

Border Collies



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Characteristics and Temperament

The most outstanding characteristic of Border Collies is their desire to work above all other things. They herd with their heads lowered, eyeing the sheep with an intense stare. They notice every movement of the livestock, and they react by moving, at times almost imperceptibly, to take advantage of or counter it. Movement of both dog and stock should be calm and steady. These dogs are the world's premier sheep-working breed and are known for their athleticism, intelligence, and strong work ethic.

Border Collies are *heading* or *gathering* herders, as opposed to *heelers*: their instinct is to run wide around a herd or flock, gather the animals, and return them to the shepherd. Border Collies can be (and are) taught to drive stock away from the shepherd, but they do not usually do it by instinct.

Typical Border Collies are workaholics. They are happiest when they have a job to do, whether that job be herding, obedience, agility, or any of the other active occupations and dog sports at which they excel. They are extremely quick, high-energy, busy dogs, and they must have plenty of exercise. They are bred for endurance: a working Border Collie is able to run many miles a day over difficult terrain, then go out and do it again the next day; a one- or two-mile run is barely a warm-up this athletic breed. People without the time to give a dog plenty of good, vigorous exercise every day are usually happier with a calmer breed. A bored Border Collie can become neurotic, obsessive, and destructive.

Border Collies herd livestock, birds, other dogs, cats, children, squirrels, rabbits, deer, bugs, and often lawn mowers, vacuum cleaners, brooms, rakes, and anything else that moves. Although Border Collies herd by "eye" rather than by nipping at the heels of livestock, many are still nippy and will nip at the heels and legs of people when they run. Young children are common targets of that behavior, because they don't know how to control it. In other words, if not handled properly the herding behavior can turn a Border Collie into a real pest. They also tend to be car-chasers, and many Border Collie lives have ended early under the wheels of a car.

Border Collies are always underfoot. These dogs watch you constantly (as if you are the stock), and rush in front of you if they think something is going to happen. They thrive on attention and are very affectionate and people-oriented. However, good *early* socialization is important for puppies: adults can be reserved with people they don't know, and aggressive with other dogs. Border Collies are highly intelligent and quick learners, but they are slow to mature - they are "puppies" until around 2 or 3 years (or older), and many 10- and 12-year-old dogs are still very lively and full of energy. Don't expect a Border Collie to start acting mature and dignified at 3 or 4 years of age!

Frequently Asked Questions

I heard that Border Collies are the most intelligent dog there is. Is this true?

Defining "most intelligent" is a highly subjective thing, and depends on what traits (such as trainability, reasoning ability, independent thinking, fitness for a particular task, etc.) you consider to be signs of intelligence. Still, by most standards Border Collies are very intelligent dogs. They are highly trainable and have good reasoning abilities. It's not unusual for them to learn a new command in just a few minutes with only a few repetitions. But their intelligence can also be a problem: many times they quickly learn things that the owner didn't intend for them to learn, and would prefer they didn't know! Their intelligence is one of the reasons that they tend to get bored (and into trouble) easily. But then, it's also one of the reasons they can excel in obedience training and competition. However, Border Collies do not train themselves. All dogs need owners who are willing to commit the time to obedience training if the dogs are to become good companions, and the Border Collie is by no means an exception.

Since they're good herding dogs, I can let my Border Collie run loose around my livestock when I'm not there, and he won't hurt them, right?

This is not the case at all. Herding instinct is a modified prey drive. An unsupervised Border Collie will chase, injure, and kill livestock just like any other dog, especially (but not only) if he's untrained .

How are they with children?

When properly socialized and well-supervised with children, some Border Collies can be fine. Those individuals often seem to know how boisterous or how gentle they need to be with different children. But Border Collies must be supervised around children to make sure neither hurts the other inadvertently. As previously mentioned, they often nip at fast-moving children. Border Collies that aren't well-socialized with them can be fearful and untrusting of children, and a nervous dog will snap at a child.

How are they with cats and other small animals?

