



FERNHILL

# YOUR SCOTTISH DEERHOUND PRIMER

*A handbook to assist prospective  
and novice Deerhound owners*

*...Like all  
sporting breeds  
the Deerhound  
was originally evolved for  
a specific purpose:  
to chase  
the wild deer  
that were found  
in the hills  
and glens  
of the Highlands...*



AMONG THOSE THAT KNOW THE BREED, THE SCOTTISH DEERHOUND IS RECOGNISED AS THE BEST KEPT SECRET IN THE DOG WORLD. BUT IT IS NOT A BREED FOR EVERYONE. FEW BREEDS ARE MORE DEMANDING AS YOUNGSTERS IN TERMS OF TIME, SPACE AND FINANCES. THIS HANDBOOK WAS WRITTEN TO ASSIST PROSPECTIVE DEERHOUND OWNERS IN UNDERSTANDING THIS BREED'S SPECIFIC NEEDS AND IDIOSYNCRASIES BETTER, SO THAT A MORE INFORMED DECISION CAN BE MADE AS TO WHETHER A SCOTTISH DEERHOUND IS THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOU. IT IS ALSO TO SERVE AS A GUIDE FOR THE NOVICE OWNER TO HELP THEM AVOID THE TRIALS AND PITFALLS THAT WE HAVE ALL EXPERIENCED WITH DEERHOUND OWNERSHIP. MOST OF ALL, IT HAS BEEN WRITTEN SO THAT MORE DEERHOUNDS MAY LIVE THE LIFE THEY DESERVE AND LOVE. AFTER MORE THAN FORTY YEARS WITH THIS WONDERFUL BREED I WOULD NOT KNOW WHOM TO THANK FOR THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS PRIMER. IT REPRESENTS THE ACCUMULATED WISDOM OF SO MANY... BUT IN PARTICULAR MY FERNHILL HOUNDS TELLING ME IN THEIR MANY SPECIAL WAYS WHAT WORKS FOR THEM.



"A respect for the function of a hound, however distant, is the way to breed a sound animal..."  
Col. David Hancock, M.B.E. • Ch. Ayrshire, Whelped 1904

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## THE DEERHOUND

By A.N. Hartley (*Rotherwood Scottish Deerhounds*) Reprinted from *Dog World*, August 1, 1952

**We do know that as early as the 15th century, the hunting dogs of North Britain were already famous.**

Some breeds have an inborn flair for advertisement. They have grasped the familiar slogan that the dog show is the shop window

of the canine world, and they see to it that their display develops the maximum pulling power.

With pricked ears, wagging tails and outstretched paws, they inveigle the passing visitor into a chat and often ensnare him for life.

But the hardy spirit who tracks the Deerhound to his show bench lair is all too often rewarded

by a row of closed eyes and rhythmically heaving flanks. Here and there a head is raised and dark wistful eyes look out from under shaggy brows; perhaps a tail stirs so unemphatically that the effort does not quite release it from an imprisoning leg. Then no further demonstration is forthcoming.

It is hard to visualise what a picture of life, grace, and power that same hound will present as he stands on a rocky hillside, head up, neck arched, tail just raised, and quarters bent for a spring, his eyes and ears alert to catch the slightest rustle or stir.

The breed has its roots in the past, and more than once Deerhounds have left their mark on the pages of history.

A 15th century historian tells us of a quarrel between the Scots and the Picts over a greatly valued hound which the Picts stole from the Scots, and he adds that many men perished in the battle that ensued. Mary Queen of Scots loved hunting, and in 1563 the Earl of Athol arranged a tainchell or deer-drive in her honour at which "the Queen ordered one of the best dogs to be let loose on the deer."

Like all sporting breeds the Deerhound was originally evolved for

a specific purpose: to chase the wild deer that were found in the hills and glens of the Highlands. A stag is nearly twice the height and more than twice the weight of a deerhound, so it follows that a hound must be brave and fast and strong if it is to be any use against such a formidable adversary. Moreover, the deer possesses deadly weapons - only let a rash and over-eager young hound venture within reach of his horns and a quick slash will end the hound's hunting for ever.

So the early sportsmen who fixed the breed's type sought for speed, slaying power, strength, agility, and, above all, for indomitable courage. What foundation stock they had and what crosses they added we cannot now tell, for they left no records, but we do know that as early as the 15th century, the hunting dogs of North Britain were already famous.

The invention of the sporting gun and the consequent division of the deer forests for letting purposes finally ended the older sport of deer coursing with dogs, because these smaller areas did not give enough scope to a hound which could follow his quarry for forty miles. Nevertheless, the points that are sought in the show ring today are those that would fit the dog to do his work on the hills. The Greyhound conformation, the ample heart room, strong loin, sloping quarters, strong dense bone, and well-padded and knuckled feet are the breed essentials, and all make for the needed speed, strength and agility. And owners who, in recent times, have used Deerhounds for hunting assure us that he has not lost the powers that made him once renowned.

When the opportunities for their legitimate work dwindled to vanishing point, Deerhounds became very scarce, and in about

1830 the breed was in danger of extinction. It was saved by the efforts of Mr. Archibald McNeill and his brother, Lord Colonsay, who gathered all the best specimens remaining in the Highlands and established the Colonsay strain which was kept by the McNeill family until 1914. The McNeill's hunted with their Deerhounds in the old manner on the island of Jura, and their dogs showed grand sport without any help from guns.

But circumstances were against the resumption of deer chasing in the British Isles, except in a few isolated instances, and the Deerhound would soon have perished if he had not been strikingly endowed with the qualities that make a good companion.

His appearance is commanding and beautiful, with the graceful outline and lithe movement of his Greyhound forebears, and he appeals irresistibly to those who like a big dog. Yet he is never clumsy, and can stow himself neatly into the corner of a small room or handily share the back seat of a car.

His height from the ground and his smooth legs enable him to come into the house on a wet day without bringing half the mud of the street in too, and his harsh, dense, grey coat keeps him warm and does not show dirt even in the smokiest town. His clean lips never slobber and he moves with a deftness that preserves the smallest ornaments.

Deerhounds are one of the longest-lived of the big breeds, and they seldom grow fat as they grow old. At eleven or twelve, they often have eyesight, teeth and hearing still perfect and some can even chase hares. But handsome is as handsome does, and it is the Deerhound's lovely character more than any other single factor that has preserved him from extinction. He is gentle, fearless and candid:

there is nothing mean about him. He is pleasant to all human beings because he neither expects harm from them nor intends harm to them. To say that he is safe with children is to say too little. He is safe with all reasonable people, but he adores children and soon becomes their playmate and guardian. He is obedient, not from a rigid sense of discipline, but because he so loves to please.

Mr. George Cupples, the author of *Scottish Deerhounds and Their Masters* (1894), paid this golden tribute to the breed more than 50 years ago. It is equally well deserved today.

*"How perfectly docile is the thoroughbred Deerhound of our own Scottish forests and stalking ranges! His master – if not always his keeper can at a word force him from the very throat of the stag he has gripped, has pulled down and has worried like a wolf, so that he comes quietly to heel. His inveterate keenness, no less than his strength, renders him about as bad a foe as mortal creature need wish to face. Yet how gentle and familiar a housemate is he; of all dumb favourites the most decorous by the hearth and table, a marvel of patience with the little dogs; and among the children a plaything that can be handled as they will."*

The Deerhound is a part of our national heritage. He is a living link with the spacious past of big logs smouldering on heaps of flaked ashes, of flames glinting on armour, of flaring torches and heralds and minstrels and all the pageantry that has faded from the world we know. He is ours to cherish, not for the work that he might do, but for the pleasure that his gentle dignity, his pleasant companionship and his loyal love can give us.

*Reprinted with kind permission of Ms. A.N. Hartley*



## THE DEERHOUND

### TYPE

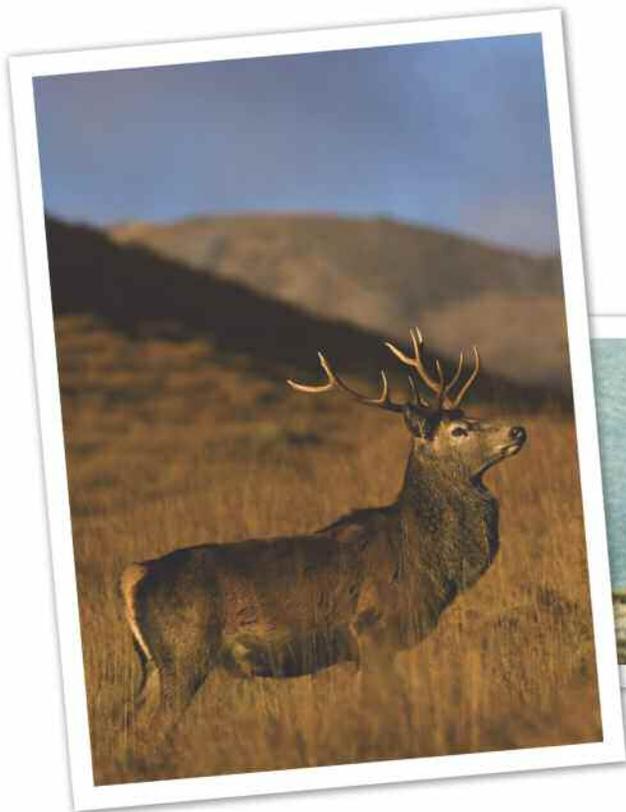
Type is the sum of those qualities which are distinctive to the breed and make the animal not a dog, but a Deerhound. Two elements in particular have formed the Deerhound as a distinct breed:

**Its quarry:** The Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*), the largest land mammal in Britain, has a size in the Scottish Highlands somewhere around that of a white-tailed deer. It can be 3 - 4 feet at the shoulder and weigh 250 - 300 pounds;

**The terrain:** Red deer habitat is rough bog, dense coarse heather, steep rugged rock hills, crags and burns and the Deerhound was expected to pursue and dispatch its quarry within three to four minutes maximum.

