

# FINNISH LAPPHUND

- BREED STANDARD
- HOW TO INTERPRET IT



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**FINNISH LAPPHUND Revised F.C.I. Standard No 189, dated 12.3.99  
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**BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY** – For hundreds of years the Lapps have used dogs of the same type as the Finnish Lapphund as reindeer herders and watchdogs in Finnish Scandinavia and in the northern parts of Russia. Due to these dogs, the first standard of the Lapponian Herder was established by the Finnish Kennel Club in 1945. The breed name was changed into Lapphund in 1967. In the 1970s the type and picture of the breed became fixed and the standard has been specified several times. The breed name was again changed to Finnish Lapphund in 1993. The breed type has become stable in a short time and today the breed is very popular in the whole of Finland, mainly as a house and hobby dog.

**GENERAL APPEARANCE** – Smaller than medium sized, its conformation is strong for its size, slightly longer than the height at the withers. Long and thick coated with pricked ears.

**Important Proportions** – The depth of the body is slightly less than half of the height at the withers. The muzzle is slightly shorter than the skull. The skull is slightly longer than broad, the depth is the same as the breadth.

**CHARACTERISTICS – Utilisation** – Originally a herder and watch dog used in the work of keeping reindeer. Today also popular as a companion dog.

**F.C.I. Classification** – Group 5 Spitz and primitive type, Section 3 Nordic Watchdogs and Herders.

**TEMPERAMENT** – Keen, courageous, calm and willing to learn. Friendly and Faithful.

**HEAD AND SKULL** – Strong in outline, rather broad.

**Cranial Region:**

**Skull** – Broad, slightly convex. The forehead is rather domed. The frontal furrow is clearly defined.

**Stop** – Clearly defined.

**Facial Region:**

**Nose** – Preferably black, yet harmonising with the coat colour.

**Muzzle** – Strong, broad and straight; viewed from above and in profile, evenly tapering, but only slightly.

**Lips** – Tight.

**Cheeks** – The zygomatic arches are clearly marked [defined].

**EYES** – Dark brown in colour, yet harmonising with the coat colour. Oval shaped. The expression is soft and friendly.

**EARS** – Medium sized. Carried **erect or semi-erect**, set rather far apart. Triangular in shape, rather broad at the base. Very mobile.

**MOUTH** – The jaws are strong. Scissor bite.

**NECK** – Medium in length, strong and covered with profuse hair.

**FOREQUARTERS – General Appearance-** Powerful with strong bones. Viewed from the front straight and parallel.

**Shoulders** – Slightly oblique.

**Upper Arm** – As long as the shoulder blade. The angle between shoulder and upper arm is rather open.

**Elbows** – Placed slightly lower than the lower edge of the ribcage, pointing straight backwards.

**Forearm** – Rather strong, vertical.

**Carpus [Wrist]** – Flexible.

**Pastern** – Of medium length, slightly sloping.

**BODY** –

**Withers** – Muscular and broad, only slightly marked [not prominent].

**Back** – Strong and straight.

**Loins** – Short and muscular.

**Croup** – Of medium length, well developed, sloping only slightly.

**Chest** – Deep, rather long, reaching almost to the elbows, not very broad. The ribs are slightly arched; the forechest clearly visible but not too pronounced.

**Underline** – Slightly tucked up.

**HINDQUARTERS** – General Appearance – Strong boned, powerful. Viewed from behind, straight and parallel. The angulation is clearly marked but not too strongly.

**Upper Thigh** – Of medium length, rather broad with well developed muscles.

**Stifles** – Pointed forward, the angulation is clearly marked [well angulated].

**Second Thigh** – Relatively long and sinewy.

**Hock Joint** – Moderately low set; the angulation is clearly marked but not too strongly. [Moderate angulation]

**Metatarsus [Rear Pastern]** – Rather short, strong and vertical.

**FEET** – Well arched, oval rather than round, covered with dense hair. The pads are elastic with the sides covered with dense hair. Rear dewclaws are not desirable.

**TAIL** – Set rather high, medium in length, covered with profuse and long hair. The tip of the tail may have a J-formed hook. In movement the tail is curved

over the back or side; at rest it may hang down.

