



**AMERICAN
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Press Release

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LABRADOR RETRIEVER DEFENDS THE TITLE OF MOST POPULAR DOG BREED IN AMERICA

--AKC Releases 2003 Registration Statistics--

New York, NY – For the 14th consecutive year, the Labrador Retriever is the most popular purebred dog in America, according to registration figures released today by the American Kennel Club*. Nearly three times as many Labs were registered in 2003 as any other breed.

Golden Retrievers were a distant second, with Beagles, German Shepherds and Dachshunds rounding out the top five spots. The top five breeds are the same as in 2002, with the exception that Beagles moved ahead of German Shepherds into the third position.

The top 10 most popular dogs according to 2003 AKC registrations are:

1. Labrador Retriever (144,934)
2. Golden Retriever (52,530)
3. Beagle (45,033 moving up one place from 2002)
4. German Shepherd Dog (43,950)
5. Dachshund (39,473)
6. Yorkshire Terrier (38,256)
7. Boxer (34,136)
8. Poodle (32,176)
9. Shih Tzu (26,935 moving up one place from 2002)
10. Chihuahua (24,930)

“The Labrador Retriever has proven once again to be a family favorite,” said AKC spokesperson Gina Lash. “The Lab’s versatile nature makes him ideal for work or play, which is why you see the breed successfully used for a variety of tasks including AKC companion events, service work, hunting as well as family companion.”

At the other end of the list, the least-registered purebred dog (19 registrations) is the English Foxhound. The other four most rare breeds are: Otterhound (34 dogs), Harrier (45), American Foxhound (52) and Komondor (69).

In 2003, the AKC registered 150 different breeds, including the newly recognized Toy Fox Terrier, German Pinscher and Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever. In total, nearly one million dogs (915,671) and 423,761 litters were registered with the AKC in 2003.

Registrations remained the same or increased for 70 breeds including the Bernese Mountain Dog (+22 %), Cavalier King Charles Spaniel (+32%), and Skye Terrier (+75%). Some lesser-known breeds also saw significant increases in AKC registrations, such as the Finnish Spitz (+52%), the Havanese (+42%) and the Ibizan Hound (+84%).

“It’s great to see that some of these breeds such as the Ibizan Hound are being discovered,” added Lash. “All of the 150 AKC recognized breeds have traits and tendencies that make each one unique, and our goal is to educate the public about their differences and characteristics. Potential dog owners can only make informed decisions after researching the breeds and speaking with responsible breeders. It’s important to select the dog that fits your lifestyle and that can be a successful addition to the family.”

A complete listing of 2003 registration statistics is available in the February issue of the *AKC Gazette* as well as on the AKC website at www.akc.org/breeds/reg_stats.cfm.

***A Look Into the Archives**

Historically, once a breed has achieved the “top dog” status at the AKC, the trend continues for a number of years. Cocker Spaniels ranked number one from 1940-52, before Beagles took over, 1953-59. Poodles enjoyed a long reign as the most popular dog for 23 years (from 1960–83). Cocker Spaniels made a comeback and were number one again from 1984-90 when the Labrador Retriever took over (and where it remains).

AKC registration statistics were compiled approximately every five years from 1915-1940. However, the Boston Terrier Club of America’s records show that between 1905 and 1935 the Boston Terrier held the number one or two position consistently. It was displaced by the German Shepherd Dog according to AKC data compiled in 1926, which was shortly after Rin Tin Tin was featured in the Warner Brothers film “Man From Hell’s River.”

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The American Kennel Club (AKC), founded in 1884, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of purebred dogs. The AKC maintains the largest registry of purebred dogs in the world, oversees the sport of purebred dogs in the United States, and along with its 4,500 licensed and member clubs, educates the general public about responsible dog ownership. More than 15,000 competitions for purebred dogs are held under AKC rules each year including conformation, agility, obedience, tracking, herding, lure coursing, hunt tests, and field and earthdog trials. Affiliate AKC organizations include the AKC Canine Health Foundation, AKC Companion Animal Recovery and the AKC Museum of the Dog. For more information, visit www.akc.org.