

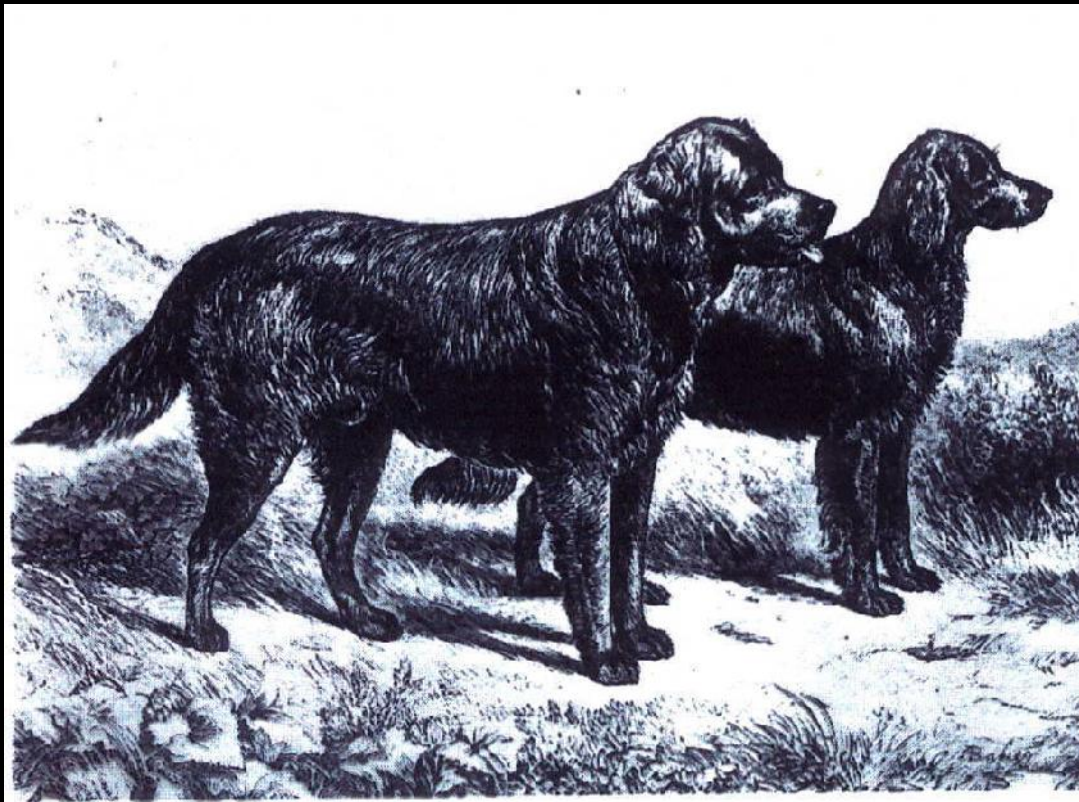
# *The Flat-Coated Retriever Breed Education Program*



The retriever originated in the mid 1800's. With improvements in the shotgun it became necessary to have a controllable dog that could find game at a distance and retrieve gently to hand.



Dogs used to develop the Flat-Coated retriever were various water dogs including the St. John's Newfoundland; spaniels and setters for game finding ability and herding dogs to improve trainability. The breed was brought to type by Mr. Shirley who was also the founder of The Kennel Club (United Kingdom).



Mr G. Brewis's Wavy-coated Retrievers, Paris and Melody  
(Stonehenge 1878)



The Flat-Coat won early favor as a trial dog and as a gamekeeper's working gun dog and companion.



Photographer Unknown



Photographer Unknown

Pictures from the scrapbooks of H. Reginald Cooke

“The Flat-Coated Retriever is first and foremost a versatile family companion hunting retriever.” *Keep this always in mind when judging this lovely breed.* The qualities necessary for his original purpose have given him the ability to succeed at many tasks in the modern world, and will keep him the wonderful family, hunting companion that he was intended to be.





Today the Flat-Coat has found employment as service and assistance dogs, therapy dogs, and search and rescue dogs as well as remaining a family dog and hunting companion.



Photo by Melissa LeVier

Success has also come in competitive obedience, agility, tracking, and hunt tests as well as conformation.



