



Autumn Edition

IWHG



Patron: Trudie Sumner

Find us on 

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter.

As the trees turn from green to various shades of autumn gold and drop to the ground we still find ourselves looking for face masks and standing in lines two metres apart. Such a lot has changed so far in 2020 and it continues to be a very unusual time for us all. Let us hope the restrictions we are all living under come to an end very soon and that we can all look forward to a safe and Happy Christmas.

We have had the excitement of the virtual dog shows which took a lot of time and effort from the organisers. How fantastic they were providing a very welcome distraction for everyone who took part.

Dr Maura Lyons has put together some analysis taken from the IWDB.org on hounds that have passed which we hope you will find interesting.

Heart Testing continues to be an important area for us and even more so now that we are affected by the Covid-19 restrictions. Wendy Heather has been working hard to ensure we had as many sessions as we could this year, and in this second lockdown those already booked were able to go ahead. Now we look towards 2021 but there is an update on 2020 sessions later in the Newsletter.

The IWHG Accounts 2019 is summarised in the Treasurer's Update.

Our focus for this Newsletter is, as always, the Health and Wellbeing of our hounds but we too as owners

during this difficult time need to look after ourselves so make yourself a cup of your favourite drink and maybe get a biscuit or two and take some time out to read this newsletter.

We hope you enjoy it and don't forget, we're here for you, so do let us know if you have a particular topic you want to raise or for us to investigate.



IWHG

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Average Lifespan per Country according to IWDB

Following a discussion amongst Health Group members recently I asked IWDB webmaster Per Arne Flatberg if he could pull some data from the IWDB for us.

We were interested to see if there were differences in lifespan between countries, for no real reason other than curiosity and the fact that sometimes people are known to say Ireland/ Great Britain/ Germany/ USA (delete as appropriate) have longer/shorter (delete as appropriate) living wolfhounds. Where do these statements of 'fact' come from? Is there any truth in them?

Using the data pertaining to wolfhounds born in the last 20 years only and the top 20 countries best represented with numbers of hounds registered we found some interesting discussion points.

Table 1 Sample size for each country

Sample Size	Country
51	Russia
53	Slovakia
72	Italy
81	Hungary
92	Poland
99	Austria
154	Ireland
157	France
169	Netherlands
176	Australia
186	Belgium
225	Denmark
227	Canada
330	Norway
377	Sweden
548	Great Britain
702	Finland
849	Czech Republic
891	USA
1183	Germany

Table 2 Percentage of known longevity

Sample size %	Country
4.19%	France
4.27%	Russia
5.35%	USA
6.12%	Canada
7.85%	Great Britain
8.13%	Italy
8.34%	Ireland
9.64%	Netherlands
10.10%	Slovakia
10.54%	Poland
11.08%	Australia
12.13%	Austria
12.90%	Germany
13.17%	Belgium
14.05%	Sweden
19.19%	Hungary
21.23%	Czech Republic
27.89%	Finland
29.49%	Denmark
37.84%	Norway

IWDB was able to use lifespan information of 6622 hounds, which is 10.61% of the 62387 born in the last 20 years in those top 20 countries. As can be seen from Tables 1 and 2 the sample size naturally varies by country. This is the number of wolfhounds in IWDB where the lifespan information is known.

This number ranges from 51 in Russia to 1183 in Germany. For each country this figure may or may not be representative of their population of wolfhounds. This may be easier to surmise when we look at Table 2 which converts the absolute sample size into a percentage of the wolfhounds in that country (that are known to IWDB).

For some countries in the IWDB the number of wolfhounds are very complete – this depends on whether the national KC publishes the registration data and makes it available to the public/members, for some countries where the national KC keep the registrations secret (notably Poland, Russia, Ireland, Hungary and Slovakia), IWDB have variably incomplete data. The percentage of lifespan data known varies from 4.19% in France to 37.84% for Norway.

Whilst IWDB primarily collects lifespan information from owners and breeders, for some countries (most notably the Scandinavian countries) there are also official lifespan reporting schemes and these are also used to populate lifespan data in IWDB.

