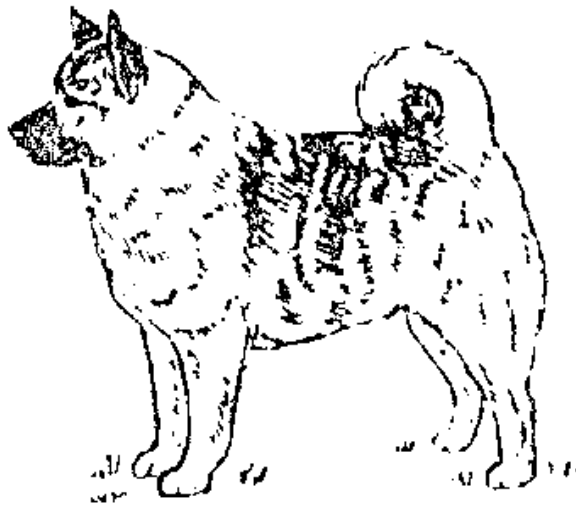
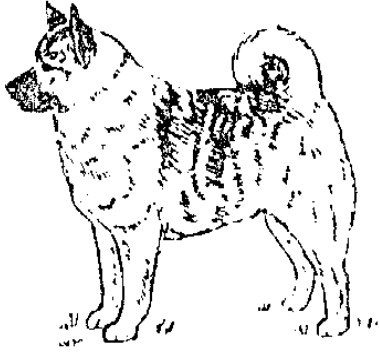


The Norwegian Elkhound



The Norwegian Elkhound

An elaboration upon the standard.



The Norwegian Elkhound is a member of the spitz family of dogs and has the physical appearance and temperament characteristic of that group rather than of the hound group to which the breed was assigned. Actually, the correct translation of Norsk Elghund into English is not Norwegian Elkhound, but Norwegian Moose Dog and it is as such that the breed must always be judged. Remember the Elkhound is first and foremost a hunting breed that must possess the necessary physical qualifications to serve its purpose.

In Norway and Sweden he is used for hunting Elk (Moose) where some thousands are shot annually during the short season of five to ten days in the autumn. There are two methods of using the dogs. As “Los-hund” (Loose-dog) or “Band-hund” (Lead-dog). With the former the dog quarters backward and forwards. Sometimes taking scent from the ground, sometimes from the air, even standing on hind legs to get a better scent. When he gets near to the elk he moves quietly and more and more slowly so as not to startle it into flight. Then he lets himself be seen. The huge elk is not much disturbed by such a comparatively small dog. Then the Elkhound gives a low “woof”, gradually increasing in volume and tone so the hunter knows he has found his quarry. Should the Elk make off the dog at once ceases to bark and follows. But should the Elk remain then the dog moves slowly nearer barking louder and louder and making little rushes. The Elk tries to rid himself of the nuisance by striking with his forefeet or sweeping with the antlers. Here the dogs build and courage come into play as he easily avoids the Elks movements while continuing to bark till the hunter can shoot. The Norwegians say only a compact and short backed dog can avoid the striking hooves and sweeping antlers and that he should be able to bounce in and out of range almost like a rubber ball.

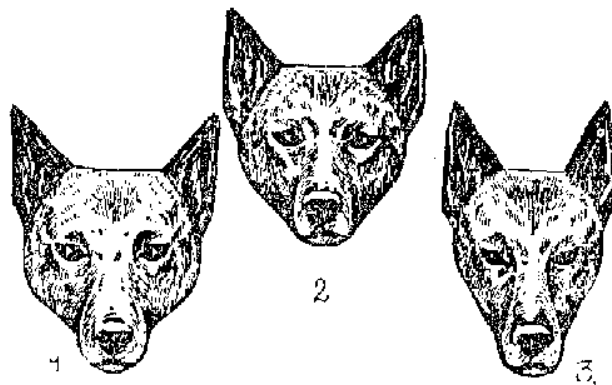


GENERAL APPEARANCE- The Elkhound is a medium sized, compact, cobby, rugged spitz dog with a square outline. In overall appearance the adult Elkhound should in no way resemble a German Shepherd or a Siberian Husky. The Elkhound that is too large or too small, too weedy or too fat is untypical of the breed and cannot perform the function for which he was originally bred. The general appearance should be of power with a deep chest, well sprung ribs and short back. The legs are straight and heavily boned and the feet oval with firm pads. All this gives an impression of endurance and stamina rather than speed.