Photo by Helen Szostak



Photo by Cheryl Kistner

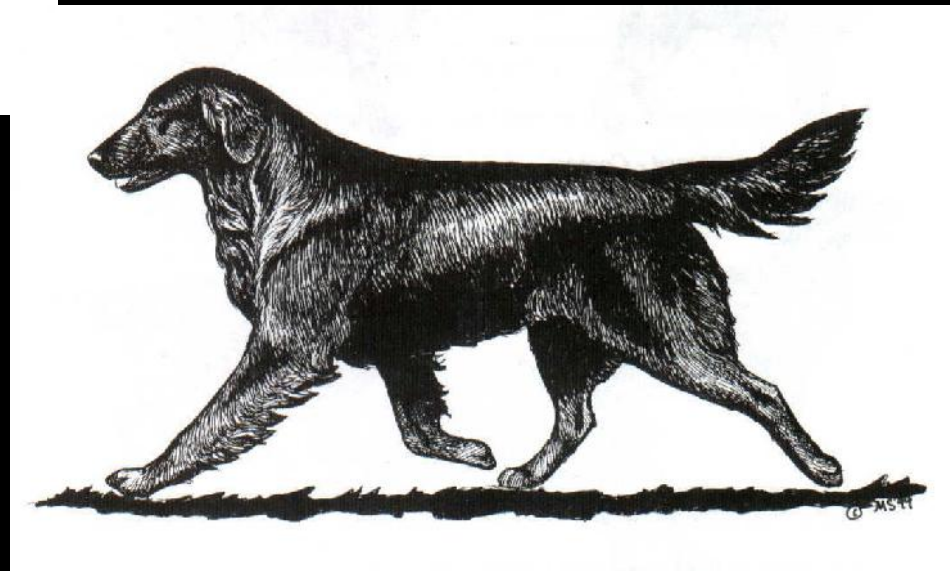
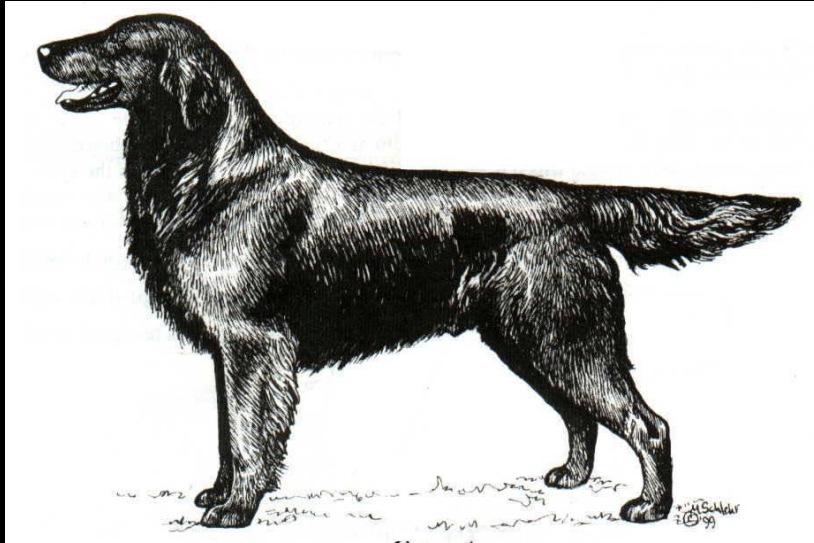


Photo by Ria Van Middelaar



*Most importantly the Flat-Coat is an outstanding companion for an active family*

When judging the Flat-Coat the most important features are the *silhouette both moving and standing, smooth effortless movement, head type, coat and character.*





*Silhouette*

“Power without lumber and raciness without weediness.” This is the traditional description of the Flat-Coated Retriever.



“In silhouette the Flat-Coat has a long, strong, clean, “one piece” head, which is unique to the breed. The head is set well into a moderately long neck which flows smoothly into well laid back shoulders. A level topline combined with a deep long rib cage tapering to a moderate tuck-up create the impression of a blunted triangle”.





“This utilitarian retriever is well balanced, strong, but elegant, never cobby, short legged or rangy. His coat is thick and flat lying. Legs and tail are well feathered. A proud carriage, responsive attitude, waving tail and overall look of functional strength, quality, style and symmetry complete the picture of the typical Flat-Coat.”



Size: the breed standard allows for a large range of sizes to accommodate the needs of different types of hunting and terrain. The preferred height is 23-24.5 inches at the withers for dogs and 22-23.5 inches for bitches with an inch allowed in either direction. The original English standard called for a dog from 60-70 pounds. The flat-coat should be shown in **LEAN, HARD, WORKING** condition.