It depends on the dog. Typically, a Border Collie will get along with cats and small animals that belong to the family, but chase those that don't. However, you often need a good-natured cat to deal with one of these dogs. Remember, if a dog's instinct is strong enough that it chases and nips at humans when they move, it's also going to be strong enough to constantly harrass the cat. It's usually a good idea to separate a Border Collie from all small animals when you're not there to supervise.

Are Border Collies hyperactive? Do they need a lot of exercise?

Border Collies should be very intense, high-energy, busy dogs, both indoors and out. If bored, they will chew anything (books, shoes, carpet, furniture, walls...). They also love to dig holes. Good forms of exercise for a Border Collie include playing fetch (they usually love to chase balls and Frisbees), swimming, jogging, running with a bicycle (be careful they don't try to cross in front of the bike to herd it!), and hiking.

Border Collies won't usually exercise on their own, and merely putting a Border Collie into a fenced area as a form of exercise is not enough for them. They tend to either lie around waiting for you to join them, or they spend their time digging up the yard and chewing things they shouldn't.

When exercising a Border Collie, especially in warm weather, you must watch very carefully for signs of heat exhaustion. Because they are so intense in their work and play, they often don't stop when they get too tired or too hot. They can easily work themselves to death, even on cool days. Another problem is that they can physically injure themselves because they are so quick and concentrate so completely on their task that they don't always pay attention to where they are going and can run into obstacles if they happen to be in the way. It's also very common for Border Collies running on gravel, concrete, and asphalt to wear the pads of their feet down to the point where they bleed, especially when they're not used to hard, rough surfaces. Most Border Collies won't even limp until the fun is over, so be sure to keep an eye on your dog's feet!

How much exercise is enough for a Border Collie?

The answer to this question is as individual as the dogs themselves. Plan on two 45-minute walks per day, snow, rain, or shine - your dog won't care what the weather is like! At least 20 minutes of each of those walks should be off leash in a safe area, and should include a game of fetch or something equally vigorous. In addition, a 15- to 30- minute daily training session (obedience, tricks, etc.) helps to keep your dog mentally stimulated *and* well-behaved. If you think your dog still needs more, you may be better off increasing the amount of training and/or *mental* exercise as opposed to increasing the physical exercise. For a dog with the Border Collie's physical stamina, working his mind is much more likely to tire him out than taking him for another run. Don't expect all this work to keep that soggy tennis ball out of your lap

when you're watching television, though. Your Border Collie will still have plenty of energy to spare!

What active sports and activities can I participate in with a Border Collie?

Because of their agility, energy, trainability, love of work, and good scenting ability, Border Collies are extremely versatile dogs that excel at many things: competitive dog sports such as obedience, agility, Schutzhund, Flyball, Scent Hurdles, Frisbee, and tracking; they make good search and rescue dogs; some well-trained, well-socialized Border Collies are wonderful pet-therapy dogs, and some organizations train them as signal (hearing) and assistance dogs; police departments in several states are using them as drug detection dogs. And, last but definitely not least, Border Collies are among the best herding dogs in the world. Be very careful, though, if you get a Border Collie and decide to try herding, because it can be addictive. Many people who got a Border Collie as a companion dog wind up buying property and sheep just to work the dog!

Do they play "Fetch"?

One of a Border Collie's favorite games is "Fetch," and it's great exercise for them. They love chasing balls, Frisbees, and anything else that moves, and their gathering instinct makes them natural retrievers. In fact, the fetching can become obsessive and, to some people, annoying. Not everyone enjoys having tennis balls frequently dropped in their laps as they're trying to relax, and an insistent dog staring at them or scolding them until the ball is thrown - only to have the process repeated again (and again and again...) a few seconds later.

A word of warning about playing Frisbee with a Border Collie (or any other dog): according to M. Christine Zink, DVM, Ph.D., author of the book *Peak Performance: Coaching the Canine Athlete*: "Frisbees can be very dangerous for dogs, particularly when they are thrown so that the dog must catch them with all four feet off the ground. The problem lies not in the dog jumping and catching the Frisbee, but in the fact that the trajectory of a Frisbee can change unpredictably, causing the dog to twist to catch it and then land in whatever position it can. The most common injuries as a consequence of Frisbee-catching are herniation of the disks of the spinal cord and tearing or rupture of the anterior cruciate ligaments. Both of these injuries can be severe enough to end a dog's performance career."

