



THE KENNEL CLUB  
DOG HEALTH

# Breed Health and Conservation Plan

## Portuguese Pointer Evidence Base

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Kennel Club launched a new resource for breed clubs and individual breeders – the Breed Health and Conservation Plans (BHCP) project – in September 2016. The purpose of the project is to ensure that all health concerns for a breed are identified through evidence-based criteria, and that breeders are provided with useful information and resources to raise awareness of current health and welfare concerns in their breed, and support them in making balanced breeding decisions.

The Breed Health and Conservation Plans take a complete view of breed health with consideration to the following issues: known inherited conditions, complex conditions (i.e. those involving many genes and environmental effects such as nutrition or exercise levels, for example hip dysplasia), conformational concerns and population genetics.

Sources of evidence and data have been collated into an evidence base which gives clear indications of the most significant health conditions in each breed, in terms of prevalence and impact. Once the evidence base document has been produced it is discussed with the relevant Breed Health Co-ordinator and breed health representatives where applicable. Priorities are agreed based on this data and incorporated into a list of actions between the Kennel Club and the breed to tackle these health concerns. These actions are then monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

The Portuguese Pointer was only formally recognised by the Kennel Club in 2013 onto the import register, and so it is not possible to determine the trend in the breed's popularity overtime. No more than 27 dogs have been registered per year. The numbers of dogs registered per year are shown in Figure 1 below.

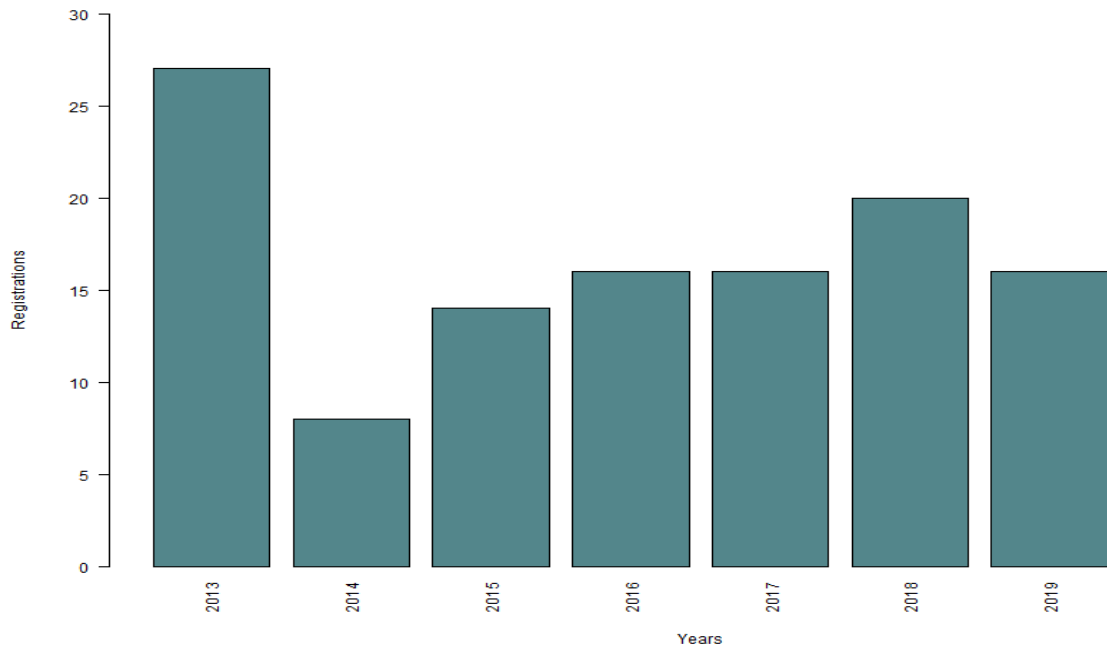


Figure 1: Number of registrations of Portuguese Pointers per year of birth, 2013 – 2019

## **BREED HEALTH CO-ORDINATOR ANNUAL HEALTH REPORT**

Breed Health Co-ordinators (BHCs) are volunteers nominated by their breed to act as a vital conduit between the Kennel Club and the breed clubs with all matters relating to health.

As a new breed to this country the BHC's initial focus is to gain a base line of the health of the Portuguese Pointers in the UK. There is insufficient data at present suggesting that there are issues to be watched. However, the breed have asked all breeding stock to be hip scored and eye tested.

## **BREED CLUB HEALTH ACTIVITES**

The Portuguese Pointer Club UK has an active Breed Health Coordinator (BHC).

