countershaded animal will have dark coloring on its upper surfaces and light coloring below. This reduces the general visibility of the animal. One reminder of this pattern is that many breeds will have the occasional "blaze", stripe, or "star" of white fur on their chest or undersides.

Sprint Metabolism: Dogs can generate large amounts of energy for a short period of time. A dog's heart and lungs are oversized relative to its body and its normal everyday needs. A dog also has relatively more red blood cells than a human. Most of the time the dog will keep the extra red blood cells stored in its spleen. When the animal enters into a situation where its full metabolism is required, such as play, catching game, or fighting other dogs, the extra cells are released into the bloodstream. The "oversized" heart and lungs will now be running at full capacity, and the animal will have an enhanced ability to engage in aerobic activity. This activity will produce internal heating. Dogs, being covered in fur, are limited in their ability to cool down. After a short time the animal must either cease its athletic activity or risk harming itself from overheating. One can easily observe this pattern of intense activity followed by rest periods in puppies. During the rest phase the spleen collects red blood cells and the animal may pant to cool down.

Behavior and Intelligence: Many dogs can be trained to skillfully perform tasks not natural to canines, such as in this dog agility competition. Dogs are valued for their intelligence. This intelligence is expressed differently with different breeds and individuals, however. For example, Border Collies are noted for their ability to learn commands, while other breeds may not be so motivated towards obedience, but instead show their cleverness in devising ways to steal food or escape from a yard. Being highly adaptable animals themselves, dogs have learned to do many jobs as required by humans over the generations.

Dogs are employed in various roles across the globe, proving invaluable assets in areas such as search-and-rescue; law enforcement (including attack dogs, sniffer dogs and tracking dogs); guards for livestock, people or property; herding; Arctic exploration sled-pullers; guiding the blind and acting as a pair of ears for the deaf; assisting with hunting, and a great many other roles which they may be trained to assume. Most dogs rarely have to deal with complex tasks and are unlikely to learn relatively complicated activities (such as opening doors) unaided. Some dogs (such as guide dogs for the visually impaired) are specially trained to recognize and avoid dangerous situations.

For example, the ability to learn quickly could be a sign of intelligence. Conversely it could be interpreted as a sign of a desire to please. In contrast, some dogs who do not learn very quickly may have other talents. An example is breeds that are not particularly interested in pleasing their owners, such as Siberian Huskies. Huskies are often fascinated with the myriad of possibilities for escaping from yards, catching small animals, and often figuring out on their own numerous inventive ways of doing both.

Assistance dogs are also required to be obedient at all times. This means they must learn a tremendous number of commands, understand how to act in a large variety of situations, and recognize threats to their human companion, some of which they might never before have encountered.

Many owners of livestock guardian breeds believe that breeds like the Great Pyrenees or the Kuvasz are not easily trained because their stubborn nature prevents them from seeing the point of such commands as "sit" or "down". Hounds may also suffer from this type of ranking. These dogs are bred to have more of a "pack" mentality with other dogs and less reliance on a master's direct commands. While they may not have the same kind of intelligence as a

Border Collie, they were not bred to learn and obey commands quickly, but to think for themselves while trailing game.

Human Relationships: Dogs have been used for a wide variety of purposes in human history. Dogs are highly social animals sometimes regarded as the most social animals on earth. This can account for their trainability, playfulness, and ability to fit into human households and social situations. This similarity has earned dogs a unique position in the realm of interspecies relationships despite being one of the most effective and potentially dangerous predators. Dogs and humans at times co-operate in some of the most effective hunting in the animal world; in that context, dogs are superpredators.

The loyalty and devotion that dogs demonstrate as part of their natural instincts as pack animals closely mimics the human idea of love and friendship, leading many dog owners to view their pets as full-fledged family members. Conversely, dogs seem to view their human companions as members of their pack, and make few, if any, distinctions between their owners and fellow dogs. Dogs fill a variety of roles in human society and are often trained as working dogs. For dogs that do not have traditional jobs, a wide range of dog sports provide the opportunity to exhibit their natural skills. In many countries, the most common and perhaps most important role of dogs is as companions.

