

**Countryside
Alliance**



The voice of the countryside

Hounds and hound showing

The hounds

Packs of hounds have been carefully bred over hundreds of years to hunt their specific quarry in the most effective way possible according to what will suit a particular hunt and their different countries.

 **Beagles**



 **Fell hounds**



 **Foxhounds**



 **Mink hounds**



 **Basset hounds**



 **Harriers**



Fox and Fell hounds

- Traditionally the quarry for foxhounds and fell hounds was the fox
- Fell hounds have feet similar to that of the hare with long claws
- Fell hounds are lighter and more athletic which helps when crossing the steep, rocky country of the Lake District. They also spend much of their time hunting unaided so independence and self-reliance are vital
- Hounds each have a stud book and their pedigrees are very important. Huntsmen will know the pedigree of each and every one of their hounds almost better than they know their own families!
- With over 180 registered packs in Great Britain, foxhounds are the most recognisable of the hound breeds.

Beagles, bassets and harriers

- Traditionally the quarry for beagles, bassets and harriers was the hare
- Beagles are small hounds, standing between 14 and 16 inches at the shoulder, and are normally followed on foot
- Harriers stand up to 21 inches in height. They are generally followed on horseback
- The harrier is smaller and lighter in weight than the foxhound with a finer build – this makes them particularly good at hunting in thick cover and over difficult terrain
- Bassets hunt at a much slower pace and are followed only on foot.

Mink hounds

- The season runs from April – September
- Hounds will be put into the river to hunt a trail, rats or flush a mink to a waiting gun
- Otter hunting ceased in the 70s when hunts realised that the population was in dramatic decline and therefore hounds were passed to newly formed mink hound packs
- The mink hound is a friendly, tough, sturdy hound with a thick coat and is a good swimmer
- Mink were released into the wild by animal rights activists, necessitating management.

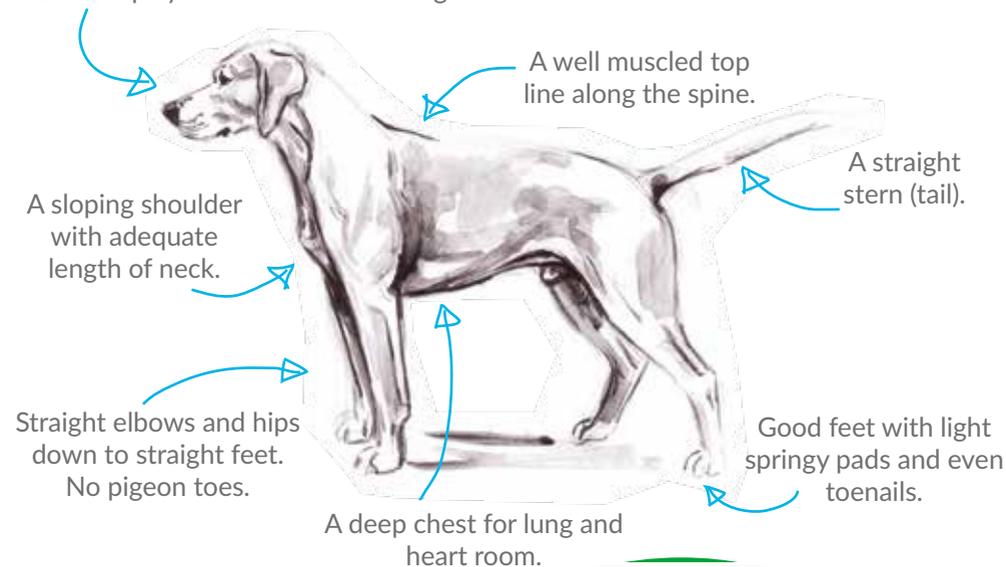
Hound showing

Studbook foxhounds from registered packs can be shown at a series of hound shows throughout the country during the summer months. Dogs and Bitches are judged separately and there are classes for unentered hounds (which will start hunting this season), entered hounds (already hunting), and hounds used for breeding.

