



Understanding the Keeshond

Compiled By: The Keeshond Club of Canada's
Breed Standard Presentation Committee



VISUAL STANDARD at a GLANCE

SKULL: Well proportioned to body; wedge-shaped when viewed from above.

SPECTACLES: Combination of markings and shadings, includes: dark line from outer corner of eye to lower corner of ear; expressive eyebrows; spectacles must be present.

EYES: Dark brown; medium size; almond shaped; set obliquely. Eye rims black—not too wide or too close.

STOP: Definite.

MUZZLE: Dark color; medium length; neither coarse nor snipey; well proportioned to skull.

MOUTH: Lips black, closely meeting; without corner wrinkles. Teeth must be white, sound, strong; meeting in a scissors bite.

CHEST: Deep and strong.

FOREQUARTERS: Slight to moderate angulation, straight forelegs; pasterns are strong with slight slope.

GAIT: Bold, brisk, sharp, straight, slight to moderate reach and drive.

LEGS: Cream in color; good bone.

FEET: Compact, well rounded, cat-like, cream colored, arched toes, black nails.

COAT: Long, straight, harsh outer coat; thick, downy undercoat. Long on body, neck, chest, tail, feathering on front legs and trousers of rear legs. Short on muzzle, skull, ears, lower legs. Shown in a natural state with trimming permissible only on the feet, pasterns and hocks, and if desired – whiskers.

EARS: Dark color—almost black; small; triangular; mounted high; carried erect; covered with thick, short, velvety hair. Length approximates the distance from the outer corner of the eye to nearest edge of ear.

HEAD: Foxlike expression. Covered with thick, smooth, soft, velvety, short hair.

NECK: Moderately long; well shaped; covered with profuse, lion-like ruff.

TAIL: Set high, moderately long, well feathered; tightly curled over back; lies flat, very light in color with black tip.

BACK: Short; straight; sloping slightly downward towards the hindquarters.

HINDQUARTERS: Slight to moderate angulation; in balance with forequarters; well muscled; hocks perpendicular to ground. Legs are profusely feathered down to hocks.

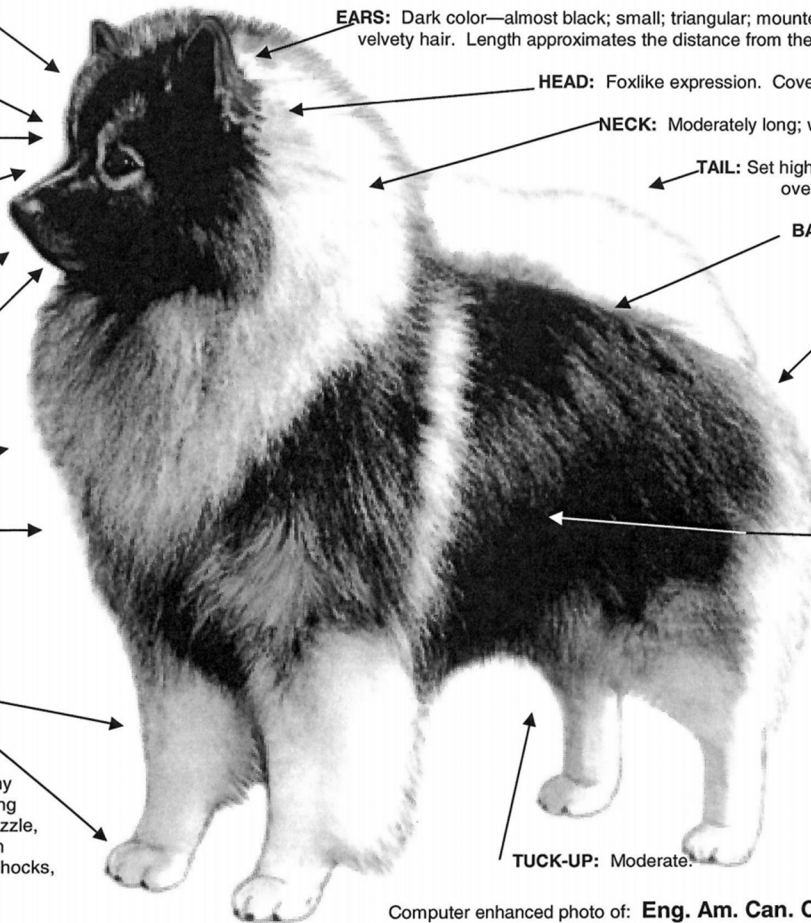
SIZE: Males—18" / females—17", measured from top of withers to the ground—with 1" variance acceptable. Size should not outweigh type.

RIBS: Well-ribbed, barrel well rounded.

APPEARANCE: Well balanced; short coupled; sturdy; square-appearing. Double, stand-off coat with profuse mane and trousers.

COLOR: Mixture of gray, black & cream; may vary from light to dark; black tipped outer coat, very pale gray or cream undercoat; no pronounced white markings; ruff and trousers are lighter than the body; well defined shoulder line.