So, it is wise to keep all of the previous information to the forefront of our minds when we are considering the lifespan figures which have been calculated. Average lifespan in each country ranged from 6.34 years in Slovakia (sample size 53, which is 10.1%), to 8.31 years in Ireland (sample size 154, or 8.34%), which is quite a difference, as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3 Average Lifespan per Country

Average Lifespan	Country
6.34	Slovakia
6.61	Norway
6.63	Finland
6.69	Poland
6.84	Denmark
6.88	Czech Republic
6.97	Sweden
7.20	Belgium
7.41	Canada
7.55	Netherlands
7.60	Germany
7.65	Australia
7.66	USA
7.67	Italy
7.74	Austria
7.78	Great Britain
7.96	Hungary
8.16	Russia
8.29	France
8.31	Ireland

Table 4 Registered Wolfhounds in IWDB

Born in last 20 years	Country
422	Hungary
525	Slovakia
763	Denmark
816	Austria
872	Norway
873	Poland
886	Italy
1193	Russia
1412	Belgium
1589	Australia
1753	Netherlands
1846	Ireland
2517	Finland
2683	Sweden
3707	Canada
3743	France
3999	Czech Republic
6977	Great Britain
9170	Germany
16641	USA

So, are these differences *actual* differences in expected lifespan of wolfhounds from these countries, and if not, how can we explain them?

Firstly, we need consider for each country whether the number of hounds for which the lifespan is known can be thought of as statistically representative of the number of hounds born in that country. (And by the way, I’m not going to give you the ‘correct’ answer for this question – the numbers are presented for you to make your own informed decisions).

Other differences between countries could be explained by:

- There are variations in the availability of veterinary care; some countries are huge and it’s not uncommon for the nearest vet to be several hours drive away. Obviously, this situation isn’t ideal in an emergency. There are also differences in cultural (and legislative) attitudes when thinking about how much intervention should be given to keep a dog alive.

- There are variations in cultural attitude towards transparency and publicly sharing of kennel data. In some countries it is quite common to report mortality data to the national KC, which then publish that data.
- A veteran bias may be more pronounced in some countries than in others. This is the phenomenon whereby breeders and owners may be more inclined to report long living hounds rather than those hounds who die at a young age.

From this data we can also see that more complete lifespan information of the population has a negative correlation to lifespan. Or put another way, average lifespan decreases as more data is collected. This leads us to believe that we really need to have as much lifespan data as possible in order to be confident that extrapolating average lifespans is reliable and accurate.

For breed clubs and councils it's very important to know the correct and accurate status of your population of the breed in order to develop breeding strategies and advise your members. Great Britain is the third highest producer of Irish Wolfhounds contributing slightly more than 10% of the global population in the last 20 years, and less than 8% of those have a recorded lifespan so, if we can gather more information it would not only be useful for the GB population but also have an impact on the global population.

From our point of view as your breed Health Group we would encourage and advise everyone to utilise IWDB for all purposes for which it can be used – be that as new or potential puppy buyers, to research the breeders you might be interested in buying your puppy from, or as established breeders looking to develop a breeding programme and research specific potential mating's.

This means providing relevant information to IWDB so that it can be included when looking at population statistics in future. If you have had a wolfhound, be that as a show or pet dog and whether or not they have been bred from, we ask that you provide the lifespan and mortality data to IWDB so that our future Wolfhound population may benefit from it.

The more information that is available to you as custodians of the breed, the better decisions can be made with regard to the health, and by extension the lifespan of our wonderful breed. Since the vast majority of our hounds are first and foremost much-loved family pets, what better project to be part of in such a simple manner than helping to improve the potential for any future puppy to live a long and healthy life?

Information can be added directly to IWDB by registering with the website and finding your dogs pedigree page and choosing the option to 'Correct/append to this pedigree', alternatively simply send an email to info@iwdb.org and the admin will add the information for you.

The Irish Wolfhound Database is a free to use database of all Irish Wolfhounds of which its estimated around 98% of all hounds ever registered are in the database. The database is valuable to breeders but also of great importance to researchers that have projects involving the Wolfhound, providing them with a huge resource and pool of information to use and support their work.

How can you help?

You can help by entering cause and age of death for all of the Wolfhounds you have owned and which you have accurate information for.



Email information [directly](#) here

Heart Testing Update - Wendy Heather



Organising Heart Testing sessions for all Irish Wolfhounds, whether for breeding reasons, veterans, rescue hounds or those just needing a regular annual appointment, continues to be an important area for us. Our focus is to make sessions available to everyone and very importantly at the same cost wherever they are in the country.

