

Identification Chart

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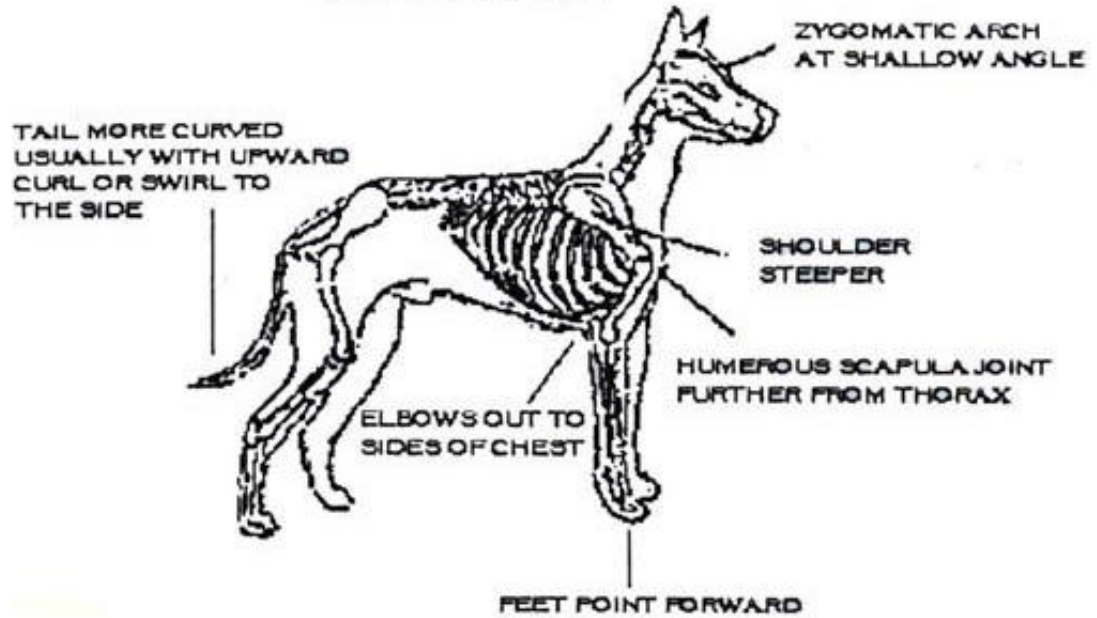


Is it a wolf, a wolfdog, or is a dog?

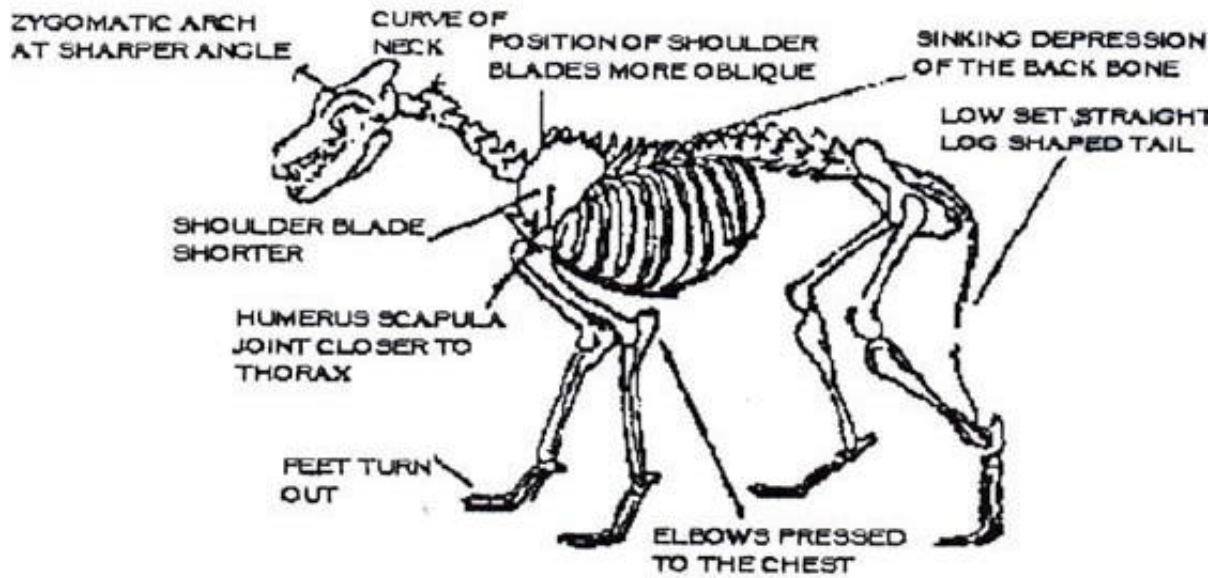
What physical characteristics do wolves have
that dogs don't?

Do wolves have any behavioral characteristics that
are not also found in dogs?