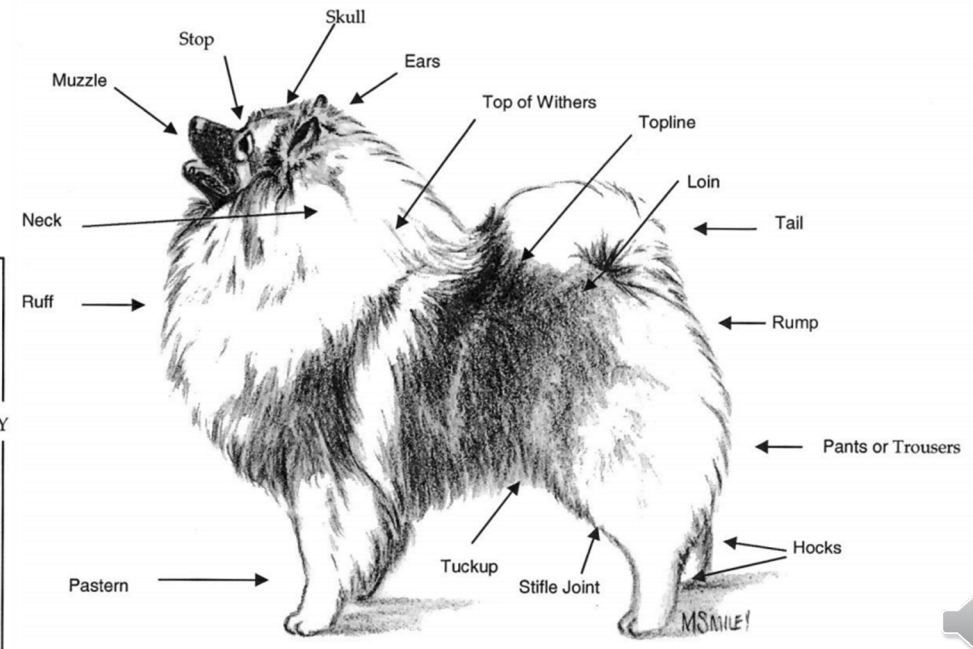
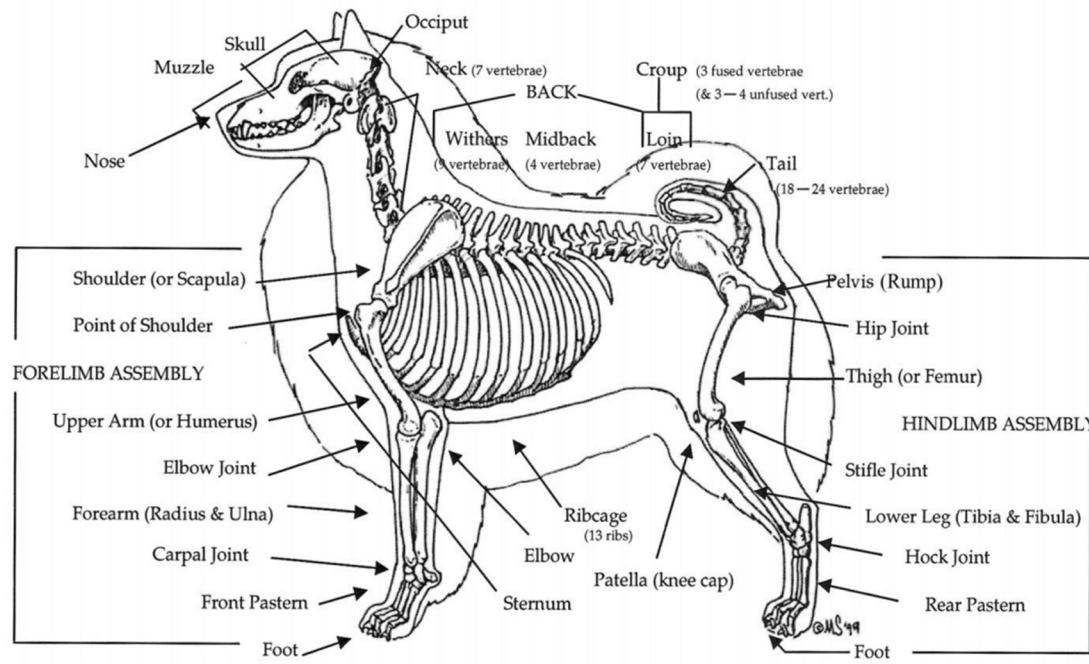
TUCK-UP: Moderate.



Computer enhanced photo of: **Eng. Am. Can. Ch. Wrocky of Wiston, ROM HOF©**

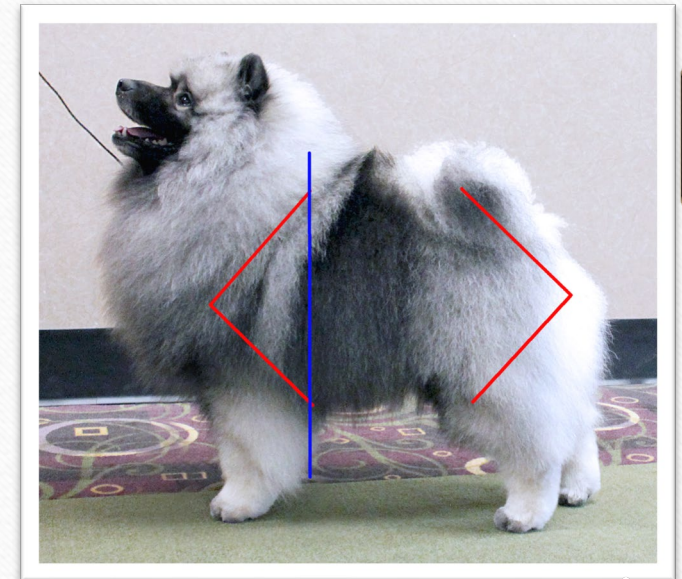
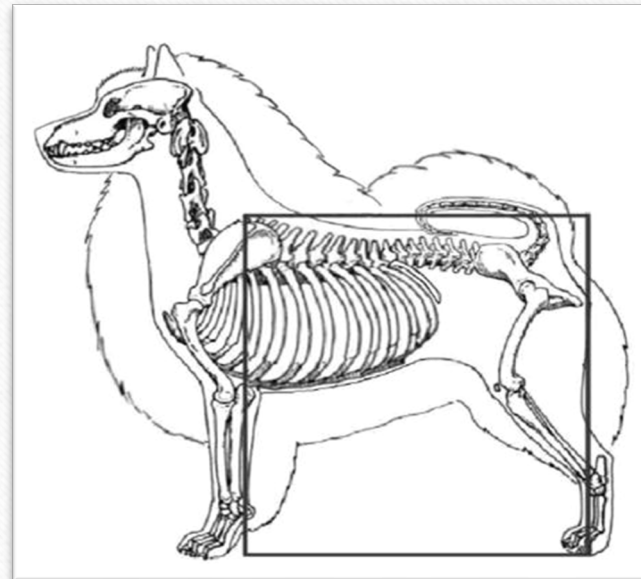


Anatomy of the Keeshond



Structure & Silhouette

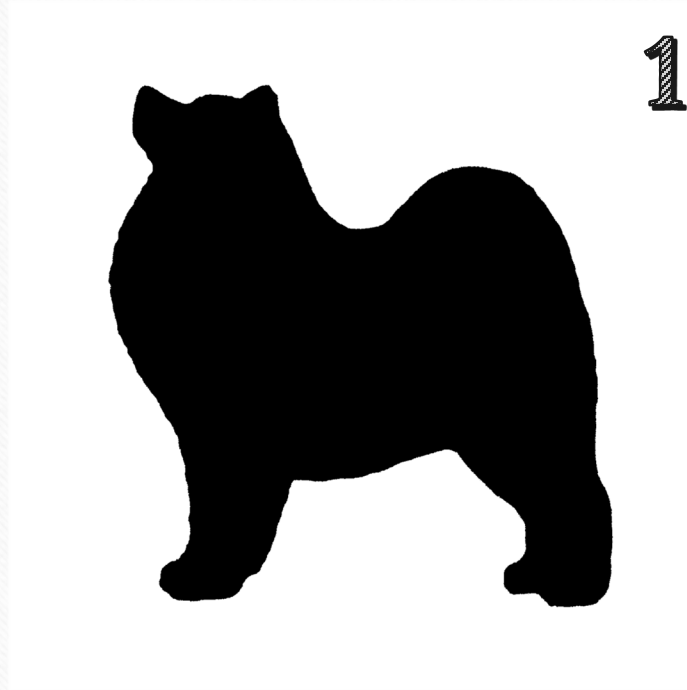
- Length of back from withers to rump should equal height as measured from top of withers to the ground
- Square appearing
- Short coupled (loin)
- Thickly coated, natural trousers
- Well plumed tail
- Note the balanced slight to moderate angles



