



# Chesapeake Bay Retriever

## What you should know...

### Breed Characteristics

A truly American sporting breed and the toughest of water retrievers, the Chesapeake Bay Retriever was developed along the Eastern Shore to hunt waterfowl under the most adverse weather and water conditions. Breed characteristics are specifically suited to enable the Chesapeake to work with ease, efficiency, and endurance. Chesapeake lovers conscientiously seek to retain both the form and function of the breed.

The Chesapeake's skull is broad and round with a medium stop, his jaw of sufficient length and strength to carry large game birds. His eye is yellow or amber and medium large with a clear, steady gaze. Ears are small, set well up on the head, hang loosely, and of medium leather. The preferred bite is scissors but level is acceptable.

The important, distinctive double coat consists of a short, harsh, wavy outer coat and a dense fine wooly undercoat. It should resist the water in the same way that a duck's feathers do. The color must be as nearly that of his working surroundings as possible. Any shade of brown, sedge, or deadgrass is acceptable. One color is not to be preferred over another.

He is a strong, well balanced, powerfully built animal of moderate size with medium length of body and leg. The chest is deep and wide. Hindquarters are as high as or a trifle higher than the shoulders. Males should weigh 65 to 80 lbs.; females 55 to 70 lbs.

The Chesapeake is valued for his bright and happy disposition, intelligence, quiet good sense, and affectionate, active, loyal nature. Adults may be somewhat aloof with strangers. Extreme shyness or extreme aggressive tendencies are not desirable.

### Basic Training

Basic training is strongly recommended for all Chesapeakes, whether yours is to be a gun dog, show dog, or family pet. Training should begin with puppy classes, which provide socialization as well as the foundations for command training. Obedience class should be fun for both you and the pup and should continue until your Chesapeake is mature. Training must be continued at home and obedience commands incorporated

into your daily life. The breed is big, bold, and active—good manners are necessary to help your Chesapeake fit well into family life.

Chesapeakes are physically tough but do not tolerate harsh treatment. They have exceptional memories and once they learn something it really stays with them. Take the time to teach your pup what you expect of him from the very beginning. Be patient, firm, and consistent and you will have a loyal and enjoyable companion.

### Crate Training

Pups and dogs should be provided crates as their safe place when they are home alone or unsupervised. Many dogs often seek out their crates as a place to relax. The safest way for the dog to ride in a vehicle is to be securely confined in a crate.

### Health Care

As soon as you get your puppy home, you should have him examined by your veterinarian. If you do not have a regular veterinarian, now is the time to select one. Choose a vet that you are comfortable talking to as well as someone you can trust to help you make health decisions for your new puppy. You should feel free to ask your veterinarian for references, just as you did when searching for a reputable breeder. Your veterinarian will evaluate the vaccination and parasite control information provided by the breeder and formulate a continuing program tailor-made to your situation and health concerns specific to your region. The vet will conduct a physical exam to be sure that you are starting off with a healthy puppy.

Your puppy's breeder should freely furnish information regarding the health status of the parents of the puppies. As in most large breeds, hip dysplasia is a health concern in the Chesapeake. Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) and PennHip are two groups who use radiographs (Xrays) to evaluate the conformation of dogs' hips. The possibility of inherited eye problems is minimized by Canine Eye Registry Foundation (CERF) examinations. Genetic testing of breeding stock should also be done for Progressive Rod-Cone Degeneration (PRCD), which is the most common form of Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) in the Chesapeake.



## Spay and Neuter

Your veterinarian may inform you of the numerous health advantages of spaying or neutering your pet. Spaying or neutering minimizes the chances of reproductive system cancers and life-threatening infections. Neutered males are often better behaved, interact better with older dogs, and are less inclined to "mark" their territory. Spaying your female eliminates the behavior changes as well as the untidiness of the seasonal heat cycle, and will eliminate the risk of unplanned or unwanted litters. Spaying or neutering will NOT make your pet fat and lazy. Too much food and not enough exercise will make your pet fat and lazy. A spayed or neutered dog may participate in all AKC activities with the exception of showing in the breed ring.

## Breeding

To contemplate breeding your Chesapeake involves many considerations. First, ask yourself why you want to breed. If you desire another Chesapeake in your family, know that you would save a great deal of money and hardship by buying a puppy from a reputable, established breeder.

Second, does your Chesapeake have the characteristics the breed standard describes? What about genetic defects—have you had your Chesapeake tested and certified to have good hips and eyes? Do you know what other genetic problems may be in your dog's background? The mate should also be a good specimen of the breed and certified free of genetic disorders.

Third, ask yourself if you have what it takes to be a responsible, conscientious breeder. You must know and understand the breed standard to evaluate your own dog and to choose a suitable mate. You must research both the sire and dam's heritage to know what good and bad traits you may be carrying on. You must have the time, money, and facilities to raise a healthy litter. It is not unusual to see ten or more pups in a Chesapeake litter. You must educate yourself and be ready for problems that are likely to occur during whelping. Your facilities must be safe and adequate for the pups until they are at least eight weeks old. Most states outlaw the sale of pups before this age. By this time, you will have had the pups wormed 3 – 4 times, and given them 1 – 2 of their puppy vaccinations.

Work on your part will be necessary for the pups to make a good transition into their new homes. This involves training. The pups should be socialized, crate trained, and accustomed to the collar and leash. You must have a plan and criteria for placing pups in suitable, lasting, loving homes. Know what health and other guarantees you are able to provide puppy buyers. Have a plan for upholding the guarantees because you may have a puppy returned to you. Good record keeping is also essential. Have the paperwork in order: veterinary records, information on the sire and dam, AKC registration forms, purchase agreements, etc. Be available to offer advice on training and problem correction long after the puppies are in their new homes.

Breeding can be rewarding if you are educated and prepared for the work that is involved. Remember that as a conscientious breeder, you will be responsible for placing many puppies in deserving, loving homes.

## Events and Activities

A very versatile breed, the Chesapeake can excel in a variety of activities, from hunting and field work to obedience, agility, therapy, and tracking. You can choose to participate in one or all of these and conformation as well. Chesapeakes are naturals in the field. They love the water and are excellent markers with great birdiness and good noses. With basic and consistent training they are superb hunting companions.

It is important to keep the Chesapeake's mind and body occupied. They are naturally active dogs and thrive on work. The advantage of owning a Chesapeake is that you need not settle for one activity with your dog. Solid command training with house rules firmly established form the foundation of whatever you and your Chesapeake enjoy doing together.

**For more information** on our breed, our parent club, regional contacts, and events in local areas, please send a check for \$3.00, made out to *American Chesapeake Club*, to:

Dana Gary  
ACC Referral Coordinator  
P. O. Box 58082  
Salt Lake City, UT 84158

The following breed-related educational materials are published by the ACC:

*Basic Training for Your Retriever*. J. Nicholes. Includes an excellent glossary. Order through ACC Supply Chairman (currently Stephanie Adelman, 10980 Little Avenue, Cologne, MN 55322). Current pricing: \$5.95 (Overseas \$10.00).

*The Chesapeake Bay Retriever*. Ed. Dyane Baldwin. Order through ACC Book Sales (currently Marie Stump, 807 Kaseville Rd., Danville, PA 17821). Current pricing: \$24.00 (overseas \$30.00) (includes S/H).

Visit the ACC web site: [www.amchessieclub.org](http://www.amchessieclub.org)