Do Border Collies like to swim?

Border Collies love to swim if encouraged to do so when they are young. Swimming is an excellent way to exercise these high-energy dogs during the hot summer months. It's also a good way of exercising a dog that has hip dysplasia because it strengthens the muscles that support the hips without putting any weight on the joint..

What other things do they like to do that will help me exercise my dog and keep it mentally stimulated?

Remember: if it moves, it will probably interest a Border Collie. Many love to chase and bite at bubbles blown from a children's bubble set. They also often love to chase water coming out of a hose (or spray bottle) - a great activity for hot days. Border Collies that understand the stay command (or that have someone who can hold onto them for a minute while another person hides) love to play hide and seek, and they get very good at locating hiding people (be sure to give them "hints" at first by calling them when they have trouble finding you so they don't get frustrated and give up). You can also hide their toys, and teach them to look for them. Teach them the names of their toys, and then to retrieve a specific toy. They love a good, fast game of "Tag" (and they love to be "It" - but don't let them nip your legs!). Many Border Collies enjoy using their herding instinct to push basketball-sized balls around the yard, and it's not unusual to find Border Collies that will play tetherball by jumping at, biting, nosing, and pawing a tetherball around the pole. You can teach your dog some informal agility by making use of the slides, tunnels, bridges, and teeter-totters available in your backyard or some parks' playgrounds. Teach them tricks - the more complicated, the better (and most Border Collies just love showing off to an appreciative audience).

Do Border Collie jump fences? Are they escape artists?

Border Collies are *extremely* agile dogs and can easily jump/climb a 6-foot or taller fence if they decide there's something more interesting on the other side. They are also good diggers and chewers, so if they can't jump a fence, they might try to dig under it or chew through it if they want to get out. Some Border Collies can even learn to open doors and latches!

How big do Border Collies get?

Border Collies average between 30 to 50 pounds. However, if size is important to you, be aware that some Border Collies are as small as 25 pounds, and some are as large as 65 pounds. You can usually tell how big a dog will get by looking at his parents, but if you plan to get a puppy and you need or want a dog whose size you can count on, you might want to consider a breed with less variation in size.

Do they make good guard dogs?

Because Border Collies are bred to herd rather than protect livestock, they are not reliable guard dogs. They can be protective of their families and generally bark if they hear or see something they don't like. (There are, however, some Border Collies that have been trained to advanced Schutzhund degrees.)

Do they shed?

They are moderate shedders. Like most dogs, they shed most in early spring and late fall.

How much grooming do they need?

Border Collies are fairly low-maintenance dogs when it comes to grooming because their coats actually shed dirt very nicely. Generally, a good 10-minute brushing two or three times per week helps to keep their coats clean and in nice condition; more frequent brushing while they are shedding helps to control the amount of hair that ends up on your carpet. Because Border Collies should not have a strong odor, bathing should be necessary only when your dog starts feeling dirty to you, or if the dog has rolled in something noxious. If your Border Collie starts to smell bad soon after a bath, a trip to the vet for a check for skin and ear problems is probably in order.

Like all dogs, they also need to have their toenails clipped regularly unless they do a lot of running on hard surfaces. In that case they often wear their nails down on their own. However, even then it's a good idea to check the nails once a week, just to make sure.

Do they bark much?

Any dog can become a barker if it gets bored, and Border Collies become more easily bored than most other dogs. In general, however, well-trained, well-exercised Border Collies that get plenty of attention are relatively quiet dogs.

How long do they live?

Border Collies are fairly long-lived dogs. Their average lifespan, barring accidents, is probably around 12 to 13 years, and it isn't at all unusual to find individuals that are 14 years and older. They usually hold their age well - a 12-year-old Border Collie often still looks and acts like a young dog.

Where should I get my dog?