Dogs have lived and worked with humans in so many roles that their loyalty has earned them the unique sobriquet "man's best friend".

Dog Communication: Laughter might not be confined or unique to humans, despite Aristotle's observation that "only the human animal laughs". The differences between chimpanzee and human laughter may be the result of adaptations that have evolved to enable human speech. However, some behavioral psychologists argue that self-awareness of one's situation, or the ability to identify with somebody else's predicament, are prerequisites for laughter, so animals are not really laughing in the same way that humans do. The dog-laugh sounds similar to a normal pant. However by analyzing the pant using a spectrograph, this pant varies with bursts of frequencies, resulting in a laugh. When this recorded dog-laugh vocalization is played to dogs in a shelter setting, it can initiate play, promote pro-social behavior, and decrease stress levels. In a study by Simonet, Versteeg, and Storie, one hundred and twenty subject dogs residing in a mid-size county animal shelter were observed. Dogs ranging from 4 months to 10 years of age were compared with and without exposure to a dog-laugh recording. The stress behaviors measured included panting, growling, salivating, pacing, barking, cowering, lunging, play-bows, sitting, orienting and lying down. The study resulted in positive findings. Exposure to the dog laughing recording resulted in the following: significantly reduced stress behaviors, increased tail wagging and the display of a play-face when playing was initiated, and more frequent pro-social behavior such as approaching and lip licking. This research suggests exposure to dog-laugh vocalizations can calm and possibly increase shelter adoptions.

Reproduction: In domestic dogs, sexual maturity (puberty) begins to happen around age 6 to 12 months for both males and females, although this can be delayed until up to two years old for some large breeds. Adolescence for most domestic dogs is around 12 to 15 months, beyond which they are for the most part more adult than puppy. As with other domesticated species, domestication has selectively bred for higher libido and earlier and more frequent breeding cycles in dogs, than in their wild ancestors. Dogs remain reproductively active until old age.

Most female dogs have their first estrous cycle between 6 and 12 months, although some larger breeds delay until as late as 2 years. Females experience estrous cycles biannually, during which her body prepares for pregnancy, and at the peak she will come into estrus, during which time she will be mentally and physically receptive to copulation.

Dogs bear their litters roughly 56 to 72 days after fertilization, although the length of gestation can vary. An average litter consists of about six puppies, though this number may vary widely based on the breed of dog. Toy dogs generally produce from one to four puppies in each litter, while much larger breeds may average as many as 12 pups in each litter.

Spaying and Neutering: Neutering (spaying females and castrating males) refers to the sterilization of animals, usually by removal of the male's testicles or the female's ovaries and uterus, in order to eliminate the ability to procreate, and reduce sex drive. Neutering has also been known to reduce aggression in male dogs, but has been

shown to occasionally increase aggression in female dogs. Animal control agencies in the United States and the ASPCA advise that dogs not intended for further breeding should be neutered so that they do not have undesired puppies.

Because of the overpopulation of dogs in some countries, puppies born to strays or as the result of accidental breedings often end up being killed in animal shelters. Neutering can also decrease the risk of hormone-driven diseases such as mammary cancer, as well as undesired hormone-driven behaviors. However, certain medical problems are more likely after neutering, such as urinary incontinence in females and prostate cancer in males. The hormonal changes involved with sterilization are likely to somewhat change the animal's personality, however, and some object to neutering as the sterilization could be carried out without the excision of organs.

It is not essential for a female dog to either experience a heat cycle or have puppies before spaying, and likewise, a male dog does not need the experience of mating before castration. Female cats and dogs are seven times more likely to develop mammary tumors if they are not spayed before their first heat cycle. The high dietary estrogen content of the average commercial pet food as well as the estrogenic activity of topical pesticides may be contributing factors in the development of mammary cancer, especially when these exogenous sources are added to those normal estrogens produced by the body. Dog food containing soybeans or soybean fractions have been found to contain phytoestrogens in levels that could have biological effects when ingested longterm. Gender-preservative surgeries such as vasectomy and tubal ligation are possible, but do not appear to be popular due to the continuation of gender-specific behaviors and disease risks.

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