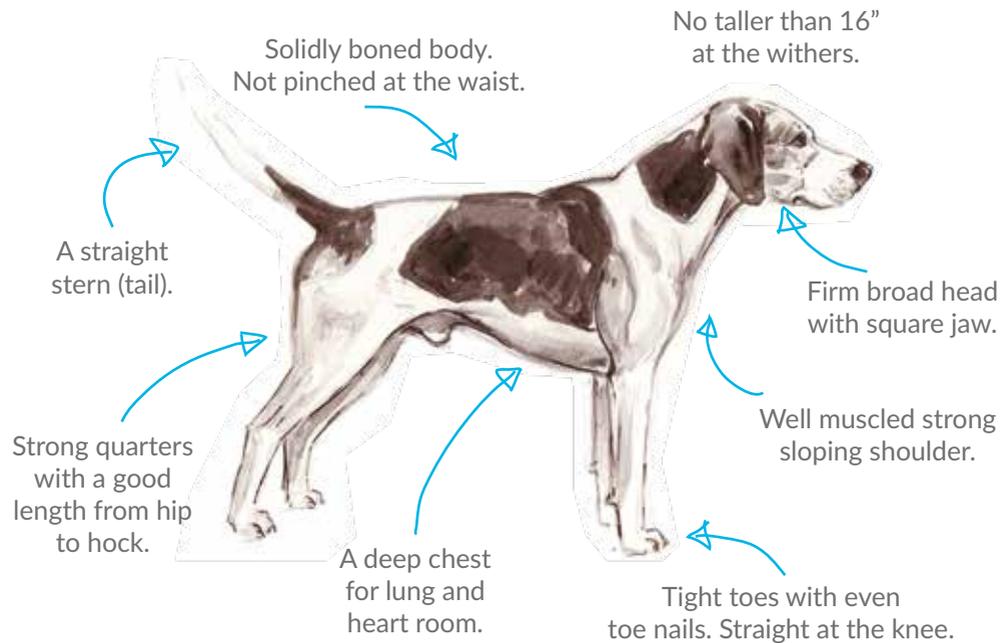
The purpose of hound judging, normally undertaken by two current or former Masters, is to assess the conformation as well as the quality, movement and balance of the hound. The judges will be looking to see if the hound has generally good conformation. This is outlined by the drawings below;

Foxhound

An intelligent head. Not too narrow or too wide.
Best displayed when concentrating on a biscuit.



Beagle



- Hunting ability cannot be judged on conformation alone but other important attributes such as scenting ability, voice and drive can only be properly assessed out hunting
- Generally it is thought that hounds with better conformation will have more stamina and are able to stand up to a full day's hunting without taking too much out of themselves

The Hunting Act came into force on 18 February 2005. Despite this, on the first Saturday of the ban 250 hunts met as normal to carry out legal trail-hunting, supported by hundreds of thousands of ordinary people. Today packs are continuing to hunt within the law and more people are going hunting than ever before.

The Hunting Act is hard to interpret and enforce, bad for animal welfare and a waste of police resources. Even though there have been only a handful of successful convictions, it cannot be right that law-abiding Huntsmen and hunt staff continue to live in constant fear of malicious prosecutions every time they take hounds out of kennels.

We continue to campaign for the repeal of this illiberal law and remain vigilant, moving our cause forward at every opportunity so that we can resume hunting as we know it.

Join us

With around 100,000 members the Countryside Alliance defends and promotes country sports and rural life at Parliament, in the media and on the ground. We have been the lead voice against the threats to hunting and shooting for many years. However, the Alliance's agenda is far broader than that, representing members on various issues including food and farming, local businesses and services and the injustices of poor mobile phone signal and broadband in the countryside. We represent the interests of country people from all backgrounds and geographical locations.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Countryside Alliance please call our membership team on **0207 840 9300** or you can join online at **www.countryside-alliance.org.uk**



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Thank you to Rosemary Coates for the use of her illustrations and to Bob Spree, Steve Wall, Sarah Farnsworth and Midge Todhunter for the use of their photos.