**GAIT/MOVEMENT** – Effortless. Changes easily from trot to gallop, which is the most natural style of movement. The legs move parallel. Agile and fast when working.

**COAT – Skin** - Tight overall without wrinkles.

**Hair** – Profuse, the males especially have an abundant mane. The outer coat is long, straight and harsh. On the head and on the front of the legs, the coat is shorter. There must be a soft and dense undercoat.

**COLOUR** – All colours are permitted. The basic colour must be dominant. Colours other than the basic colour can occur on head, neck, chest, underside of the body, on legs and tail.

**SIZE – Height at withers** – Ideal height for males - 49 cm [19.5 ins]

Ideal height for females - 44 cm [17 ins]

With a tolerance of +/- 3 cm [just over 1 in]

Type is more important than size.

**FAULTS** - Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree.

Males not masculine and females not feminine

Light head, insufficient stop.

Dropped ears.

Tail carriage continuously lower than the topline.

Over angulated or too straight rear angulation.

Lack of under coat. Flat coat. Curly outer coat.

Basic colour indistinct.

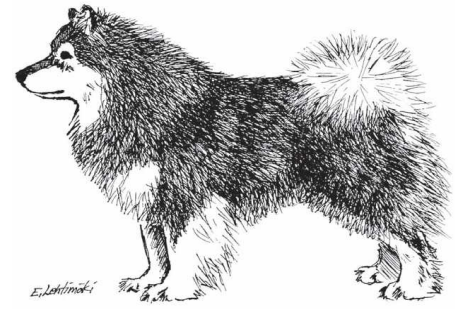
**Disqualifications** –

Over or undershot mouth.

Kinky tail

**NOTE** - Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Working Dog Group A.N.K.C. © January 2000

# FINNISH LAPPHUND



## SUOMENLAPINKOIRA

Lappalaiskoirat ry  
- Lapplands Judges Guide

### FORWARD

The breed standard of the Finnish Lapphund has been intentionally kept somewhat open. Minor details have never played an important part in the show rings or breeding program's, let alone when choosing a "friend for life". Therefore, dogs are easily identified as Finnish Lapphunds, there is still a great deal of variation within the breed – that is the beauty of the Finnish Lapphund.

Often, a breed standard only provides a description of the breed's anatomy. And that is also the case when it comes to that of the Finnish Lapphund – that "certain something" that makes a Lapphund a Lapphund remains unclear.

This booklet was compiled in order to guide judges and breeders; anyone who reads this should create a mental picture of the typey correct Finnish Lapphund, as well as pay attention to those fundamental features that make a Lapphund look like a typical representative of the breed.

### GENERAL APPEARANCE

The general appearance is the most essential section of the standard. The cynological type, proportions, and the overall picture are described in that section.

Furthermore, the general appearance should be the deciding factor when a judge places a dog at a show. Even an excellent specimen of the breed may have minor faults when it comes to details, but it is the general appearance that should immediately reveal a dog's breed and gender, as well as indicate type at first glance. What is more, the general appearance also is the most difficult feature to judge – a typey appearance cannot be fully described in words, it is just something that one has to learn to recognise.

So, the general appearance is of utmost importance in judging. In the show ring there often are dogs that admittedly are 'long-haired spitz' but not Finnish Lapphunds. Abundant coat and upright carriage together with an acceptable construction can easily fool a judge into placing a dog well, even though the dog is missing that 'certain something' that makes a Lapphund a Lapphund. There are Finnish Lapphunds that resemble Eurasiers, coloured samoyeds, or an 'average spitz' in general. It is only the breed-specific appearance and expression, correct proportions and movement, as well as correct coat that make a Lapphund.

With respect to its size, the Finnish Lapphund is strongly built, and, what is more, the impression of strength is accentuated by abundant, thick, erect coat. The lavish furnishings make the head and limbs in particular appear considerably stronger than they are in reality. Furthermore, the coat makes the body look both broader and deeper – in other words rounder. Therefore it is always necessary to go through a dog by using hands.

Proportions, too, can be distorted because of the coat. A heavily coated dog can easily appear low-legged. The especially abundant and long hair on the chest, and in the rear in particular make a dog appear longer than it really is. It requires a lot of practise before one is able to see the dog itself underneath the coat.