There are several options, some good, others not so good. If you choose to get an adult dog, you can get one from a shelter, from a Border Collie rescue organization, or from a breeder who is looking for a home for an adult Border Collie. If you decide to get a puppy, you should do some research and find a breeder

with a good reputation. Do *not* buy a Border Collie puppy from a pet store. Although these puppies are adorable, they are generally from puppy mills and are incredibly overpriced. Most people don't realize that they can usually buy a very well-bred, well-socialized, pet-quality puppy with exceptional guarantees from a reputable breeder for less money than they can buy a puppy from a pet store. Pet store puppies have usually been bred for profit with little consideration given to long-term health. They are often prone to many problems, such as epilepsy, hip and joint problems, and early blindness. They are also usually poorly socialized, which means they can grow up to be timid, fearful dogs. Do not even buy from pet stores advertising that their animals are not from puppy mills: *no reputable breeder would ever sell puppies to a pet store!* You will often encounter the same problems with health and socialization with puppies sold through ads in the newspaper. The best way to find a good breeder is by asking people who already own healthy Border Collies with good temperaments.

Don't "rescued" Border Collies have a lot of behavior problems? Do they have trouble bonding with their new owners?

Rescue can be an excellent way of getting a Border Collie, particularly if it will be your first one. The dogs that come into rescue are often well-bred, healthy dogs screened by the rescuer for temperament, whose only "faults" were that they were in homes that could not deal with the exercise and training needs of the breed. The dogs are often housebroken, and sometimes partially trained in basic obedience. Border Collies that go from rescue into active, loving homes seem to bond very quickly and strongly to their new owners. You can even sometimes get a puppy from rescue. (See the section on [Breed Rescue Organizations](#) for contacts and further information.)

How do I choose a puppy?

If you want a healthy puppy with a good temperament, the most important thing is to not be in a hurry! First, decide what activities you want to do with the dog: herding, obedience, agility, active pet (jogging, hiking), etc. Once you know what you're looking for, talk to breeders and discuss your concerns and ideas. Since Border Collies are prone to eye diseases such as Progressive Retinal Atrophy and juvenile cataracts, and hip problems such as hip dysplasia, look for a breeder who has all dogs' eyes and hips checked and certified: eyes are certified by C.E.R.F., and hips are certified by O.F.A. Be sure to ask to see the certificates issued by those organizations. Make sure the puppies are well-socialized: they should be friendly and confident. When you find a someone that you like and who has a good reputation, allow the breeder to help you select your puppy. Most good breeders have a pretty good idea of what the puppies' personalities are like and will help you to make a good choice of the best puppy for your particular lifestyle.

History

The Border Collie originated in the border country between Scotland and England. It is a very old breed, with references in literature going back to at least 1570 in writings by Dr. Caius. Caius mentions him as "not huge, vaste and bigge but of indifferent stature and growth". The breed has been known as the Working Collie, Old-Fashioned Collie, Farm Collie, and English Collie. It was in 1915 that James Reid, Secretary of the International Sheepdog Society in Great Britain, first called the dog a Border Collie.

The first sheepdog trials were held on October 9, 1873 in Bala, Wales. In the United States, the trials started in 1880.

Famous Border Collies

Two Border Collies that have had a great deal of influence on the modern Border Collie are Old Hemp and Wiston Cap.

Old Hemp, a tri-color dog, was born September 1893 and died May 1901. He was bred by Adam Telfer from Roy, a black and tan dog, and Meg, a black-coated, strong-eyed dog. Hemp was a quiet, powerful dog that sheep responded to easily. Many shepherds used him for stud on their bitches, and Hemp's working style became the Border Collie style. It is believed that Old Hemp's blood runs in the veins of almost all Border Collies today.

Wiston Cap is the dog that the International Sheep Dog Society (ISDS) badge portrays in the characteristic Border Collie herding pose. He was the most popular and used stud dog in the history of the breed, and appears in a huge percentage of pedigrees today. Bred by W. S. Hetherington and trained and handled by John Richardson, Cap was a biddable and good-natured dog. His blood lines all trace back to the early registered dogs of the stud book, and to J. M. Wilson's Cap, who occurs sixteen times within seven generations in his pedigree. Wiston Cap sired three Supreme Champions and is grand-sire of three others, one of which is E. W. Edwards' Bill, who won the championship twice.

