

# The Truth About Dilutes

Margaret Wilson

Here are the facts, anything else is conjecture, guessing, speculation, or simply incorrect. Since you all can read the lies which have been addressed previously, there is no need to rehash them other than to say, "consider the source." When a group relies on lies to further their agenda, everything they say must be considered as tainted in the same manner as their revealed lies have been.

The Labrador is descended from the St. John's dog, not a breed, but a landrace from Newfoundland, Canada. A number of St. John's dogs were imported by sportsmen into Great Britain where the lines remained basically pure in the breeding kennels under the dedication and care of the Earl of Malmesbury and the Duke of Buccleuch. The St. John's dog was not a dilute dog and was the progenitor for all the modern retrieving breeds developed in Great Britain at that time, most notably the Labrador Retriever, the Golden Retriever, and the Flat Coated Retriever (colors produced in these breeds were limited to black, liver, and yellow). Despite what some dilute supporters claim, as evidenced in meticulous record keeping, breeding and whelping logs, and descriptions of all colors, markings, etc, there was never any mention of dilutes appearing in any of the Retriever breeds based on the St. John's dog.

The Labrador Retriever was officially recognized and registered first in the country where it was developed, Great Britain, in 1903. The predominant color was (as it remains today) black, but chocolates and yellows have always been legitimately in the breed. Subsequently, the Labrador Retriever was imported into North America and gained recognition and registration by the AKC in 1917. Labradors have since grown in popularity from no more than three registered with the AKC in 1926, 23 dogs in 1928, and 40 registered in 1931. Labradors have since become the number one dog in AKC registrations for over the past two decades. The Labrador has become the world's most popular breed, described by every breed standard and registry in virtually identical terms throughout the world. There is no Labrador breed standard which describes any color other than black, yellow, and chocolate.

It was not until 1985 that the AKC registered the first "Silver", which heralded the incestuous practice of inbreeding siblings, parents and offspring, etc. by an individual to "establish" dilutes. The dilute lines can all be traced back through pedigree information to two particular dogs from a kennel in the Midwest during the latter part of the 20th century. The overwhelming consensus among breed experts from legitimate Labrador Clubs, the position of these accredited Labrador clubs, and a growing number of recognized purebred dog registries, is that the dilutes are the result of a cross breeding, with Weimaraner being the source of the dilute allele, and are therefore not registerable in a purebred registry.

It was not until 2006 that the first "silver" was born in Great Britain, from dilute parents imported from the United States. There was no "silver" born in Australia until the same time, also from dilute parents imported from the United States. There have been no dilutes of any kind

born anywhere else in the world until the past decade and that was to dilute parents imported from the United States. Any reference to writings which addresses shades or coloring which the dilute supporters claim describes a dilute dog have been taken out of context, misquoted or otherwise misapplied to create an incorrect scenario which did not exist.

The Newfoundland dog during the days of the St. John's dog was not the contemporary breed as we recognize it. The Newfoundland is a distinctly Canadian breed and yet even today, the Newfoundland in Canada remains true to its origins and only comes in two colors, Black, and Landseer, neither of which is dilute. The dilute allele was likely introduced into the Canadian Newfoundland after it was exported to Europe and crossed with mastiff breeds after the Labrador was already established as an individual breed. Since the first Chesapeake Bay Retriever (a bitch) was imported to Great Britain by Dr. Helen Ingleby in the 1930's, this is also evidence debunking the claim that the Labrador was developed by crossing the Newfoundland with the Chesapeake Bay Retriever, and is patently not accurate.

Despite multiple references to "research" gleaned from a particular silver breeder site, none of the writings on that site are credible since most of them are grossly inaccurate or outright false. In addition to erroneous information on breed purity, and the genetics involved in producing dilute carriers and dilute affecteds, another example is the claim that dilute Labradors are accepted and recognized by most clubs and registries. The author includes the ANKC, the CKC, the UKC, the NKC, the FCI, and the NZKC, which, in fact, prohibit the registration and breeding of dilutes. Any dog falsely registered as a recognized and accepted color in many of these registries will have the registrations revoked, progeny will be revoked, the dog will not be exportable or breedable, etc.