Desire the strength but the Finnish Lapphund should express certain softness. It should never create a picture of a sharp and snappish dog. The Lapphund essence and appearance must create an image of a serene dog that has respect for people. A typical disposition is seen in a dog's carriage, tail set, movement and expression. This humility and submissiveness is particularly characteristic of bitches.

## PROPORTIONS

When it comes to proportions, the Finnish Lapphund is slightly longer than tall – this means by no means square proportions!

Compared to many other spitz breeds, the Lapphund has a lower carriage, and it is not as alert in the show ring. These factors, combined with the abundant coat and the fact that bitches in particular tend to keep their tails down, contribute to the fact that the Finnish Lapphund acceptably, in fact desirably, appears long-bodied and low-legged rather than short-bodied and high-legged.

Where as the Lapponian Herder represents pure trotting type, the Finnish Lapphund is a mixture of different cynological types. Both the Finnish Lapphund and Lapponian Herder descend from the varied canine population in Lapland; the Finnish Lapphund originates from dogs that were used at the time when reindeer were kept under constant supervision.

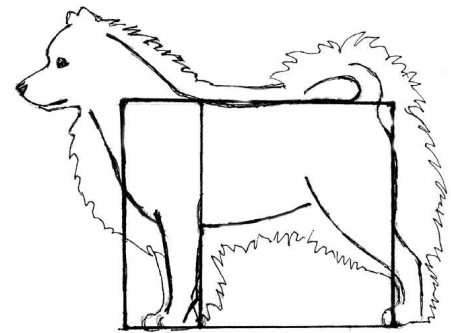
The dog's task was mostly to guard and keep the flock together. Later on, when the reindeer no longer were under 24-hour supervision but wandered freely in the woods, it was necessary to have a dog that was able to run long distances and gather up the flock.

The Lapponian Herder type was better suited for this than the Finnish Lapphund, as more stamina was needed.

This is why the Finnish Lapphund is slightly less angulated and has a shorter body than the Lapponian Herder.

However, even today the Finnish Lapphund still possesses features that are characteristic of a hardy dog; those characteristics were vital as the working days were long and hard.

Considering the two breeds similar backgrounds and the several common ancestors, Lapponian Herder – like features in a Finnish Lapphund should not be regarded as a major fault as features referring to other breeds.



(Illustration)  
An example of correct  
Proportions and balanced  
body.



## **Dogs** that are slightly different in type, but still display excellent general appearance.



**Very good head and bone, and even though the tail set is rather loose, it does not disturb the excellent general outline.**



**Excellent dog in general outline, though the upper arm is slightly short and upright.**



**Tipped ears, excellent type, pay attention to his very characteristic appearance.**



**Strong male, though should have a stronger head.**



**Very promising youngster, not in full coat yet.**



**Strong bone, excellent in general. Extremely good head and expression.**

**Bitches** that are slightly different in type, but still display excellent general appearance.



Very beautiful bitch with an excellent feminine appearance.



Strong body, good head.



Strong in bone and head, still not too masculine.



Beautiful bitch, not too long in body, though not even a bitch should be any longer than this.



Well angulated, strong in bone, not in full coat.



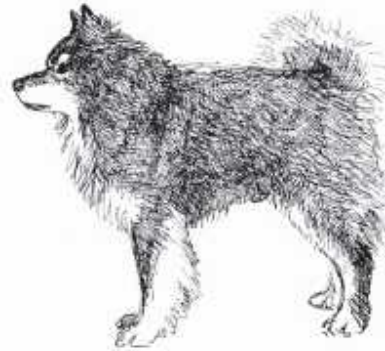
Young bitch, very beautiful expression.



## Finnish Lapphunds displaying faulty general appearance.



**1. Short and light**  
Short in body, light bone and head lacks angulation too little coat.



**2. High – legged**  
Too high in leg and hock.



**3. Heavy**  
Way too heavy and low-legged.

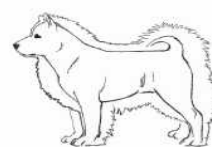


**4. Long**  
Too long in body and low in leg.  
Shoulder blade positioned too far in front and too upright.

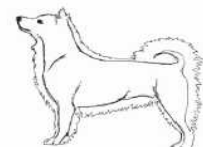
These illustrations demonstrate how the coat makes the body appear longer. More important than the relation of the height and length is what the length consists of:

In Picture 1 it consists of a strong front and rear as well as a relatively short back, Whereas

In Picture 2 it consists of a weak front and rear combined with a long back and loin.