The Deerhound is a sprinter. Hunting in pairs, they "coursed" their quarry in a short swift chase on difficult terrain. The successful course ended within minutes with a leap for the jowl, ear or throat. The weight of the dog and the speed of the running target caused the deer, ideally, to fall, breaking its neck and dying instantly. Failing a swift kill, Deerhounds would keep a stag at bay until it could be dispatched. The Deerhound Standard describes the Deerhound "type" as a rough-coated Greyhound of larger size and bone (UK 1892, 1914; AKC 1935).

For more information on the Scottish Deerhound Standard, email [bh@fernhill.com](mailto:bh@fernhill.com) and ask for "Visualizing the Standard" (2012).



Slipping the Deerhounds at Dava, Scotland • Photo Sarah Helps



The Titan Breaks Bay · H.H.Crealock 1873



"Evie and her Raven Puppies"

## DEERHOUND HUSBANDRY

*The Key Ingredients are Exercise and Food*

Every Deerhound breeder does their best to produce a companion that will be a credit to the breed at home, in the ring, and in the field. Usually no expense is spared in order to send out a puppy that has the best possible start in life. However, it is the new owner that grows that puppy out from a 20-30 pound pup to a 100 lb adolescent in the space of some 6-10 months. It cannot be stressed enough that this is a notoriously difficult task in Deerhounds. Because it is fraught with so many pitfalls and so many Deerhounds do not reach their maximum physical potential, the following articles were written for *The Windhound* in the 1980s... they have stood the test of time. Hopefully they are of some help. The key ingredients are exercise and food...not forced exercise, but lots of puppy play. It is extremely difficult to raise a show quality specimen without a litter-mate. It can be done, but during those first critical years, it is almost a full-time job. It is only over the years that I have come to realize how difficult the Deerhound is to grow out in comparison to other breeds. There is, as well, a vast difference in growing out a 29 inch 70 lb female and a 32 inch 100 lb male that attain those dimensions in only 10 months. Try to follow these instructions, give the breeder a call when things get rough, be patient... all Deerhounds go through some horrendous stages... and good luck. When your puppy is three years old, you can open your eyes and look at what you've got. It's clear sailing after that.



Fernhill's Lyric at 7 wks...



...and again at 7 years



## DEERHOUND HUSBANDRY



*Fern Hill's  
Duncan, Max, Gregor  
Linda DeLeon Jan 98*

### **DEERHOUND DIET** *(First printed in The Windhound, July 1983)*

Exercise and proper nutrition are the key elements in raising a Deerhound into a physical specimen that you can be proud of. Most people have their own tried and true method of feeding, puppies and adults. This is mine. Not that I expect any converts, but it is always interesting to hear how someone else indulges their pets to the edge of bankruptcy! After years of growing out Deerhound puppies, I have acquired a raft of Fundamental Truths.

First, I feel that food and water should be available to your hounds, especially growing puppies, at all times.

Second, no supplements for growing puppies if you use a commercially prepared dog meal that is chicken based.

Third, vary the diet as much as your budget will allow.

Fourth, protein content should be 22% to 24% maximum for growing puppies and adults.

Feed puppies up to six months three to four times daily. After six months (and this includes adults), feed twice daily. In addition to the meals have a dog kibble available for self-feeding at all times so they learn food is always available and they don't have to gobble their food. Deerhound puppies don't overeat. On the contrary, the trick in growing them out is to get enough in them to meet their needs and put a little flesh on them. No mean task.

The meals consist of as much as will be eaten in fifteen minutes. They are made up of a commercial balanced 22% dog kibble with chicken based broth/stew to moisten (up to 25% of total by volume), 2 tablespoons of sunflower/safflower/salmon oil and one half a cup of yogurt. The broth/stew is made from soup bones, chicken necks, lamb, carrots, celery tops, etc., spiced with garlic. In addition, at least three times a week, preferably daily, I feed raw or semi-frozen chicken necks or backs (bones and all) which they scrunch up or gulp whole. I also feed one to two pieces of raw pork liver weekly. This is the only pork they are allowed, a notoriously indigestible meat. Pork liver is much higher in iron than beef liver and also much cheaper. If they enjoy it, a big bowl of milk with a raw egg yolk beaten up (no raw white) and/or a hardboiled egg, shell included, is also good. Single Deerhounds tend to

be poor eaters and it is a problem getting them to consume enough in that first year if they don't have competition at the feed bowl. Puppies should be fed together or with adults to stimulate their appetites. If you are desperate, borrow a neighbour's dog - even a cat will help.

The goop that I put on puppy and adult meals varies considerably. Sometimes it is fried liver or chicken giblets, sometimes a stew of vegetables and meat and table scraps that include all egg shells, stale bread, etc. Now and then I hit on something that they really like, such as lamb. It is very digestible and wonderful for dogs with stomach problems. Be prepared, after you have filled your freezer with a new-found delicacy, to have them go "off" it. They get bored easily. I personally think that the variety is essential right from the beginning to keep the innards active and minimize problems should your dogs get into garbage or you are forced to alter their diet for some reason. My dogs have eaten everything from raw frozen char and salmon, seal fat, whole chickens, groundhog heads (their choice!), lamb and beef, to awful offal and thrived. We have had one bout of pancreatitis from a combination of pork hocks and anchovies, stomach gas from roast goose skin, and unbearable flatulence from raisins and dates. You have been warned!

I have never owned a Deerhound that really liked dog biscuits but some do. Except for teething puppies, I do not recommend knuckle and long leg (beef) bones. The continual gnawing seems to wear down the enamel of the adult teeth at too fast a rate.

I think that puppy or growth chows are too "hot" a feed for puppies and if you are adding vitamins and calcium-phosphorus supplements, you are asking for serious trouble. Remember, many puppies

"toe out" in the early stages, particularly when teething. However if their feet look flat you likely have "soft" water (lacking Ca and Mg) so add more canned milk. As the body develops and the chest drops, the front should gradually straighten out. This may take up to a year to two years with the big males. Don't panic! Let me assure you that it will get progressively worse if you load the supplements into the food. It is far better to stimulate the appetite with more running and play and increase the overall nutrition intake of the puppy that to pump it full of concentrated vitamins. My active adults also have a prepared meal morning and evening... basically the same regime as for puppies. Select the dry meal on the basis of the detailed content analysis on the side of the package. Avoid the expandable chows that are high in soya products, the simulated meat products that are loaded with red dye and those feeds with ethoxyquin as a preservative. Meat and bone meal should be near the top of the ingredients listed.

It is important to continue the oil, as most dry feeds are deficient in fatty acids as concentrates of unsaturated fats lead to rancidity and the destruction of other nutrients such as vitamin E. Deficiencies in linoleic acid (and other essential fatty acids) causes dry scaly skin and lesions.

Deerhounds in particular need additions of dietary fats. Of the animal and vegetable fats, safflower oil, corn oil and poultry offal fat are highest in linoleic acid. Ensure that your dry food is fresh and add sufficient fats to bring the total fat content up to 8% to 10% with 1% as linoleic acid. The milk products can be dropped for adults. Many dogs cannot tolerate the lactose, and as the bones have finished their major spurt, it is not really necessary.

**A Deerhound puppy will never overeat. Feed it as much as you can coax it to consume and it will grow out better.**



## DEERHOUND HUSBANDRY

### ADDENDUM

The death of two puppies of mine at six months from aflatoxins originating from mould on feed at a time when another Deerhound breeder had a similar experience, as well as occasional bouts of unexplained diarrhoea while using feed that I know is more than three months old have made me extremely concerned about the freshness of commercial feeds. While there is little that can be done when the grains used by the company contain mycotoxins, (and random laboratory analysis that I have had carried out on a premium feed indicates that this can happen) the risk to your dog can be reduced by never purchasing any feed for which you are unable to establish the date of manufacture. Mycotoxins (aflatoxin, vomitoxin, etc.) are implicated in compromising immune systems, toxic hepatitis, liver tumours and other ailments. Based on the presence of more visible symptoms, the cause of illness or death may be attributed to other factors. However, these well may be exacerbated by long term low levels of mycotoxins in the feed that forms the bulk of your dog's diet. The best you can do to protect your pet is to purchase food that is not older than three months since the date of manufacture. Store all food in a cool dry location - not in a closed plastic container in a warm kitchen. Alternatively feed a raw diet, grain-free kibble... certainly corn free kibble. Companies that use "Best Before" usually assume their product has a shelf life of over a year. Would you eat a meal that has been sitting around on a shelf for a year?