The bottom line is that with the presence of so much incorrect information being cited as "fact" any of the information being put forth by dilute promoters needs to be treated with extreme prejudice and skepticism. We have all seen the outright lies which come so vehemently from the dilute supporters. Why anyone would blindly believe anything else coming from them defies wisdom and logic.

There was never any mention in the meticulous and exhaustive breeding records, whelping logs, descriptions of markings, colors, etc., and stud books kept by gentlemen of unimpeachable integrity, of any dog being produced that was, in fact or in fantasy, a dilute. Not in ANY of the retriever breeds developed from the St. John's dog during that time in Great Britain. The dilute allele was introduced after the establishment of the recognized breeds. In the case of the Labrador, this introduction occurred in the USA during the latter part of the 20th century. Chocolates and yellows, regardless of their popularity and unlike the dilutes, have always been recognized as legitimate Labrador Retrievers and have NEVER been a non-accepted color or a disqualification. The earliest days of the St. John's dog, and the development of the Labrador Retriever breed, are not recorded with enough authority to be absolutely reliable. It was not until the Duke of Buccleuch and the Earl of Malmsbury dedicated themselves to maintaining meticulous breeding and whelping logs that we have reliable records, and on these we must rely and be forever thankful.

## **The Labrador Is A World-Wide Breed**

The Labrador is a world-wide breed, and is described the same by the applicable standards of the country in which the individual dog is registered. The official breed standards all agree on the three allowable colors, black, yellow, and chocolate, and some registries will not allow a Labrador of another color to be registered at all. This is simply the fact that the only three colors recognized for Labradors are black, yellow and chocolate. Of course, dogs of any color and mixed breed status are beloved pets, as they should be, and that is something with which we all agree.

This is not simply an AKC concern, since it is a world-wide issue. The AKC and the Canadian Kennel Club do not allow for any registration of a Labrador except as black, yellow, or chocolate. Unfortunately, somehow these dilute dogs have managed to become registered by an allowable color which is not their actual coat color, but by what some individuals think is their "base" color. The end result is the AKC and CKC registration recording some color other than the dog's actual appearance, or phenotype. The country where the Labrador breed as we know it today was developed does not recognize any color except for black, yellow, or chocolate. In fact, there is no Labrador Club or recognized registering organization which recognizes any color except for black, yellow, or chocolate. There are countries where non-allowed colors in Labradors may not be registered or even bred at all. Other countries which will revoke registrations if non-recognized colors have been falsely recorded on registration papers, and countries which mandate restrictions on any litters born to dilute carrying parents. The reason for these restrictions in registration is based on the principle that non-recognized colors are the product of mixed breeding and are non-acceptable in a purebred dog registry. In fact, even the AKC defines "purebred" as being "of unmixed descent since recognition of the breed."

The position statement of the AKC Parent Club for the Labrador Retriever states that "a silver Labrador is not a purebred Labrador retriever. The pet owning public is being duped into believing that animals with this dilute coat color are desirable, purebred and rare and, therefore, warrant special notoriety or a premium purchase price."

The breeding of dilute Labradors has now been banned in the Netherlands, and as of April 1, 2016, no dilutes can be registered at all. The concern of the Dutch Kennel Club and the two National Labrador Clubs, the NLV and the LKN, is that dilutes are not naturally occurring in Labradors and are the result of crossbreeding, and mixed breeds are unacceptable in a purebred registry.

The Kennel Club in Great Britain already officially states that the dilute colors in Labradors are "not recognized".