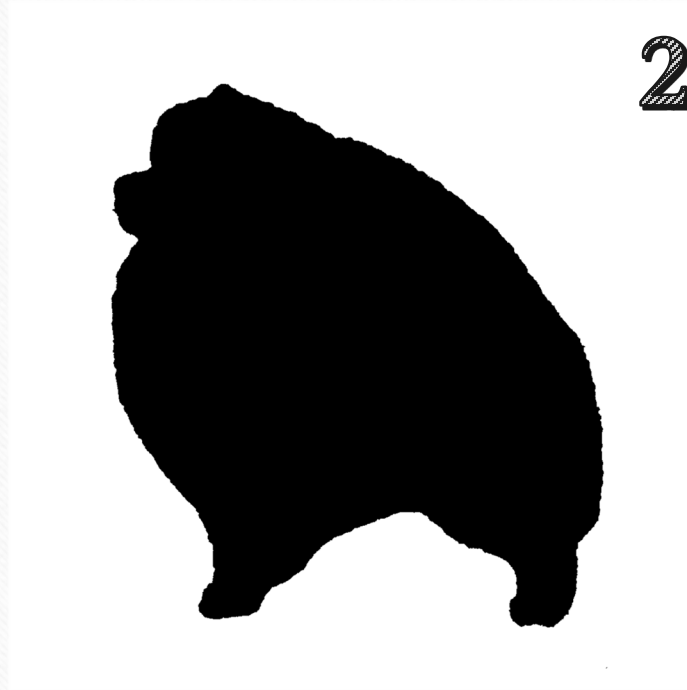
Which is the silhouette of the Keeshond?



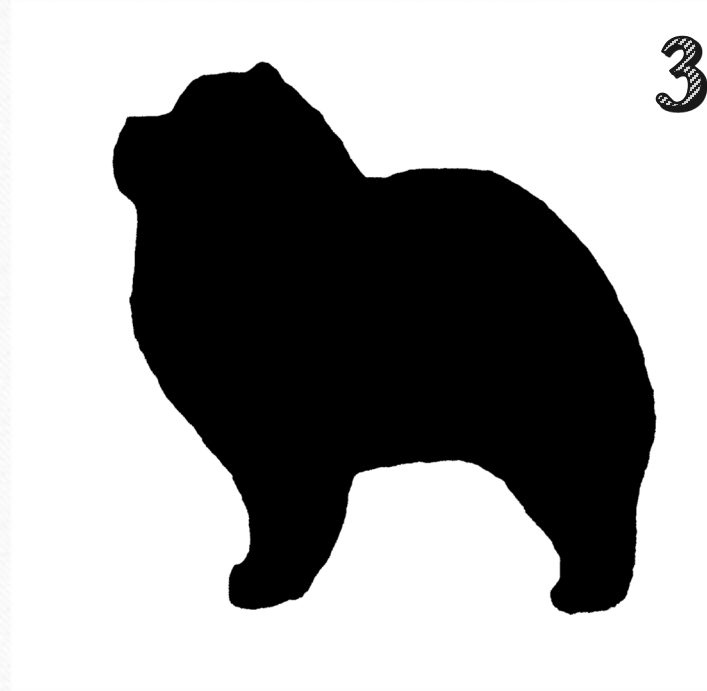
Samoyed



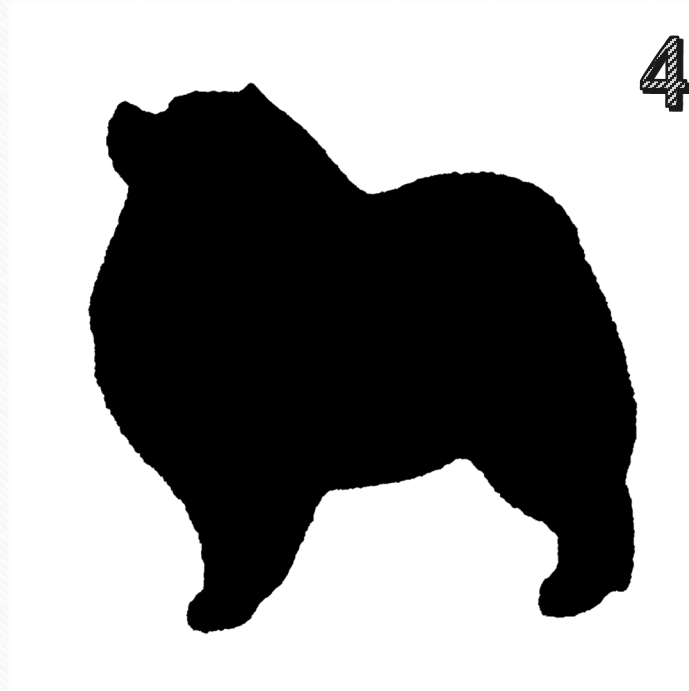
Pomeranian



Chow Chow



Keeshond



History

The Keeshond (pronounced kayz – hawnd) is an old breed. History traces them back to the 18th century to Holland, where the leader of the Patriot party had one as his constant companion. In 1910 several Keeshonden were imported to England, with few exception, the Keeshonden in the U.S. and Canada are descendants of these dogs. He is one of the only breeds in existence today that still does the job they were bred to do, that is to be a companion. Keeshonden are watchdogs, the breed should never be aggressive or shy. The breed is affectionate with its family and can be somewhat reserved with strangers. They possess a great memory, and tend to think about commands before acting on them.



General Appearance

- A handsome dog, well balanced and short coupled in body, attracting attention not only by his alert carriage and intelligent expression, but also his luxurious coat, his richly plumed tail, well curled over his back, and by his fox like face and head with small pointed ears. A very thick coat around the neck, along with the shoulders and chest, forms the Keeshond's lion like mane. His rump and hind legs, down to the hocks, are thickly coated forming trousers. His head, ears and lower legs are covered in thick short hair.
- Keeshonden should be shown natural, this means not to be groomed beyond proper bathing, brushing and combing. Scissoring is allowed only on the feet and legs up to the first joint.
- **Obvious grooming excesses, such as scissoring, chalking, dying, bleaching etc. should be severely penalized.**



Size, Proportion, Substance

- Ideal height of fully matured males, measured from the ground to the withers is 18", females 17" (one inch variance either way is acceptable for both sexes)
- Size consideration should not outweigh that of type
- Length of back from withers to rump should equal height as measured above
- The medium sized Keeshond should not be fine or coarse; large or small; but sturdy with good muscling and substance



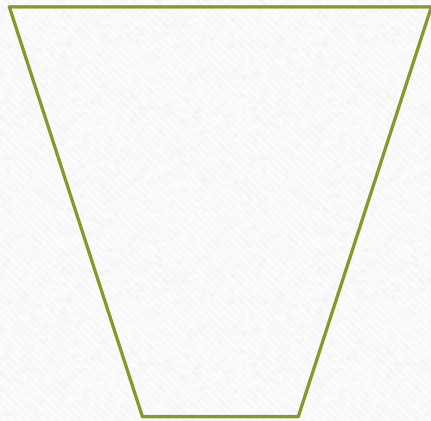
Head

- Expression/Spectacles, is largely dependent on the distinctive characteristic called “Spectacles” a delicately **penciled black line slanting slightly upwards** from the outer corner of the eye to the lower corner of the ear, coupled with distinct markings and shading forming **short but expressive eyebrows**. The markings must present a pleasing appearance, imparting the dog to an alert and intelligent expression. Spectacles are one of the hallmarks of our breed. They must be present to some degree.
- Fault = Absence of Spectacles
- Natural spectacles are very important. Dogs, who was markings have been altered to improve their appearance, should be severely penalized. The dark pencil like markings should not be enhanced artificially, nor should the colour of the hair around the eyes be lightened by applying light powders or trimming off the black tips.