Picture 1



Picture 2

## HEADS

Head features should be strong; yet the expression should be soft. A correct 'teddy-like' friendly expression is attained when the skull is broad and slightly convex, the stop is clearly defined, and the muzzle is strong, broad and shorter than the skull. The muzzle tapers only a little bit towards the nose and should be 'full' and well-cushioned.

The jaws should be strong and broad. Special attention must be paid on the bottom jaw; it must be sufficiently strong. The juncture between muzzle and skull must be straight in profile, and furthermore, the stop must be clearly defined, forming an angle with the muzzle. The frontal furrow is clearly defined, too and must be visible through the coat.

Ears must be set rather far apart, not on top of the head nor too close to each other. They should be quite small in size, triangular, broad at the base and round at the top – by no means long or pointed. Furthermore, the ears must be heavily coated, so that they are protected against the cold and mosquitoes. Large, pointed or short-coated ears are a mistake.

Semi-erect ears are equally acceptable as erect ears. Drop ears, however, are faulty, though not disqualifying. What is more, odd ears (one erect, the other semi-erect) are acceptable.

Eyes must be oval in shape and as dark as possible. Brown dogs may have lighter eyes, though not yellow. Blue eyes are disqualifying. Large round eyes occur sometimes – they are faulty.

The nose is preferably black. Brown dogs, however, always have a brown nose. Sable coloured dogs in particular may have a light streak on the nose – it is not a mistake.

In general, Finnish Lapphunds have a scissor bite, although a level bite is acceptable too. A clearly overshot or undershot is a disqualifying fault. Premolars may be missing sometimes; this should always be mentioned in the written evaluation.

## EXCELLENT HEADS AND EXPRESSIONS



Excellent, Strong, Masculine head.



Very good profile. Note the clearly defined stop and hairy ears.



Beautiful male with soft expression. Good, 'full' muzzle.

## EXCELLENT HEADS & EXPRESSIONS



**Nice headed young male.**



**Young male with rounded ears.**



**Excellent, soft, friendly female expression.**



**Very beautiful female expression.**



**Correct pricked ears at rest.**



**Excellent feminine head, Acceptable odd ears.**



## FAULT HEADS & EXPRESSIONS



Stop not clearly defined; long thin muzzle.



Strong head, but lacking stop and typical Lapphund expression.



Too large, Alsatian – like ears.



Drop ears; must be penalised.



## BODY

The body is relatively sturdy, though never heavy. Withes are only slightly marked and the topline is level; by no means sloping or roached. The Finnish Lapphund often has a clearly marked anticline (dip behind the withers), and if a dog also has a lot of coat on the croup, it may create an illusion of a swayback. The loin is short, though bitches generally have a little bit longer loin than dogs. The croup is only slightly oblique, of medium length, and broad (especially on bitches).

(Illustration) High rear end is due to an upright croup – hence rear quarters underneath the body. Low tail set.



Very upright croup's occur sometimes, which is why some dogs tend to keep their rear quarters underneath their body. The chest is in no way exaggerated. A broad chest resembling a barrel causes a dog to elbow out, which leads to incorrect front movement. Also, too narrow chests occur, but too broad a chest still affects a dog's action more harmfully than a slightly narrow chest. Furthermore, the chest should not be too deep either. It should almost reach the elbows, but never go below them.

## LIMBS & MOVEMENT

Limbs are powerful with strong bones. Judges should always go through the limbs by using hands, as the hair on them is very often deceiving. When standing, the limbs are parallel seen from the front and rear, whereas on the move ideal front action is not completely straight and parallel but resembles that of the wolverine; in other words, the Finnish Lapphund toes in slightly and the front quarters make an arch. The Lapphund tends to move around so that it only leaves a single trail (resembling a string of pearls) on the ground – this should not be misinterpreted as narrow movement. In addition, if the pasterns are heavily coated, rear movement may appear more narrow than is actually is.

