



American Border Collie Association, Inc.

Newsletter

www.americanbordercollie.org

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Deaf from Birth

We hear a lot about Early Adult Onset Deafness, and rightly so, because it can be so devastating for working dogs to go deaf after so much time and effort has been spent in training them, and because research is actively going forward to identify its genetic causes. But we don't hear as much about the other principal cause of deafness in Border Collies -- congenital sensorineural deafness. This other type of deafness occurs in pups, after birth but before they are six weeks old.

One of the many complex things we all need to have in order to hear -- dogs and people alike -- is hair cells in the inner ear. Without movement of these cochlear hair cells, the chain by which sound is transmitted through various stages to reach the brain is broken -- nerve impulses to the brain will not be generated. These hair cells are nourished by a vascular bed in the ear called the *stria vascularis*. In congenital sensorineural deafness, the *stria* is fine up until a few weeks after birth, but then it begins to degenerate, and very quickly thereafter hair cell function is lost and deafness occurs. The condition is irreversible and permanent.

Deafness can be discovered before pups go to their new homes, either through BAER testing or other less-sophisticated and less-reliable hearing tests, but how can this type of deafness be prevented from occurring in the first place? Unfortunately, we don't yet have an answer to this question.

We do know that the cause is genetic. We do know that it is not related to the sex of the puppies -- it affects both males and females. We know that, unsurprisingly, it is more common in the offspring of deaf dams than normal hearing dams. We know that it can be present in both ears (bilateral deafness) or only in one ear (unilateral deafness), and that unilateral deafness is more common. Research done on other breeds of dogs -- mainly Dalmatians, because this type of deafness is especially prevalent in that breed -- has pointed a finger at the piebald or white factor gene, located at the S locus. There are three recessive forms of that pigment gene, and there is some suggestion that dogs carrying two copies of the allele that produces the most white on a dog's body -- the s^w mutation -- might be related to the disorder. But even in Dalmatians the evidence is not clear, and certainly the vast majority of Border Collies carrying two copies of the s^w mutation are not deaf. Still, the possibility that two copies of the s^w mutation PLUS some other, unidentified regulatory gene might be the culprits cannot be ruled out at our present state of knowledge. There have so far been no studies done of a possible s^w mutation effect on deafness in the Border Collie.

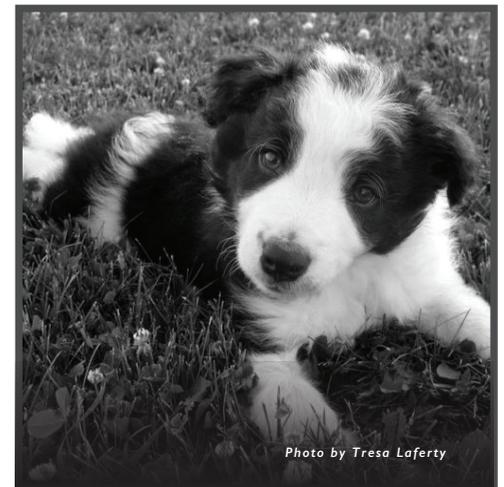


Photo by Tresa Laferty

On the other hand, it is pretty clear that the merle gene has an impact on this type of deafness. The merle gene (Mm) is dominant, and therefore a merle Border Collie bred to a non-merle will produce merle puppies. (Merle patterning occurs in the dark color areas of a dog, producing light-colored splotches in those areas. It is different from ticking, which produces dark-colored spotting on areas that would normally be white.) But a merle bred to another merle will produce pups that don't appear merle at all -- they are mostly or entirely white, and frequently deaf. They can have other health problems as well, including blindness. For this reason breeders should take care not to mate a merle dog to another merle.

A study done in 2006 on UK Border Collies found that "Deaf Border Collies had higher rates of merle coat pigmentation, blue iris pigment, and excess white on the head than normal hearing Border Collies." Blue eye color has long been correlated with deafness across a number of dog breeds and other species, and blue eye color occurs in merles more than in those with other Border Collie color patterns. Unfortunately, the researchers in this study did not focus at all on the incidence of deafness in dogs carrying the extreme piebald (white factor) gene, because of their stated belief that "the S locus is not thought to be involved in the regulation of deafness in Border Collies." The S locus alleles determine the amount of white on the body, but not white on the head.