We can understand the dismay felt by everyone who was hoping to attend the sessions in Devon and East Anglia when the latest lockdown was announced and looked likely to impact the dates for those sessions. Working with our cardiologists and seeking advice from the BVA and the RCVS guidelines together with the Regulations published by Public Health, England we have been able to conduct 2 sessions at Holsworthy in Devon and 1 in Spalding in East Anglia during November.

We must thank the cardiologists for agreeing to conduct sessions for us this year under what has been very trying times. Their willingness to be part of the Health Group Scheme is very much appreciated.

We also want to thank our hosts for helping to make the sessions run smoothly, adhering to covid-19 rules and complying with instructions and guidance from the cardiologists. We thank them for their support and willingness to jump through hoops to make their venue compliant.

We are extremely pleased that we have been able to organise sessions in

- September
Thirsk & Redditch
- October
Salisbury & Snaith

- November
Spalding & 2x Holsworthy

A total of 84 hounds have been screened during this 3 month period, 4 of which were Rescue and 6 Super Veteran.

Planning has already started for sessions in 2021 and, with Covid-19 still likely to be with us, we are faced with additional costs covering items such as PPE plus a cardiologist's assistant. It is with regret, therefore, that we will need to increase the cost per hound for 2021.

There will be a full review of 2020 and further details on 2021 plans in our next newsletter.

Thank you everyone for your understanding and patience during these past few months.

Please Note:

For the duration of the pandemic most sessions will be run with reduced numbers. This is to allow a smooth workflow, limit owner waiting times and allow time for cleaning between hounds.

*Bookings are limited to **two hounds per attendee** to try to accommodate those hounds needing regular checks due to AF or DCM or requiring screening for breeding purposes. We hope that owners will appreciate the reason for this limit and that it has been imposed so that we can ensure fair access to our sessions. We are hopeful that the two hound per attendee limit per session will be removed during 2021.*

If you have multiple hounds requiring screening please contact the heart testing coordinator for a list of VCS approved cardiologists, some of whom can undertake the three part test without a veterinary referral on a private basis.

If you wish to be informed when sessions open for booking or to be added to the cancellation list of a fully booked session please contact Anne Vaudin

Bookings are ONLY accepted using our online booking form which you can access via the IWHG website.

Treasurer's Update - Steven Ritchie



IRISH WOLFHOUND HEALTH GROUP

REPORT & ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31ST DECEMBER 2019

The accounts for the year to **31st December 2019** have now been approved and published on our website

[Click here](#)

At the end of 2019 the balance sheet stood at **£42,491** (2018: £38,508).

This comprised:

- the **Project Development Fund** with a balance of **£13,847** (2018: £9,632)
- the **Osteosarcoma Fund** with a balance of **£10,576** (2018: £10,576)
- the **Pneumonia Fund** with a balance of **£2,568** (2018: £2,800)
- the **Heart Testing Scanner Fund** with a balance of **£15,000** (2018: £15,000)
- the **Administration Account** with a balance of **£500** (2018: £500)

During the year, no allocations were made from the Project Development Fund with the exception of £16 which was allocated from the Project Development Fund to the Administration Account to top up the Administration Account to £500.

Regional Heart Testing made an overall surplus of £146 in the year without the need of the proposed subsidy of £1,000 from the Project Development Fund for Super Veterans heart testing, which in 2019 continued to be free of charge.

The funding priorities identified for the Project Development Fund for 2020 are as follows:

- **Allowance for Super-Veteran Heart Testing subsidies 2020** - set aside £1,000

In November 2019 the IWHG held its biannual seminar which realised a small deficit of £152. The seminar raffle was very well supported and raised £940 on the day. Thank you to everyone who donated prizes and bought tickets, and congratulations to all the prize winners.

We would like to thank our fundraisers, donators and supporters for helping to generate donations of £3,296 in 2019, a fantastic sum which will help support current and future breed research projects. Direct donations amounted to £800 with a further £565 generated by loose change tins. Easy-fundraising donations amounted to £744 during the year and Mandy Addington raised the magnificent sum of £1,187 from the sale of calendars and cards, spring raffle and the sale of Irish Wolfhound Community merchandise. A big thank you also to Helen Ward for the generous donation of £450 from the sale of her beautiful Posh Collars.

Steven Ritchie

IWHG Treasurer

25th November 2020

Christmas is nearly here

Did you order yours ?



All Calendars and Cards
have now been sold

We understand that over £3,000 has been
raised which is absolutely fantastic.
Well done Mandy and all those involved.

