

Yarmouth County, Nova Scotia, Canada is considered the place of origin of the pure-bred dog officially known as the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever.

There is not authentic record of the development of the Toller, but present day thinking is that the basic stock was the red decoy dog, probably brought to Nova Scotia with the early settlers from Europe. Crosses with other breeds: possibly spaniel and setter-type dogs; retriever-type dogs; and farm collie, produced today's Toller. Originally known as the Little River Duck Dog after the district of Yarmouth County, or as a Yarmouth Toller, the Toller has bred true for generations and was granted official breed status by the Canadian Kennel Club in 1945, when fifteen were registered.

For a number of years Tollers were seldom seen outside of Nova Scotia, but today they are spread all across Canada, the United States, as well as Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

A few Tollers were introduced into the United States in the 1960's, but it wasn't until the late 1970's and early 1980's that serious breeders became interested. The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club (USA) was formed in October, 1984, to promote the interest of the Toller, and to safeguard its future in the United States.



**The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club (USA)** holds the belief that sporting breed dogs, such as the Toller, should demonstrate the basic instincts and traits necessary to adequately execute the tasks for which they were bred. The founding board of directors and membership established a precedent, that to be awarded a club championship title, a Toller must show that it still has these basic skills.

In the late 1980's the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club (USA) instituted its own test designed to evaluate the innate working abilities of the Nova Scotia Duck Retriever (Toller). The name of this test was the Natural Instinct Test (NIT). The purpose of the test was to establish that a dog possessed retrieving instincts; "to reveal the presence or absence of innate ability, not the strength of that ability or the dog's trainability." The test was later renamed the Basic Retrieving and Tolling (BRT) Test in order to clarify that some training was required, although the purpose of the test remained the same. Most of the entrants would be young dogs with very little training. While the BRT satisfies the

field test requirement for obtaining a club championship title, the BRT is in itself not a breed title.

After the BRT program was placed in operation, the NSDTRC(USA) elected to create a further program which included a title. This was the initial Working Certificate program. This program has now evolved into a three-step program with the titles of Working Certificate (WC), Working Certificate Intermediate (WCI) and Working Certificate Excellent (WCX) awarded to the dogs that successfully complete the requirements at the respective levels.

What makes all of these tests unique is that each level - from the basic BRT thru the WCX - includes "Tolling." In the field, the tolling dog runs, jumps and plays along the shoreline in full view of a flock of ducks rafting in the center of the lake. Aided by the hunter (either in a natural blind or a man-made one) the dog appears and disappears as small sticks or a ball is thrown out into the open. The dog's playful actions arouse the curiosity of the ducks swimming offshore and they are lured within gunshot range. The Toller is subsequently sent out to retrieve the dead or wounded birds shot by the hunter.

The NSDTRC(USA) realizes that this requirement cannot be carried over to the

American Kennel Club's Championship, however, it feels strongly that all Tollers should have these innate working abilities, and encourages all Tollers to prove them by passing an approved field test.

*Today's Toller is multi-faceted. You get the ideal dog ... a retriever, a hunter, a loyal watchdog, a competitions dog and a wonderful loving pet all rolled into one!*

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**The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling  
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is available!**

Write to  
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**THE TOLLER BOOK:  
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## **HISTORY OF THE NOVA SCOTIA DUCK TOLLING RETRIEVER**

*"Tolling"* is a Middle English word meaning to "lure or decoy game"



To the hunter, this means to draw the waterfowl within range by using the playful action of a tolling dog, much as a fox will lure ducks within range. The curiosity of the waterfowl as they watch the appearance and disappearance of the red dog's playful actions along a shore line causes them to swim in close to shore to more closely observe the dog.

The Toller becomes a living decoy. Decoy dogs were used in Europe to lure ducks into nets, and as hunting companions since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, and in eastern North America from Chesapeake Bay to the Maritimes.