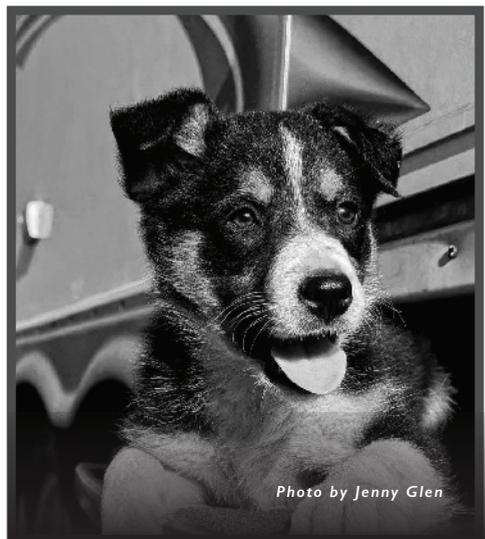
Other than this one, there do not appear to be any studies done on the relationship between coat color and congenital sensorineural deafness in the Border Collie breed. Because it has been shown that causes of sensorineural deafness are different in different breeds, this is certainly work that needs to be done.

AMERICAN BORDER COLLIE ASSOCIATION

Annual Meeting

October 3, 2024

Minutes



Steve Rhidenour welcomed everyone to Middletown, VA and called the meeting to order.

Debbie Bailey presented proof of mailing of the notice for the Annual Meeting. Debbie stated 2,641 ballots mailed to eligible voters, 3 ballots returned ineligible. Patricia L. Smith, CPA, tallied the ballots, reporting 335 validly cast ballots. This represents more than a quorum of 10% of eligible voters. Debbie thanked the out-going Directors for their service Mike Neary, Linda Tesdahl and Steve Rhidenour. The result of the election: Four Directors were elected for three-year terms; Sonia Craig, Michael McNutt, Mary Minor and Jamie Spring.

The minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting were distributed to the members. A motion was made by Mary Minor to approve the minutes as presented. Marianna Schreeder made the second and the motion was approved.

Steve Rhidenour gave the President's Report. American Border Collie Association is a member owned registry with more than 9,000 members (Life and Annual). We provide a full range of services. In 2023, we registered 13,535 dogs, recorded 1,882

transfers and replaced lost and/or updated more than 600 certificates.

ABCA contributed \$58,975 to support the National Sheepdog Finals and National Cattledog Finals in 2023. This includes \$22,500 for the Sheepdog Finals, \$10,175 for the Cattledog Finals and \$26,300 in prize money. ABCA is the longest tenured sponsor and partner for both events.

In 2023, ABCA provided support to the U.S. World Trial Team with a stipend of \$1,000 per competing dog for a total of \$11,000.

ABCA distributed \$50,475 in promotional money to fund trials, clinics and educational events conducted by state, and regional organizations and individual members to promote the working Border Collie.