The Border Collie Controversy

The Border Collie brings out a great deal of passion in the people who love it, especially in regard to what is best for the breed. Unfortunately, there is much disagreement on that subject, and the disagreement has created some hard feelings among people who are all intensely concerned about the Border Collie's future. Following is a very simplified summary of the three main factions.

Many people, particularly Border Collie owners from the herding community, feel that American Kennel Club (AKC) recognition in the United States, and Canadian Kennel Club recognition (CKC) in Canada, will irreparably harm the Border Collie. These people believe that breeding the dogs to a conformation standard (that is, for beauty or a certain look) will, at best, split the breed in North America by creating a set of Border Collies that are pretty but can't work. They take the dogs' herding instinct very seriously, and believe it would be a serious injustice to the breed if this were to happen. These people refuse to have anything to do with the AKC, and do not register their dogs with the AKC.

Many other people, especially those involved in showing their dogs in AKC obedience trials and other performance events, hope that, with enough people committed to keeping the dog a working dog, and with an AKC parent club committed to the same thing, they will be able to keep a major split from happening by placing the emphasis on herding and performance, especially when it comes to breeding dogs.

There is also a group of Border Collie owners who are primarily interested in showing in conformation. Many of these people have imported conformation-bred Border Collies from the UK, Australia, and New Zealand, where the breed has been recognized by the Kennel Clubs for a number of years.

In 1994, breed clubs for all breeds that had been in the Miscellaneous group for many years without seeking full recognition were notified by the AKC that they had to either seek recognition or be dropped from the AKC entirely. The AKC had made the decision that the Miscellaneous group should be used as it was intended: as a temporary holding place for breeds actively seeking recognition.

In December 1994, the AKC voted to officially recognize the Border Collie after decades of its being in the Miscellaneous group (no one seems to be sure exactly how long it's been, but it's apparently at least since 1955). Registration began in February, 1995, with stud books to be kept open for three years (in October 1997, the AKC decided to allow an additional three years; as of this writing, stud books are now due to close in January 2001). As a Miscellaneous breed, the Border Collie was allowed to show only in AKC obedience and tracking trials; on February 1, 1995, the breed also became eligible to show in herding and agility trials. In October 1995, Border Collies were seen for the first time in AKC conformation as part of the herding group. And finally, in the summer of 1996, the AKC selected the Border Collie Society of America (BCSA) as the AKC parent club for the breed.

The Canadian Kennel Club, due to its inability to recognize the breed at this time, removed the Border Collie from its Miscellaneous group. (The process of breed recognition is regulated by the Canadian government through the Animal Pedigree Act.) As a result, any Border Collies not CKC miscellaneous certified by the end of 1993 are not allowed to participate in CKC- sanctioned events. The Border Collie Club of Canada (BCCC) is continuing to work with the CKC to regain their showing privileges.

Description

For the sheep rancher looking for a Border Collie, emphasis is on intelligence, trainability, and herding instinct rather than on beauty. He doesn't care what color the dog is, how big he is, or whether his ears stand up or flop down. The rancher needs the dog to be physically and mentally capable of performing the work.

In general, Border Collies are medium-sized dogs, averaging between 35 and 50 pounds, but individuals can be as small as 25 pounds, and as large as 65 pounds. The most common color is black and white, but black, white, and tan (tri), red and white, red-tri, red merle, blue merle, and blue and white also exist. Ear set can be almost anything, from floppy or "rose," to semi-prick, to prick, and both ears don't necessarily look alike. Eyes can be of any color: some dogs have one blue and one brown eye. "Typical" Border collie markings are colored body with a white blaze up the face, white collar, white feet and legs, and a white tail tip, but there are many dogs that are almost solid-colored.

Be aware that many excellent breeders do not breed to the AKC standard. They believe that working ability *alone* is the only way to define a Border Collie. In the writer's opinion, if a breeder is breeding toward the AKC standard, s/he should also be breeding for herding ability, and the only way to make sure of that is to train and work the dog regularly. Passing a herding instinct tests does not mean a dog can stand up to the rigors of regular training and work in tough circumstances on difficult stock.