TREAT YOUR IRISH
WOLFHOUSES TO
THEIR VERY OWN HAND
MADE CHRISTMAS
STOCKINGS



8
COLORS AND
PATTERNS



The Lovely people at Joppe Creations are
creating custom-made Christmas stockings
for your Irish Wolfhounds in support of the
Irish Wolfhound Database.

Get yours whilst they are still available.
<https://merch.iwdb.org/>

*The IWHG want to wish
you all a very Happy
Christmas.
Stay Safe Everyone*



**Happy Christmas
Everyone
From the IWHG**

How Can You Contribute to Health Research in Irish Wolfhounds?

Dr Maura Lyons, PhD, IWHG Research Co-ordinator

The IWHG are involved with or coordinating various different research projects in Irish Wolfhounds, many are still ongoing and need your help. This is a list of the current projects. Take a read through the following list and see if you and your hound can help contribute to research helping to maintain and improve the health status of the breed.

Nottingham University Osteosarcoma Longitudinal Project – Dr Mark Dunning

We have around 900 wolfhounds recruited for this study and currently NVS have said they don't need any further swabs. For those dogs already swabbed for this project **please remember to complete the health update surveys annually.**

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/nottingham-university.html>

For anyone who has experienced bone cancer in their dogs in the past, whether the dog was swabbed or not, there is a Treatment Survey to determine which treatments are offered by primary care vets and which are most successful. There are also two further surveys, one for wolfhound owners who have decided to amputate for reasons other than osteosarcoma and also owners who have never experienced either amputation or osteosarcoma.

Survey 1 – please complete this survey if you have experience of amputation in your wolfhound but it was for a reason other than bone cancer: <http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/IW-amputation>

Survey 2 – Please complete this survey if you have never experienced either bone cancer/osteosarcoma or amputation in your wolfhound: http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/canine_amputation1

If your swabbed wolfhound gets a confirmed diagnosis of bone cancer

Whilst it is hoped that no wolfhound ever suffers from bone cancer again, if your dog is swabbed and gets a confirmed diagnosis of bone cancer, please get in touch with Mark to see how you can help. This is a large project with many angles and full details can be found on the webpage link above.

Nottingham Heart Disease Research – Prof. Malcolm Cobb and Dr Serena Brownlie-Sykes

By taking part in the IWHG Regional Heart Testing scheme you are contributing to this ongoing project, possibly the longest running veterinary research project ever! The results of your wolfhound's heart test are recorded in the database and used by the team at Nottingham University to unravel the specifics of wolfhound heart disease. To book a slot and contribute to this valuable research whilst also looking after your own dogs heart please find a session closest to you and get in touch with Anne Vaudin.

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/dates-and-locations-.html>

Nottingham Pneumonia Study – Dr Angela Bodey & Dr Mark Dunning

If your wolfhound has ever experienced pneumonia or any other type of respiratory disease or any type of nasal disease (snotty nose) we are collecting case studies so that our researchers may evaluate the most

effective treatments and devise a recommended treatment protocol. We are very aware that wolfhounds are still dying of pneumonia, so please do all you can to help out, if you experience pneumonia with your wolfhound fill out the survey and let Angela know what treatment your dog received and what the outcome was. Please see all details and fill out the survey on the webpage here;

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/pneumonia.html>

FCE Research – Caroline Sheppard

Irish Wolfhounds appear to suffer from a unique form of FCE, one which affects them in puppyhood, which is why this condition is also known as puppy paralysis. It is hoped that by studying the experience of wolfhounds affected by FCE, this research could determine what causes it and the most appropriate treatment for a favourable outcome. Ellen Kroll has written a comprehensive article about FCE which is available on our webpage. If your wolfhound has experienced any form of puppy paralysis or FCE please fill out the survey and return it to

Mail to : researchcoordinator@iwhealthgroup.co.uk

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/puppy-paralysis.html>

Livershunt/Epilepsy & PRA Reporting Survey – Dr Maura Lyons

This is a simple form to record incidences of Liver shunt, Epilepsy and PRA. This enables the IWHG to monitor the prevalence of these diseases within the IW population. If you have experienced these conditions in your wolfhound, please fill out the survey with your experiences.