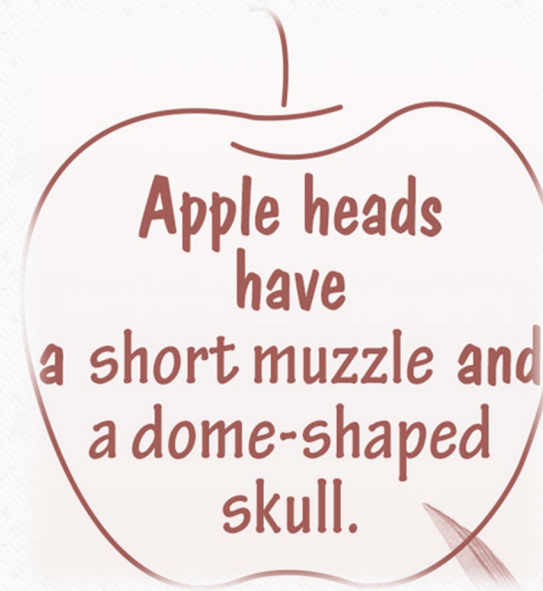


Head

Correct - Wedge



Incorrect



Variations – Keeshond Head Shots



Stop



Correct Stop



Poor Stop



Incorrect Stop



Muzzle, Mouth, Teeth, Bite

- **Muzzle** should be dark in colour, and of medium length, neither coarse nor snipey, well-proportioned to the skull. The muzzle should be approximately the same length as from stop to occiput. It should taper out on the sides, cleanly and smoothly to form a wedge with a rounded end.
 - Explanation: it should be noted that the muzzle and ears are never solid black. Puppies will have darker muzzles than adults. A solid dull colour on the ears or muzzle is usually indicative of chalking.
- **Mouth, Teeth, Bite**, neither overshot nor undershot, lips should be black and closely meeting, not thick, coarse, or sagging and with no wrinkle at the corner of the mouth, teeth should be white, meeting in a scissors bite.
 - Fault = overshot or undershot



Muzzle



Correct



Incorrect - Snipey



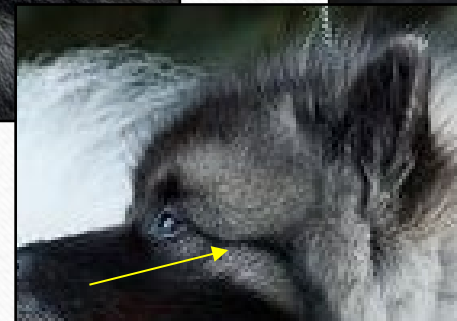
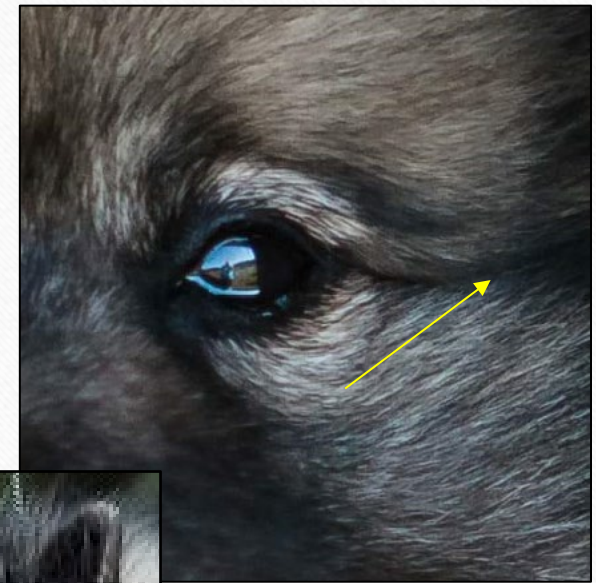
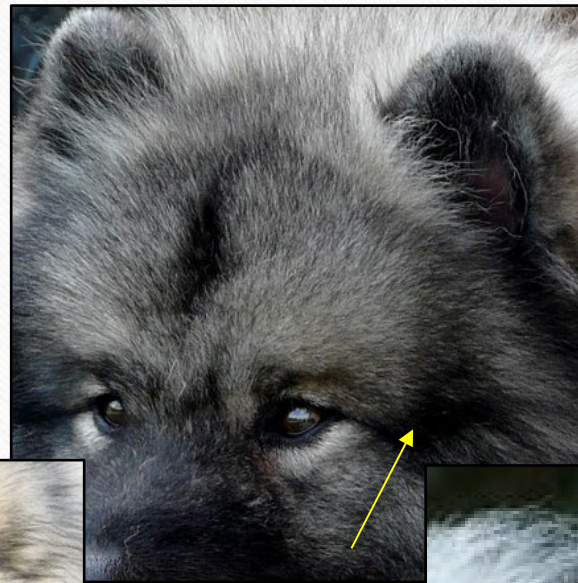
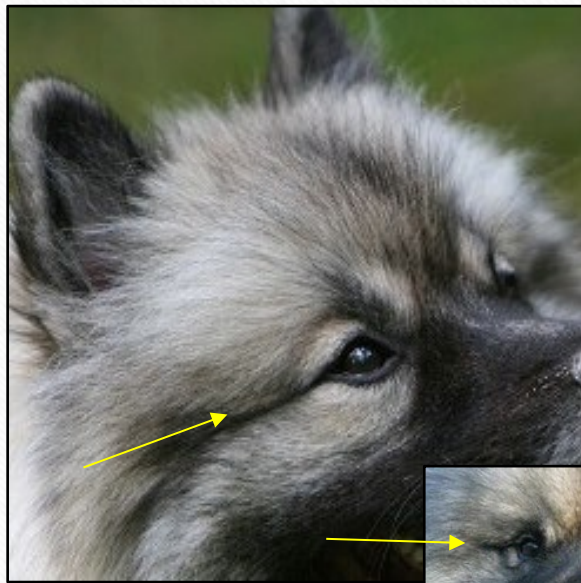
Incorrect - Coarse



Spectacles are one of the hallmarks of our breed...