HEAD AND SKULL- The Elkhound is not a head breed but it remains very important for undoubtedly the first impression is created by it.

Norwegian judge Mr. T. Hemsen describes the head as follows:-

“The head of the purebred Elkhound is rather large and very distinctive. It is the head that one first looks at to see if the dog is pure. Elkhound characteristics carry along for generations and when mixed with other breeds they predominate. A mixture of Elkhound and Shepherd will exhibit mostly Elkhound characteristics. The head which is typically wedge shaped, must not be too pinched, tight, or dry ahead of the eyes. Viewed from above, the line from nose to ear should be straight. And viewed from the side, the top lines of the skull and the nose should be parallel. The skull is a little higher than the muzzle. It is slightly rounded, but from the side fairly straight. Eyebrows define a little stop. Under-lines of the lips conform with the jaw and do not bend upward at the front. The snout must be strong and of good size at the tip so that it does not appear snipish, especially for males.

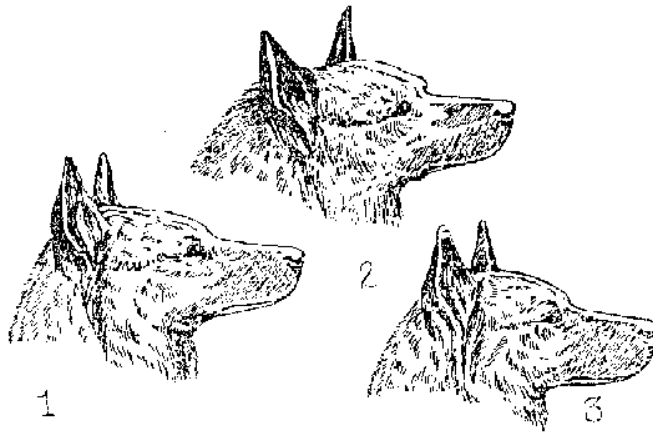


1. Wide skull – pinched foreface
2. Correct – wedge shaped
3. Narrow – fox-like

The muzzle length for males of medium size is normally 9cm. For females 8cm. The inside of the lips is dark slate colour, the tongue is flesh colour. A rounded skull, which is a big

fault, seems to be more and more common recently. It makes the head not typical. The stop is too great and the side lines curve inward with a pinched muzzle ahead of the eyes. If we hope to eliminate the fault we must not breed dogs having that fault nor award them prizes. The skin of the head should be dry with no wrinkles.”

One of the basic features of the breed is a wide, full skull. The bridge of the nose should be straight. The nostrils should be wide open, moist and dark. A definite but slight stop. The whiskers, which are dark and of medium length, should not be trimmed.



1. Narrow and wrinkled between close set eyes.
2. Too much stop - too much ruff – low set ears.
3. Correct side view of head

MOUTH – The lips should close tightly without hanging flews and of course the teeth should come together in a scissors bite, neither overshot nor undershot. Strong, white teeth are essential.

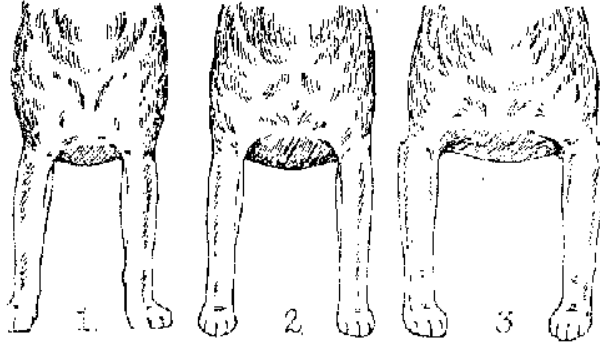
EYES – The eyes should be dark brown, medium size, and almond shaped, with a friendly expression. Never round or bulging. Light eyes and yellow or amber eyes constitute faults and give the dog a poor and untypical expression.