*BH 1999*



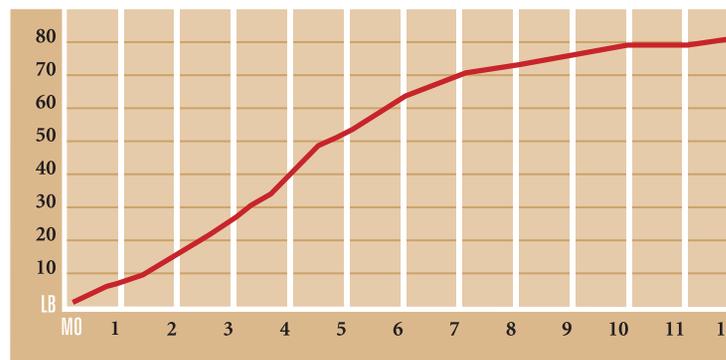
### FEEDING UP TO SIX MONTHS

- 1 Leave a bowl of dry meal ( $\pm 22\%$  protein, usually marketed as “maintenance” or “adult”) out for your puppy to nibble when it feels hungry;
- 2 For the prepared meal (3 to 4 times daily): use a suitable quantity of dry meal (as much as will be eaten in 15 minutes) with a touch of boiling water over it to soften slightly and bring out the flavour. Don’t turn the meal into mush; pour a cup of evaporated milk (dilute, using two cans of evaporated milk to one quart of whole milk and two egg yolks, but no whites) and a doggy stew made from soup bones, chicken necks, carrots, apples, greens, etc. over the above. The stew is preferred chilled in summer and warmed in the winter. Also mixed with the above, add yogurt ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup) and 1 tablespoon of safflower oil.
- 3 A big bowl of whole milk with an egg yolk (no white) beaten up in it once a day is appreciated unless your puppy exhibits an intolerance for lactose, then try a livestock lactose-free milk replacer.
- 4 Raw chicken necks or backs (bones and all... but not the long leg and wing bones (other than the tips) daily (4-10 necks) is good and also a chunk of raw liver weekly.
- 5 Fresh clean water at all times.

**Do not supplement your puppy with vitamins.** Big lumpy joints are normal for a large breed puppy that is growing rapidly. So is toeing out (but not flat feet) during the teething stage.

**A Deerhound puppy will never overeat.** Feed it as much as you can coax it to consume and it will grow out better. Picky eaters are likely not getting enough exercise.

Table 1: The First Year Growth Spurt of Mary Electra Buchanan



### OVER SIX MONTHS TO ADULTHOOD (*Morning and evening feeding*)

Continue the dry meal at 22% protein content (usually called “adult” or “maintenance”) and stew as above, increasing the quantity. Do not use soya based feeds as they have been thought to cause bloat. Of the oils, safflower, corn oil, sunflower oil are highest in linoleic acid, which is a must for their skin and coat. Avoid suddenly adding rich, fatty foods... that may trigger pancreatitis which is relatively common in Deerhounds. Supplements of milk and yogurt can be discontinued when your pup is 1½ to 2 years unless they become lactose intolerant at a younger age.

**YES!** 22%-25% protein, chicken necks, lamb, chicken, turkey necks and meat, fresh cod liver oil

**NO!** 28%-32% protein, preservatives (ethoxyquin), soya, corn, colour, sugar, vitamins

**Table 2: The Ratio of Calcium to Phosphorus in a Variety of Foods**

Food	Ca to P
Brewer's Dried Yeast	1 : 11.0
Casein	1 : 1.6
Corn Meal	1 : 9.7
Cracked Barley	1 : 8.6
Wheat Red Dog	1 : 6.5
Round Steak	1 : 16.9
Dried Rice	1 : 3.9
Beef Liver	1 : 44.0
Beef Heart	1 : 39.0
Cottage Cheese	1 : 1.6
Chuck Roast	1 : 12.0

**Some Foods that are Exceptions to the Above are:**

Food	Ca to P
Milk, non-fat, dry	1.3 : 1
Butter	1.3 : 1
Green Bone	1.9 : 1
Bone Meal, steamed	2.1 : 1
Chicken, whole	1.4 : 1

**CALCIUM AND PHOSPHOROUS**

These are the primary minerals for building bones. Before either of these two minerals can perform properly, they must be fed in a proper ratio to one another. One without the other or one improperly balanced with the other will not be adequate. The correct calcium-phosphorus ratio is 1.2 - 1.4 parts calcium to 1 part phosphorus. Or, more roughly stated: 6 parts calcium to 5 parts phosphorus.

Even when calcium is fed to a dog in the correct quantity, a calcium deficiency can exist. This happens when too great a level of phosphorus has been fed through an improper ratio, usually when supplementing an already correctly balanced dry food with vitamin-mineral powders and meat. A severe calcium deficiency results when the phosphorus level is so high that it binds most or all of the calcium present and makes it unavailable to the dog. The calcium deficiency could cause splaying of the toes, falling pasterns, de-mineralization of the bones in the young, spontaneous fractures and bone disease or osteomalacia in the adult dog depending on the degree of deficiency of the mineral. It is also possible to create a severe phosphorus deficiency by the high level feeding of calcium causing deficiency signs as those above. A disturbing fact about the deficiency signs of calcium, phosphorus, vitamin D, magnesium, manganese or copper deficiency is that they may be difficult or impossible to differentiate clinically.

In foods available to the dog today (in the form of raw materials) almost all, with few exceptions, have greater proportions of phosphorus than calcium as shown in Table 2.



Heading out

DEERHOUND HUSBANDRY



"Havoc" Non cogito, ergo zoom • Photo by Dan Gauss

**DEERHOUNDS AND EXERCISE** *(From The Windhound, July 1983)*

I was invited to discuss Deerhounds and exercise... and agreed, because a Deerhound is, above all, a galloping Hound and this tends to get ignored or forgotten today. It is easy to do with the malleable disposition of the Deerhound and the fact that most are raised in an urban environment. Simply put, the true Deerhound is a running machine that cannot develop to its maximum potential, mentally and physically, without a lot of exercise. An apartment or suburban raised Deerhound with a quick jaunt around the block once or twice a day will survive (and fray the nerves of its owner) but will not end up thinking or looking the way a Deerhound should. So many Deerhound fanciers have never seen hounds that hunt regularly and have been raised under "ideal" conditions that the difference is difficult to describe. It boils down to muscle tone, attitude, purposeful drive in the animal's gait, and a gleam in the eye, as opposed to that sweet lap dog look which is so much a part of a Deerhound too, but I shudder when I see it come to dominate the breed.

I will discuss exercising puppies first, and then adults. Now, for a fundamental truth in raising a Deerhound puppy: a pup will not reach its maximum potential unless it is grown out with another dog, preferably a litter-mate. The difficulty in raising a Deerhound as a single dog is that human and puppy activity cycles are totally different. Most people are occupied during the day and a puppy left alone in the house

**Simply put, the true Deerhound is a running machine that cannot develop to its maximum potential without a lot of exercise.**



or yard will sleep longer, wander about aimlessly, play sporadically and sometimes get into destructive chewing, out of boredom.

**All Deerhounds go through some horrendous stages...**

**When your puppy is three years old, you can open your eyes and look at what you've got. It's clear sailing after then.**

Exercise may then come as a concentrated dose during an hours walk or play during the evening. The natural process during the first year of growth is for puppies to play hard, verging on violently, for half an hour to an hour, then sleep, then more play, *all day long*. They seldom let up and it is exhausting for humans just to watch! This kind of continuous but paced activity is what builds muscle,

stimulates the appetite and physically develops the dog. The single Deerhound puppy (and adult), because they are basically relaxed dogs, will not self-exercise sufficiently for optimum development; nor can humans generally provide an adequate substitute, especially at the puppy stage.

Not all single Deerhounds raised as urban house pets exhibit what I call the "single sighthound syndrome," but many do. This is the gawky, yearling that has no body, toes out, is down in the pasterns and is hocky behind. It is sad for the breeder that sent out a sound, solid puppy at 8 - 12 weeks. It is hard on the owner that is anxious to get into the show ring. Growing out any animal that goes from a pound to 100 pounds in a year is tricky, to say the least, even in an ideal set up. The requirement in that first year is continuous, unforced play; that leaping, twisting and galloping around that puppies do constantly. Roadwork for a puppy is no replacement for this and can be downright dangerous to a growing puppy if it is mechanised and forced. Restricting a puppy's ability to exercise is just as bad! Would you prevent your

child from running about and playing hard until they become a teen? NEVER CRATE YOUR DEERHOUND PUPPY and then go off to work!

So, what is that "ideal" set up during that critical growing out period? It consists of a huge (50' x 100' minimum) fenced yard, two Deerhounds, or some other high energy breed, and two separate beds. Then attach the works to the house so the yard can be supervised visually by a person with a loud voice to calm things down when they get too rough. Socialization in the house goes without saying (after all, that's why we have them). Another critical element, in spite of the large yard, is a long walk daily with the owner, off lead, preferably in a park or field. Now with a young pup, this walk is not that important for conditioning, but it is vital for bonding. A Deerhound likes the hand that feeds it, but it loves the person that takes it for a run. It is this walk that makes the Deerhound your special pet.

I personally don't agree with wire dog runs for Deerhounds. If you need runs, you have too many dogs. I experience a guilt trip every time I pass a penned Deerhound and have to look at those wistful eyes begging to be taken for a walk. Dogs in long adjacent runs will exercise themselves into some kind of condition by fence running and fence fighting, but I feel puppies grown out this way may have a tendency to neurotic behaviour, especially if there is insufficient socialization as well.

