

NEWFOUNDLAND

They are remarkably docile and obedient to their masters, serviceable in all the fishing countries, and yoked in pairs to draw the winter's fuel home. They are faithful, good-natured, and ever friendly to man.

—WILLIAM YOUATT, *THE DOG* (1852)

THIS MILD-MANNERED DOG HAILS FROM THE EASTERN CANADIAN ISLANDS OF NEWFOUNDLAND and Labrador, which are subject to some of the highest tides in the world. The “Newf’s” physiology adapted accordingly. A superb swimmer, it is large enough to carry a drowning man ashore and there are many stories of the Newf’s heroic rescues. □ A stiff, oily outer coat repels water, and a fleecy undercoat protects it from icy, harsh climates. Instead of dog-paddling, the Newfoundland breast-strokes through the water; its powerful hindquarters, fully webbed feet, and considerable lung capacity allow it to go great distances on both water and land. A Newf’s eyes shut tight to keep out water and infection. Its pendulous flews (droopy upper lips) allow it to breathe while carrying something as it swims. □ Black is the most common coat color, although the black-and-white Newfoundland, known as the “Landseer,” was depicted in many of Sir Edwin Landseer’s famous dog paintings. □ In addition to its skill in water, this gentle giant’s bulk, strength, and sweet personality make it suited to draft work. Newfs were—and continue to be—used for myriad tasks, including pulling carts, fishing, and rescue work. Known for being exceptionally good with children, their protective instincts earned the Newfoundland the nickname “Nature’s Babysitter.”