The purebred Labrador community in New Zealand has worked to prevent the infiltration of dilutes. LRLs, (litter registration limitations) state that at least one parent must be clear of the dilute allele, the result of which means that dilute puppies are not able to be registered with the NZKC, preventing the further spread of the dilute allele and the elimination of dilutes from NZKC registered Labradors. There are already some silver breeders who are on a restricted breeding list which prohibits the registration of dilutes.

The position statement of the National Labrador Breed Council of Australia is that "The sad fact is that these silver Labradors are cross bred dogs – the result of crossing a Labrador Retriever with a Weimaraner."

In Australia, dilute Labradors may not be registered. If you falsely register a silver as a chocolate, your registration will be revoked. The same applies for any other falsely registered dilute color in Australia.

The Labrador Retriever is recognized the world over and should be bred according to the applicable breed standard, including the country where the breed was developed, Great Britain, all the FCI countries, and all the countries whose kennel club registries are recognized and supported by the FCI, including the Canadian Kennel Club and the AKC. All of these registries, Labrador Clubs and Kennel Clubs uphold virtually the identical breed standard. This is why the AKC Parent Club has taken the position that every Labrador should be tested for the dilute allele, and those carrying the condition should not be bred. The Dutch, New Zealand and Australian Kennel Clubs prohibit the breeding and registration of dilute Labradors. There is no legitimate registering body, either FCI member or FCI recognized, that offer the registration of dilute colors.

There are the two recognized German Labrador clubs:

1. Deutsche Retriever Club e.V. (DRC)
2. Labrador Club Deutschland (LCD).

Both of these clubs are members of the Verband für das Deutsche Hundewesen e.V. (VDH), the only German Kennel Club recognized by the FCI.

The VDH is the leading representative of the interests of all dog owners in Germany –“ the number one address for people living with dogs, dog sports and dog breeding”.

These legitimate clubs do not recognize any dilutes.

Even the American UKC ( United Kennel Club) has restrictions against dilute Labradors.

The UKC states that the color silver is a disqualification. The UKC will not knowingly register a Labrador Retriever that is a color disqualification. In a written statement made in 2015, the UKC declared:

"The UKC standard is clear. Any color or combination of colors other than yellow, black, or chocolate is a disqualification. UKC does not recognize any form of silver coloration as a variation of the chocolate color and UKC does not and has not knowingly accepted registrations for Labradors that have a silver coat coloring."

<http://www.nationallabradorretrieverbreedcouncilaustralia.com/buyer-beware.asp>

<http://ankc.org.au/Frontend/Breed/UmbracoDataDetail/2371>

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

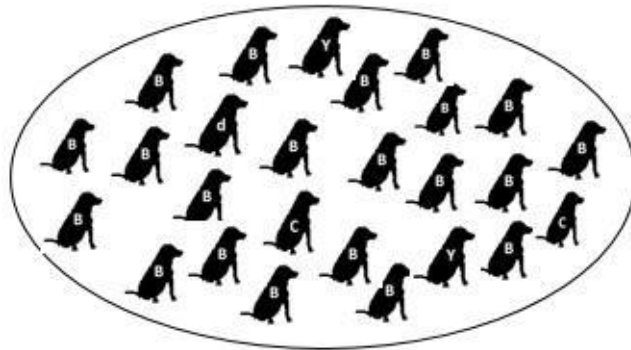
<https://notosilverlabs.wordpress.com/2016/03/30/dutch-kennel-club-bans-breeding-silver-labradors/>