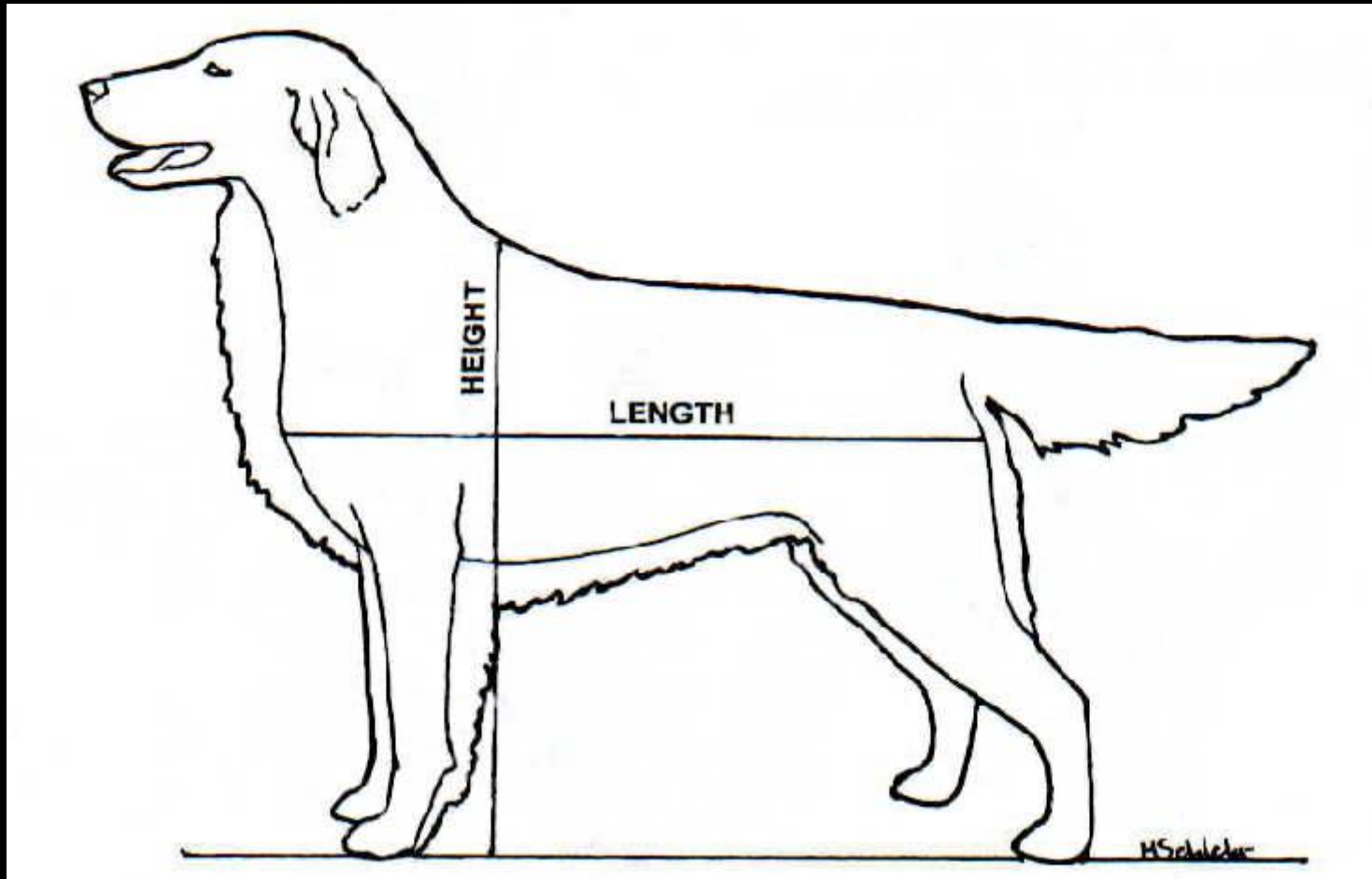




*Substance* is Moderate. *Bone* is medium and is flat or oval rather than round. It is strong but never massive, coarse, weedy or fine.



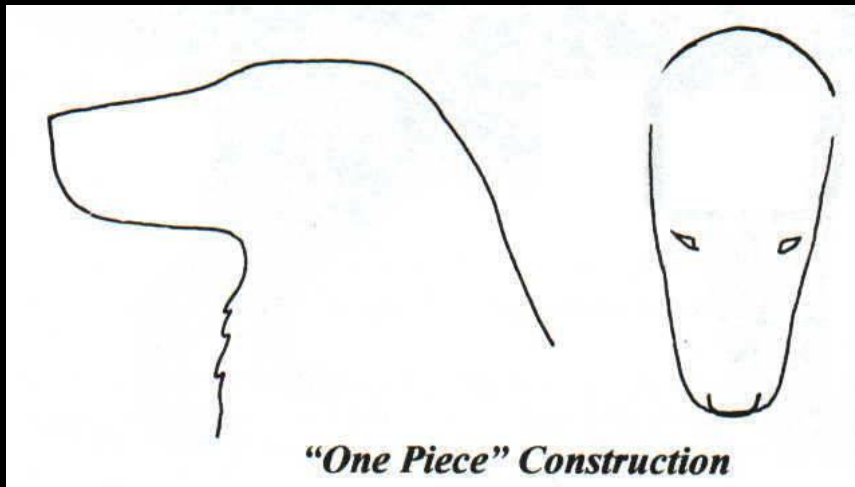
The length of the body from the point of the shoulder to the rearmost projection of the upper thigh is slightly more than the height at the withers. The length of the body of the Flat-coat is in the ribcage. The loin must be strong. *The Flat-coat is not Cobby, he is not a square dog.*





The head of the Flat-Coated Retriever is unique within the sporting group. It is a very important part of his silhouette and integral to type. This is not, however, intended to be a “head” breed.

*The Head* is long clean and well molded. It is adequate in size to carry a large pheasant, duck or hare with ease. The impression of the skull and muzzle being “*cast in one piece*” is created by the fairly flat skull of moderate breadth and flat, clean cheeks, combined with the long, strong, deep muzzle which is well filled in before, between, and beneath the eyes. Viewed from above, the muzzle is nearly equal in length and breadth to the skull.