Natural Spectacles

Spectacles are defined as the delicately penciled black line slanting slightly upwards from the outer corner of the eye to the lower corner of the ear NOT the shading coloration around the eye itself.



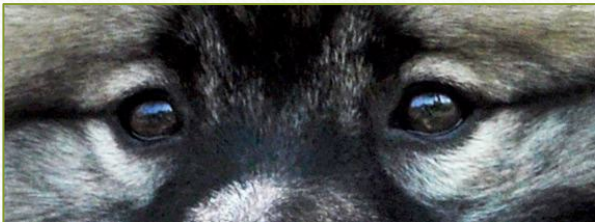
Eyes, Ears & Skull

- **Eyes**, dark brown in colour, medium sized almond shaped, rather oblique, black eye rims
 - Fault = protruding round or lighter brown in colour
- **Ears**, should be small, triangular in shape, mounted high on the head and carried erect; dark in colour and covered in thick, velvety, short hair. Size should be proportionate to the head, with the length approximating from the distance from outer corner of the eye to the nearest edge of the ear.
 - Explanation: mounted high on the head implies that the tips of the ear are pointed upward but they're not so closely said that they appear to be within an inch of each other. On the other hand, a wide set ear is most unattractive and undesirable. Ideally, the ears should finish off the face.
 - A Keeshond's ears are highly mobile and are indicative of how the dog feels. If the Keeshond is distracted the ears may be folded back in the ruff. The judge must see the proper placement of the dog's ears at least once for basic judging of the head.
 - Fault = ears not carried erect when at attention
- **Skull**, well proportioned to the body and wedge shape when viewed from above. Not only in muzzle, but the whole head should give this impression. Head in profile should exhibit a definite stop.
 - Fault = Apple head, or absence of stop

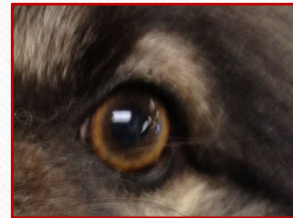


Eyes

Correct – Dark, Almond



Incorrect – Lighter, Round



Ear Set

Correct



Incorrect
Too Wide Set

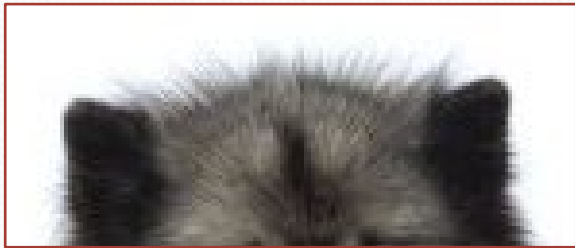


Incorrect
Too Narrow Set



Ear Set

Wide



Correct



Narrow



Neck, Topline & Body

- The neck should be moderately long, well-shaped and well set on the shoulders; the body should be compact with the short, straight back sloping slightly downward towards the hindquarters. Deep strong chest, well ribbed, barrel well rounded, belly moderately tucked up.
- When fully alert the Keeshond's head is carried well above the height of the back and tail on a neck that is set on correctly placed shoulders. The back should be straight and firm, sloping slightly downward from the withers to a short, relatively flat croup. The correct silhouette of a Keeshond shows the dog's ears, shoulders and toe in a line.



Neck, Topline & Body



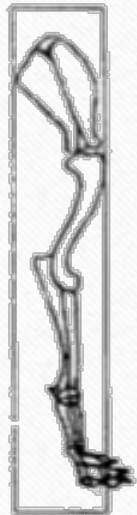
Forequarters

- Legs should be straight from any angle, well-feathered.
- The neck needs to be “well set on shoulders”. The Keeshond standard calls for slight to moderate angulation, which should balance front to rear.
- The ideal foot in leg colour is cream from the elbows and hocks down to and including the toes. You will see dogs with gray or black markings down to the midpoint of the foreleg, or a small amount of penciling around the toes, this is permitted and acceptable. Any other black markings below the midpoint of the foreleg is incorrect. Any pronounced white markings or patches on the body including white feet are also incorrect.
- **Fault = black markings below the knee, penciling allowed.**



Forequarters

*Slight
Angulation*

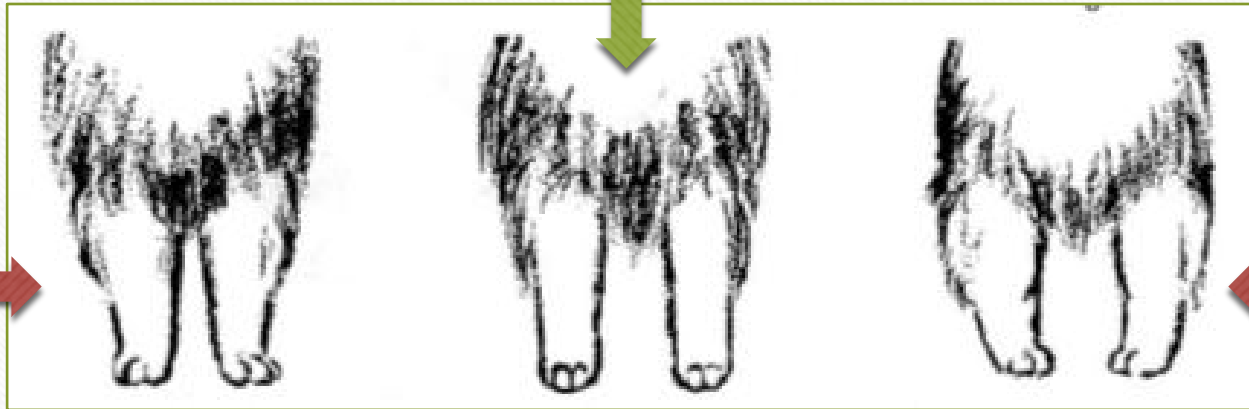


*Moderate
Angulation*



Front

Incorrect
Narrow
Pinched Front
Toeing Out



Correct



Incorrect
Wide Front
Elbows Out
Toeing In



Hindquarters

- Profusely feathered down to the hocks, not below, with hocks only slightly bent. Legs must be a good bone and cream in colour. The feet should be catlike, and cream in colour. Toes nicely arched.
- Angulation in rear should be between slight to moderate to compliment the forequarters, creating balance and typical gait.
- Fault = solid black or white foot



