

## TERRIER GROUP

drop-eared dog identified only as “Andy,” who must be a direct ancestor of my current boy Arthur. *Those “sit um up” genes are strong!*)

A little gem is *Woof—The Story of a Jones Terrier who chased grizzly bears*, written by John M. Holzworth and privately printed in 1933. The late Mary B. Hewes of Avon, Connecticut (who sold *Charlotte’s Web* author E.B. White the first of his two Norfolk Terriers), wrote in the introduction, “I hope to share with others the story of this valiant little dog.”

Then there are the books by the late D. Brian Plummer. While not about Norfolks, English terrier man Plummer paints vivid pictures of many of our dogs’ cousins. His books include *The Fell Terrier*, *The Sporting Terrier*, *Tales of a Rat-Hunting Man*, and *Hunters All*. His stories of hunting with terriers, lurchers, and even ferrets give us a picture of where our dogs’ hunting instincts come from.

This information is important. Although most of our present day Norfolks do not get to enjoy the “thrill of the hunt” on a regular basis, if at all, we cannot lose track of where they came from and what their intended job is. Keeping them fit, engaged in outdoor activities, and keen to hunt is part of what makes them special and why we must breed to the standard—including both physical structure and proper terrier temperament. Correct coats give them protection in every type of weather.

Correct bites and strong teeth are important to overall health, as well as in dispatching vermin. Proper movement gets them where they need to go. What people sometimes describe as stubbornness is actually the independence required of dogs who need to be able to think for themselves in order to get out of dicey situations. A steady, brave, and (yes) independent attitude is what we need to strive for.

Read all about it.

—Sheila Foran,

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[Norfolk Terrier Club](#)

### Norwich Terriers

#### HOW LONG WILL MY NORWICH TERRIER LIVE?

#### INSIGHTS FROM THE BREED HEALTH SURVEY

Those who have ever lost a dog know that the grief can be intense—for some as intense as that experienced when losing a family member. In fact, in a questionnaire study of dog owners (Archer, 1997), over half agreed with the statement that the loss of their dog would mean as much to them as the loss of a family member or friend.

New puppy owners often ask how long they can expect their Norwich Terrier to live. While it’s an important question for owners, there’s no way to answer when it comes to a particular dog. That said, there are some gen-

eral guidelines by breed size, and our recent Norwich Terrier Club of America (NTCA) breed health survey provides information specifically about Norwich Terriers.

*What did we learn about mortality in Norwich Terriers?*

Following the AKC Canine Health Foundation’s recommendation, the NTCA Health Committee conducted a health survey in 2021. The final sample included 588 dogs, age 1 year and older, who were alive at the time of the survey, and 180 dogs who were age 1 year and older at the time of death. The median age at death in the sample was 13.5 years, ranging from 1 to 18 years. The interquartile range was 11 to 15 years, meaning that 50 percent of the dogs died in this age range.

The most frequently reported causes of death were “old age” (N=47) and cancer (N=41), followed by respiratory illness (N=16), kidney disease (N=12), and heart disease (N=11). Owners listed various other causes for 25 dogs, and reported multiple causes or were unsure of the cause for 13 dogs. The specific type of cancer diagnosis was unspecified in most cases; however, some owners reported suspected lung cancers, possible hemangiosarcoma of the spleen, intestinal adenocarcinoma, brain cancer, and pancreatic and bladder cancers. Congestive heart failure was the leading



Norwich Terrier Bella, aged 15.5 years

type of heart disease. Cancer and heart disease were highly correlated with older age at death. Because the questionnaire was completed by owners and was anonymous (in order to encourage participation), the cause of death information was not verified with the owners or their veterinarians. Despite this limitation, the survey resulted in the most current estimate of Norwich Terrier mortality in the U.S.

*How do our Norwich Terrier results compare with those for other purebred dogs?*

Although there are few peer-reviewed research studies comparing cause of death across breeds, our survey results were comparable to those about small breeds generally. For example, in a study published in 2014

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(Lewis et al.), researchers collected mortality data on 5,663 deceased dogs registered with the Kennel Club (United Kingdom) using an owner-based survey. The overall median age at death was 10.3 years (interquartile range: 7.2 to 12.8 years), but varied widely across breeds from the West Highland Terrier (12.7 years) to the Dobermann Pinscher (7.7 years). The most common causes of death overall were old age (14 percent), unspecified cancer (9 percent) and heart failure (5 percent).

Breeds also differed in their most common causes of death, suggesting that some breeds are susceptible to particular causes of death. Also in the United Kingdom, a large study by Adams et al., published in 2010, collected information on the cause of death and longevity of pedigree dogs (N=15,881) by asking owners about dogs that had died in the previous 10 years. This study found breed differences in lifespan and causes of death, and provides additional evidence that smaller breeds tend to have longer lifespans compared with larger breeds. The smaller breeds died of diseases appropriate to their longevity, with old age, cancer, cardiac conditions and chronic renal failure representing the highest proportional mortalities.

### *Tipping the odds: Maintaining healthy weight*

The definition of “average” means that some individual dogs will have shorter lifes-

pans, while others can be expected to live longer than the average. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, early death (defined as less than two years of age) is most often associated with trauma, congenital disease, or infectious causes. There are some things that can tip the odds in favor of a longer life expectancy: feeding a healthy diet, keeping safe from injury (using a proper leash, fence, and so on), restricting access to harmful substances (such as poisons or environmental toxins), maintaining regular veterinary care, and knowing the signs and symptoms of any breed-specific diseases for early diagnosis and treatment.

Many diseases are clearly out of the owner’s control, but in North American dogs obesity is the most common preventable disease. Statistics vary, but are reported to be 25 to 30 percent or more in the general canine population, and 40 to 45 percent in dogs aged 5 to 11 years. Most pet owners know that obesity is a health risk, but may not realize the magnitude. The research is alarming and suggests that obese dogs live two years less than dogs of healthy weight. Obesity increases the risk of diabetes, pancreatitis, cardiac conditions, and respiratory conditions such as airway dysfunction and tracheal collapse. Because respiratory disease is a health focus in our breed, the NTCA survey finding that greater than 20 per-

cent of Norwich Terriers were reported to be overweight or obese is especially concerning.

Eventually the loss of a beloved dog brings most owners to tears. Their lives are short, too short. The health of the dogs we breed over their lifespan is most important—more important than any dog show ribbon! Disease surveillance on the part of breeders depends on keeping in touch with owners. The loss of a beloved pet is inevitable and a death, whether early or late, is heartbreaking news. On the far end of the bell curve, news from owners whose dogs are defying the breed average—exceeding our best guess of the Norwich Terrier’s life expectancy—is cherished beyond words.

### *References*

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## Scottish Terriers

### JUDGES’ EDUCATION

The Scottish Terrier Club of America (STCA) takes its role in the stewardship of the breed seriously. Similar to that of most breed parent clubs, its founding constitution identifies the main goals and purposes as:

“To encourage and promote the quality breeding of purebred Scottish Terriers and to do all possible to bring their natural qualities to perfection” and “to urge members and breeders to accept the Standard of the Breed as approved by The American Kennel Club as the only standard of excellence by which Scottish Terriers shall be judged.”

As part of this commitment, the STCA has a very active judges education committee (JEC) and strong support from the Board of Directors to ensure frequent seminars and multiple instructional components.

Education comes in many formats and includes:

- seminars with hands-on evaluations at major judges’ education events;
- promoting parent club mentoring and approving of parent club mentors;
- approved mentors are available around the