Training/Behavior Hints

Border Collies are often "soft" dogs; that is, they are sensitive to rough treatment and corrections. You must be firm and consistent because these dogs will try to get away with as much as they can, but you must also be fair in your corrections and training. Typical reactions from a Border Collie that has been stressed by rough or unfair treatment are that it may shut down, possibly rolling onto its back in submission, or acting very engrossed in something else and paying no attention to you; or it may become more anxious and wound up, trying to do everything in triple time, which causes it to make even more mistakes. Motivational-type training, with plenty of treats and/or play, works best with soft dogs for obedience training. It brings out the best in them, helping to turn them into excellent, happy workers that love their training sessions.

Attention-training is important for Border Collies that will be shown in obedience competition. These dogs are very sight-oriented, and are easily distracted by anything moving around them. A dog that is closely watching his handler cannot pay attention to other things that are happening around him.

Border Collies make wonderful trick dogs. They love to learn new things and can be taught many behaviors, such as sitting up, playing dead, and rolling over, and they usually love to show off. They can be very undignified and clownish if they think it will get them attention or make people laugh. This is why these dogs are so popular in movies and television.

Border Collies can be very sound-sensitive. This sensitivity manifests itself in a couple of ways: some dogs become very frightened at loud or unusual noises (i.e., fireworks, the sound of a smoke alarm, even something as simple as hand-clapping); other dogs might just be extremely distracted by different noises.

Is a Border Collie For You?

With the recent appearance of the Border Collie in movies, commercials, and television programs, many people are now considering one as a potential new pet. While Border Collies are very intelligent, they also require a larger time and energy commitment from their owners than many other breeds. They are active, spirited, and sometimes strong willed. Although some may be calmer than others, others are decidedly hyperactive, always wanting to be up and

doing something. They often exhibit obsessive behaviors, like chasing lights, shadows, and running or dripping water. Many owners have no patience for this kind of activity, but breed lovers seem to enjoy this loony streak.

There is no way of telling how highly developed a pup's herding instinct will be. If you acquire one that wants to work above all else, its frustration may take the form of herding and possibly nipping at the heels of children, running adults, or other animals. This is not a sign of viciousness, but it is something that *must be controlled*, especially with small children who can become frightened with the behavior.

The people who make the most satisfied Border Collie owners are people who enjoy spending a lot of time with their dogs and are willing and able to make the commitment to exercise and train in some way every day; who are very active, who like to hike, jog, and/or take long walks with their dogs; who don't mind living with a dog that never really settles down, even in the house, even after a lot of exercise, even when its owner is tired from a long day at work; and *most important*, who have a real job for the dogs to do, whether it's one of the dog sports that these dogs excel at, or, of course, herding a flock of sheep.

In summary, Border Collies are much more work than most other breeds. They do not typically make easy family pets. If you have never been around one, try to spend some time with the breed before you decide to get one. Many Border Collies end up in shelters when their owners find that they are just too much trouble to have around because they need so much exercise, attention, and training/mental stimulation.

Recognized

American Kennel Club
Australian National Kennel Council
FCI
Kennel Club of Great Britain
Raad van Beheer
United Kennel Club

Special Medical Problems

There is a mistaken belief by some breeders that the Border Collie's work weeds out unhealthy breeding stock and, as a result, the breed is unaffected by the genetic disorders common in other breeds. This is absolutely untrue! Many Border Collies in the U.S. have disorders such as hip dysplasia, eye problems, and epilepsy. If a breeder tells you that the breed is unaffected by these problems, *find another breeder*. Also, if a breeder tells you he doesn't check and certify hips and eyes because his particular breeding lines are unaffected by hip and eye problems, find another breeder.

Hip Dysplasia

Like most medium- and large-sized dogs, Border Collies are prone to Canine Hip Dysplasia (CHD), which can cause mild to severe lameness, so be sure to look for breeders that certify their dogs through the [OFA](#) and insist on seeing the certificates. Dogs do not have to be obviously lame to have this condition and pass it on to their offspring. As a dog approaches middle age, symptoms of CHD often show up as mild arthritis: the dog limps or appears somewhat stiff after hard exercise or upon getting up from a nap. Often the dog seems fine after he moves around and stretches himself a bit. These symptoms can become worse as the dog ages. Depending on the dog (age, activity level) and owner (finances, ability and willingness to commit to helping the dog with its rehabilitation), treatment varies from pain management (using drugs, managed exercise, and rest) to several choices of surgery (including total hip replacement).