Hindquarters

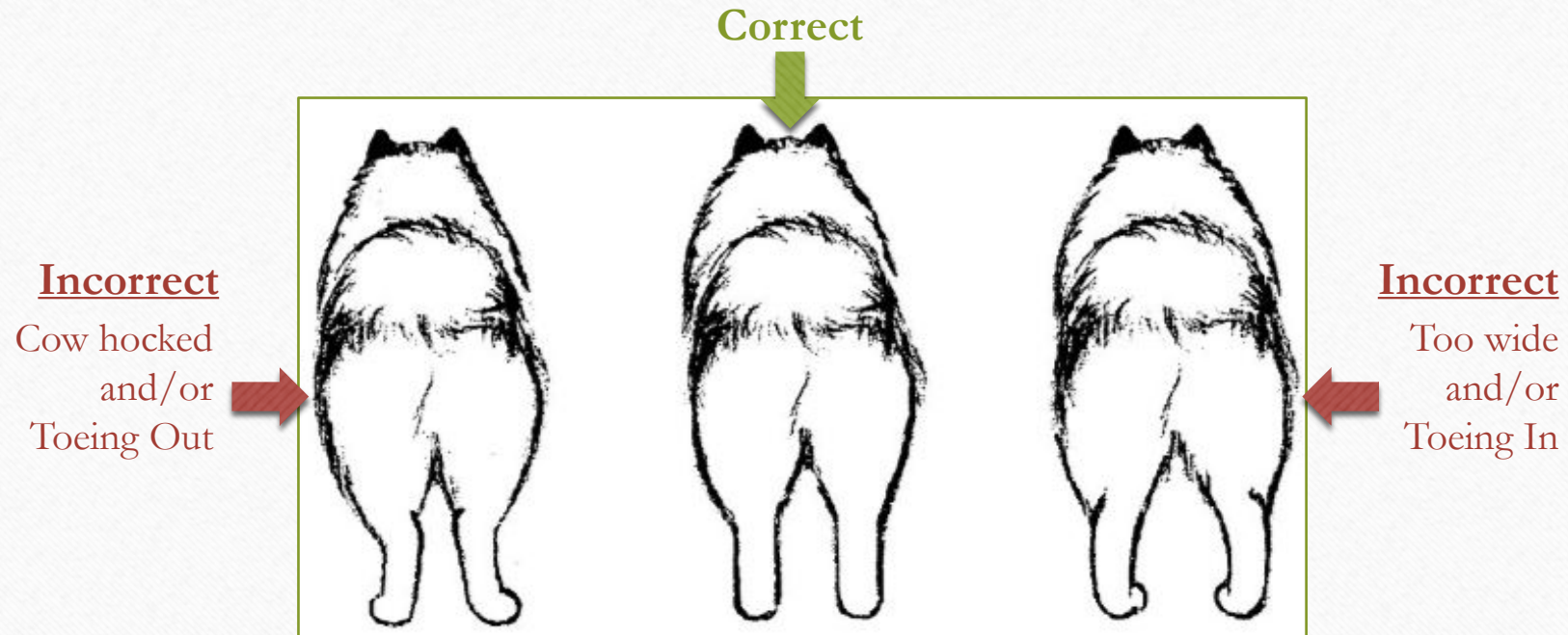
*Slight
Angulation*



*Moderate
Angulation*



Rear



Legs should appear straight when viewed from behind not slanted outwards / \

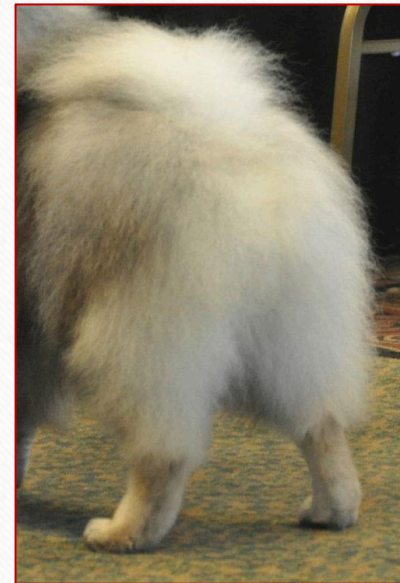


Rear

Correct



Incorrect



Tail

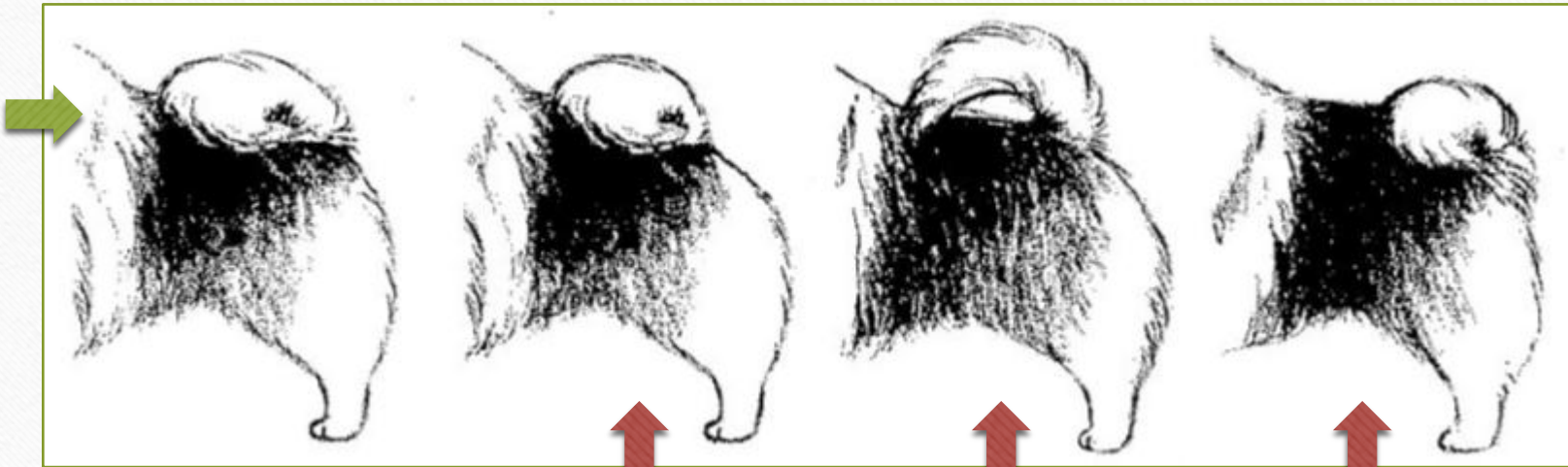
- Should be highly set, moderately long, and well-feathered, tightly curled over the back. It should lie flat and close to the body with a very light grey / cream coloured plume on top where curled but the tip of the tail must be black. The tail should form part of the silhouette of the dogs body rather than give the appearance of an appendage.
- The bones of the tail may have one or more curls, as long as the tail lies close to the back it is correct.
- Fault = tail not lying close to the back



Tail

Correct

High Set &
tightly curled
over the back



Penalty

Well set,
but trimmed

Incorrect

Loose curl, not
close to back

Incorrect

Set too low



Gait

- Dogs should show boldly and keep tails curled over the back. They should move cleanly, briskly and balanced. The movement should be straight and sharp (not a lope like a GSD).
- The Keeshond when seen from the side should never cover ground with extended reach and drive. The breed should exhibit a shorter, brisker drive, one of the front legs extend just enough to clear the rear legs. The pasterns should only show enough bend break the fall of the leg. Coming at you the leg of the perfect moving Keeshond should converge toward a centre line, going away the legs should appear straight from hip to foot and converge to the centre line of gravity, with just enough drive to display the back pads.
- The Keeshond is a double tracking breed. As speed increases, the legs converge toward a centre point. When moved at a brisk trot a Keeshond should never pound, bounce or sway back and forth. Please remember that a mature dog with a barrel well-rounded should move with the front foot and leg placement slightly wider than that of the rear.
- Fault = tail not carried over the back when moving