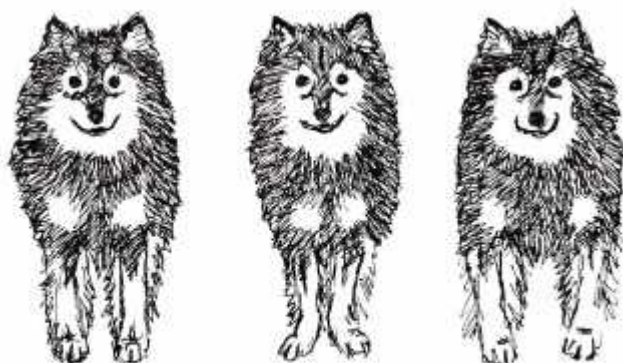


(Illustrations)

Coming: Note that front action is not completely straight and parallel.

Going: Note the tendency towards only leaving a single trail on the ground.

Seen from the front, the breadth of chest is correct when there is enough room for one hand, Though the size of the dog must be taken into account. Too narrow fronts occur in lapphunds, But there are also too broad fronts, which is why some dogs tend to elbow out on the move.



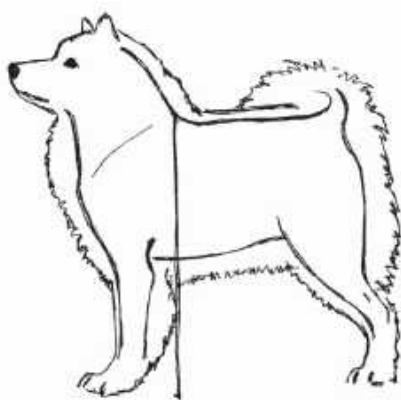
1. **Correct front**
2. **Narrow chest**
3. **Broad chest**

1.

2.

3.

The angulation is clearly marked, but not too strongly. Sometimes Finnish Lapphunds can be 'overangulated', but nowadays it is more common to see dogs that have very poor, almost non-existent angulation. Especially front angulation should be paid more attention. The shoulder blade and upper arm must be equally long, and the angle that they form must be clearly marked. An often occurring mistake is a short upright upper arm, which is why the forelimbs are set too far in front instead of being underneath the body where they support the weight of the chest. What is more, a short upper arm leads to short and ineffective or hackneyed movement. Pasterns are slightly oblique and flexible. An upright pastern cannot function properly as a 'shock absorber', and the same goes for a too much bent weak pastern. A correctly angulated front is of utmost importance; it is the front that is strained most, especially on the move.



(Illustrations)

This dog has good rear, but the upper arm is upright, which is why the forelimbs are set in front of the line going down from the withers.

In order to achieve the proper strength on the move, a dog must have correct rear angulation – clearly marked but not exaggerated. It is a good idea to feel the Hind angulation with your hands, especially on heavily-coated Lapphunds. The surprisingly long hair on the front of the Thighs and on the back of the pasterns can be misleading. ( see illustration )



Furthermore in order to achieve powerful, effective movement, a dog must also have broad, muscular thighs and a low hock. There are Lapphunds with too high hock. Seen from the rear, the pads on the hind limbs must be entirely visible on the move. Poorly angulated, distinctly cow-hocked hind limbs are a common mistake. Such a dog moves inefficiently in the rear, and the risk for patella luxation is higher, so this fault must be penalised in the show ring.



(Illustration) This dog has good front, but the rear angulation is far too insufficient and croup too short.

At shows, movement is judged when the dog is trotting. The correct Lapphund movement is sound and effortless. Even though the Finnish Lapphund must be strongly built, it should never be so heavy that its movement lacks effortlessness. When you look at a Finnish Lapphund move, you should be able to imagine it working for days on end on the fells in Lapland. When running freely, the Finnish Lapphund changes relatively easily from trot to gallop, But never the less it has to have a long enough step; a short-stepping dog does not possess sufficient endurance, nor is it, in all likelihood, well enough construction in order to gallop efficiently either.