Adult Deerhounds are notoriously poor at self-exercising. They generally lounge about, waiting for something to happen. I have confronted my dogs with miles of empty tundra and prairie and spent a lot of mental and physical energy figuring out how to unglue them from my side. I ended up resorting to a snow machine and

dirt bike. Loose behind a trail bike, a Deerhound can run all day, pacing itself very cleverly between a lope, trot and gallop, and then will quit when tired. In an urban environment, jog to keep your dog in good condition. Start gradually with 1-2 miles a day for the unfit hound, and by the end of a few weeks, you should be up to five to ten miles a day. If you can't do this yourself advertise for a sprinter or marathoner in training to help! (This is, of course, not for puppies and geriatrics.) This will keep your dog in condition. It promotes muscle tone, but it does not build muscle. The latter develops with the unrestrained gallop, from dogs chasing each other, lure coursing, etc.. Both types of exercise are needed to develop a Deerhound and keep them fit and healthy. If you have facilities for only the former, that at least should be provided. If you cannot even provide that, consider some other type of dog.

The use of a car for conditioning? I have seen it done. It's gross; also, it's dangerous to the dog, to other motorists and to you. It wastes gas and it forces your dog to breathe in exhaust fumes; it's a good way to throttle your dog or have him hit by a car. A definite no to this kind of exercise. Any able-bodied person using this method should trade in their hound for a Pug or Peke. As for walking and jogging, I conclude that no mortal man or woman is capable of over-exercising a healthy adult Deerhound on foot.

## MEDICAL RECORD - VACCINATIONS

**Puppies:** An appropriate vaccination protocol recommended by veterinarians is as follows:

- The standard 3 shot series for puppies is Distemper (MLV) and Parvovirus (MLV) (e.g. Intervet; Progard Puppy) starting at 9 weeks and then again at 12 weeks and 16-20 weeks. Immunity for parainfluenza and bordetella (two important agents that cause kennel cough) are best given by nose drops 3 days before a show or potential exposure.
- Rabies vaccine (killed) should be given after 24 weeks.
- Heartworm medication is necessary if they are prevalent in your area.

**Adults:** An appropriate vaccination protocol recommended by veterinarians is as follows:

- Booster at 1 year MLV Distemper/Parvovirus only. No further boosters are needed as studies indicate that the duration of immunity is 7.5 to 15 years, probably lifetime. HOWEVER, if you show actively, course, or use the public dog parks and generally expose your dog to other dogs regularly, check titers annually or do boosters every three years.
- At 1 year give at least 3-4 weeks apart from the Distemper/Parvo booster, a killed 3 year rabies vaccine. Follow the legal requirements to vaccinate in your state or province.

**Vaccines not recommended for dogs:** Corona, Lyme.

See Dr. Jean Dodds at: <http://www.weim.net/emberweims/Vaccine.html>





Am. Can. Ch. Pennant's Ghost (Ch. Fernhill's Turbulent Indigo X Ch. Fernhill's Encore) pictured at 13 years of age • Owned by Nancy and Bill Logan

## AN ABC OF DEERHOUND IDIOSYNCRACIES

*A Few Tips Accumulated after Forty years with Deerhounds*

### AGE

Old age for a deerhound female is 11-13 years and for a male 9-11 years. Not enough Deerhounds make it to old age. The true average life span in North America is 9.8 years for females and 8.3 for males based on the 2011 Scottish Deerhound Club of America's (SDCA) health survey. In the 1995 survey these numbers were 8.9 and 8.4 respectively. Cars are the most preventable killer of Deerhounds (or should that be rephrased as owner carelessness). Not many Deerhounds ever grasp that anything faster and more lethal than themselves can possibly exist. Heart failure due to dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) or other causes, and bone cancer (osteosarcoma) are the two most frequent causes of health related death, with torsion-bloat (stomach and splenic) following close behind. All three have a clear familial link, with DCM and osteosarcoma being inherited. This is tragic for owners and breeders. Check on the longevity of the ancestors of the dog you are purchasing. While there is a big element of luck in owning a thirteen year old Deerhound, there is dedication involved as well. Feed a well balanced diet with lots of raw (i.e. chicken necks); don't over inoculate; keep stress levels down. If there is a single secret to longevity in Deerhounds, it is keeping them happy with lots of exercise and love. They are quite capable of worrying themselves to death if their lives are disrupted.

### ANESTHESIA IN SIGHTHOUNDS

*Betty Stephenson, D.V.M. ("Kyleakin Deerhounds") 2012*

Anesthesia in sighthounds has in the past been fraught with danger, primarily because the anesthetics most commonly used were metabolized differently in them than in most other breeds. Very low

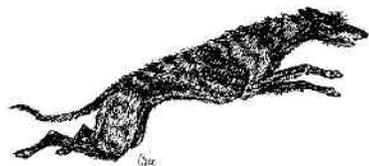
body fat does not allow for drugs like barbiturates to sequester, thus causing very long recovery times. Also, the liver enzyme induction system in sighthounds differs from other dogs and they appear to metabolize drugs more as cats do. However, today the ultra short barbiturates are used less commonly and have been replaced in many practices by drugs that sighthounds metabolize in the same way as other dogs.

My anesthetic protocol for general surgery in sighthounds usually includes butorphanol as a pre-anesthetic agent given intramuscularly ten minutes prior to induction or IV immediately before. Induction with propofol; or with ketamine/diazepam which is mixed in the same syringe 1:1, 1cc per 10 pounds given intravenously. I find it difficult to keep a very large dog deep enough to perform abdominal surgery if I use isoflurane with propofol so when using this agent, I usually use sevoflurane. Propofol is used at 3cc per 10 pounds intravenously, though I usually use a maximum dose of about 20cc, even for very large dogs. It's safe to give to effect if the initial dose isn't enough. With ketamine/diazepam, isoflurane works well. High risk patients may be masked with sevoflurane, but in my experience, large dogs become very stressed when masked, to the point where I believe most are better off with "balanced anesthesia", or using a combination of drugs to lower the amounts needed of each one.

Other sedatives that seem to be safe for most sighthounds include oxymorphone and acepromazine. Rompun (xylazine) has too high a potential for inciting cardiac arrhythmias to make it a viable agent in any small animal practice today. A similar product which maintains the analgesic properties of xylazine and the sedative effect of the Rompun/ketamine combination is Domitor, which



## AN ABC OF DEERHOUND IDIOSYNCRASIES



is sold as a combined product and is reversible with an agent that is sold separately (Antesedan). It can be given intravenously for immediate effect or intramuscularly, and provides enough sedation and pain control for suturing lacerations. If prolonged sedation is desirable (for example, the animal is highly excitable - not too likely in Deerhounds!), it needn't be reversed and will provide several hours of stupor.

I always insert an IV catheter in any animal under general anesthesia and provide IV fluid support for any surgery unless it's very minor like suturing small lacerations. Most veterinarians routinely run blood tests before anesthetizing any patient, paying particular attention to plasma protein concentration and red cell, white cell and platelet counts to detect anemia, dehydration, infection, or potential clotting problems that aren't apparent clinically. Greyhounds (we now know that all sighthounds do) have higher red blood cell counts, lower white blood cell and platelet counts, and lower total plasma protein concentrations than other dogs, which is important to remember when evaluating pre-anesthetic blood tests. Monitoring for every patient includes temperature, electrocardiogram and blood pressure monitoring, with a dedicated technician throughout the procedure. The safety of any anesthetic protocol depends on several things, including the anesthetist's familiarity with drugs used, the appropriateness of

the protocol as determined by pre-anesthetic laboratory evaluation, and the extent of patient monitoring. Sighthounds are now at about the same risk under general anesthesia as any other breed of dog if modern agents and monitoring are utilized.

Some sighthounds, including Deerhounds, appear to be predisposed to a life-threatening condition called malignant hyperthermia. Malignant hyperthermia is a sudden, rapid rise in body temperature. During an episode, temperature can rise as fast as two degrees every five minutes. Malignant hyperthermia is an inherited disorder of skeletal muscle characterized by hypercarbia, rhabdomyolysis, generalized skeletal muscle contracture, cardiac dysrhythmia, and renal failure. Triggering events can be a drug, an anesthetic, over-exertion, or stress (injury, surgery, emotional anxiety). Sometimes there's no clue what the triggering event is. Anesthetizing a sighthound always carries the risk of triggering malignant hyperthermia, especially if the hound or one of its relatives has ever had an episode of malignant hyperthermia or if one of its relatives died of unknown causes during routine anesthesia. Treatment is twofold: cooling the affected hound and injecting dantrolene, 2-3 mg/kg IV one time.

Postoperative bleeding 24-48 hours after surgical procedures is a known complication in Deerhounds but has only very recently been compared to the thrombolysis seen in Greyhounds - clot fragility

which allows postsurgical clots to dissolve too early, leaving the patient with life-threatening bleeding. Administering oral aminocaproic acid (Amicar) three times daily for five days after surgery appears to preclude this possibility. The dosage is 8 mg/lb and the drug can be administered even after bleeding begins and is effective.