EARS – The Elkhound ear should be pointed, but not acute like that of a German Shepherd. The ears should be slightly longer than they are wide. The ears are very mobile. When he is listening the ears may point slightly forward and be somewhat close together. Otherwise they are set on the head somewhat apart but pointing straight up.

NECK- The neck should be strong and muscular. Upstanding and well arched.

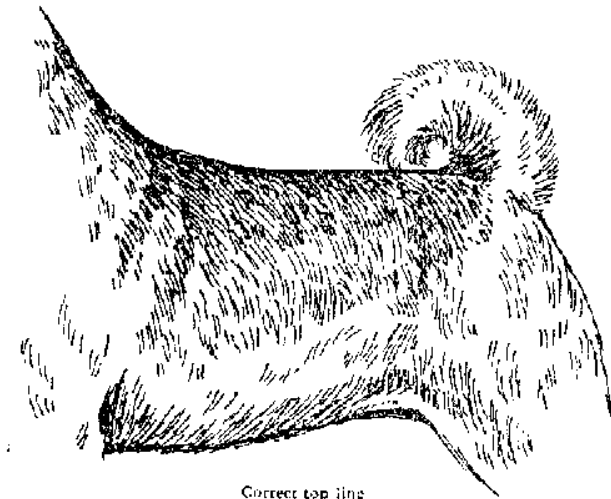


FOREQUARTERS- The legs must not be too thin, but they must harmonise with the dogs structure. The front legs should stand a good distance apart when viewed from the front and must not be loose or pinched.



1. Narrow – pinched elbows – toes out
2. Correct – straight – toes forward
3. Too wide – elbows out – toes out

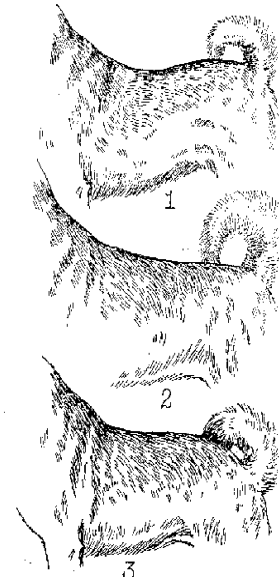
BODY- The body should have a good spring of rib. There should be little tuck up at the belly and the loin should be well muscled. The back and loins should be short in length but not so short and rigid as to give the dog a stilted gait or impede his agility.



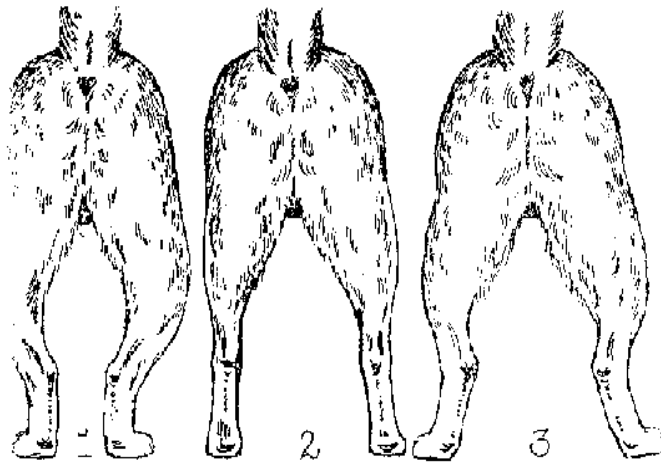
Correct top line

The backline should be level or very slightly sloping toward the tail. Never should the dog be higher at the root of the tail than he is at the withers. A sway back is a serious fault. The correct formula for measuring balance is the length from the withers to the root of the tail is equal to the length from withers to the feet and the length from the withers to the elbow should equal the length from the elbow to the feet.