## **The Dilute Allele And The Labrador**

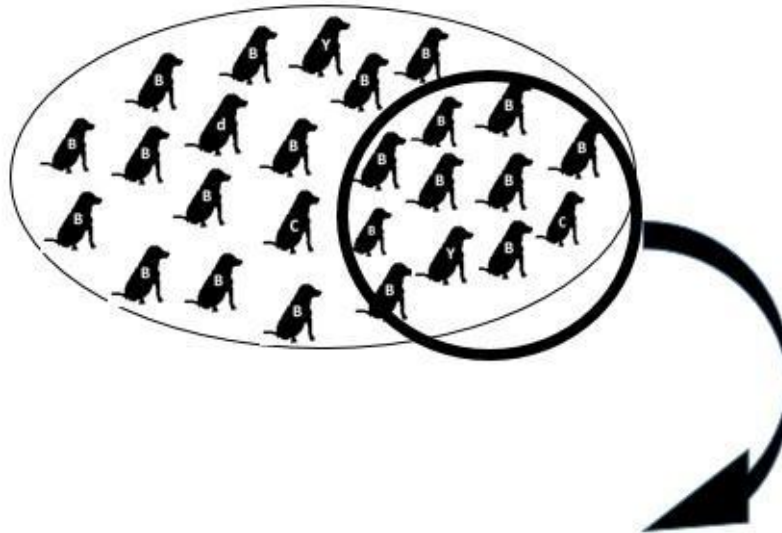
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In regard to the erroneous theory of the dilute allele being native to the Labrador and having been in the breed since the beginning, it is nonsense. In a small, finite population, a recessive gene becomes "fixed" much more quickly and expresses itself with consistency. This is due to a form of genetic drift, called a bottleneck, and a founder effect in the smaller, new population. Genetic drift is when the allele frequency changes in a population. When a subset of members of a population are removed or relocated, this creates a bottleneck effect of existing alleles for that subset. The smaller the subset, the greater the decrease in genetic variation. When that subset is used to start a new population, that new population has diminished genetic variation. This is called a founder effect. The figure below demonstrates the population of St. John's dogs. Note that the majority are black, with a rare yellow and chocolate as well as a hypothetical dilute (I), a population bottleneck as a subset of those dogs exported to the UK (II), and the founder effect with a lack of the dilute allele in the population used to develop the Labrador Retriever (III).

I. Population of lesser Newfoundland (St John's dog).  
B = black; Y = yellow; C = chocolate; d = hypothetical dilute/dilute carrier