Osteochondritis Desicans

A disease that can cause lameness in the joints of young dogs (usually from 6 to 12 months of age) is Osteochondritis Desicans (OCD). This is a degenerative disease of the joints, and is possibly associated with over-nutrition and too-fast growth of puppies. Treatment includes rest and/or surgery.

Progressive Retinal Atrophy

Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) and Central Retinal Atrophy (CPRA) are two eye problems. PRA generally shows up in dogs around two years of age. At first it shows up as night blindness, and slowly progresses over eight years or so to total blindness. Dogs that are bred should have their eyes checked and certified by a veterinary ophthalmologist. Again, insist on seeing the [CERF](#) certificates.

Collie Eye Anomaly

Collie Eye Anomaly (CEA) is another eye problem that is becoming more and more common in Border Collies. Like PRA, CEA can also cause blindness. However, unlike PRA, it is not a progressive disease. A puppy with this problem will not get progressively worse. The entire litter should be tested for CEA between the ages of six and ten weeks by a qualified veterinary ophthalmologist. An official certificate should be available if the litter has been tested, and every puppy in the litter should be listed as normal.

Epilepsy

Border Collies are also prone to [epilepsy](#), a neurological seizure disorder, which can be extremely serious. Although epileptic seizures can usually be controlled by drugs, that's not always the case. Dogs have been known to die of uncontrollable seizures. Unfortunately, there is no test for this. Ask the breeder if there are any known epilepsy problems. Ethical breeders will be more than happy to discuss this with you.

Canine Ceroid Lipofuscinosis (Storage Disease)

This is a rare [disease](#) found in some dogs, which affects the nerve cells of the body. It is caused by a metabolic defect that allows a waste product called *ceroid lipofuscin* to accumulate in body cells. Dogs appear normal until around 18 months, at which time the build-up is substantial enough that symptoms start to appear. Symptoms include: unreasonable fear of familiar objects and surroundings; abnormal gait, unsteady on feet, difficulty jumping; demented behaviour, mania, hyperactivity, or rage. There is no treatment for this disease, and it is terminal.

Deafness

Congenital deafness can be a problem in some Border Collies, and more breeders are starting to have breeding stock and litters hearing (BAER) tested.

Malignant Hyperthermia

This is a very serious, although fairly unusual condition that affects some Border Collies. Typical symptoms include staggering after a brief period (5 or 10 minutes) of exercise. If left to run they would collapse. Body temperatures shoot up extremely high, and take a long time to return to normal, even in cold weather. Any exercise or stress can trigger an attack. If the temperature goes high enough, it can trigger seizures, strokes or even death. Dogs with this condition must have their exercise carefully controlled and monitored.

Anesthetics

Because of their low body fat, some Border Collies may be sensitive to barbiturate-based anesthetics. This is something that you should discuss with your veterinarian before any kind of surgery or procedure for which your dog will be anesthetized.

References

Books

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Carpenter, E. B., *Blue Ribband of the Heather: The Supreme Champions 1906 - 1988*, Farming Press Books, Ipswich, UK, 1989

Combe, Iris, *Border Collies*, Faber and Faber, London, 1978

Jones, H. Glyn, *A Way of Life*, Diamond Farm Enterprises, Alexandria, NY, 1987

Larson, Janet E., *The Versatile Border Collie*, Second Edition, Alpine Publications, Inc., Loveland, Colorado, 1999

Longton, Tim, and Hart, Edward, *The Sheepdog: Its Work and Training*, Newton Abbot, North Pomfret, VT, 1976

McCaig, Donald, *Nop's Trials* (Fiction), Crown Publishers, New York, NY, 1984

McCaig, Donald, *Eminent Dogs, Dangerous Men*, Harper Collins, New York, NY, 1991