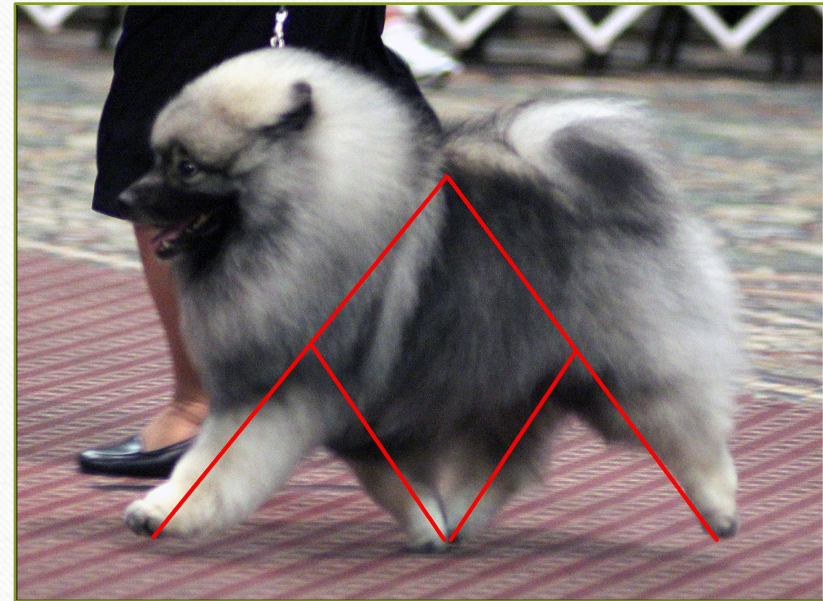


Gait

Side Movement:

When viewed in profile the short, brisk movement can be seen to full advantage.

The front movement is short and brisk, the front legs extending forwards enough to clear them from the rear legs. As one front leg extends forwards, the rear leg on the same side extends backwards. The opposite front and rear legs move inwards and under the dog, converging at its centre of gravity. There should be no signs of excessive reach or a hackney like front action nor excessive drive from the rear legs.

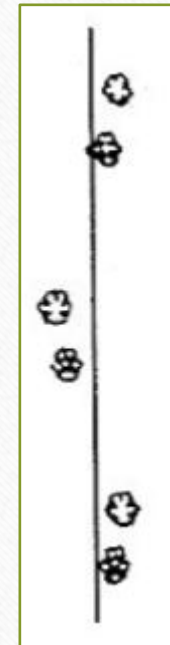
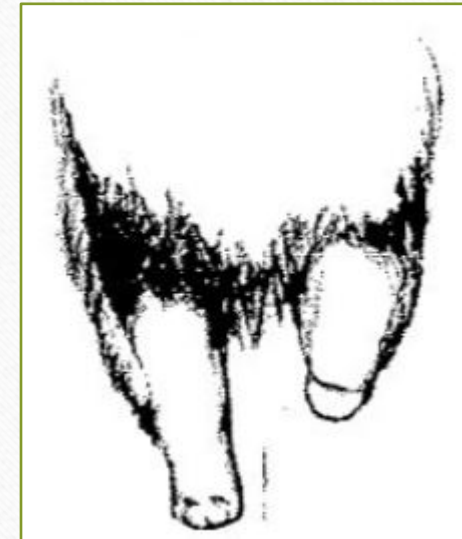


Gait

Front Movement:

Coming towards you, a correctly moving Keeshond will move in a straight line with the front legs almost as parallel as when the dog is standing to attention.

There should be no tenancy for the dog to either toe-in or throw its elbows or feet out.

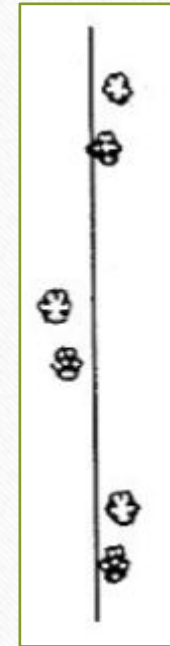
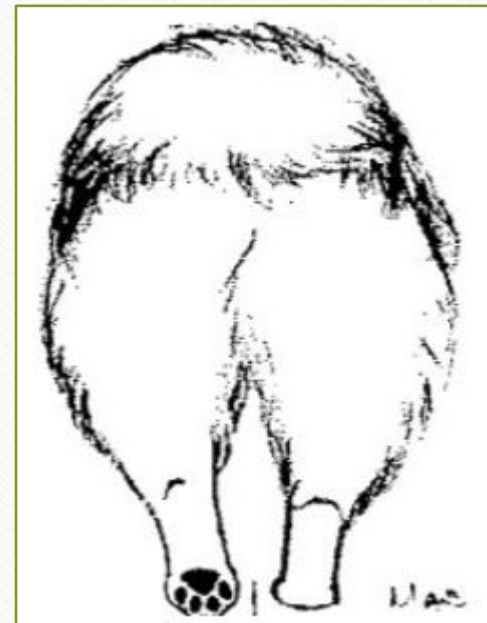


Gait

Rear Movement:

Travelling away from you, the correctly built Keeshond will again exhibit a clean straight action. There should be no sign of the hocks either turning outwards in a cow hocked fashion, coming together, or crossing over each other when the dog is moving.

The rear pasterns should remain parallel to each other, similarly to when the dog is standing still, and because the movement should be sharp and brisk, excessive drive is not essential.



Coat

- The body should be covered with long, straight, harsh hair standing well out from a thick, downy undercoat. The colour should be a mixture of grey and black. The undercoat should be very pale grey or cream. The hair of the outer coat is black tipped, the length of the black tips producing the characteristic shading of colour. The colour may vary from light to dark.
- The shoulder line markings should be well defined.
- The colour of the ruff and trousers is generally lighter than that of the body.
- There should be no pronounced white markings



Coat

- **Faults:**

- Silky, Wavy or Curly coats
- A part in the coat down the back
- Entirely black, white or any other solid colour
- Any pronounced deviation from the grey and black colour



Coat

- Bitches' Coats need special mention. It is unusual for bitches to carry as full and/or as long a coat as males – **they should never be penalized for their shorter coats.** There are bitches that carry as much coat as a male and they too should not be penalized. However, you must be able to tell one sex from the other.
- Puppy Coat (can be up to 15 months of age) will sometimes carry thicker, woolier and/or softer coat than adults.