## **UK LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review lays out the current scientific knowledge relating to the health of the breed. We have attempted to refer primarily to research which has been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. The Portuguese Pointer is an incredibly numerically small breed, and therefore very little is available in scientific literature.

*Genetic variation:* A study of several Portuguese breeds included the Portuguese Pointer to assess variation amongst different native breeds and stray canine

populations (Pires et al, 2009). The Portuguese Pointer was found to be one of the least diverse breeds, through investigated of microsatellite allelic richness and expected heterozygosity (tools to compare genetic variation between breeds), but was genetically distinct to the other breeds assessed.

## **ASSURED BREEDER SCHEME**

There are currently no requirements and recommendations for the Portuguese Pointer.

## **BREED CLUB BREEDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Portuguese Pointer Club UK recommend hip score and eye testing.

## **DNA TEST RESULTS**

There are currently no DNA tests available for the breed.

Whilst other DNA tests may be available for the breed, results from these will not be accepted by the Kennel Club until the test has been formally recognised, the process of which involves collaboration between the breed clubs and the Kennel Club in order to validate the test's accuracy.

Laboratories that test for these DNA tests and the methods through which the Kennel Club accept results can be found through:

<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/worldwide-dna-tests/>

## **CANINE HEALTH SCHEMES**

All of the British Veterinary Association (BVA)/Kennel Club (KC) Canine Health Schemes are open to dogs of any breed with a summary given of dogs tested to date below.

### HIPS

A total of 15 Portuguese Pointers have been scored to date (April 2020) with a median of 12 (range 4 – 63).

### ELBOWS

Just one Portuguese Pointer has been elbow graded to date (April 2020) with a score of 0.

## EYES

The Portuguese Pointer is not currently listed for any eye condition on the Known Inherited Ocular Disease list (formally Schedule A) as part of the BVA/KC/International Sheepdog Society (ISDS) Eye Scheme.

KIOD lists the known inherited eye conditions in the breeds where there is enough scientific information to show that the condition is inherited in the breed, often including the actual mode of inheritance and in some cases even a DNA test.

Schedule B has been incorporated into an annual sightings reports, which records the results of conditions not listed on KIOD for dogs which have participated in the scheme. The results of Eye Scheme examinations of the breed which have taken place in the past 10 years are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sightings reports of Portuguese Pointers that have been eye tested under the scheme to date.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number Seen</b>	<b>Comments</b>
2013	0 adults	No comments
2014	2 adults	2 – posterior polar subcapsular cataract (PPSC)
2015	4 adults	1 – other cataract 1 – retinopathy
2016	0 adults	No comments
2017	2 adults	No comments
2018	3 adults	No comments

## **REPORTED CAESAREAN SECTIONS**

When breeders register a litter of puppies, they are asked to indicate whether the litter was delivered (in whole or in part) by caesarean section. In addition, veterinary surgeons are asked to report caesarean sections they perform on Kennel Club registered bitches. The consent of the Kennel Club registered dog owner releases the veterinary surgeon from the professional obligation to maintain confidentiality (vide the Kennel Club General Code of Ethics (2)).

No caesarean sections have yet been reported for dogs of the breed.

## **GENETIC DIVERSITY MEASURES**

Population analysis was not available for the breed at this time.

## **CURRENT RESEARCH**

There is no research currently being undertaken for the breed.

## **PRIORITIES**

Due to the breed's recent recognition in the UK, it is too soon to establish key health and welfare priorities at this time. However, the BHC and breed club will continue to monitor health and any emerging conditions.

## **ACTION PLAN**

Following the meeting between the Kennel Club and the breed regarding the evidence base of the Breed Health & Conservation Plans, the following actions were agreed to improve the health of the Portuguese Pointer. Both partners are expected to begin to action these points prior to the next review

### **Breed Club actions include:**

- The breed club to develop a club website
- The breed club to continue to encourage owners to hip and eye test
- The breed club to consider holding a health survey, once there is a sufficient population to do so

### **Kennel Club actions include:**

- The KC to assist in promoting the breed through its social media channels
- The KC to investigate when population analysis could be undertaken for the breed

## REFERENCES

Pires, A.E., Amorim, I.R., Ginja, C., Gomes, M., Godinho, I., Simoes, F., Oom, M., Petrucci-Fonseca, F., Matos, J., Bruford, M.W. (2009) Molecular structure in peripheral dog breeds: Portuguese native breeds as a case study. *Animal Genetics* doi:10.1111/j.1365-2052.2009.01849.x