

## Data Packet 3F:

## Basenji

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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basenji>

The **Basenji** is a breed of **hunting dog** that was bred from stock originating in central **Africa**. Most of the major clubs in the **English-speaking world** place the breed in the **Hound Group**; more specifically, it may be classified as belonging to the **sighthound type**.

The Basenji produces an unusual **yodel-like** sound commonly called a "barroo", due to its unusually shaped **larynx**. This trait also gives the Basenji the nickname "Barkless Dog".

Basenji lack a distinctive odor, and are prone to howls, yodels, and other undulated vocalizations over the characteristic bark of modern dog breeds. One theory holds that the latter trait is the result of the selective killing of 'barkier' dogs in the traditional Central African context because barking could lead enemies to humans' forest encampments.

While dogs that resemble the basenji in some respects are commonplace over much of Africa, the breed's original foundation stock came from the old growth forest regions of the **Congo Basin**, where its structure and type were fixed by adaptation to its habitat, as well as use (primarily net hunting in extremely dense **old-growth forest** vegetation).

### Appearance

Basenjjs are small, elegant-looking, shorthaired dogs with erect ears, a tightly curled tail and a graceful neck. A basenji's forehead is wrinkled, even more so when they are young or extremely young. A basenji's eyes are typically almond-shaped, which often gives the dogs the appearance of squinting.

Basenjjs typically weigh about 24 pounds and stand 16 inches at the shoulder. They are a square breed, which means they are as long as they are tall.

Basenjjs are athletic dogs, and are actually deceptively powerful for their size. They have a graceful, confident gait like a trotting horse, and skim the ground in a double suspension gallop, with their characteristic curled tail straightened out for greater balance when running flat out at their top speed.

Basenjjs come in a few different colorations: red, black, tricolor, and brindle, and they all have white chests and stomachs. They can also come in trindle, which is a tricolor with brindle points, a rare combination.

**Basenji**



A red basenji with white markings

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Other names</b>                    | African Bush Dog<br>African Barkless Dog<br>Ango Angari<br>Congo Dog<br>Zande Dog |
| <b>Country of origin</b>              | Democratic Republic of the Congo  |
| <b>Patronage</b>                      | Great Britain   |
| <b>Traits</b>                         | [hide]  |
| <b>Classification and standards</b>   | [show]  |
| Dog ( <i>Canis lupus familiaris</i> ) |   |



A red Basenji

## Behavior

The Basenji is alert, affectionate, energetic, curious and reserved with strangers. It can be described as speedy, frisky, tireless at play, and teasing the owner into play. Basenjies may not get along with non-canine pets.

The Basenji has the unique properties of not barking (it makes a low, liquid [ululation](#) instead) and cleaning itself like a cat. Often, the Basenji is commonly referred to as the shrieking dog, or screaming child dog.

Basenjies often stand on their hind legs, somewhat like a [meerkat](#), by themselves or leaning on something; this behavior is often observed when the dog is curious about something. Basenjies reveal their animal-of-prey nature by chasing after fast moving objects that cross their paths.

According to the book *The Intelligence of Dogs*, they are the second least trainable dog. However, Basenjies are extremely intelligent and respond to training that is consistent and positive with plenty of treats.

## History

The Basenji is arguably the most [ancient dog breed](#); that is to say that the common ancestor it shares with all other existing dogs lived longer ago than the common ancestor of any two other living dogs.

However, this is not to say that most ancient common ancestor of all dogs was a Basenji, as the characteristics that define the breed may have evolved since then. Although the modern Basenji is from central Africa, at some point long ago its ancestor arrived there from eastern Asia, having evolved from either Chinese or southeast Asian wolves.

Originating on the continent of [Africa](#), basenji-like dogs have lived with humans for thousands of years. Dogs resembling modern Basenjies can be seen on [stelae](#) in the tombs of [Egyptian pharaohs](#), sitting at the feet of their masters, looking just as they do today, with pricked ears and tightly curled tails.

Dogs of this type were originally kept for hunting small game by tracking and driving the game into nets, Europeans first described the type of dog from which the Basenji breed was derived in the [Congo](#) in 1895. These local dogs, which Europeans identified as a unique breed and called "basenji" were prized by locals for their intelligence, courage, speed, and silence. Basenjies were assistants to the hunt, chasing wild game into nets for their masters.

Several attempts were made to bring the breed to [England](#), but the earliest imports succumbed to disease. In 1923, for example, Lady Helen Nutting brought six Basenjies with her from [Sudan](#), but all six died from [distemper](#) shots they received in [quarantine](#). It was not until the 1930s that foundation stock was successfully established in England, and then to the [United States](#) by animal importer [Henry Trefflich](#).

So it is that nearly all the Basenjies in the Western world are descended from these few original imports. The breed was officially accepted into the AKC in 1943. In 1990, the AKC studbook was reopened to 14 new imports at the request of the Basenji Club of America. The studbook was reopened again to selected imported dogs from 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2013. An American led expedition collected breeding stock in villages in the [Basankusu](#) area of the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#), in 2010.

Further study is needed to determine whether they belong to the subspecies *Canis lupus familiaris*, as is the case with most dogs, or rather into the subspecies *Canis lupus dingo*, like the [Australian Dingo](#).

## Health

Major health issues are [allergies](#), [cancer](#), and [hip dysplasia](#).

Sensitivity to [anesthesia](#) is an issue the Afghan hound shares with the rest of the [sighthound](#) group, as sighthounds have relatively low levels of body fat.

Afghan hounds are also among the dog breeds most likely to develop [chylothorax](#), a rare condition which causes the thoracic ducts to leak, allowing large quantities of [chyle fluid](#) to enter the dog's chest cavity.<sup>[16]</sup> This condition commonly results in a lung torsion (in which the dog's lung twists within the chest cavity, requiring emergency surgery), due to the breed's typically deep, "barrel"-shaped chest. If not corrected through surgery, chylothorax can ultimately cause fibrosing pleuritis, or a hardening of the organs, due to scar tissue forming around the organs to protect them from the chyle fluid. Chylothorax is not necessarily, but often, fatal.