

NATIVE DOG BREEDS OF NORWAY



Norwegian Buhund



Photo: Terje Lindstrøm

BREED ORIGIN AND HISTORY | The Norwegian Buhund is considered to be a direct descendant of the dogs used by the first settlers in Norway. Remains of spitz-type dogs have been found in the oldest archeological sites. The breed's name is derived from the old Norwegian term "bu", which refers to such concepts as "farm", "hut" and "livestock", thus indicating the Buhund's original use as a farm and herding dog. It was used for herding cattle and small livestock, but also reindeer and pigs. In many areas of the country, every farm had its Buhund. The dogs often lived in the barn, and herded the animals when they were put to pasture in the daytime.

In the early 1900s, the Norwegian Buhund population rapidly declined, partially due to the import of foreign breeds that outcompeted the Buhund. Fortunately, the situation was taken seriously and a considerable effort was made to save this unique breed. Systematic registration, controlled breeding and participation at shows held by the Norwegian Kennel Club resulted in the breed's increasing popularity and formed the basis for the modern-day Buhund.

In the 1920s, Buhund shows were commonly held in connection with the state-run goat and sheep shows. These shows were surely important for the increasing interest in the Norwegian Buhund – as there were especially many active breeders in the

"sheep county" Rogaland in south-western Norway. In recent years, about 100-150 Norwegian Buhund puppies have been registered annually by the Norwegian Kennel Club. The Norwegian Buhund is thus a small-numbered breed, and preferably its numbers should increase in order to ensure sound and effective breeding efforts.

APPEARANCE | The Norwegian Buhund is a typical spitz dog, slightly below medium size. The Buhund is squarely built and has a dense, flat-lying coat. The ears are pointed and erect and their shape and size should harmonize with the head shape. The tail is carried firmly curled over the back. The Buhund is either wheaten or black. The wheaten variant can range from rather light to yellowish-red, with or without dark-tipped hairs. Clean and bright colour is preferred. The black variant should preferably be self-coloured, but white as a blaze, chest spot or collar and on the paws is acceptable. Eyes should be as dark as possible and harmonize with the overall appearance. Height at the withers is 43-47 cm for males and 41-45 cm for bitches. The weight should be in proportion to the dog's size.

UTILIZATION | The Norwegian Buhund was traditionally a herding dog, and is often preferably used to herd sheep, especially in large sheep drives. The breed is also used somewhat for hunting, e.g. in elk hunting. Due to its excellent learning abilities, the



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Buhund is now also being used for other purposes. Increasing numbers of Buhunds are distinguishing themselves at such disciplines as obedience and agility. In England, they are also being used as guide dogs and drug detection dogs – which says a lot about the breed's versatility and potential.

A Norwegian Buhund is a good, friendly family dog, and is usually good-natured and loyal. The Buhund is very active and needs a lot of exercise and stimulation. If not provided with sufficient daily challenges and activities, the Buhund will let you know – which is probably why the myth of a "yappy dog" arose. However, a satisfied Buhund is often a calm and devoted dog. (Source: Den norske hundeboka, Ulvund tekst & forlag)

SECURING THE FUTURE OF THE NORWEGIAN BUHUND | The most important way of securing the future of the Norwegian Buhund is to further develop and maintain a large and viable breed population. Anyone already considering getting a smaller spitz dog can contribute to

this by choosing a Norwegian Buhund.

A canine semen bank has been established for all Norwegian dog breeds. The semen bank is being jointly developed by the various breed clubs, the Norwegian Kennel Club and the Norwegian Genetic Resource Centre. The aim is to deposit semen from ten dogs of each of the seven native Norwegian breeds (in addition to the Norwegian Buhund, these are the Norwegian Elkhound Grey, the Norwegian Elkhound Black, the Norwegian Lundehund, the Halden Hound, the Hygen Hound and the Norwegian Hound). Preferably, the semen shall be stored for ten years and can be used, for example, in case of a sudden crisis within a specific breed or if there is a need for "old" genetic material in breeding.

If you are interested in more information about the Norwegian Buhund, please contact Norsk Buhund Klubb, c/o Norwegian Kennel Club, PO Box 163 Bryn, 0611 Oslo, Norway (phone: +47 21 60 09 00) or the Norwegian Genetic Resource Centre, 1431 Ås, Norway (phone: +47 64 94 90 55).



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