

# Chesapeake Bay Retriever

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**General Appearance:** Equally proficient on land and in the water, the Chesapeake Bay Retriever was developed along the Chesapeake Bay to hunt waterfowl under the most adverse weather and water conditions, often having to break ice during the course of many strenuous multiple retrieves. Frequently the Chesapeake must face wind, tide and long cold swims in its work. The breed's characteristics are specifically suited to enable the Chesapeake to function with ease, efficiency and endurance. In head, the Chesapeake's skull is broad and round with a medium stop. The jaws should be of sufficient length and strength to carry large game birds with an easy, tender hold. The double coat consists of a short, harsh, wavy outer coat and a dense, fine, wooly undercoat containing an abundance of natural oil and is ideally suited for the icy rugged conditions of weather the Chesapeake often works in. In body, the Chesapeake is a strong, well-balanced, powerfully built animal of moderate size and medium length in body and leg, deep and wide in chest, the shoulders built with full liberty of movement, and with no tendency to weakness in any feature, particularly the rear. The power though, should not be at the expense of agility or stamina. Size and substance should not be excessive as this is a working retriever of an active nature.

Distinctive features include eyes that are very clear, of yellowish or amber hue, hindquarters as high or a trifle higher than the shoulders, and a double coat which tends to wave on shoulders, neck, back and loins only.

The Chesapeake is valued for its bright and happy disposition, intelligence, quiet good sense, and affectionate protective nature. Extreme shyness or extreme aggressive tendencies are not desirable in the breed either as a gun dog or companion.

**Disqualifications:** *Specimens that are lacking in breed characteristics should be disqualified.*

**Size, Proportion, Substance:** **Height**--Males should measure 23 to 26 inches; females should measure 21 to 24 inches. *Oversized or undersized animals are to be severely penalized.* **Proportion**--Height from the top of the shoulder blades to the ground should be slightly less than the body length from the breastbone to the point of buttocks. Depth of body should extend at least to the elbow. Shoulder to elbow and elbow to ground should be equal. **Weight**--Males should weigh 65 to 80 pounds; females should weigh 55 to 70 pounds.

**Head:** The Chesapeake Bay Retriever should have an intelligent expression. **Eyes** are to be medium large, very clear, of yellowish or amber color and wide apart. **Ears** are to be small, set well up on the head, hanging loosely, and of medium leather. **Skull** is broad and round with a medium stop. **Nose** is medium short. **Muzzle** is approximately the same length as the skull, tapered, pointed but not sharp. **Lips** are thin, not pendulous. **Bite**--Scissors is preferred, but a level bite is acceptable.

**Disqualifications:** *Either undershot or overshot bites are to be disqualified.*

**Neck, Topline, Body:** **Neck** should be of medium length with a strong muscular appearance, tapering to the shoulders. **Topline** should show the hindquarters to be as high as or a trifle higher than the shoulders. **Back** should be short, well coupled and powerful. **Chest** should be strong, deep and wide. Rib cage barrel round and deep. **Body** is of medium length, neither cobby nor roached, but rather approaching hollowness from underneath as the flanks should be well tucked up. **Tail** of medium length; medium heavy at the base. The tail should be straight or slightly curved and should not curl over back or side kink.

**Forequarters:** There should be no tendency to weakness in the forequarters. **Shoulders** should be sloping with full liberty of action, plenty of power and without any restrictions of movement. **Legs** should be medium in length and straight, showing good bone and muscle. Pasterns slightly bent and of medium length. The front legs should appear straight when viewed from front or rear. Dewclaws on the forelegs may be removed. Well webbed hare feet should be of good size with toes well-rounded and close.

**Hindquarters:** Good hindquarters are essential. They should show fully as much power as the forequarters. There should be no tendency to weakness in the hindquarters. Hindquarters should be especially powerful to supply the driving power for swimming. Legs should be medium length and straight, showing good bone and muscle. Stifles should be well angulated. The distance from hock to ground should be of medium length. The hind legs should look straight when viewed from the front or rear. Dewclaws, if any, must be removed from the hind legs. **Disqualifications:** *Dewclaws on the hind legs are a disqualification.*

**Coat:** Coat should be thick and short, nowhere over 1½ inches long, with a dense fine wooly undercoat. Hair on the face and legs should be very short and straight with a tendency to wave on the shoulders, neck, back and loins only. Moderate feathering on rear of hindquarters and tail is permissible. The texture of the Chesapeake's coat is very important, as the Chesapeake is used for hunting under all sorts of adverse weather conditions, often working in ice and snow. The oil in the harsh outer coat and wooly undercoat is of extreme value in preventing the cold water from reaching the Chesapeake's skin and aids in quick drying. A Chesapeake's coat should resist the water in the same way that a duck's feathers do. When the Chesapeake leaves the water and shakes, the coat should not hold water at all, being merely moist. **Disqualifications:** *A coat that is curly or has a tendency to curl all over the body must be disqualified. Feathering on the tail or legs over 1¾ inches long must be disqualified.*

**Color** The color of the Chesapeake Bay Retriever must be as nearly that of its working surroundings as possible. Any color of brown, sedge or deadgrass is acceptable, self-colored Chesapeakes being preferred. One color is not to be preferred over another. A white spot on the breast, belly, toes, or back of the feet (immediately above the large pad) is permissible, but the

smaller the spot the better, solid colored preferred. The color of the coat and its texture must be given every consideration when judging on the bench or in the ring. Honorable scars are not to be penalized. **Disqualifications:** *Black colored; white on any part of the body except breast, belly, toes, or back of feet must be disqualified*

**Gait** The gait should be smooth, free and effortless, giving the impression of great power and strength. When viewed from the side, there should be good reach with no restrictions of movement in the front and plenty of drive in the rear, with good flexion of the stifle and hock joints. Coming at you, there should be no sign of elbows being out. *When the Chesapeake is moving away from you, there should be no sign of cowhockness from the rear.* As speed increases, the feet tend to converge toward a center line of gravity.

**Temperament:** The Chesapeake Bay Retriever should show a bright and happy disposition with an intelligent expression. Courage, willingness to work, alertness, nose, intelligence, love of water, general quality and, most of all, disposition should be given primary consideration in the selection and breeding of the Chesapeake Bay Retriever.

**Disqualifications:**

1. *Specimens lacking in breed characteristics.*
2. *Teeth overshot or undershot.*
3. *Dewclaws on the hind legs.*
4. *Coat curly or with a tendency to curl all over the body.*
5. *Feathering on the tail or legs over 1¾ inches long.*
6. *Black colored.*
7. *White on any part of the body except breast, belly, toes, or back of feet.*

The question of coat and general type of balance takes precedence over any scoring table which could be drawn up. The Chesapeake should be well proportioned, an animal with a good coat and well balanced in other points being preferable to one excelling in some but weak in others.

**Positive Scale of Points**

Head, including lips, ears and eyes	16
Neck	4
Shoulders and body	12
Hindquarters and stifles	12
Elbows, legs and feet	12
Color	4
Stern and tail	10
Coat and texture	18
General conformation	<u>12</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Approximate Measurements**

**Inches**

Length head, nose to occiput	9½ to 10
Girth at ears	20 to 21
Muzzle below eyes	10 to 10½
Length of ears	4½ to 5
Width between eyes	2½ to 2¾
Girth neck close to shoulder	20 to 22
Girth at flank	24 to 25
Length from occiput to tail base	34 to 35
Girth forearms at shoulders	10 to 10½
Girth upper thigh	19 to 20
From root to root of ear, over skull	5 to 6
Occiput to top shoulder blades	9 to 9½
From elbow to elbow over the shoulders	25 to 26