

## Association of Bloodhound Breeders Health Survey 2013

Public perception of the health status of a breed is often very different to reality, and we can only fight prejudice with statistics provided by bloodhound owners. Health surveys are also valuable to breeders, especially new ones, who need to be completely aware of any health issues that are out there. Only data provided by bloodhound owners can fully identify the range and extent of health issues that afflict our hounds. Health data is also a crucial step in helping to remove the Bloodhound from The Kennel Club's list of High Profile Breeds, which is our ultimate goal.

The second in our series of full breed health surveys was distributed to all UK members of the Association of Bloodhound Breeders at the beginning of 2013, the first having been conducted at the beginning of 2011. A total of 28 replies were received, from 120 surveys issued, a response rate of 23%. This was a slight improvement on 2011. Many thanks to those who took the time to complete the survey, your assistance is invaluable.

**Question 1. Please supply the number, sex and age of all of your pedigree registered hounds at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012.**

The results covered 84 living hounds. The numbers of hounds owned varied from 1 to 11 hounds, the average being 3. Only 3 replies came from owners with 6 or more hounds, suggesting a greater percentage of replies this time came from pet owners rather than breeders. Numbers of males were once again lower than bitches – 39% and 61% respectively.

Ages ranged from 1 to 10 with the average age being 4.3 years. 19 hounds (23%) were 7 years or over.

**Question 2. Did any of your hounds die or were put to sleep during 2012? If so how many?**

14 hounds who died during 2012 were included in the survey. The death rate is therefore 14% of the total number of hounds surveyed.

**Question 3. If yes to question 2, what was the cause of death?**

Cause of Death	Number	Percentage of deaths
Cancer	6	43%
Bloat/Gastric Torsion	3	22%
Heart failure/fluid around heart	2	14%
Kidney failure	1	7%
Addisonian crisis	1	7%
Paralysis (euthanased for)	1	7%

Once again cancer and gastric torsion or bloat were the primary causes of death (43% and 22% respectively). This is a similar picture to previous surveys.

**Question 4. If yes to question 3, what was the age at death?**

Age at death varied from 3 years to 10 years. The average age at death was 8.25 years.

**Question 5. Did any of your hounds receive non-routine veterinary treatment (i.e. not vaccinations etc) during 2012? If so please specify the condition the treatment was for.**

Any hounds included in questions 3 and 4 were excluded from this question.

Cause of Vet Visit	Number	Percentage of total sample
Ear infection	4	4.8
Bloat/torsion (leading to recovery)	4	4.8
Intestinal obstruction	3	3.6
Other infection/abcess	3	3.6
Benign tumour removal (including epulis)	3	3.6
Corneal ulcer	2	2.4
Urinary tract infection	2	2.4
Skin infection	2	2.4
Weight loss	2	2.4
Pneumonia	1	1.2
Eye trauma	1	1.2
Pericardial rub	1	1.2
Broken toe	1	1.2
Pancreatitis	1	1.2
Wart removal	1	1.2
Bruising of cruciate ligament	1	1.2
Bite	1	1.2
Diarrhoea	1	1.2
False pregnancy	1	1.2
Pyometra	1	1.2
Tail amputation (due to accident)	1	1.2
Elbow replacement	1	1.2

Our breed continues to be the focus of attention for health issues as one of the Kennel Club's listed 'High Profile Breeds'. Congenital eye defects, skin infections and unsound movement are the issues of concern highlighted. The table above shows two hounds identified as having corneal ulcers (2.4%). Whether these are due to entropion, or other trauma, is unknown. Two hounds (2.4%) were also identified as having been treated for skin infections. One hound (1.2%) had been treated for elbow dysplasia, resulting in an elbow replacement.

Eye, skin and movement issues are clearly occasionally to be seen in our breed. The question is whether they are prevalent enough to single the breed out for extra attention, and to classify the Bloodhound as 'high profile'. The occurrence of these health issues would seem to suggest that they

continue to affect very low numbers of hounds, and probably any other breed would show a similar if not higher occurrence. Breeders of course continue to work to eliminate problems altogether.

Other issues that triggered unscheduled vet visits are varied and none would suggest the breed has other major congenital issues. Pleasingly, 10 owners, covering 22 hounds (26% of the sample population), indicated no unscheduled vet visits were required.

**Question 6. Have you had any of your current hounds hip scored? If so what was the score?**

Hound	Total Score (both hips)
1	14
2	26
3	18
4	14
5	Good

A total of 4 owners indicated that their hounds had participated in the BVA/Kennel Club hip scoring scheme. This compares to only 2 owners in the 2011 survey. A further owner indicated their hound was x-rayed with good results but as this was before the hounds 1<sup>st</sup> birthday a score could not be submitted to the BVA scheme. Unfortunately numbers of hounds taking part is still low (5 hounds, the same as the 2011 survey, making 6% of the sample population).

Out of a maximum score of 106 for both hips, the range of scores was between 14 and 26, the average being 18 which is pleasingly low (compared to 21 in 2011). One owner was not able to identify the exact score but recalled it was 'good'. Trends are difficult to comment on with low sample numbers such as this. We hope to encourage more people to have their hounds x-rayed.

**Question 7. Have you had any of your current hounds elbow scored? If so what was the score?**

Hound	Total Score (both elbows)
1	1
2	1
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	Good

The number of owners submitting results from the BVA/Kennel Club elbow scoring scheme was a total of 5, compared to 4 in the 2011 survey. However, the number of hounds involved was significantly less (5 compared to 15 in 2011). The average score was 0.4 (0), with a score of 0 being the best result. One owner could not recollect the exact figure. Again it is difficult to draw conclusions from such low numbers but there would appear to be little cause for concern in the results submitted, though we know elbow dysplasia does exist in the UK bloodhound population.

**Question 8. Have you had any of your current hounds tested for any other genetic/potentially genetic disease?**

One owner indicated their hound had been tested for glaucoma, and degenerative myelopathy, with the hound showing as clear for both conditions. No other health screening was carried out by any owners.

Please note, the question on eye testing/scoring results has been removed from this survey as The Bloodhound Club has recently published data on this in a separate report. This can be viewed at <http://www.bloodhoundhealth.co.uk/eyes>

Summary

- A total of 84 hounds (39% dogs and 61% bitches) were included in the survey. This is thought (based on registrations and surveyed death rate) to represent approximately 20% of the UK Bloodhound population.
- The chief causes of death during 2012 were cancer (43%) and torsion/bloat (22%), this is a similar position to the previous survey.
- The average age of death was 8.25 years
- The principle reasons for non-routine vet visits were ear infections, bloat/torsion (leading to recovery), internal obstructions, and removal of benign tumours. Incidences of treatment for skin infections and eye problems were low, and, not significantly higher than would be expected in any breed of dog.
- Although more owners submitted the results of BVA/Kennel club hip and elbow scoring schemes, fewer hounds were involved. The results cannot be regarded as being representative of the population as a whole due to the low numbers involved, the results at face value are pleasing and do not cause concern
- Owners are generally not carrying out other forms of screening, though two new tests, for glaucoma and degenerative myelopathy, have appeared on the radar.

David Gore