II. A subset of St. John's dogs were exported to the UK, which caused a population bottleneck.



III. Founder effect: Decreased genetic variation in the new population lacks the d allele.

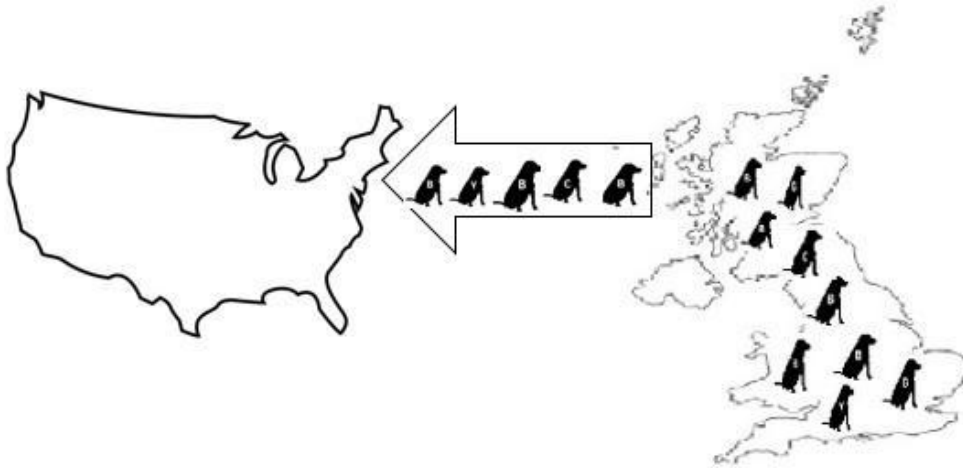


During the early part of the 20th century, Labradors began to be exported from Great Britain to the United States. In 1917, the AKC recognized and began registering those Labrador Retrievers. In 1926 there were no more than three Labrador Retrievers registered in the United States. In 1928 there were 23 AKC Labrador Retrievers, and this population grew slowly from dogs being born to these British Imports or from additional Labradors being imported from Great Britain. In 1931 there were 40 AKC Labradors. And in 1946 there was a grand total of 1736 Labradors registered with the AKC across the entire United States. During this time period, these dogs were either imported Labradors from Great Britain or American bred dogs descended from imported British stock. Going back to 1928 with the 23 Labradors, we can assume that certainly some of these dogs were being bred and producing puppies. In any event, with less than two dozen dogs in an entire breeding population, this population bottleneck would drive a breeding population toward genetic uniformity, and any recessive traits were bound to be expressed within such a small population, such as we have seen in the AKC records (23 Labradors in 1928, 40 Labradors 3 years later in 1931). Yet during this time, there was never any record of a dilute being produced in the United States or elsewhere.

In Great Britain, there was never a dilute born in all the time the breed was being developed in the 1800's, nor in 1903 when the Labrador was first recognized as a distinct Retriever breed, nor throughout the entire 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Only in 2006, was the first dilute whelped in Great Britain from dilute dogs imported from the United States. The exact same situation occurred in Australia. So we have to examine why dilutes appeared during the latter part of the 20th century only in the United States, generating from a much smaller original breeding population than in Great Britain.

In the 1980's a particular person was "fixing" the dilute allele in his own breeding Labradors. He bred and registered the first AKC "silver" Labrador in 1985 by an extremely incestuous inbreeding program whereby he bred mother to son, father to daughter, brother to sister, and continued to inbreed the offspring back and forth to their immediate relatives. This was how the situation we are currently experiencing came about. Not by careful and judicious breeding to improve the breed, but by repeatedly breeding for a foreign allele which produces dilutes.

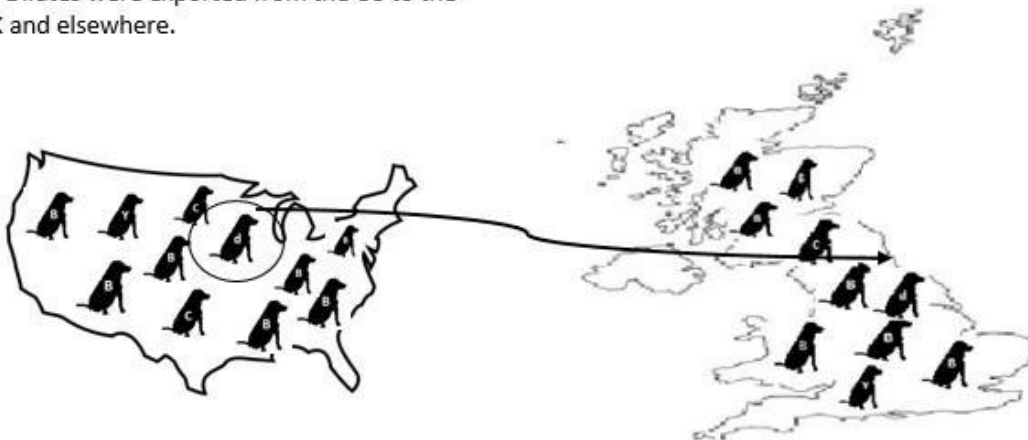
I. Labrador retrievers were exported from the UK to the United States.



II. The dilute allele was introduced to a subset of the US population of Labrador retrievers and purposely bred by inbreeding and registered as purebred Labrador retrievers.



III. Dilutes were exported from the US to the UK and elsewhere.



Today, the only recourse we have to avoid crossbreeding and introducing the dilute allele into our purebred Labradors is to do genetic testing on every breeding Labrador to ensure that this breed disqualification is not insinuated further into our Labrador population. Hopefully, a



program will be devised by the AKC where dilutes will be identified and eliminated from the ranks of the Labrador Retriever. Other registries have begun doing this, even going to the extent of allowing dilutes to gain recognition as their own breed. The AKC could do the same.