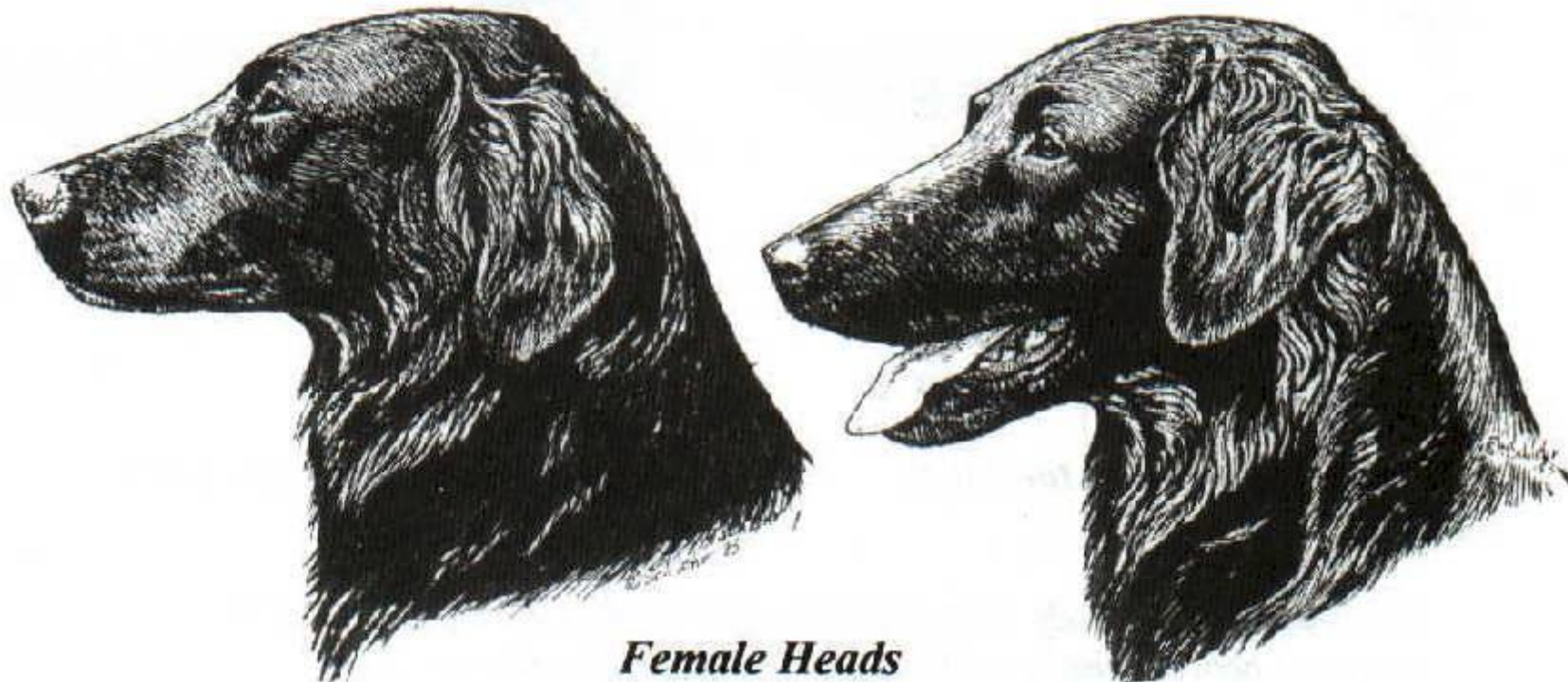


*The outlines of the head are shown without the ear because the ears should be relaxed and blend into the hair of the neck when the head is evaluated.*



Photo by Diana Cornell

There is a gradual, slight, barely perceptible stop. *Brows* are slightly raised and mobile, giving life to the expression. *Stop* must be evaluated in profile so that it will not be confused with the raised brow.”