**Correct length of step**



**Short step**



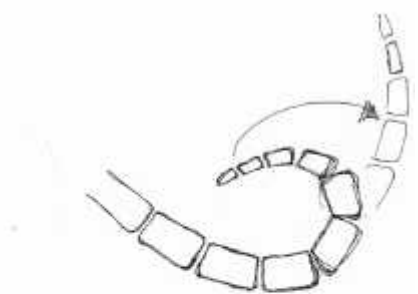
**Correct side movement.**

## TAIL

The tail is relatively high set. On the move it is curved over the back or side, whereas at rest it is often hanging down. A too tightly curved tail is not desirable on a Lapphund; instead it should be 'lively' and indicate the dog's mood, as well as balance its movement. Especially a bitch (with a typical Lapphund temperament) is only too willing to drop her tail when standing still. If judges require that the tail to be on the back at all times in the show ring, it results in favouring too dominant dogs. The tail is correctly set when you are able to bend it over the back by hand – if it is too low set, this is not possible. If a dog is excellent in every other way, a loosely curved tail alone should not affect its judgement.

### Kinks and 'J' shaped hooks.

Some Lapphunds have a 'J' shaped hook on the tip of the tail might be curved even to great extent, but it is always possible to straighten it by hand. A hook of this type is entirely acceptable. However a Kink, i.e. vertebrae grown together, is a disqualifying fault. A kink can appear in any part of the tail (in the spine at its worst), whereas the 'J' shaped hook is always on the tip of the tail.



'J' shaped hook; the tip of the tail is curved, but it is possible to straighten it at least to some extent.



Kink; vertebrae grown together.

## COAT

The coat is thick and profuse. The outer coat is straight and it absolutely has to be harsh so that it does not gather snow. What is more, a harsh coat does not get wet in a similar way than a soft coat; it is water-resistant. The outer coat is not shiny; it should be matt. The undercoat is soft, very dense and plentiful, so that it makes the outer coat stand erect. Judges should pay attention to the undercoat to make sure that it is very profuse. The outer coat may sometimes be a bit wavy (on youngsters in particular), which is not a fault, provided that it is still harsh. Curls and soft coats do not always automatically go hand in hand; even a straight coat might be soft. A harsh wavy coat is much better than a straight and soft coat. The outer coat should not be so long that it 'hangs'. A flat coat is faulty. The coat on the head and on the front side of the legs is clearly shorter. Male Lapphunds in particular have a distinct mane, and the limbs should be properly furnished. Furthermore, furnishings on the paws (between toes) are desirable, and shall never be trimmed. Also the ears should be noticeably hairy.





## COLOURS

All colours are permitted, as long as the basic colour is dominant. The most usual colours are Black, Black & tan, Brown, Brown & tan, Wolf sable. Sable & cream. Most Lapphunds also have white markings, but parti-colours with white as the basic colour are undesirable. What is more, brindle is not desired, nor the saddle-back colouring. These three colours must be penalised.



**Black**



**Black with spectacles**



**Black & tan**



**Brown (with or without tan marks;  
The nose is always brown).**



**Wolf sable**



**Cream**



**Sable**



**Sable (red; black nose)**



**This much white is still acceptable**



**Saddle-back (undesirable)**



**Black & brindle (undesirable)**



**Brindle (undesirable)**

## SIZE

For dogs, the ideal height at the withers is 49 cm ( 46 – 52cm ) and for bitches 44 cm ( 41 – 47cm ). The type is definitely more important than the size, and slight deviations from the heights mentioned in the standard are acceptable if the dog is typey and its sex is apparent.

## Temperament

Temperament is most essential section in the standard. A dog with a faulty construction is still a good companion, if it is good – natured.

So, what is an ideal temperament like? A Finnish Lapphund with an ideal temperament is well suited for its purpose, and in harmony with the people and animals around it; its owner in particular. Evaluation of the temperament is, of necessity, rather superficial in the show ring, as the time allocated to each dog is limited.

The Finnish Lapphund should be calm and friendly, as well as submissive towards people.

It may be a little bit distant, but never timid, although bitches may seem a little shy.

Excessive sharpness and snarling are by no means acceptable features in Lapphunds, Not even in males.

The Finnish lapphund should under no circumstances show any signs of aggressiveness towards people.

The need to co– operate and interact with people is characteristic of herding dogs. This can often be seen in the show ring, as many Lapphunds tend to keep contact with their handlers instead of focusing on other dogs in the ring, or outside the ring.