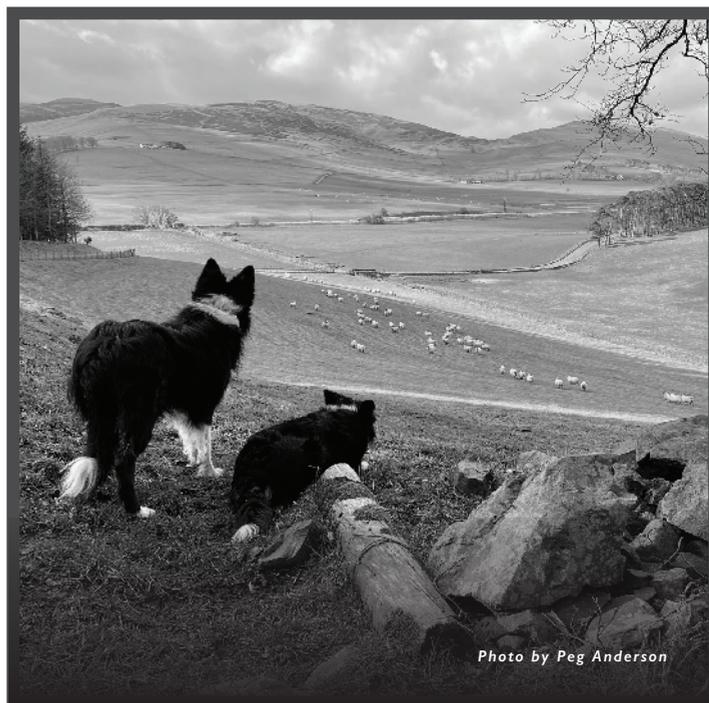
In 2023, the Board of Directors voted to induct Scott Glen and CVS Alice, ABCA #391799, to the American Border Collie Hall Of Fame.

The Board voted to approve a stipend of \$25,000 for the ABCA Health & Education Foundation during the annual spring review in 2023. Through the years ABCA has been a leader among breed organizations when it comes to early identification of health problems and supporting research for the benefit of our dogs. With ABCA's support, the Foundation can continue to advance the working Border Collie.

Debbie Bailey presented the Finance Report for 2023. Amanda Milliken moved to accept the report. Sue Schoen made the second, motion approved.

Eileen Stein, President, ABCA Health and Education Foundation (HEF) provided an update on Early Adult-Onset Deafness (EAOD). The complete report can be found in the newsletter.

Steve Rhidenour asked if anyone had comments or further business. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Hall of Fame Nominations

Due To ABCA by June 15, 2025

Application forms available from the office or online at www.americanbordercollie.org

**ABCA HEALTH & EDUCATION FOUNDATION
UPDATE ON EARLY ADULT ONSET DEAFNESS (EAOD)
EILEEN STEIN, PRESIDENT**



Photo by Allison Jarrard

Research into Early Adult Onset Deafness (EAOD) was the first project undertaken by the ABCA Health & Education Foundation (HEF) when it was founded, and continues to be its most important focus. The researchers — Hannes Lohi in Helsinki, assisted by Jim Mickelson at the University of Minnesota — working with funding, samples and data provided by HEF have not been able to find the actual genetic variant(s) causing EAOD, but by 2019 they had succeeded in identifying four linked genetic markers that are always found together, and are always found in dogs with EAOD. Based on those markers, a “risk test” for EAOD was developed and made commercially available while the research continued. It is not a definitive test, in the way that the test for Collie Eye Anomaly can tell you for sure if a dog is clear of the disease, or a carrier, or affected. Instead it can tell you whether there is an enhanced risk that a particular dog, if bred, would produce EAOD affected offspring.

ABCA HEF has never been really comfortable with the test, and has not endorsed it, because we have not been shown sufficient data to justify recommending it to ABCA members. And so there matters stood, while the researchers pursued several different avenues without success, until this year.

Recently, however, a new technology that enables reading longer gene sequences has pointed to two new gene variants that give some promise of being the causative mutations. Dr. Lohi’s team has been completing the variant analyses results, and intends to publish their findings by the end of the year. At best, the manuscript would disclose the identity of the causal mutations if the current target variants do indeed prove to be causative. At the least, it would make public their data from which other researchers could build on their findings, and other testing companies could develop their own risk tests, thus hopefully making the tests more affordable. In our contract with Dr. Lohi, the HEF insisted that the results of their research be published, with the aim of enabling price competition and avoiding a monopoly by any one testing company.



Photo by Peg Anderson

In the event that this latest research proves not to have uncovered the causative mutation(s), the HEF is seriously considering an additional, separate research commitment. Thanks to Kay Stephens, we have made contact with a U.S. researcher whose lab at a major U.S. university is currently using cutting-edge technology in a number of ongoing projects aimed at fuller understanding of the biology behind various diseases, including deafness, in various species. He is very interested in taking on EAOD in our breed, and we think it would be productive to enlist this alternative approach in the search for the elusive genetic cause of EAOD. This would put fresh eyes on the project, and offer us two ways forward instead of one. So I’m happy to be able to report that after being at a seeming dead end, this year we have two different reasons for optimism as we continue pursuing this quest.