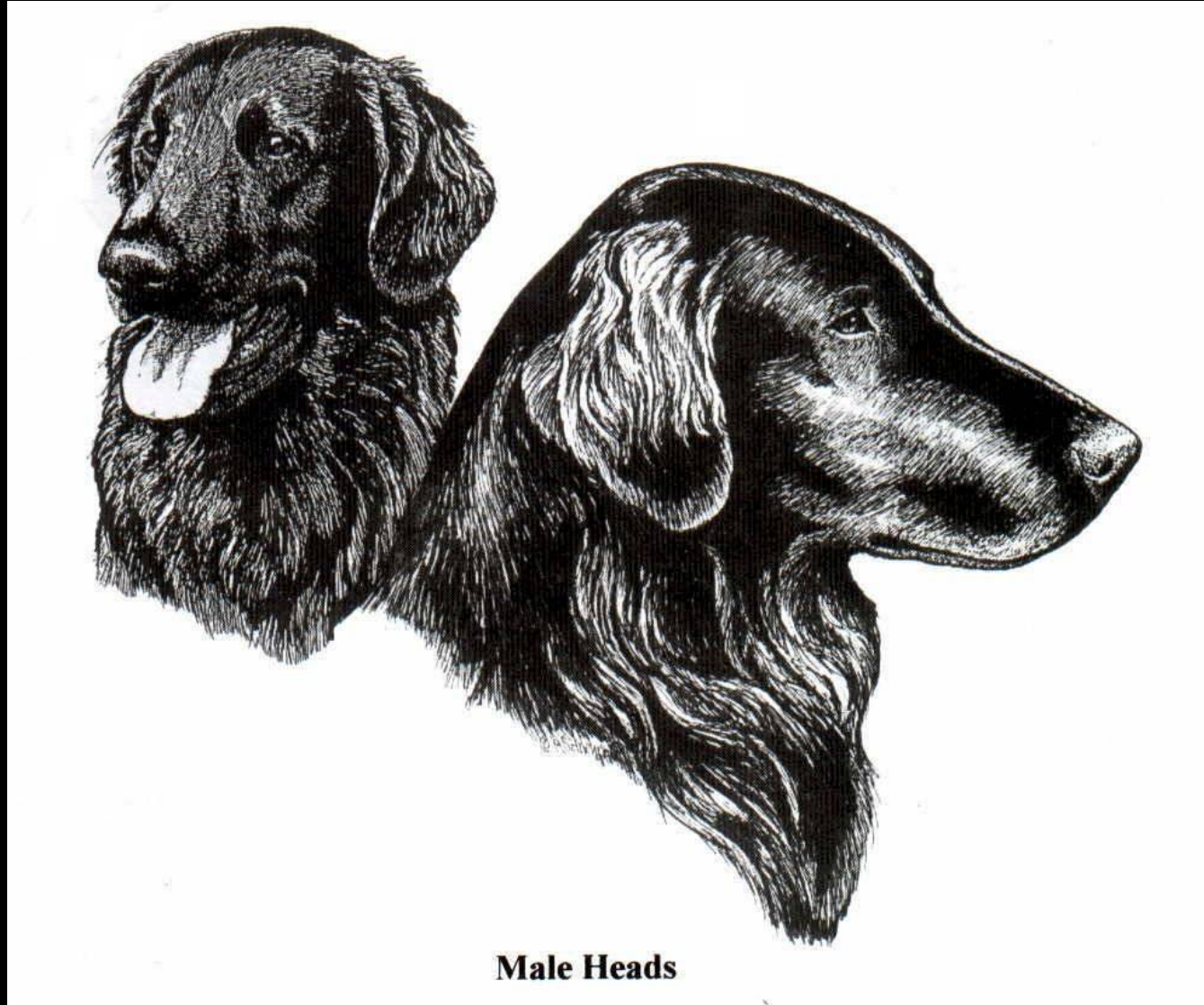


*Female Heads*





The *occiput* is not accentuated, the skull forming a gentle curve where it fits well into the neck.



**Male Heads**



“The *expression* is alert, intelligent and kind. *Eyes* are set widely apart, medium sized, almond shaped, dark brown or hazel. Eye rims are self-colored and tight.”



Photo by Ria Van Middelaar



Photo by Ria Van Middelaar



The *ears* are well set on, lying close to the side of the head and thickly feathered. The *nose* has large open nostrils. Black on black dogs, brown on liver dogs.



Photo by Sophia Fanous



Photographer unknown

*Lips* are fairly tight, firm, clean and dry to minimize the retention of feathers. *Jaws* are long and strong, capable of carrying a hare or pheasant.”



A scissors *bite* is preferred, a level bite is acceptable. . Broken teeth should not count against the dog.

Severe faults – Wry and undershot or overshot bites with a noticeable gap must be severely penalized.”