DOG SKELETON



WOLF SKELETON



**Drawings of a Dog and a "Direwolf"
Wolf drawing furnished by Nick Federoff**

Drawings first published by Pat Carney, 1991

HEAD TRAITS	Wolves	Husky	Malamute	German Shepherd
Ears	Small to medium, pricked, slightly rounded and heavily furred inside	Medium, triangular, pointed; high set	Small to medium. Triangular with slightly rounded tips, not high set	Medium to large, Moderately pointed to rounded tips
Eyes	Pupils are distinguished from iris. Eyes are almond shaped, ringed in black and obliquely set, with the corner lines intersecting towards the nose. They are any shade of brown (but not dark brown or black) amber, yellow, or green, but NEVER blue	Almond shaped, Brown, blue, bi-eyed or particolored.	Eyes are obliquely set and are yellow to brown, ringed in black in all but the reds. Reds tend to have brown pigmentation around the eyes. No Blue Eyes.	Almond shaped, somewhat obliquely set. Eyes are as dark as possible.
Skull	Wedge shaped. (1) Orbital angle – angle between a line drawn through the upper and lower edges of eye socket and the line drawn across the top of the skull. Wolves have more acute orbital angle ; 40-45 degrees. Dogs have wider angle 53-60 degrees (2) In wolves, the tympanic bullae – two dome like protrusions on base of skull just behind sockets of lower jaw --- are large convex and spherical; in dogs, smaller, more compressed and slightly crumpled.	Slightly rounded skull	Broad skull; –	Wedge shaped
Stop	Not pronounced – in part because of the orbital angle	Well defined	Slightly to Moderately pronounced	Slightly to Moderately pronounced but not abrupt
Nose	Black, with longer and broader snout than most dogs	Black nose in grays, tans, and blacks. Liver nose in copper dogs to pink in white dogs.	Black in all but the reds which can be brown	Predominantly Black
Face/Mask	Blended; neither sharply contrasted or white, never a widow's peak	Markings on head/face are common; widow's peak to a variety of masks. Some masks are very striking and not found in any other breed.	Slight furrow between the eyes. Distinct widow's peak. Large, bulky muzzle.	Muzzle and ears tend to be darker than the face, but no obvious masks.
Teeth	Wolf Canines are large reaching 2 1/4" including imbedded portion- scissor bite	Moderate – scissor bite	Moderate – scissor bite	Large – scissor bite

General

Weight	Males 95-100 pounds; rarely exceeds 120; Females 80-85 pounds; rarely exceeds 100; Largest male on record was 175 pounds from southeastern Alaska	Males 45- 60 pounds Females 35 – 50 pounds	Males 85 - 125 pounds Females; 70 - 115 pounds	Males 80 – 95 pounds Females 75 – 90 pounds
Height	Average shoulder measurements: Males: 26" –32" sometimes up to 36" Females: average approximately 2" shorter	Males: 21" –23.5" Females: 20"- 22"	Males 25"- 28" Females 23" - 26"	Males 24" – 26" Females 22" – 24"
Length	From nose to tip of tail: Males – 5' –6.5' Females 4.5' - 6'	Shorter than a wolf	Similar to a wolf	Longer tail length than wolves

Characteristics

Wolves

Husky

Malamutes

Wolfdogs

Coat color	White through cream colored; buff, tawny; reddish; brownish; and gray to black. No sharp contrasts. The agouti grays tend to dominate, with other colors tending to increase the higher the latitude. Wolves are never born white and tend to lighten with age	White, white with saddle, silver and white, sable, agouti (banded coat), gray, wolf gray, black, mostly black, light red, and copper. Commonly has a variety of masks	White always on underbody, parts of legs, feet and masked markings. Pronounced widow's peak. Light gray through intermediate shadings of black, gold through shadings of red to liver	Solid black or gray, tan/gold with black saddle, sable are most common. Blues, livers, albinos and whites are uncommon or usually considered dis-qualifications
Precaudal Gland	Located about 3" below the start of the tail and surrounded by stiff, coarse hairs that are usually tipped with black in the wolf . Pre-dominate I both wolves and dogs	See Wolf	See Wolf	See Wolf
Shoulders, Legs, Elbows	Shoulders close together, elbows angled into the chest with paws turned out, allowing both legs on the same side to swing in the same line (i.e. the rear paw is placed in the tract of front paw – aka lateral movement.) Front legs closely set, rear usually cow hocked; slight bend at hock.	Shoulders set tight to body; not straight or loose. Elbows not out. Paws neither in nor out. Front legs slightly to moderately spaced. Rear dew claws possible but uncommon. Moderate bend to hock.	Shoulders moderately sloping, heavily boned and not straight. Front legs widely spaced apart. Rear legs track movement of front legs and have dew claws. Moderate bend to hock.	Shoulder blades set moderately tight to body and obliquely angled. Forelegs straight. Broad thigh, front legs moderately spread. Very pronounced bend at hock. Rear dew claws possible but uncommon.
Paws	Front paws angle outward at 4" x 4" to 5" x 5" four toes on the back foot and five on the front (one, a dew claw). No rear dew claws. Well furred between toes.	Oval in shape medium and compact in size. Well furred between toes. Paws not long, splayed or large; nor are they turned in or out.	Like snowshoes; large and compact. Well furred between toes.	Short and compact
Nails	Non-retracting (not cat like) and always black	Short, black, white, or opaque	Short: black, white, or opaque	Short and black.
Chest	Very deep, very narrow, and keel-shaped. Extends slightly forward of the shoulders	Deep, moderately narrow and keel shaped; does not extend forward of shoulders	Broad; deep and keel shaped; extends well forward of the shoulder; Bulging	Deep, moderately wide, and keel shaped. Extends forward of the shoulders.

*Data for the above chart was compiled by Kim Miles

Identification is a "Best" Guess

When trying to identify a wolfdog, please note that there are no physical characteristics found in wolves that are not also found in some dogs. The above chart only compares three other breeds of dogs to wolves and does not show similarities that might be found in other breeds. Dogs are descendants of the wolf and share physical and behavioral characteristics of their wild ancestors. Even after centuries of domestication, there is sufficient genetic similarities to declare wolves and dogs as being the same species. Many large breeds of dogs such as northern breeds and German Shepherd are similar in build and coloration to wolves. In many cases, dogs from these breeds have been mistaken for wolfdogs or in some instances, pure wolves. It is difficult, if not impossible for those that are familiar with these animals to distinguish between a wolfdog and a poorly bred northern breed or cross bred dog (such as shepherd x husky crosses or shepherd x malamute crosses). It is also difficult to distinguish between a pure wolf and a high content.