### **ANAL GLANDS**

Anal glands can be a real pain in the ass. Have them checked periodically and expressed if full or impacted. You should learn how to do this and the procedure is explained in the home vet text recommended in this Primer. "Scooting" or a distinct odour under the tail with a "wet look" around the anus indicates trouble. Chances are the glands are infected. There are two ways to handle this and both methods should be used. The glands should be expressed, flushed out with a saline solution and then packed with an antibiotic ointment such as Panalog. A culture and sensitivity (C&S) test must be done so that the dog is also placed on the appropriate oral antibiotic. Do not assume that a broad spectrum antibiotic will be effective. I know of several Deerhounds that are no longer with us when the anal gland infection spread to the kidneys. The dogs were on a broad spectrum antibiotic that had no effect on the bacteria. A C & S test is necessary. Persistent anal gland infections may, as a last resort, be dealt with by the removal of the offending sacs.

### **ANTIBIOTICS**

Awareness of the fact that some Deerhounds have had negative reactions to certain drugs is critical. The most common drugs that Deerhounds have an adverse reaction to are sulpha based

antibiotics. Lots of Deerhounds have had problems with sulpha drugs and several have died. Reactions include platelet count depression (thrombocytopenia) and white cell depression (leukopenia). The dog may get sluggish, bruise easily, and bleed from other areas. Avoid Trimethoprim-sulpha antibiotics which include veterinary brands such as: Tribriksen, Di-Trim, Uniprim, generic Sulphadiazine & Trimethoprim. Human brands include: Bactrim, Septra, Sulphatrim, generic Sulphamethoxazole & Trimethoprim. No sulpha drugs should be on your dog's medical file. Avoid chloramphenicol, another antibiotic to which some Deerhounds have had toxic reaction that manifest in major body swelling, especially in the head area.

Ampicillin and amoxicillin are usually benign. Clavamox and Cephalexin can cause some nausea and inappetite (always give with food), but are pretty well tolerated. Remember, any drug can cause an individual negative response. Use drugs judiciously and be observant.

When oral antibiotics are prescribed for your dog, add yogurt to the meals or give daily doses of probiotics (from a health food store). Antibiotics kill the flora in the stomach and these need to be replaced for proper digestion through the use of additional "friendly" bacteria.

### **ADOLESCENT PIMPLES**

Young puppies get lumps and spots on their belly from dirt and bacteria. These can blow up into nasty looking purple welts and then burst open. Don't panic or vet the puppy. Just wipe clean with a solution of hydrogen peroxide and eventually they will heal. These disappear as your pup gets higher off the ground.



## AN ABC OF DEERHOUND IDIOSYNCRACIES



Dog bed (double thickness preferred)...

### BEDS

Inside the house and outside, your Deerhound should have his own bed. I prefer a minimum of 6" of fiberfill (quilting) with some chopped foam in a 4' x 4' covered pad and then inserted in a zippered canvas bag for easy washing. If you don't provide something very soft your dog will get callused elbows, which are unsightly and very difficult to get rid of, or worse, they may develop a bursa (water on the elbow). Most Deerhounds spend their time indoors on the couch. If you don't provide an equally comfortable spot on the floor, you can just about write off your sofa for human use. Styrofoam bead bags flatten with time and foam blocks or chipped foam for some reason will incite in your Deerhound



...or sofa

puppy a primeval desire to trash the bed into a million microscopic pieces. A lawn covered in shredded foam takes forever to vacuum up and tends to make the neighbours worry about your sanity.

### BLOAT/TORSION/VOLVULUS - GASTRITIS

Bloat (gastric dilatation) is a life-threatening condition that some Deerhounds seem susceptible to. It occurs when the stomach swells up with gas, fluid or both. Once distended, it may rotate on its long axis (gastric dilatation/volvulus - GDV).

Signs are tight stomach muscles, reluctance to move, possibly some drooling... acute abdominal pain with or without a distended stomach.

A mild gastric dilatation (gas) not complicated by a twist of the stomach on its axis or any other signs of severe distress is not an acute emergency and can be treated at home with an anti-gas (simethicone) and anti-acid (ranitidine) oral preparation. Keep both handy in your home vet kit. There are acupuncture points on the rear stifle that can also work miracles when you hear ominous gurgling. Stimulation of the "Stomach 36" point, helps relieve digestive problems, such as stomach bloat, diarrhoea, vomiting of water and constipation. The location is just below the knee in a depression in the middle of the muscle on the outside of the shinbone. With your fingertips or thumb, use steady pressure on Stomach 36 for thirty seconds to one minute or massage in a circular motion. If you can't locate the exact acupuncture point, massage the general area. Check out internet sources for the details on this: <http://www.yourholisticdog.com/canine-acupressure-first-aid>

If you are unsure, however, do not take chances. Torsion is a life and death situation and requires immediate attention.

#### **Generally, dogs that bloat**

- eat large quantities of dry kibble without extras such as the stew mentioned under feeding, or the raw meats recommended
- eat too quickly
- are uptight and nervous;
- tend to drink water in large quantities after meals;
- have a history of gas, gurgling stomachs and gastritis.

**You must move quickly. This will kill your dog within a few hours.**

#### **BROKEN TOES**

This is a common occurrence in Deerhounds. Do not have the whole leg immobilised with a cast. Keep just the toes immobilised by binding a fibreglass foot pad to the bottom of the foot that allows as much articulation at the pastern as possible but keeps the toes immobilised. A little cotton wool between the toes before setting to keep the interior dry and then check every 3 to 4 days to ensure everything looks healthy. Try and keep the foot pad on for two weeks... a major feat with a puppy. This may require that dreaded Elizabethan collar!

#### **BOARDING**

If you have to leave your Deerhound, please at all costs avoid boarding kennels. They do not have the facilities for a dog of this size and chances are your Deerhound won't eat until you get back. Find a house/pet sitter or leave him with doggy friends or relatives.

#### **BURSA ("Bubble Butt")**

When your Deerhound's elbow or rump bones hit the ground with a thud as they do when puppies flop down to rest, a large sac the size of an orange may develop at the point of impact. This fills with fluid, which protects the point of impact/injury. While the size can be alarming and puppies look very sad as they gallop about with these bags bouncing on their pelvic bones, they do disappear if you leave them alone, which is preferable to having your vet try to drain them. Provide puppies and adults with a soft bed to lie on and you will minimise this problem. Bursas do develop occasionally regardless how you pamper your pet.



## AN ABC OF DEERHOUND IDIOSYNCRACIES

### “CHEESE TEST”

It is not always easy to tell if your adult Deerhound is under the weather or simply being its normal laid back self; nor is it always easy to tell if your old couch potato is alive or not.

One tried and true method that surpasses a thermometer, pulse test or fogging mirror under the nose is a piece of cheese (old Canadian cheddar is best) waved one-eighth of an inch in front of the nostrils. If there is no reaction you have either a critically ill Deerhound or it has quietly passed away.

### COURSING

Lure coursing was developed to give sighthounds, primarily bred for hunting, a chance to exercise the inbred skills which today are no longer used. Plastic bags are tied to a continuous loop of string about 2000 ft. (700 metres) in length and a series of pulleys and tie-downs enable a lure operator to simulate the irregular action of pursued game. Sighthounds have a fanatical urge to chase and love this activity.

It is a competitive sport with judges (usually two), scoring the dogs' performance on speed, endurance, follow, agility, and enthusiasm. In a sanctioned (AKC, ASFA, CKC) event, your dog will run twice against other Deerhounds or other breeds and the score for both runs are totalled and posted. The first four placements are awarded points toward their field championship which they earn after achieving 100 points.

Open-field coursing is the ultimate in coursing and that involves the chase after hares — also conducted as a competitive event in parts of the U.S.A. Deerhounds seldom have the agility to be effective hare killers so this sport is usually bloodless but exciting for all!

### “DEERHOUND NECK” AND SPINAL PROBLEMS

The long spinal column of the Deerhound and the violent athleticism of this breed make it susceptible to herniated discs or other spinal problems. If your dog squeals with pain as it tries to raise its head from a lying position or holds its head at a stiff unnatural angle, lies stationary in a sphinx-like position, it likely has suffered some trauma to the spine. Have your vet confirm the diagnosis through a physical examination. I would not advise a myelogram to confirm the diagnosis. It is extremely painful and not necessary. Besides, there is seldom anything that can be done about “Deerhound Neck” surgically. Analgesics that have been



“Tally-ho”

used successfully with Deerhounds are as follows: Meloxicam (trade name: Metacam); Carprofen (trade name: Rimadyl...not always safe with Deerhounds); Ketoprofen (trade name: Anafen); and the synthetic analogue of codeine Tramadol (trade name: Ultram). No violent activity and time will help. Chiropractors have also been very beneficial for this problem. This may take more than a year to resolve but most recover on their own without surgical intervention. Physiotherapy and acupuncture may also assist in the healing process. Steroid treatment (anti-inflammatory) may be worth a try. Avoid the painkiller phenylbutazone ("bute") for puppies as it can be fatal.

#### **DIARRHOEA ("The Squirts")**

Puppies are like animated vacuum cleaners. They sample everything in sight and invariably end up with bouts of diarrhoea. Pepto-Bismol (1 ml/lb/day) or Kaolin based squirt medicines are your best bet for occasional diarrhoea. Don't worry about it unless the dog has a temperature as well (over 102°), seems listless, in pain or has blood in the stool. If diarrhoea is accompanied by loss of appetite, depression or dehydration, immediate attention is required.