*Scissors*

*Level*

*Overshot*

*Undershot*

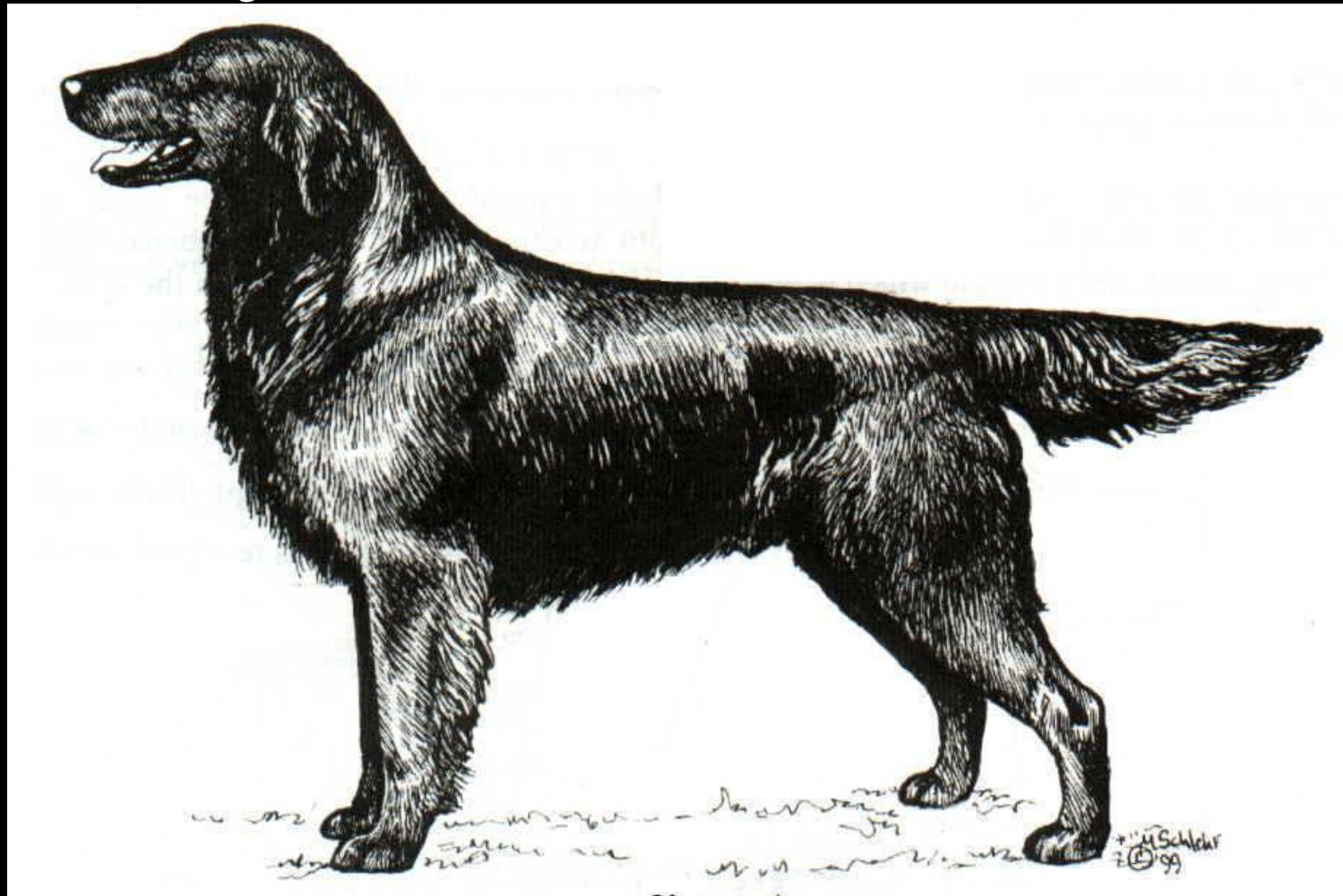
*Wry*

*The Flat-Coated Retriever is a long-headed dog, and the upper and lower jaws do not grow equally. A 6 to 12 month old puppy may be allowed a “roomy” scissors bite (top over bottom). A puppy of this age with a level bite could possibly become undershot at full maturity, but should be judged as it appears “on the day”.*



“The *neck* strong and slightly arched for retrieving strength. Moderately long to allow for easy seeking of the trail. Free from throatiness. Coat on neck is untrimmed”.

*Topline* is strong and level



The *chest* is deep, reaching to the elbow and only moderately broad. He has a prominent well developed prow. The ribcage is deep, long and only moderately broad. There is a strong well muscled loin and a moderate tuck up.



Photo by Joyce Klevering

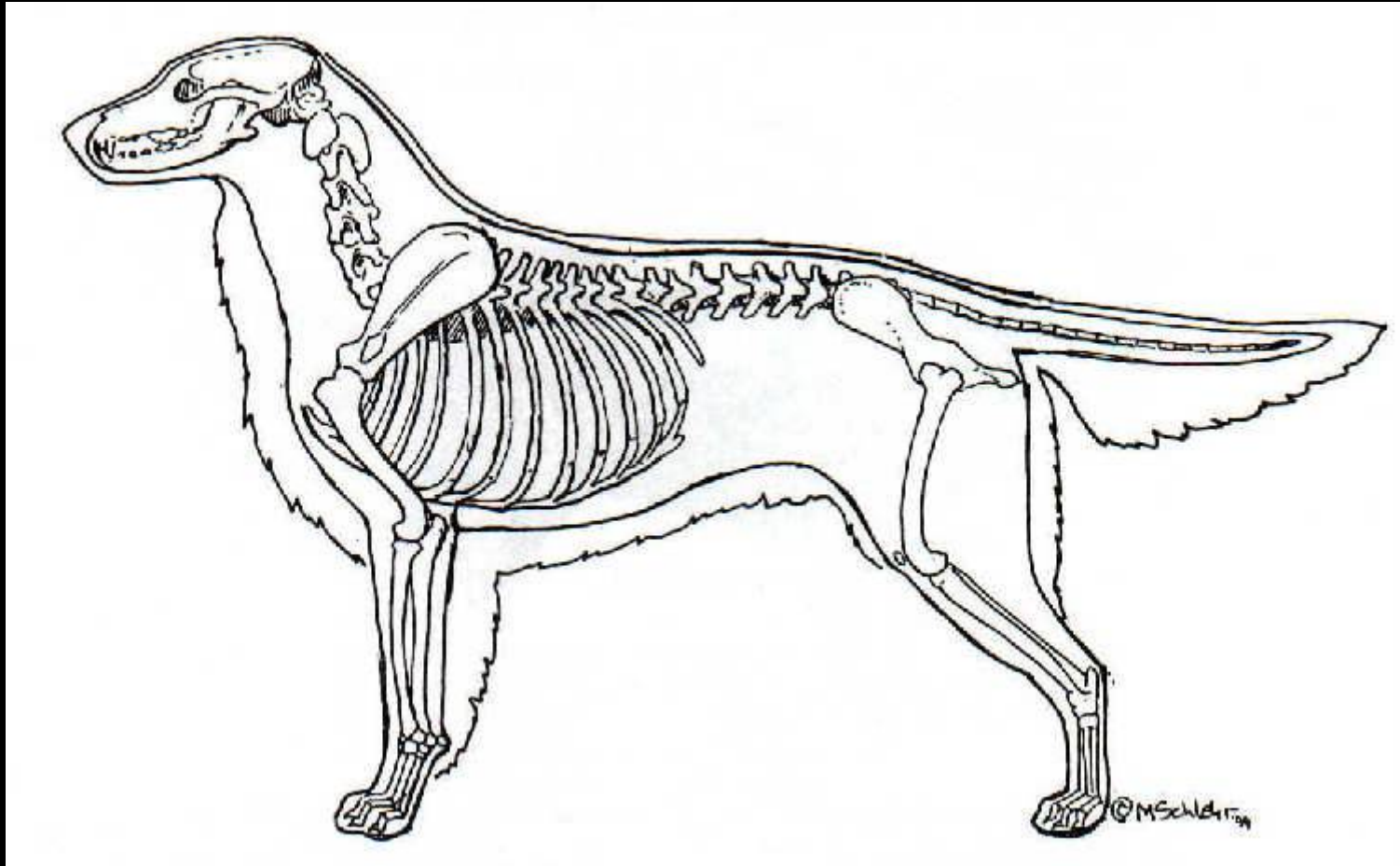


The *croup* slopes slightly. The *rump* is moderately broad and when viewed from above there is approximately the same width at the chest, broadest point of the rib spring and the hindquarters. The *tail* is carried happily as a smooth extension of the topline.

