

BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE DOGS

# DOGS & pups

E1 K1 (Each 1 Keep 1)

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Yummy!  
I'm loving it!

**BREED PROFILE**

Newfoundlands  
and Japanese Chin

Docking and cropping  
not to be allowed!



# Incredible but true!

– by Dino Marcellino

Together, a man and a dog can use helicopters to save lives at sea! The dog can even swim with the survivor holding onto his life-jacket! Here's more on this incredible act of human-canine relationship.



Testing the boarding in helicopter





Jump and fly



**P**icture this! Pleasant climate and a beautiful sunny spring morning at the banks of Lake Iseo (north Italy in the Central Alps). The Mediterranean vegetation, olive groves and vineyards offer a pleasant and relaxing environment. The surrounding mountains are reflected in the lake whose water is rippled by a gentle breeze. From the small port of Pisogne village a lone surfer leaves the shore with his surfboard and making his way toward the middle of the lake. It seems like a scene prepared for a landscape painter, when suddenly the solitary surfer loses his balance, perhaps shaken by the waves created by a passing ferry, knocks the head against the surfboard and ends up in the cold water.

The scene is observed from the shore of the lake and the alarm is given. Funny to say but for the man in water is in any case a lucky day because not far from there the men and women of the 'S.I.C.S. - Italian School of Water Rescue Dogs' are engaged in heli-rescue training session.

The helicopter, an Ecureuil B3 by Eliwork Society, starts the rotors, a S.I.C.S. instructor and his Newfoundland dog are accompanied on board by a technician. The flight is short and from the ground you can see the shapes of canine unit, man and dog, jump from the helicopter that was positioned in hovering at few meters from the water, at some safety distance from the drowning surfer.

That odd couple, man and dog, swim side by side until they reach the victim; the rescuer performs manoeuvres in order to support the surfer who is groping with violence and creates some difficulties to the helper, even if he is an experienced water-rescuer. The dog swims around the two men and they grasp the bodice of the dog. The Newfoundland is swimming, slow but steady, and almost seems unreal that a dog could pull so well two men in the water. Once ashore, appropriate assistance is provided to the survivor. The dog receives proper attention, a delicious recompense, and rewards for rescue.

### But who are the actors of this incredible rescue?

They are the team from S.I.C.S., the school for rescue-at-sea and air-rescue in the marine



Special dog life-jacket.

environment in Italy, founded by Ferruccio Pilenga in 1989, an owner of a Newfoundland and volunteer in Italian Civil Protection, who decided to bring to front the innate qualities of the aforementioned dog breeds developing the ability to save. The activity with helicopters began in 1992 and a close collaboration with the Coast Guard and Air Force SAR brought to the official approval in 1996 by the authorities responsible for emergency, and also by the Ministry of Transport and Navigation. Today, the school has a headquarter and nine branches throughout the country. Qualified Trainers are operative at each one of them, and more than 200 water rescue dog K9 Units are active and patented.

According to Ferruccio, "Some races have an innate propensity for water and for saving, especially Newfoundland, Labrador and Golden Retriever. The challenge is to transform this instinct in a real capacity to rescue. Crucial is the unique and unrepeatable relationship between the dog and his handler. He must be able to train his dog, must also have the necessary passion for the rescue activities, and a lot of dedication because the training and the maintenance of the qualification require great efforts. Starting from these assumptions we at S.I.C.S. can transform the couple in an efficient and effective water rescue K-9 Unit, transferring them our knowledge, experience, skills and equipments."

### The training...

The training is long and includes several steps. It teaches the dog to swim faster. More difficult is to teach to swim in pairs with his handler without hindering or scratching him. So, the dog has to learn how to stand in water, how to position himself with respect to people in water, offering them his special life-jacket which people can grasp. He must learn to tow them to shore, and if necessary also drag a small boat.

The handler also receives adequate preparation: in addition to working with dog he learns to drive boat, handle equipments as transceivers and safety equipments, providing first aid and resuscitation actions.

The school, at the end of the training, issues a 'S.I.C.S. Operative Water Rescue Certificate', after successfully completing the most demanding test: demonstrate the ability to operate from a helicopter, jumping from it when it is hovering at 2-5 meters from the water, and of course carry out the rescue. The couple - man and dog - confirm to be synonymous of friendship, love and fidelity, both in water and air. ■

## puppies

armed for life



**ROYAL CANIN**

<http://mypuppyguide.royalcanin.in>





*Pix courtesy: Dino Marcellino*

# NEWFOUNDLANDS

## The life saviours

**N**ewfoundlands were earlier used for hauling in nets, carrying boat lines to the shores, retrieving things which fell overboard and most importantly rescuing shipwrecked and drowning victims. They are still used as outstanding water rescue dogs. S.I.C.S., the school for rescue-at-sea and air-rescue in the marine environment in Italy, trains dogs, especially the Newfoundlands for this amazing feat.

### The strong persona...

Strong and massive, Newfoundlands are bear-like dogs. Their head is broad and heavy and so is their muzzle. Their nose is black and eyes are deep-set and brown, spaced wide apart. Their ears are small and triangular

shaped. And they have webbed feet – which make them excellent swimmers. Their tail is strong and broad.

They have a double coat, which is flat and water-resistant. They are found in different colours like black, black with blue highlights, black with white markings, brown, grey and white with black markings.

Males weigh around 59-68 kg while females weigh around 45-54 kg and their height varies from 69-74 cm and 63-69 cm respectively.

### The beautiful temperament...

Intelligent, sweet, courageous, generous, calm, patient, loyal, trustworthy, sociable, gentle...these are just a few of the qualities of Newfoundlands. They are very obedient dogs who are devoted to their pet parents. Though they rarely bark, they are brave dogs and are protective whenever there is a need. They can distinguish between who is a threat to the pack and who is not.

When they are properly socialised, they get along with other dogs and animals. They are patient with children and love to play with them. They enjoy outdoors but love to be with their family.

### The little problems with the rescuer...

They drink a lot of water and create a mess while drinking. They also drool after a drink. Besides, they are little difficult to train – you need to be calm but firm while training them.

Dogs are man's best friends and Newfoundlands live to this adage. They are life saviours – rescuing shipwrecked and drowning victims. Here's more on this amazing breed.

### Living with them...

Sufficiently exercised, they can live in an apartment. A small yard would be good for their exercises. They prefer colder climate and cannot do well in warmer regions.

### Daily walks...

This giant breed loves to laze around but they do need their daily dose of walk. And they would simply love to swim!

### The grooming regime...

Your Newfoundland needs to be groomed regularly. His thick, coarse double-coat needs to be brushed daily, or at least weekly. They shed their undercoat twice in a year and they need special grooming during that time.

### Famous Newfoundlands

- **Boatswain:** Pet of English poet Lord Byron and the subject of his poem 'Epitaph to a Dog'.
- **Bilbo:** Lifeguard at Sennon cove beach in Cornwall.
- **Brumus:** Robert F Kennedy's dog.
- **Brutus:** First dog to complete the Appalachian Mountain Club's 'Winter 48', climbing all 48 peaks in one calendar winter.
- **Carlo:** Emily Dickinson's dog.
- **Hairy Man:** The dog who helped Ann Harvey and her father and brother rescue 163 people from a shipwreck.