#### **EARS**

Deerhounds very seldom have ear problems (as they are so high off the ground). An occasional swabbing out with a diluted white vinegar solution or a brand name otic cleansing solution should keep them clean. Check regularly. If you detect an odour and/or quantities of brown wax see your vet. Panalog applied in the ear will solve the problem.

#### **FLEAS**

Don't use flea collars on your Deerhound. Some types are quite lethal to greyhound type dogs, which it says in very fine print inside the package. Advantage and Frontline Plus have revolutionised the life of Deerhounds wherever there are fleas. The active ingredients selamectin, fipronil, imidacloprid appear to be safe on Deerhounds.

#### **"GOOBERS-IN-THE-EYES"**

Some puppies (and adults) have a tendency to get a mucus build-up in their eye corners. This appears most often between 6 months to 2 years when the eyes and eye socket growth don't seem to quite keep pace with each other. Don't fuss over it. The best way to deal with this if it occurs is a Kleenex tip or Q-tip. Should the discharge be yellowish, a slight infection has set in which will clear up quickly with an ophthalmic ointment.

#### **LARYNGOSPASM ("Wheezles")**

This is actually a common problem in all dogs but is alarming when your Deerhound suddenly stops in its tracks and wheezes for breath (reverse sneezing). It seems to be triggered by a specific type of behaviour such as swallowing something abrasive. The noise is created when the opening to the trachea at the larynx spasms shut creating a slit-like opening instead of opening into a nice wide round tube. Even though the opening is large enough to allow adequate air to get through, it is narrow enough to cause turbulence and noise. You can alleviate the spasm by rubbing the dog's throat, but since the spasms are so short, let them come and go.



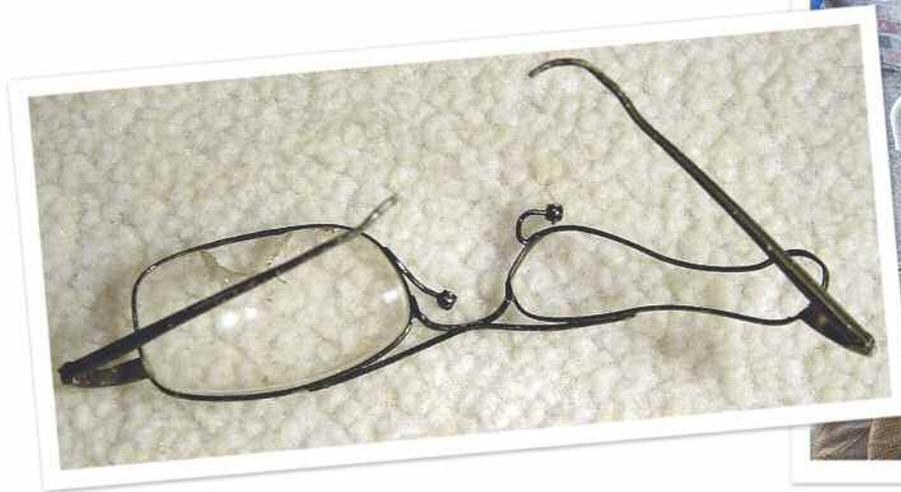
## AN ABC OF DEERHOUND IDIOSYNCRACIES

### MATURING

A Deerhound takes a long time (2½ to 3 years) to mature and will go through strange phases in the process both mentally and physically. Puppies that appear impossibly wild and wayward do become quiet and staid at three. That long leggy look should eventually fill out to a solid deep-chested adult. The rear, which seems to grow upward much faster than the front half, during the first year will eventually become balanced and broader. The bits and pieces that grow at different rates do come together but it takes time - a good three years. A full coat comes at that age. Sometimes it is hard to remember that a 1 1/2 year old 90 lb puppy is like a four-year-old child and can do things like this... Be patient....and be tidy!

### NAILS

Clip nails weekly with nail clippers such as the Resco Jumbo or some other solid type. You must get your pup used to this. There is nothing worse than trying to catch and pin down a resisting 100 lb adult whose long claws are damaging your hardwood floors or bed covers where they nest when you leave them at home alone.



Ooops... • Photo (R) by Lesa Newbitt



A winter's morning at Fern Hill • Photo by James Luce

## AN ABC OF DEERHOUND IDIOSYNCRACIES

### RESCUE REMEDIES: ELECTROLYTES

Deerhounds that feel under the weather due to illness and surgery often decide to die. It helps to have electrolyte ingredients and the famous Magic Meatballs ready in your freezer plus an iron will on your part to keep your dog alive. Oral electrolytes help rehydrate your dog after dehydration caused by extreme exertion or illness that may involve vomiting or diarrhoea. Here is a simple recipe. Add the following ingredients to one litre of water (.946 litre = 1 quart) and use a syringe or turkey baster to slowly infuse it into a cheek pocket so it can be swallowed:

- $\frac{2}{3}$  tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. baking soda
- 8 tsp. table sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$  tsp. potassium chloride



### RESCUE REMEDIES: MAGIC MEATBALLS

Magic Meatballs are considered irresistible and are easily tolerated...mix the following together in a huge mixing bowl:

- 10 lbs hamburger (go for cheap with a high fat %)
- 8 cups of cooked cereal (make this from 1 cup of cracked wheat, 1 cup of cracked rye, 2 tablespoons of cracked flax, 2 tbs whole flax seed, added to 6 cups of water. Cook and stir for 5 minutes after bringing it to boil. Add the 10 egg whites and stir. Then cool. In Canada this nutritious cooked cereal is called "Red River cereal";
- Add enough dry pre-cooked (i.e. "quick") oatmeal to make the mixture easy to shape into bite sized balls
- 10 egg whites separated and *cooked* in cereal
- 10 raw egg yolks
- 1 15 oz jar wheat germ (about 4 cups)
- 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup vegetable oil (sunflower is good)
- 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup un-sulphured molasses
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp of probiotics get mixed into this just before feeding

Note: Mix all together and make into tablespoon sized balls that can be frozen or freeze in packs that supply a daily ration. It is important to stick to the proportions. Thaw what you need, add the probiotics and pop down your dog's throat...until they eat voluntarily!

## SEASONS/SPAYING/NEUTERING

The average age for the first season appears to be around 14 months and your boy may take a year before he lifts his leg. If you intend to have your Deerhound spayed, wait until after her first season... preferably after she is 5 years. Early spay/neuter has been implicated in bone cancer. See Laura J. Sanborn (2007) *The Long Term Health Effects of Spay/Neuter in Dogs* for a good summary of the research on this subject, and also I.M.Reichler (2009) "Gonadectomy in Cats and Dogs: A Review of Risks and Benefits" in *Reproduction in Domestic Animals* vol 44 (Suppl. 2): 29-35. Male and female hormones are needed to develop properly. Males may or may not be interested in your female during her first season as some do not appear to ovulate. Don't take any chances. While neutering your male is seldom necessary or advisable, if you have a pair of Deerhounds be VERY careful!! As a sober warning let me mention my litter of 22 live puppies from an (almost) 3 year old, bred on her second season!

## SHOWING

If you want to show, here are some words of wisdom to keep in mind:

- anyone who shows a Deerhound under 2-3 years is a real sucker for punishment;
- anyone who shows a puppy at indoor matches has a good chance of subsidising the expansion of his favourite veterinary clinic;
- anyone who shows a Deerhound that is not in top physical condition is a great source of embarrassment to the breed;
- take handling classes and look professional, your dog deserves it;
- train your dog to enjoy the process and the show itself;
- don't look shocked or surprised if you win;
- keep smiling and don't take it too seriously!



GCH Foxcliffe Hickory Wind, BIS, Westminster, USA 2011  
Handled by Angela Lloyd • Bred by Ceil and Scott Dove  
Photo by Steve Surfman



**SCOTTISH DEERHOUNDS AND STRESS**

*(First printed in The Windhound, September 1983)*

Deerhounds, I have found, are noted for their inability to cope with stress. It is their sensitivity that makes them such a delightful breed to live with; however, that also makes them tricky to raise. A predisposition to "fall apart" physically or to fall prey to certain weaknesses in their genetic makeup seems to occur when they are subjected to stress. That is, of course, a broad generalization, but the cases are frequent enough for me to conclude that it is a Deerhound characteristic.

From the time they are puppies, Deerhounds are noticeably different from other breeds in the way they react to certain situations. For example, their reaction to strangers picking them up is that they invariably go catatonic in their arms. Shipped in a crate for the first time, they don't howl or frantically scratch to get out; they go comatose and officials assume they are drugged. They stop eating in strange surroundings, or in familiar surroundings when their owners leave. They will wither away from a minor ailment, exhibiting no will to live. Stress situations are known to trigger bloat, heart problems, skin diseases, etc.

We hear of top-winning bitches that are bred and rebred that fail to conceive, or produce one or two pups. Are these bitches, who are campaigned heavily, failing to ovulate normally because they are under tremendous stress? (Similar to female athletes under intensive training whose menstrual cycle ceases, a rather common occurrence). It may be that their resistance is lower at a time when they are exposed to a vast array of bacteria and they become more susceptible to vaginal and uterine infections.