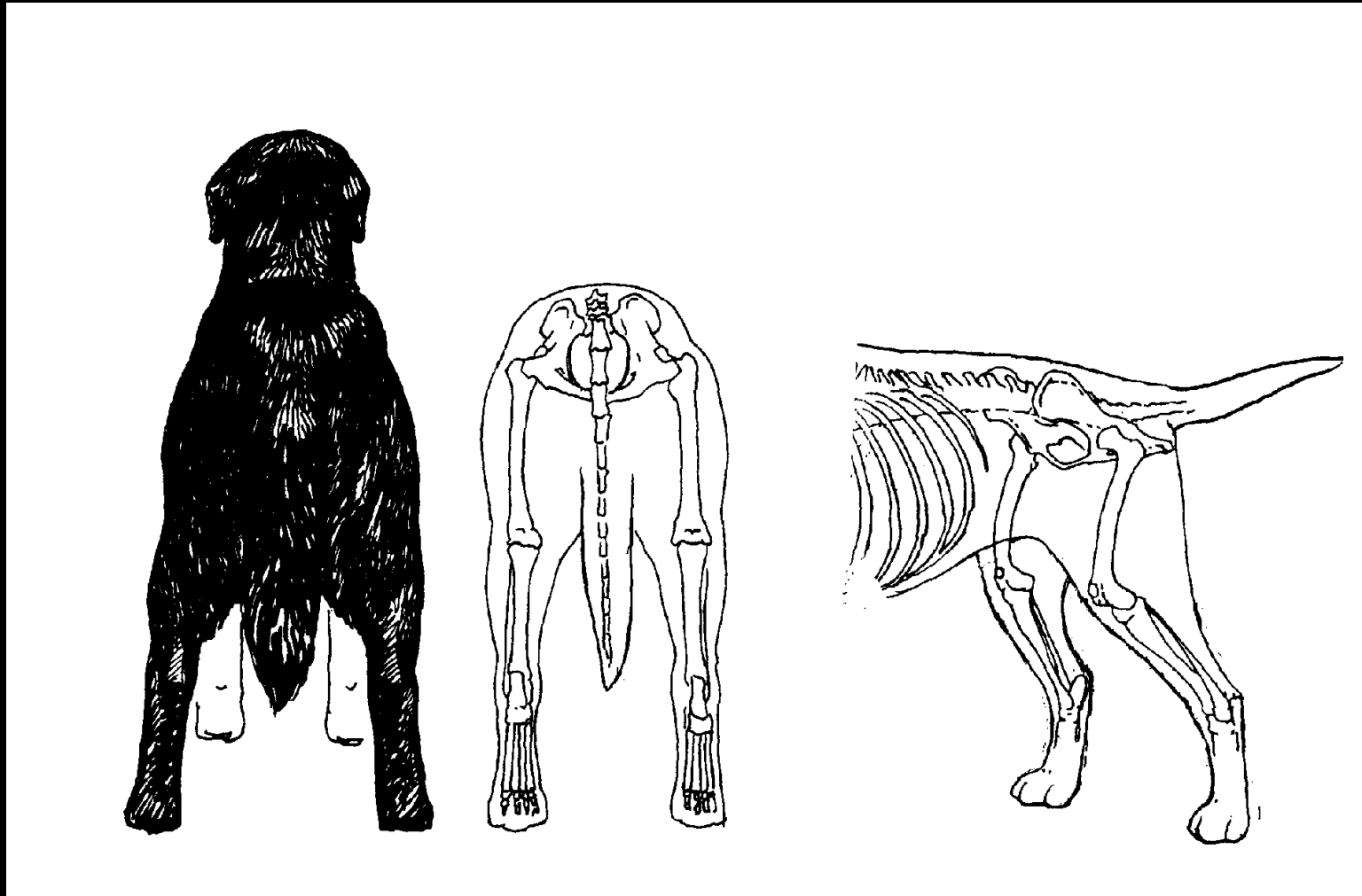




*“Forequarters – Shoulders long, well laid back should blade with upper arm of equal length. Musculature wiry rather than bulky. Elbows clean, close to the body and set well back under the withers. Forelegs straight and strong with medium bone. Pasterns slightly sloping and strong. Feet oval or round. Medium sized and tight with well arched toes and thick pads.”*



“*Hindquarters* – Powerful with angulation in balance with the front assembly. *Upper thighs* powerful and well muscled. *Stifle* – good turn of stifle with sound, strong joint. *Second thighs* – as long as or only slightly longer than upper thigh. *Hock* – hock joint strong, well let down.”



“*Gait* – Sound, efficient movement is of critical importance to a hunting retriever. The flat-coat viewed from the side covers ground efficiently and movement appears balanced, free flowing and well coordinated. Topline appears level, strong and supple while the dog is in motion.”





“A true appraisal of gait is best achieved with the dog moving at a working trot on a loose lead. The efficient hunting retriever will cover a maximum amount of ground in the fewest strides with the least effort.”