Wilcox, Bonnie, DVM, and Walkowicz, Chris, *Atlas of Dog Breeds*, TFH Publications, Inc., 1991

Zink, M. Christine, DVM, *Peak Performance: Coaching the Canine Athlete*, Second Edition, Canine Sports Productions, 1997

Periodicals

American Border Collie

218 Stagecoach Lane, Crawford, TX 76638

Borderlines

(Newsletter for BCSA)

Editor: Helen Phillips

email: HelenPhillips@BorderCollie.Lover.org

Arvada, CO

The Ranch Dog Trainer

PO Box 599, Ellendale, TN 38029

The Shepherd's Dogge

Woolgather Farm

Box 843, Ithaca, NY 14581

The Working Border Collie Magazine

14933 Kirkwood Road, Sidney, OH 45365

United States Border Collie Club Newsletter

14401 Poplar Hill Road, Germantown, MD 20874

Email List about Border Collies

A mailing list is available for discussing issues and topics relating to Border Collies. You can join by sending a message to:

BC-L-Subscribe@egroups.com

leave the subject line and body of the message blank, and send the email.

There is also a mailing list specifically for herding with Border collies. To join, send email to:

listproc@cornell.edu

In the body of the message, put the lines:

subscribe SHEEPDOG-L *firstname lastname*

Breed Rescue Organizations

Many Border Collie rescue volunteers are experts at matching dogs with the right homes, so, for example, you won't end up with a dog with intense herding instincts if what you want is just an active companion. Many are also very knowledgeable about dog behavior, and are happy to answer any questions and help you with any problems you might have after you get your new dog home.

The following website lists most of the rescue organizations in the United States.

<http://www.modricusa.com/bcr/nd98/contacts.html>

Breeders

For lists of breeders, contact the one of the [breed clubs](#) listed later in this article. Be sure to interview the breeders very carefully, and expect them to interview you to make sure you can provide an appropriate home for one of their puppies. Responsible breeders are very careful about who they send their puppies home with.

Registries

The American Border Collie Association Inc. (ABCA)

82 Rogers Road, Perkinston, MS 39573 USA

(601) 928-7551

<http://www.bordercollie.org/abca.html>

The American-International Border Collie Registry, Inc. (AIBC)

c/o Senette Parker, PO Box 274, Chappell Hills, TX 77426, USA

(409) 836-4864

<http://www.aibc-registry.org/>

The American Kennel Club. (AKC)

51 Madison Avenue, New York, NY USA

email: info@akc.org

<http://www.akc.org>

The North American Sheep Dog Society (NASDS)

RR 3, McLeansboro, IL 62859, USA

Raad van Beheer

Postbus 75901, 1070 AX Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The Kennel Club

I-4 Clarges St. Piccadilly, London, W1Y8AB, England

The International Sheep Dog Society (ISDS)

Chesam House, 47 Bromham Road, Bedford, England MK40 2AA

<http://intsheepdogsoc.org.uk>

The Australian National Kennel Council

Royal Show Grounds, Ascot Vale, Victoria, Australia

The United Kennel Club (UKC)

100 East Kilgore Rd., Kalamazoo, MI 49001 USA

<http://www.ukcdogs.com/>

Breed Clubs

Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with any inquiry.

The Border Collie Club of Great Britain

Ted Keeton, Acting Secretary

Hunters Quay, Dale Bank, Ashover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S45 0EX

<http://www.k9netuk.com/bccgb/>

Border Collie Club Nederland

Amerlaan 31, 5626 BR Eindhoven

The Netherlands

Tel: +31 (0)40 2904066

Border Collie Club of Tasmania

Syd Munton

Lot 1, Lower Shield Street, Huonville 7109 Tasmania (002)641659

<http://www.vision.net.au/~mhampson/bcsct.htm>

Border Collie Society of America, Inc (BCSA)

(AKC Parent Club)

14328 W. 96th Avenue, Arvada, CO 80005

<http://www.duke.edu/~awho/bc/bcsa.htm>

The United States Border Collie Club

12813 Maple Street, Silver Spring, MD 20904

<http://www.bordercollie.org/>

Border Collie FAQ

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