Perhaps the most obvious sign to a breeder of the Deerhound's

susceptibility to stress are those puppies that fail to grow up to their maximum potential as a result of environmental factors. After working with certain bloodlines for a number of litters, most breeders have a fairly good idea of how an eight-week-old puppy will mature. On two occasions, I have been totally wrong. One was a male that should have been pushing thirty-three inches at the shoulder and 110 pounds at a year old. However, by the time he was a year old, he had his C.D. Title and had been to every match and show in the district. He was friendly and well-adjusted and spent his non-working hours on a water bed. But, at a year, he weighed only seventy-five pounds. He fulfilled his height expectations but the stress had taken its toll. He lacked bone and body...but I will admit (sheepishly) that he lived to be 14 years old! I have found that a puppy's weight gain is notably altered by the changes that take place in its environment. One litter I raised had to spend six hours in the car every weekend commuting with me. When the litter was split up, those that travelled did not gain as rapidly as those that remained in one place. It makes sense, but visually it's difficult to detect the results of the stress the puppies were subjected to. They slept or played in the back of the car and seemed no worse for the trip. Only a monitoring of their weight and growth picked up on the physical reality of the situation.

As a result of the stress factor, I have a strong preference as to how Deerhounds should be raised, particularly during that first critical year. I feel that the strain of growing in itself is enough for any Deerhound puppy. Any other stress should be minimised. Socialise, sleep, and play away that first year. There is plenty of time later for formal training, showing, coursing, etc. When they are physically mature and mentally more knowing, most Deerhounds

can handle any situation that they are introduced to gradually. Too much stress at too young an age, I feel, jeopardizes their physical development and can result in problems later on in life.

### **TAILS (“Stud Dog Tail”)**

Dogs have an extra oily area about one-third of the way from the base of their tail on the top, known in wolves as the “pre-caudal tail gland.” This circular area of skin is different from the skin anywhere else on the dog’s body. Much more noticeable in older male dogs, this zone is more active in the presence of male hormones. The hairs here emerge singularly; no compound hair follicles are present. The skin of the tail gland area is rich in sebaceous and apocrine glands. It is not uncommon for this area especially in older dogs to be hairless due to frictional loss of the coarse, single hairs.



The Long Dash • Photo by Luis Saenz



Am. Can. Ch. Gwent's Trefor O'Fernhill

## TAIL INJURIES

Stemming the flow of blood from a cut or injury on the tip of the tail can be a real problem that at its worst may result in amputation of the tip by frustrated vets and owners. There is no easy solution to this, but here are methods that have worked:

- “Kwik-Stop” on the cut. This is a product developed for overzealous nail cutters that leave their dogs with a bleeding nail quick;
- invert the tail so that the tip points upward rather than hanging down either by taping it in a loop up the leg or fashioning a sling that hooks around the hips and holds the tail upright;
- treat the tail (saline, antibiotic cream) and pad it about with soft cotton and then place the tail in a length of foam pipe wrap that is designed to hang from a sling about the waist...pictured to the right. This is an inexpensive effective way of protecting the tail. If self adhesive vet wrap is used over the soft cotton, don't wrap too tight!! . There should be no pressure on the tail as its circulation is very poor.

## VAGINITIS

Common in female puppies are bouts of “vaginitis” (copious pus-like discharge). This is actually the mucous producing cells overdoing it before the first heat cycle. It is not an infection and antibiotics will not make it go away. It will go away when the bitch has her first heat cycle.

## WORMS

Your puppy will have been wormed several times (2 weeks, 6 weeks and 8 weeks) before you get him. Puppies generally have round

worms. Check for worms at 3 months and every 3 months thereafter until the dog is over a year. Then, an annual check should be sufficient unless the dog's condition merits an unscheduled inspection. Dogs invariably get tapeworms from fleas or eating rabbits. For roundworms, use Strongid-T or Pyr-a-pam (pyrantel pamoate), for tapeworms use Droncit, do not use Telminitic (active ingredient mebendazole). If you are in a heartworm area, have your vet prescribe caricide or ivermectin base pills. Do not use any wormer which uses oxibendazole (for hook worms and roundworms) as it can cause liver damage.





Fernhill's Mary Electra Buchanan, Aged 6 months • Photo by James Forrester

## YOU AND YOUR VETERINARIAN

*What your DVM needs to know about Deerhounds!*

Find a vet that you feel comfortable with and trust. You should always have explained to you what may be wrong with your dog, the name of any medication that is prescribed, and any risks in using it. Common sense is necessary in relating to your vet. No one knows your dog better than yourself. Don't get talked into an anaesthetic for x-rays or stitching small wounds. This only adds to your bill and jeopardises the life of your dog. Don't leave your dog overnight for minor problems. Deerhounds don't respond well in unfamiliar surroundings. Try not to "over-vet" your dog. A little "benign neglect" or a "wait and see" attitude may be better than an immediate high tech solution. Check with the breeder or some other long term Deerhound owner for options when things go wrong. Always watch for tell-tale signs. An easily readable rectal thermometer is a necessity. Normal for a dog is 101°-102°. An elevated temperature tells you something is wrong. Head off to your clinic quickly.

Not all veterinarians are familiar with Deerhounds or Sighthounds. It is up to you to ensure that your vet is aware of differences between Deerhounds and other breeds. There are some basic physiological differences between Deerhounds and other breeds (i.e. "normal dogs") that your vet should know about.

### **Copy the next few pages and place it on your dogs file at your clinic:**

- great risk from anaesthesia when injectable barbiturates are used. Give your vet a copy of Betty Stephenson, DVM's Anaesthesia article (see: the A B Cs Section);
- low end of the "normal" range for thyroid levels
- low (50 bpm) to irregular heart rate with a marked sinoatrial arrhythmia. Make certain that your vet has a copy of the echocardiogram normal values for Deerhounds (see below);
- higher than normal heart weight (volume) to body weight ratio
- higher than average blood pressure
- higher red blood cell counts, lower white blood cell counts and lower total plasma protein concentration
- sensitivity to certain drugs: sulpha-trimethaprim
- predisposition to malignant hyperthermia
- predisposition to post operative bleeding. Every Deerhound that undergoes elective surgery should be given aminocaproic acid\* for the next 5 days to reduce the risk of delayed post-operative bleeding. Aminocaproic acid is available in 500 mg scored tablets. The dose should be as follows (basically 8 mg/lb):

<b>Dog Weight</b>	<b>Dose Every 8 Hours</b>
55 to 79 lbs	500 mg (1 tablet)
80 to 104 lbs	750 mg (1 ½ tablet)
> 105 lbs	1000 mg (2 tablets)

*Source: Dillberger, J. 2011. "Post Operative Bleeding in Greyhounds and what it means for Deerhounds." The Claymore May-June 2011: 6-9 (publication of the S.D.C.A)*

*\*Tranexamic acid (range from 5 to 10 mg/kg of body weight 3 times a day) can be used instead of Amicar (aminocaproic acid) starting the day of the surgery and continuing for 5-6 days. (Source: personal communication Dr. Couto July 17, 2012)*





Illustration by Sir Edwin Landseer R.A., (1802 - 1873)

Table 3 and its Source on page 36 should be given to your vet as well as the heart data below.

#### **CLINICAL GUIDE FOR ECHOCARDIOGRAM EXAMINATION FOR SCOTTISH DEERHOUNDS**

(Your vet **MUST** be given a copy of this!)

The normal ranges for Scottish Deerhound heart parameters should be shared with your veterinarian and specialist. These values were established by Dr. Philip Fox, from the cardiac clinic he did at the Vermont National Specialty in 2004. While not published by Dr. Fox, these parameters are confirmed by Dr. Vollmar in *Kleintierpraxis* (1998) 43: 497-508.

#### **Scottish Deerhound General Clinical Guide for Echocardiographic Examination**

Based upon an average weight 100 lbs/45 kg:

- Left atrium should be no larger than 50-55 mm
- Aorta should be no wider than 30-33 mm
- LA:Ao ratio should be <1.5:1
- Left ventricle end-diastolic dimension should be no greater than 55-60 mm
- Left ventricle end-systolic dimension should be no greater than 40-45 mm
- LV Wall end-diastolic thickness should be >8-9mm
- LV Shortening fraction should generally be >20 %, and more commonly, >25%
- Heart Rhythm should be sinus or sinus arrhythmia

Note: The echocardiogram is one part of the database that includes medical history, physical examination, ECG, and chest radiograph. Optimal diagnosis is based upon consideration of these variables.

These should be used as GENERAL guidelines for a normal dog. A particularly large or small animal, could fall outside of this range.

#### **VETERINARY PRIMER**

*The Dog Owners Home Veterinary Handbook* (2007) D.M. Eldredge DVM, L.D. Carlson DVM, D.G. Carlson DVM, J.M. Giffin MD, B. Adelman (ed) ISBN: 978-0-470-06785-7 is an excellent non-technical reference manual for the lay person. I would also suggest for alternative feeding regimes and a "natural" approach, Dr. Pitcairn's *Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs & Cats* (Rodale Press, 1995).