1. Swayback
2. Long in back – fan shaped tail
3. Goose rump.

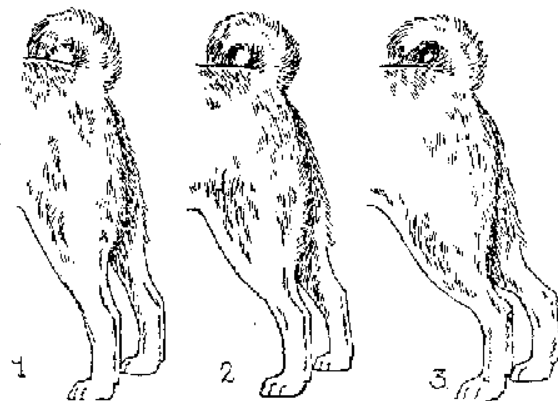


HINDQUARTERS- The legs should be well muscled with hocks well let down and stifles moderately bent in order that the dog can react with lightening movement. The legs should be straight as seen from the rear.



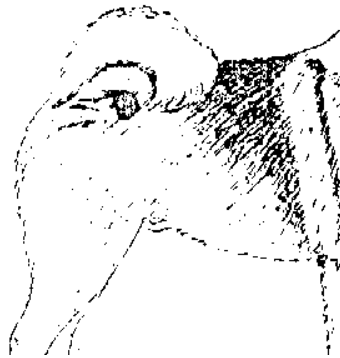
1. Bandy- legged
1. Correct rear
1. Cowhocks

1. Straight stifles
2. Correct side rear
3. Over angulation



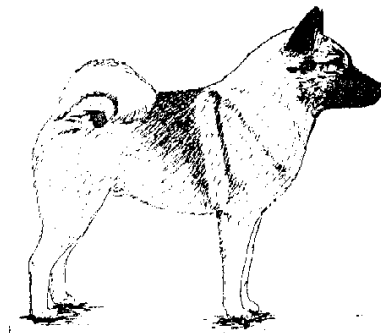
FEET- The dog should stand well up on his toes with front feet pointing straight ahead. The feet should be tight, compact and oval shaped. The feet are comparatively small with thick, tough pads with protective hair between them. The nails should be dark grey and very strong to grip the ground when the dog is in motion and for quick starts.

TAIL- The tail is, when correctly rolled and carried, one of the Elkhounds most typical characteristics and contributes strongly to give the dog a good appearance. The tail should be tightly curled and centrally placed over the back. It should be thickly coated but not excessively bushy. The tail should be set high on the back with no trace of goose rump. It should lie so firmly on the pelvis that the hair on the tail is parted at the place where it lies on the pelvis and the hair on the pelvis is parted also. A good tight tail goes forward from the base or root, making the dog appear short and full of fire.



COAT- The Elkhound has a double coat. It is composed of the longer, harsher cover hairs, dark at the tips and a lighter woolly undercoat. The coat should be close lying and rich. Not excessively bushy or open. The correct Elkhound coat is weather resistant. It sheds snow, ice and mud without difficulty. Because the Elkhound has an extremely thick coat the dog is insulated against heat, cold and insect bites.

COLOUR- The muzzle, ears and tip of tail should be black in colour. There should be a grey saddle and a medium grey, thickly coated, ruff around the neck. A medium to short coat, light grey to silver in colour, covers the legs, buttocks, stomach and top surface of the tail ring. Immediately behind the forelegs there should be a well-defined "Harness Mark" consisting of light grey guard hairs which do not have black tips and which are longer than the rest of the coat. The harness mark is one of the distinctive trademarks of the breed.



WEIGHT AND SIZE- Elkhound size should be guarded carefully, because a big, clumsy dog is not suited for the work for which this breed was developed. Such a dog would tire too easily and he will lack the quickness and agility required of a big game hunter.

SUMMARY- The most remarkable part of moose hunting in Norway is that even the top ranking show Elkhounds are expected to participate in hunting. If they cannot hunt, they are considered worthless as far as breeding is concerned and cannot become champions.

The Elkhound must always be judged as a working hunting dog.