Coat

- **Trimming is to be SEVERELY PENALIZED!!!**
- The only trimming allowed on Keeshonden is feet, hocks and pasterns.
- Trimmed hair has a blunt feel to the end. There are dogs that have correctly fitted coats, do not mistakenly penalize them.
- A proper fitting coat will have hair of varying length that moves when the dog is in motion.



Appearance of trimming on same keeshond



Correct (Not trimmed)



Incorrect (Trimmed)



Colour & Markings

- A dramatically marked dog, the Keeshond is a mixture of grey, black and cream. This colouration may vary from light to dark. The hair of the outer coat is black tipped, the length of the black tips producing the characteristic of shading colour. The undercoat is very pale grey or cream.
- Puppies are often less intensely marked. Puppy undercoat may have a dark cream colour of the head and/or around the ears.
- Dramatically marked means obvious contrast. Shoulder line markings should be well defined. The degree of light or dark is irrelevant as long as the required markings are present.



Colour & Markings

- Head colour – You will see varying degrees of colour on the head, a very dark marked dog is correct as long as you can see some natural shadings of spectacles, conversely a light coloured dog is also correct if the spectacles have the dark line extending from the outer corner of the eye and the short eyebrow colouration visible.
- An entirely white, black or any other solid coloured Keeshond is considered a **SERIOUS FAULT**.



Colour & Markings

All of these colours are correct & acceptable...as long as you can see markings



Examples of puppy coat



A 6 Month Old Puppy



An 11 Month Old Puppy



Baby Puppy: Age 4-6 months



May not have any of their adult coloring at this age, normal (difference between 4 months old & 3 years old)



Junior Puppy: 6-9 Months



Color begins coming in, still tend to have more puppy coat than adult coat & may be light in color



Senior Puppy: 9-12 Months



Adult coloring should be more prevalent and black markings clearly visible



Juvenile: Age 12-18 Months

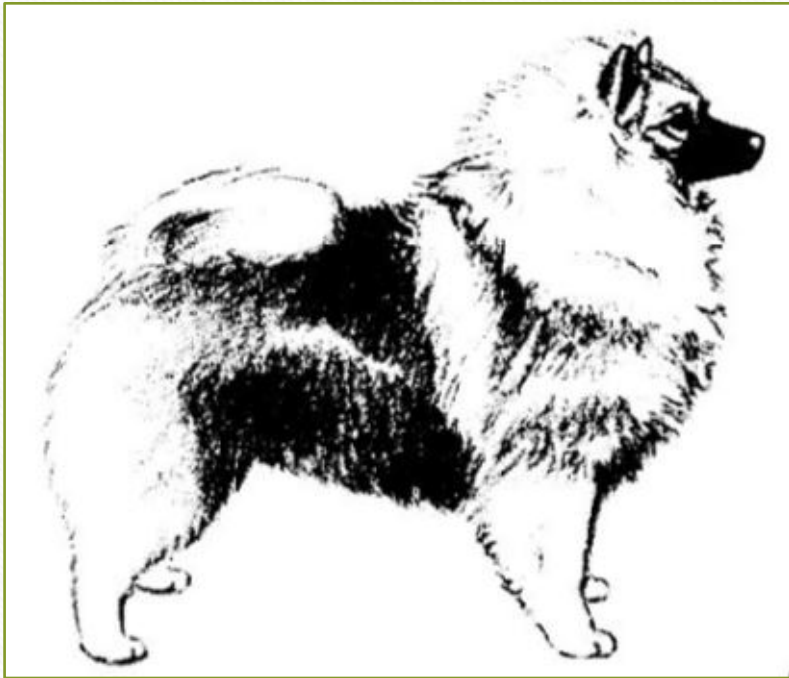


The awkward 'tween stage!

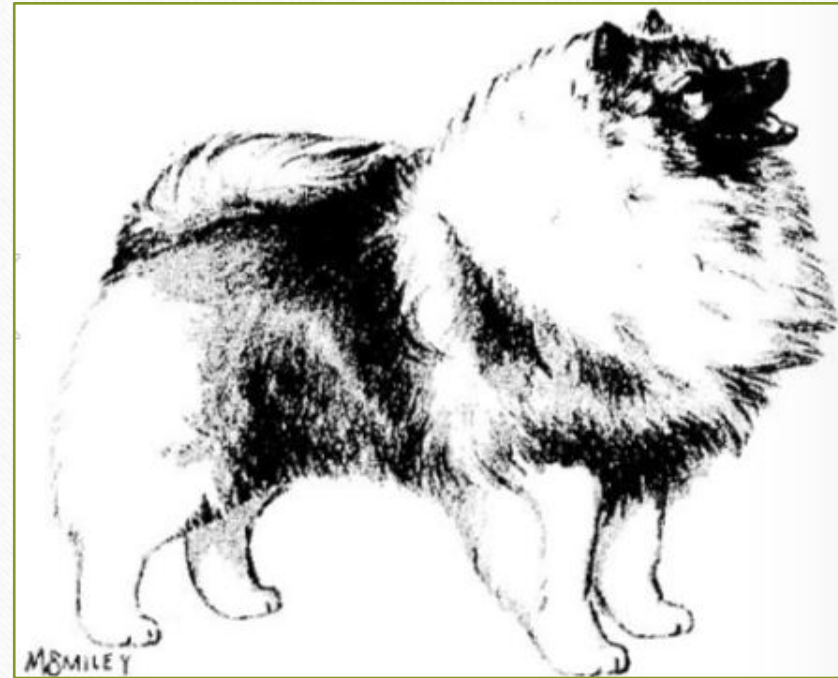
Juvenile keeshonden can be leggy/lanky looking at this age and should not be penalized if they appear to be lacking in coat, as they are often transitioning between puppy & adult coat at this age.



Examples of coat



Correct Female Coat



Correct Male Coat



Examples of correct coat by sex

Female



Male



Temperament



Temperament

- For centuries Keeshonden have been maintained as alarm giving watchdogs and companions to humans. They do not hunt, herd or patrol. They should alert the family to anything out of the ordinary. They are somewhat aloof with strangers, but also at the same time friendly and not at all aggressive. They are mischievous clowns that will do almost anything to get their owners' attention.
- In the conformation ring, you will find the Keeshond may briefly greet the judge, they prefer to keep their focus on 'their person'. If the dog is baiting nicely for its handler then it should not be necessary for any Judge to try and gain the dog's attention. Generally Keeshonden do not like to stand still for any length of time. They would much prefer to be jumping, playing and just being a bit silly.
- Known as "The Smiling Dutchman"



A few more Keeshonden...



A few more Keeshonden...



A few more Keeshonden...



A few more Keeshonden...



Thank You



References

- Keeshond Club of Australia, Breed Standard Sketches, Used with Permission
- Photographs of Member owned, co-owned or used with permission past Keeshond show dogs and companions
- [Keeshond Breed Standard](#), Canadian Kennel Club
- Former KCC Judges Education Presentations offered by Cathy Cinnamon, Glady Gates and Kathy Stewart
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