**Table 3: Analytes and Features Characteristic of Greyhound Dogs Compared with Those of Other Breeds**

Higher Values	Lower Values	Unique Features
PCV/HCT	WBC count	Non-staining eosinophil granules
RBC count	Neutrophil count	Higher frequency of DEA 1.1- negative dogs
Hemoglobin concentration	Platelet count	
MCV*	Fibrinogen	
MCHC	TEG values: K-time, angle, MA, and G	
Hemoglobin affinity for O <sub>2</sub>	Potassium	
Creatinine	Phosphate	
Glomerular filtration rate	Calcium, ionized	
Alanine aminotransferase	Magnesium, ionized	
Aspartate aminotransferase	Serum total protein	
Sodium	Total globulins	
Chloride	$\alpha$ and $\beta$ globulins	
Total CO <sub>2</sub>	IgA and IgM	
Bicarbonate	Haptoglobin	
Cardiac troponin I	Total T <sub>4</sub> and free T <sub>4</sub>	

**Abbreviated Hematology Values**

PCV	Packed cell volume
HCT	Hematocrit
WBC	White blood cells
RBC	Red blood cells
DEA	Dog Erythrocyte Antigen
MCV*	Mean cell volume
MCHC	Mean corpuscular hemoglobin concentration
TEG	Thromboelastography
K Time	Blood clot values
MA and G	Blood clot values
IgA IgM	Antibodies
T <sub>4</sub>	Thyroid hormone

\* Reported in one study only

Source: S. Zaldivar-Lopez, L.M. Marin, M.C. Iazbik, N. Westendorf-Stingle, S. Hensley, C.G. Couto, "Clinical pathology of Greyhounds and other sighthounds" *Veterinary Clinical Pathology* 40/4 (2011) 414-425



VETERINARY FIRST AID KIT

There are doggy First Aid Kits that can be purchased or made up yourself and the essentials should include:

- ✓ cotton gauze bandage wrap,
- ✓ Vet Wrap,
- ✓ Adhesive tape roll
- ✓ Non-stick (Telfa) bandages,
- ✓ cotton gauze pads,
- ✓ cotton swabs or Q-tips,
- ✓ rectal thermometer,
- ✓ tweezers,
- ✓ LED head lamp or small flashlight for peering into orifices,
- ✓ haemostat (for pulling ticks, thorns, large splinters, etc),
- ✓ small blunt end scissors,
- ✓ tooth scraper for removing tartar
- ✓ 3 ml syringe & 35 cc syringe
- ✓ paper towels

Then there are some do-it-yourself remedies that should be in your kit that are useful only if applied in tandem with a lot of common sense and some experience. The basics include:

- ✓ Sterile saline solution (contact lens squirt bottle works well) for flushing out eye contaminants and wounds
- ✓ Styptic powder for stopping small wounds from bleeding
- ✓ Epsom salt (mix 1 teaspoon in 2 cups of warm water) for drawing out infection and bathing itchy paws and skin
- ✓ Electrolytes or electrolyte ingredients for rehydrating

- ✓ Benadryl 1-2 mg per lb, every 8 hrs (65 lb dog, 2-4 25 mg tablets every 8 hrs) (itching, allergies, bug bites and stings)
- ✓ Aspirin 5 mg per lb every 12 hrs ( 325 mg tablet per 65 lb dog per 12 hrs) (pain relief and anti-inflammatory). For long term pain management use liquid Metacam (meloxicam) for treatment of osteoarthritis, lameness. Rimadyl (Carprofen) may have side effects.
- ✓ hydrogen peroxide to induce vomiting: 1-3 tsp every 10 minutes until dog vomits
- ✓ Activated charcoal tablets (effective in absorbing many toxins)
- ✓ Pepto Bismol 1 tsp per 5 lb per 6 hours (3-4 tbsp per 65 lb dog per 6 hrs) (for stomach upset and the squirts)
- ✓ Kaopectate 1 ml per 1 lb per 2 hours (3-4 tbsp per 65 lb dog, 2 hrs) (for the squirts)
- ✓ Immodium 1 mg per 15 lbs 1-2 times daily (for the squirts)
- ✓ Simethicone (anti gas) 180 mg for gassy dogs and for gurgling stomachs add Ranitidine and then immediately figure out what triggered this off and eliminate it from the diet!
- ✓ Ranitidine (anti-acid) 150 mg for gurgling stomachs

The last two items are absolutely necessary for a Deerhound owner's First Aid Kit.

- ✗ **NEVER EVER** give Tylenol or ibuprofen (Nuprin, Motrin, Advil, etc.) which are toxic to dogs. Only aspirin is safe for dogs, and buffered aspirin or ascriptin is preferred to minimize stomach upset.

## PUPPY OR ADULT?

*There is simply no more delightful companion in the world than a wise old Deerhound.*

If reading Section 2 exhausted you, and suitable acreage for growing out a puppy exists only in your dreams; if you value your carpets, shoes, unblemished furniture and sanity, yet still long for a large, grey, hairy companion on your walks, consider purchasing an adult Deerhound. "Heresy! (you think), I need a puppy so that it will bond to me" Nonsense! An adolescent (up to three years) or adult will bond as firmly as a puppy. How quickly depends on the individual dog and the effort you put into the relationship. A Deerhound is very quick to sense when it has landed into a "gravy-train" set up and responds accordingly. Adjustment may take thirty seconds after entering your household or as much as three months. With time you should have a relationship that equals that of a hand reared puppy, but without the tell-tale signs that an undisciplined puppy once cavorted about your premises.

If you plan to acquire an older Deerhound, look for a house pet that has been well socialised and always insist on a lengthy enough trial period that gives the dog a chance to adjust and show its real personality. That typical Deerhound personality, sweet, gentle and loving, will invariably emerge although there may be an initial indifference or withdrawal stage. A kennel raised older Deerhound will likely pose some special problems that you will not encounter with a home raised dog. Fortunately, few Deerhounds are raised in that environment as they fail to develop properly, either mentally or physically.

A mature Deerhound is happy to spend most of the day ensconced on your couch, but will require daily (as a minimum) a long walk and a good run. If you fail to maintain this regime even with your twelve year old, the rear muscles will atrophy with age and your Deerhound will be unable to get up and lie down unassisted. It is

sad to have to put your old friend down when everything else is functioning simply because he can no longer move about. Fitness must be maintained throughout your dog's lifespan. Of course, common sense must prevail. You have to be careful not to overdo it. A thirteen year old of mine was happy to amble along at her own pace for about a mile, then either return on her own or lie in the sun waiting until the rest of the crowd came back. Geriatrics need to move along slowly and sniff at leisure. There is simply no more delightful companion in the world than a wise old Deerhound! It is hard to believe that at one time they were frustrating adolescents that could take off in hot pursuit after a mounted policeman trying desperately to stay on a bolting horse, while you shrieked your recall in vain (true story).

Judging from the number of Deerhound owners that specifically ask that their next dog be a young adult rather than a puppy, there is some-thing to be said for the instant perfect companion without the pain.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

There are a limited number of books available on Deerhounds and a lot of misinformation on the internet on this breed. The misinformation covers the myth about only royalty being able to own Deerhounds and describes them as “gentle giants”.

For a quick realist take on this breed check out Michele Welton “Scottish Deerhound - What’s Good About ‘Em; What’s Bad About ‘Em”

[www.yourpurebredpuppy.com/reviews/scottishdeerhounds.html](http://www.yourpurebredpuppy.com/reviews/scottishdeerhounds.html)

Have a look as well at:

[www.fernhill.com/about-deerhounds/deerhound-character](http://www.fernhill.com/about-deerhounds/deerhound-character)

Listed below are a few reference books that can still be found:

Bell, Weston.

**The Scottish Deerhound.** 1892

(Reprinted by Hoflin Publishing Inc., 4401 Sephyr St.,  
Wheat Ridge, Colorado, U.S.A. 80003)

Benbow, A.

**How To Raise and Train A Scottish Deerhound.**

Neptune City, N.J.: T.F.H.Publications, 1965, 1993

Cassels, Kenneth.

**A Most Perfect Creature of Heaven: The Scottish Deerhound.**

K.A.H.Cassels, 1997

Crealock, Lt.-General Henry Hope.

**Deerstalking in the Highlands of Scotland.**

London: Longmans & Green, 1892

Cunliffe, J.

**Deerhound.**

Dorking, Surrey, U.K.: Interpet Publishing, 2002

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**Scotch Deerhounds and their Masters.**

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

Hartley, A.N.

**The Deerhound.** 1986

(Available from the Scottish Deerhound Club of America and the Deerhound Club (U.K.)

**The Scottish Deerhound Annual.** Volumes were issued in 1980, 1981, 1982 and are available from Hoflin Publishing Inc.

Scrope, William.

**The Art of Deerstalking.**

London: John Murray, Albermarle Street, 1839

Not a specific Deerhound reference, this book is a valuable resource for all sighthound owners:

Blythe, L.L., Gannon, J.R., Craig, A.M.

**Care of the Racing Greyhound ~ A Guide for Trainers,**

**Breeders and Veterinarians.** Oregon: American

Greyhound Council Inc., USA, 1994

Cover

**Detail from Deer at Bay in a Torrent**

From *The Art of Deerstalking* by William Scrope, 1839

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**Champion Ayrshire**

Arthur Wardle, c. 1908

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**"The Titan Breaks Bay", at Balmacaan, Glen Urquhart**

H.H Crealock, 1873

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**Fernhill's Duncan, Luan, Gregor**

Linda DeLeau, 1998

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**Leaping Hound**

Obie Peck, c. 1990

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**Deerhound Head**

Sir Edwin Landseer R.A., (1802 - 1873)

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**Highland Dogs**

Sir Edwin Landseer R.A., c. 1839

Courtesy of Tate Britain, London U.K.

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Fernhill's Kendra  
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Nelungaloo Fair Dinkum at 11½ years of age • Owned by Heidi Groebli • Photo by Barbara Wickli

# YOUR SCOTTISH DEERHOUND PRIMER

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