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/multi-survey.html>

Dentition Survey – Caroline Sheppard

Caroline has been collecting examples of jaw growth in wolfhound puppies in order to provide evidence concerning the eventual alignment of teeth in the adult wolfhound. The IW is on the KC Breed Watch list for instances of misaligned canines, the IWHG feel that if this is seen in a growing puppy there is every chance the condition could correct itself – either if left or with some targeted therapy. If you have experienced puppies with teeth issues, please contact Caroline to share your experiences. <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/about-the-study.html>

Veteran Survey – Caroline Sheppard

The IWHG would like to hear about your veteran wolfhounds. If you have a wolfhound that has lived to over 7 years then please fill out the questionnaire. It includes details about lifestyle and environment in order to see if there is a correlation between any of these factors and longevity in wolfhounds. You can find the details and a link to the survey on the webpage: www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/health-surveys.html

NVS Bloat Incidence Survey – Matthew Keane

Study investigating the factors influencing bloating and the development and outcome of GDV in Irish Wolfhounds in the UK. This project is based on owner reported incidences of bloat and GDV in their wolfhounds and comparison to dogs unaffected by bloating.

Please complete the survey here...

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/IWH_GDV_Survey?fbclid=IwAR1o8XkAENiM0iwojG52EAnF41StixCY7CSS20P5kv0TKhyDbx4SHXPRneM

Megaesophagus (ME) In Puppies –

Although it is not believed that this condition is particularly common in the breed in comparison to other issues which affect our puppies i.e. Livershunts and FCE, there is sufficient interest to have generated an opportunity for research with Professor Jared Jaffey at Midwestern University College of Veterinary Medicine. It would be appreciated if anyone who has experienced ME in a puppy could contact Prof. Jaffey and provide details in order that an indication of frequency might be obtained. If anyone has an affected puppy being managed by diet, and would be prepared to submit a blood sample for the ongoing genetic research, again please contact Prof Jaffey and he will send instructions to your vet regarding preparation of the sample.

Contact details are Jared Jaffey DVM, MS, DACVIM (SAIM), Assistant Professor, Midwestern University College of Veterinary Medicine. Email : jjaffe@midwestern.edu

BetterBred Genetic Diversity Project – Dr Maura Lyons

This project is designed to establish the genetic diversity of our breed, which in turn could help us maintain genetic diversity in the future by identifying dogs that carry less common genes, and avoiding future bottlenecks.

We believe this could be a very important project given that we know our breed has a limited gene pool, but to what extent is unclear. The diversity test when complete, will offer a breeder one more tool in their quest to breed healthy typical sound hounds.

If you would like to add your dog to the study, If you would like to add your dog to the programme, the price of a test is currently held at \$50 and can be obtained [HERE](#).

THANK YOU!

To stay in touch with everything health-wise:

Please sign up for notifications of announcements on our website here,

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/home.html>

Quick Links to Surveys -

[PNEUMONIA](#)

[PUPPY PARALYSIS - Fibrocartilaginous embolism \(FCE\)](#)

[BONE CANCER TREATMENT – \(Osteosarcoma\)](#)

[BLOAT - Gastric Dilatation/Volvulus \(GDV\)](#)

[Dentition](#)

[Livershunts/PRA/Epilepsy](#)

[Veteran](#)

Publications & Guides

[Guide to Buying an Irish Wolfhound Puppy](#)

[Breed Guide - Introducing your new Irish Wolfhound](#)

[Guide to anaesthesia](#)

[Neutering factsheet](#)

[Bloat \(gastric dilatation volvulus, GDV\)](#)

[Puppy paralysis \(fibrocartilaginous embolism, FCE\)](#)

[Heart disease \(dilated cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation\)](#)

[Megaesophagus](#)

[Pneumonia for owners](#)

[Pneumonia for vets](#)

[Progressive retinal atrophy \(PRA\)](#)

[Dentition Guide](#)

[Heart Testing Sessions Current Dates and Locations Available here](#)

[Heart Test Booking Form to book a session – click here](#)

[Livershunts Testing Forms](#)



[DOWNLOAD FROM THE WEBSITE HERE](#)

Useful Downloads

Covid-19 and Dogs

<https://www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/coronavirus-and-dogs>

First Aid Kit

<https://www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/basic-first-aid-dogs>

Harmful to dogs

<https://www.dogtrust.org.uk/help-advice/factsheets-downloads/factsheetpoisonoussubstances09.pdf>

Contacts ..

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Consultant Veterinary Surgeon:

Ian Finney MRCVS

Health Group Website



Find us on
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Irish Wolfhound Health Group

Join the discussion

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/IWhealthgroup/>



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