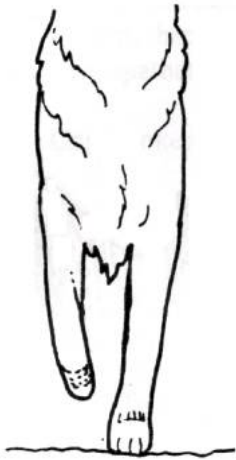
“The dog should move freely and with confidence. When moving, the tail is carried behind the dog, waving but not curled or held much above the level of the topline”



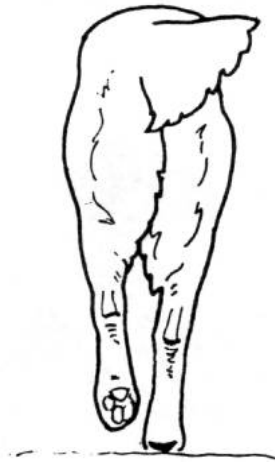
Tail carriage has become a problem in our breed. Poor tail carriage portrayed on the right, spoils the outline of the dog and may indicate faulty rear construction.



***Movement*** should be sound and efficient with clean strides. Viewed from front and rear, the column of bones from shoulder joint to foot and from hip joint to foot remains in a straight line, converging toward a center line under the body as speed increases.



***Correct Front Movement***



***Correct Rear Movement***





A proper *coat* is an important part of a Flat-Coat's silhouette. Coat is of moderate length, density and fullness and with a high luster. The ideal coat is straight and flat lying. A slight waviness is permissible but the coat is not curly, woolly, short, silky or fluffy. The Flat-Coated retriever was originally called the *Wavy Coated Retriever*. You will still see evidence of this in the breed today.



Photo by Wies Boersmans

The Flat-coat is a working retriever and the coat must provide protection from all types of weather, water and ground cover. This requires a coat of sufficient texture, length and fullness to allow for adequate insulation.





“When the dog is in full coat, the ears, front, chest, back of forelegs, thighs and underside of the tail are thickly feathered without being bushy, stringy or silky. Mane of longer heavier coat on the neck extending over the withers and shoulders is considered typical, especially in the male dog, and can cause the neck to appear thicker and the withers higher, sometimes causing the appearance of a dip behind the withers. Since the flat-coat is a hunting retriever, the feathering is not excessively long.”





Colors are black or liver. Yellow is a disqualification



*“Trimming – the breed is shown with as natural a coat as possible and must not be penalized for lack of trimming, as long as the coat is clean and well brushed. Tidying of ears, feet, underline and tip of tail is acceptable. Whiskers serve a specific function and it is preferred that they not be trimmed. **Shaving or barbering of the head, neck or body coat must be severely penalized.**”*



The grooming of this dog is acceptable.

The Flat-Coated retriever is one of the few sporting breeds who have not diverged into a field and show type. The same dog who goes hunting today can win in the show ring tomorrow. To that end it is important to us that the breed be presented in a natural coat. The coat is protection to the dog. Stripping it's neck and shoulders removes the dog's protection from brush, wind and cold water. It alters the dogs outline. It is not acceptable.



Due to excessive trimming, this dog should not be placed in the show ring. 37



*Temperament* is a primary and outstanding asset of the Flat-Coated Retriever. He is a responsive, loving member of the family, a versatile working dog, multi-talented, sensible, bright and tractable. In competition, the Flat-coat demonstrates *stability* and a desire to please with a confident, happy and outgoing attitude characterized by a wagging tail.

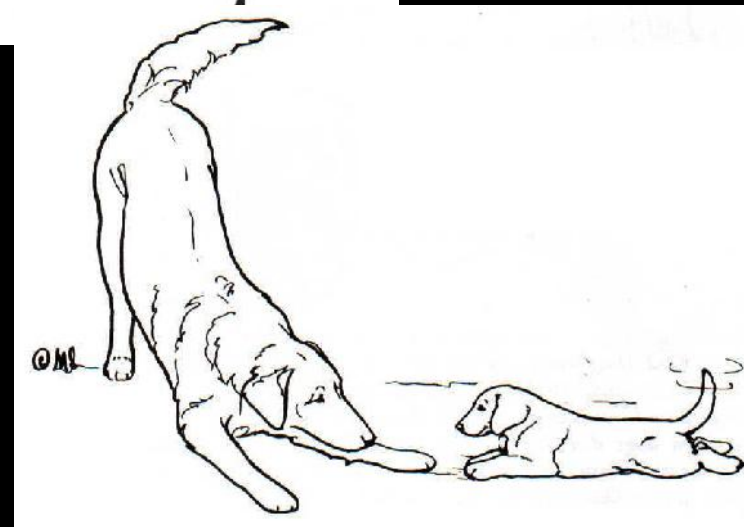
*Severe fault* – Unprovoked aggressive behavior toward people or animals is *totally* unacceptable.”



*“Character* is as important to the evaluation of stock as any other aspect of the breed standard. The Flat-Coat is primarily a family companion hunting retriever. He is keen and birdy, flushing within gun range, as well as a determined, resourceful retriever on land and water. As a family companion he is sensible, alert and highly intelligent; a lighthearted, affectionate and adaptable friend.”



Drawing by Amelia Jessel





The Flat-Coat is a cheerful, devoted companion who requires and appreciates living with and interacting with as a member of his family. To reach full potential in any endeavor he absolutely must have a strong personal bond and affectionate individual attention.



Photo by Wendy MacDonald



Photo by Wendy MacDonald



# *The Flat-Coated Retriever Breed Education Program*

Created by the Flat-Coated Retriever Society of America  
Judges Education Committee, Helen Szostak, Chairperson  
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