CONSIDERING A MICROCHIP IDENTIFICATION FOR YOUR DOG?

A microchip is a small, electronic chip enclosed in a glass cylinder that is about the same size as a grain of rice. When a scanner is passed over it, the radio waves put out by the scanner activate the chip, which transmits its identification number to the scanner. The chip thus provides a unique, permanent means of identifying your dog.

Once the chip is implanted in your dog, you can then register its number plus information about you and your dog with the manufacturer. This greatly improves the chances of getting your dogs back if they become lost or stolen. Nearly all veterinary offices, animal shelters and rescues have chip readers and routinely scan lost or recovered dogs for chips. They can then contact the manufacturer and learn the ownership information that will enable them to restore your dog to you. You will need to keep that information updated if you move or change phone numbers.

Another reason for microchipping your dog is that nowadays it is usually required for international travel. If you take your dog to a trial overseas, or if you import or export a pup or dog, you will probably need to have it microchipped. The CDC recently required that dogs being imported to the US, or returning to the US after traveling to other countries, carry an ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 15 digit microchip. Although that requirement is not currently in effect if travel is to/from a country that is not at high risk for rabies, it can be -- and has been in the past -- imposed on very short notice. And dogs will not be able to run in the World Trial unless identified by microchip.

A microchip can be injected into your dog by your vet, usually during the course of an ordinary vet visit. It is injected through a needle only slightly larger than those used for an ordinary shot, and should not cause any greater discomfort. It would be wise to request an ISO 15 digit microchip with a 134.2kHz frequency, as that seems to be the chip that will be most universally used in the future. The cost for microchipping is quite negligible, and if you want to be able to read microchips yourself, a scanner can be purchased on Amazon for less than \$50.



Photo by Jamie Spring

ABCA can place your dog's microchip or tattoo number on their certificate of registration. You may submit your original certificate, provide the chip number, and a new certificate will be created for you. The fee is \$10 (the \$10 charge does not apply if your request is made during a transfer of ownership or at initial registration). Simply include the number on the registration application in the "markings" section.

For further information about microchipping, consult the American Veterinary Medical Association's FAQ at <https://search.app/rdwSGG4QgdSDRjBP9>



Photo by Rachel Ritland

WAYS THAT YOU CAN SUPPORT ABCA HEALTH & EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Gifts to the HEF are fully tax deductible. 100% of donations will support the activities, programs and grants of the HEF. None goes to paid fundraisers or salaries. You may make a gift online or by mail. Contact information below. A gift to the HEF may be made in memory of a family member or friend. The HEF will send a card to the recipient, letting them know of your thoughtful gift.

The HEF's mission is to support research into border collie genetics, diseases, disease prevention and treatment, and to disseminate educational information regarding Border Collies, including their use and value as working stock dogs, and their genetics, diseases, and proper breeding.

The HEF is still a young organization and its programs and activities are still being formulated. Its website contains useful health information, but work to create and expand educational content on its site is still in progress. The HEF hopes to improve the future of the Border Collie and needs your help and input to do so.

Eileen Stein, President, American Border Collie Health & Education Foundation
212 Long Hill Rd • Hillsborough, NJ 08844 • eileen@bordercollie.org • www.bordercolliefoundation.org

**AMERICAN BORDER COLLIE ASSOCIATION, INC.
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES, AND OTHER
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS - MODIFIED CASH BASIS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023**

REVENUES	2023
Annual Memberships	\$ 27,660
Duplicates and Corrections	5,442
Lifetime Memberships	30,135
Registration Fees	201,224
Transfer Fees	26,685
Miscellaneous	1,472
Investment Income	60,304
Total Revenues	352,922

EXPENSES	
Program Services	
Health and education grants	25,000
World trial grants	11,000
Prize monies awarded	26,300
Promotional support to members	50,475
National finals sponsorship	35,111
Total Program Services	147,886

