

The Official Standard For The Louisiana Catahoula The State Dog of Louisiana



ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

Country/State of Origin: United States/Louisiana. Used as stock dog, tree dog, companion, watch and guard dog.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Louisiana Catahoula is a medium to medium-large dog, well muscled, yet trim, powerful, but denoting agility and great endurance.

TEMPERAMENT

Independent, protective, territorial. May show aggressive behavior. Signs of timidity on leash should not be taken as cowardice, but the intolerance for strangers.

SIZE

Males should measure 22-26 inches (55.8cm - 66.0 cm). Females should measure 20-24 inches (50.8 cm - 60.9 cm)

COAT AND COLOR

The coat-length should be short to medium in length. Color-Leopards are to be preferred and may come in blue, gray, black, liver, red, white and patched. Trim may be black, white, tan, red or buff. Solid colors acceptable are black, yellow, red and chocolate.

HEAD

The head should be powerfully built with well developed cheeks. **SKULL:** Broad top-skull with well defined stop being moderate in length. **MUZZLE:** The muzzle should be strong, deep and approximately equal in length to the top skull as measured from the stop to the occiput bone. The muzzle should be broad at the base and taper towards the nose when viewed from the front. **BITE:** The bite should be a strong scissor bite, with a level bite being acceptable. Complete dentition is greatly desired, however broken teeth are not to be faulted. **EYES:** Glass eyes are preferred although the eyes may be of any color or combination of colors. The eyes do not have to be the same color and may have partial glass in one or both eyes, commonly called "cracks". **EARS:** The ears should be short to medium in length with the top of the ear being set level or slightly below the top of the head. Properly hung ears, with the inner edge of the ear lying close to the cheek are to be preferred. "Laid-back" ears are acceptable.

NECK

The neck should be muscular and of good length.

NALC

The National Association of Louisiana Catahoulas, Inc. is a non-profit organization. It began in 1977 to insure the continuing line of certified pure-bred Louisiana Catahoulas, through a supervised program of breeding and registration. This act of preservation for a unique part of Louisiana heritage, recognizes the Louisiana Catahoula as the only breed of dog which historically originated in the State of Louisiana. On July 9, 1979, Gov. Edwin Edwards signed a Bill into Law which was passed by the Louisiana Legislature, making NALC the propagator of the Louisiana Catahoula Leopard dog, the Official State Dog of Louisiana.

HISTORY

The Louisiana Catahoula Leopard Dog evolved in the swamps of central Louisiana, around the Catahoula Lakes. Legend says their ancestors were the results of the Indian dogs, or red wolf found in the area at that time, mating with the surviving "war dogs" or mastiff used by the Spaniards in battle and then left behind, either wounded or captured by the Indians. The first white settlers to the Catahoula Lake area found this strange breed of dog with mottled spots and white eyes, and called them CATAHOULA meaning "beautiful clear water". The dogs were used for hunting deer, bobcat and wild hogs. The settlers learned to appreciate the dogs technique in trailing by wind, baying & herding and soon they had the dogs working cattle.

APPEARANCE

The Louisiana Catahoula is a medium to tall "rangy" dog, with broad chest, strong legs and a wide head. It has slick, short hair, and the average adult size ranges between 20-26 inches at the withers, and has an average weight between 50-85 lbs. Most Louisiana Catahoulas are spotted up, with 2 to 5 different colors in their coat, having a base color of black, blue, brown, liver or white, with contrasting spots of any, or all, of these colors. A few may be almost solid but have a white spot on the chest or trim on the legs and face. There are 2 types of ears: crinkled, and laid-back or folded-over like the hound, but much shorter. The webbed toes of these dogs help them walk easily in swampland

as well as over snow, and make them excellent swimmers. The Louisiana Catahoulas keeps growing and maturing until around 2 years old, but they work like an adult at 8 or 9 months. Females come in heat between 8 1/2 months to a year. Studs should not be used until they are 12 to 14 months old. The females make good brood dogs when bred after 12 months or older. They wean their pups early, at about 4 weeks.

EYES

A characteristic of the breed are the unusual eyes, which can be brown, green, light blue "glass eyes", or one colored eye with one glass eye; or eyes with "glass cracks", spots of white in one or both eyes. The most striking and preferred eye color is the unique "double glass eyes".

TRAINING

This versatile dog can be trained for almost any purpose. Performance in obedience training, as well as the ability to master & perform difficult tricks, amaze and amuse owners. Basically, the dog wants to please its master, and this, together with their natural instincts, make training a matter of getting the pup's attention, then teaching them basic obedience. They develop their own style of working and strive to help and defend their master. They work on both sight & sound signals and are excellent obedience and field trial dogs. A kind word and a pat on the head will be reward enough for the Catahoula to try his best for his Master.

ABILITIES

This dog is second to none as a Head Dog, stockdog, having the guts and inbred desire to work wild cows or hogs, but still working well with gentle stock. Lead dogs bark to aggravate the cows from the front; herd or drive dogs circle, give voice and keep the cows bunched; or there is a combination dog that works all positions. The Catahoula can out work and out last any other breed. It is strong, active, and has natural instincts and a working style all its own. A Catahoula is affectionate, intelligent and faithful. It makes a wonderful pet or guard dog, a stock dog, hunting dog or show dog. They are fearless in nature and can be fighters yet gentle with their family. They are a multipurpose dog, good at home, but best on the farm.