

## **Breed Health Coordinators Report**

I am Barbara Barganska, and have been involved in our breed since 1992, and currently own my 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> generations of the breed.

There have been many great advances in the understanding of Health in dogs, and tools developed to help conscientious breeders produce puppies with a better likelihood of avoiding major health issues, with more challenges still remaining.

I maintained a list of Norwegian Elkhounds tested for Glaucoma and Dwarfism between those used in research in 2014, and then from Commercial testing DNA tested between 2015 – 2020.

In 2020 The Kennel Club accepted these tests to be listed on a dogs record along with the DNA test for prcd-PRA and Clinical KC/BVA scheme tests listed earlier.

I was appointed Breed Health Coordinator at the 2024 AGM.

All these measures have been part of the NECGB Code of Ethics as they became appropriate/available.

The Code of Ethics requires Dogs test Results to be known to the Club before breeding takes place. This is normally through the Dogs results being listed on their profile with the Kennel Club.

Issues of dog's Health Testing status have arisen where people have not sent their Health test results into the KC (Please sent to: [health.results@thekennelclub.org.uk](mailto:health.results@thekennelclub.org.uk) ). Also, especially due to Covid, and extreme delays with the BVA processing, some breeders chose to use the Hip Scoring scheme in Australia, that uses the same scoring system (but does not use two scrutineers).

The Kennel Club accepted these internally for the requirements of ABS members but does not record them on the Dogs searchable record.

To fulfil the Code of Ethics requirements and avoid suspicion of tests not being carried out, I would ask these breeders to kindly send a copy of the results to me. I strongly urge people now that Hip and Elbow results are processed as quickly as 2 days from x-rays being done, to preferably return to using the KC/BVA Scheme.

For fellow breeders researching pedigrees re Health it is far preferable to be able to find results at the KC, other Kennel Club Databases and the OFA Health database in USA.

I found an interesting document on the Kennel Club Site for DNA test results by breed:

( <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/3803/breed-specific-information-dna-testing.pdf> ) and have reproduced the Norwegian Elkhound Results below:

Breed	Total number tested		Clear		Carrier		Affected		Hereditary Clear		Hereditary Carrier		Hereditary Affected	
	15 Years	2021	15 Years	2021	15 Years	2021	15 Years	2021	15 Years	2021	15 Years	2021	15 Years	2021
Norwegian Elkhound	909	116	152		80		10		663	116	4			
CDSL	161	45	26						135	45				
POAG	119	14	19		9				91	14				
prcd-PRA	629	57	107		71		10		437	57	4			

## Breeder/Member Health Reports

During 2024 I have had a report of two dogs having fits. I have asked for Veterinary Reports, but so far have not received any.

Below is Kennel Club Information regarding Epilepsy, which is very common in dogs of any breed or non-breed, about 1 in every 130 dogs.

( <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health-and-dog-care/health/health-and-care/a-z-of-health-and-care-issues/epilepsy/> )

## Conditions with no test available

### **Breeding Advice**

If your dog is unaffected, but has produced an affected puppy

If two dogs have previously produced affected puppies, then you shouldn't repeat the mating. If the dogs are not affected themselves but have other excellent qualities, you might consider mating them to different dogs. If you choose an alternative mate for your dog, you should ensure that there is no history of the condition in their line, particularly with close relatives. Taking these steps should reduce the risk of puppies affected by the condition. More information below.

( <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health-and-dog-care/health/getting-started-with-health-testing-and-screening/inherited-conditions-with-no-test-available/> )

## **POLICY CHANGES AT THE KENNEL CLUB**

For many reasons the Kennel Club decided to end from 31/12/2024 its 'Assured Breeders Scheme' that only 10% of breeders support.

Many good breeders felt it did not meet the needs of the majority 80% of breeders that bred 1 litter or less a year, and since UKAS involvement seemed to be more geared towards a more Commercial and larger Scale breeding model.

Many felt that they already went well beyond the minimum requirements of the scheme re Health and individual based care, and were not happy with the one size fits all tick box attempt at standardisation.

So loosely based on the Health requirements that were in the Scheme they embarked on an Exercise to produce The Kennel Club Health Standard:

It's initial categorisation and explanations did not meet with favour, they took on comments and suggestions, and the new standard was revealed recently, along with changes to how the Health results for dogs are shown on a dogs on-line record.

**The Kennel Club's health standard:** as it relates to the Norwegian Elkhound  
( <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/about-us/about-the-kennel-club/the-kennel-club-codes/the-kennel-club-health-standard/> )

### **Good Practice schemes and tests**

We strongly recommend that breeders, at a minimum, conduct these tests before breeding, as evidence indicates these conditions are a significant concern in the breed.

- [Prioritising genetic diversity](#)
- [DNA test for Primary open angle glaucoma \(POAG-2\)](#)
- [DNA test for Progressive retinal atrophy \(prcd-PRA\)](#)

### **Best Practice schemes and tests**

These tests address conditions that are still significant for the breed, though they may not be as critical as those listed under Good Practice. They might be less common or newly identified, and research is ongoing to determine their full impact.

To support the breed's health, responsible breeders should ensure they complete all tests in both categories. Following our Best Practice guidelines means completing both the Good Practice and Best Practice tests for your breed.

- [DNA test for chondrodysplasia \(CDSL\)](#)
- [Eye testing using the BVA/KC/ISDS Eye Scheme](#)
- [Hip testing \(for hip dysplasia\) using the BVA/KC Hip Dysplasia Scheme](#)

Later in the year the Kennel Club Undertook a Population Analysis for every breed covering the period 1990 – 2022. They asked for a Focus Group to be formed, with comments regarding the draft Report which Vanessa McHugh and I submitted to them on the 30<sup>th</sup> December 2024 as requested.

The full report will be available once comments taken on board, etc.

There was a similar report commissioned in 2015 (1980 -2014). Reading this will be interesting and give an idea of the data included for when the more recent report, it's findings and recommendations are published. Unfortunately, I can longer find it on-line but am happy to email a copy on request.

Going forward the Kennel Club plans to do an updated report every 8 years.

For Information I attach The Key Findings, of the new report so far.



## KEY FINDINGS FOR THE NORWEGIAN ELKHOUND

- Around three quarters of the breed pedigree held in the KC's database consisted of dogs born in the UK and registered under the Litter Registration
- The breed population suffered a significant decline in size between 1990 and 2021
- The percentage of males used in breeding was low, which poses a risk to genetic diversity
- Large percentage of litters were produced by at least one parent with a stud book number
- Average litter size was 5, with no statistically significant trends over time
- Average COI for dogs born in 2021 was 5.2%
- Based on the rate of inbreeding calculated for dogs born between 1990 and 2021, the effective population size was estimated at 38 therefore the population is considered to be at critical risk of suffering from inbreeding depression
- The average relationship among dogs assumed to be alive is 11% - i.e. average Norwegian Elkhound in the current population is more related to any other dog in the same cohort than a great-great-grandparent and great-great-grandchild, but not as closely as first cousins
- Across time, there was evidence of popular sire use
- Sires with stud book numbers and imported sires had significantly higher numbers of litters

Lastly LABOKLIN have caused some confusion listing a DNA test for Hereditary Ataxia for Norwegian Elkhounds. It does not relate to our breed.

The Scientific discovery is for the gene in The Norwegian Elkhound **BLACK**.  
**Plos 1** refers: ( <file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/journal.pone.0261845.pdf> )