Supporting Services	
Annual meeting expenses	1,879
Bank fees and credit card processing fees	9,206
Computer expense, technical support, and web expense	6,943
Depreciation and amortization	1,640
Donations	250
File storage and maintenance	1,732
Insurance	1,872
Investment fees	17,284
Office supplies	2,726
Miscellaneous	246
Postage and delivery	12,126
Printing and reproduction	10,107
Professional fees	4,450
Office manager/registrar fees	90,816
Telephone	3,526
Travel	2,111
Total Supporting Services	166,914
Total Expenses	314,800

OTHER INCOME (EXPENSE)	
Realized gain (loss) on investments	8,756
Loss on disposal of assets	(326)
Total other income (expense)	8,430
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	46,552
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	2,043,288
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	2,089,840

ABCA'S PROMOTIONAL MONEY PROGRAM

Since its founding, the ABCA has had a program that uses a portion of each registration fee to support member-run events throughout the United States and Canada that promote the working Border Collie. Three dollars from each dog registration is reserved for redistribution to member-run events which promote the Border Collie throughout the United States and Canada. Typically, these events are stockdog trials (sheep and cattle), but they can also include demonstrations, training clinics, and other educational initiatives.

Requests are reviewed and awarded in the same year the event is held. There are two deadlines for submitting requests for promotional money, February 15 and July 15. Soon after each deadline, the Board of Directors will review and vote on the requests. Their decision will be based on information submitted about the scope and features of the event, including location, dates, how many people and dogs will attend, a budget for the event and other sources of financial support. Requests must be submitted by a current member who is involved with organizing and running the event. More information about the application process and an application form can be found at: americanbordercollie.org/services/promotional-money-program/

Prize Monies Paid at the National Finals Each Year

**Dogs must be ABCA registered to collect ABCA prize monies.*

**Handler must be a current American Border Collie Association Member to compete in the USBCHA Finals.*

**Breeder must be current American Border Collie Association Member to be eligible for prize monies.*

Sheep Finals

Nursery Top 30 Qualifying.....	\$200 each
Open Top 50 1st Go Round	\$200 each
Open Top 20 2nd Go Round	\$200 each
Breeder of the Top ABCA registered Nursery and Open Dogs.....	\$1000 each
Breeder of the Reserve ABCA registered Nursery and Open Dogs	\$500 each

Cattle Finals

Nursery	
1st	\$300
2nd.....	\$200
Open -1st Go Round	
1st	\$200
2nd-4th	\$100 each
Open - 2nd Go Round	
1st	\$200
2nd-4th	\$100 each
Open Finals	
1st	\$500
2nd.....	\$400
3rd	\$300
4th.....	\$200
5th-10th	\$100 each
11th-20th	\$50 each
Breeder of the Top ABCA registered Open and Nursery Dogs	\$1000 each
Breeder of the Reserve ABCA registered Open and Nursery Dogs	\$500 each



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Photo by Jenny Glen

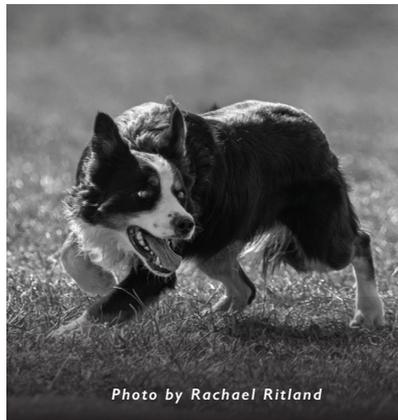


Photo by Rachael Ritland



Photo by Peg Anderson

ABCA is the premier registry for the working Border Collie

Annual Memberships Due before January 1, 2025

Annual Memberships expire on December 31st of each calendar year. To be eligible to vote in the 2025 elections, your membership must be paid **prior** to January 1, 2025. Annual Membership fees are \$15. Lifetime Memberships are \$150.

Both Annual and Lifetime Memberships offer the same benefits.