

BREED COLUMNS

WORKING GROUP

breed community. Because of this, any change that makes it through all the steps within the club and within the AKC will be perceived as critical to judges. Why else would the club want it changed?

Judges will read all the changes and think these are very important things to pick the dogs on. They will think they must have been getting it wrong before—why else would the club change it?

Even if you think you're just clarifying something, the result will be that you've now raised the level of importance so that it now becomes something the judges use to eliminate (or select) dogs.

Personally, 99 percent of the time I personally am a bigger fan of adjusting, changing, adding to your JE presentation and discussion than of changing the actual standard.

—Margaret R. (Peggy) Wolfe,

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United States Neapolitan Mastiff Club

Newfoundlands

FLYING NEWFOUNDLANDS

Newfoundland dogs are well known for their water skills, but did you know they can now take flight? We recently traveled on dog-friendly RetrieveAir from Long Island to Denver with our two Newfoundlands—Willow, a 4-year-old female, and Elsa, a 15-week-old puppy.

Although “gentle giant” breeds are sometimes prohibited from flying on the dog-friendly airlines, RetrieveAir allows dogs of all sizes. A separate seat must be booked for large dogs, so we purchased four seats for \$7,600. As in other aspects of Newfoundland ownership, flying with this breed is expensive, more than the cost of first-class tickets on a commercial airline.

The entire experience was in keeping with the airline's retriever-like values of friendliness, joy, reliability, and trust. These are good traits in a dog, and equally good traits for an airline.

The company currently offers a weekly flight from west to east, and then back again from east to west. However, RetrieveAir's founders recently presented on Shark Tank and successfully secured additional funding. They have seen an uptick in bookings and will be adding more flights.

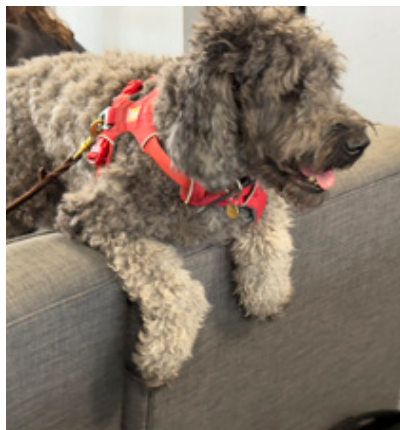
Dog-friendly flights where dogs and their humans fly together in the cabin are a growing market, and the global pet travel services industry, estimated at \$2.6 billion, is expected to grow to \$5.4 billion in 2030.

Many dog airlines did not allow large dogs, but that is beginning to change. JXC airlines, with numerous flights connecting southern cities in the U.S., permits only dogs less than 80 pounds. Bark-Air allows larger dogs and is a good option for international destinations, while K9air allows giant breeds but mostly flies to international cities.

For our trip to Denver last Friday, we arrived early at the designated terminal

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Newfoundland Elsa boarding; Elsa on the plane; canine passengers and their owners waiting to board.

at Farmingdale airport on Long Island. When we entered the lobby and saw two Shetland Sheepdogs and their owners comfortably resting on an oversized couch, we knew we were in the right place.

Over the next hour, 15 dogs and their people arrived with luggage and leashes. Everyone asked

friendly questions about each other's dogs and travel plans. Many customers were flying home with their pets for the Thanksgiving vacation. Many were repeat customers, even though the airline only started flying in May 2025. Most dogs calmly sat next to their owners, but a few barked at the furry commotion, and a feisty Chihuahua was escorted into the pilot's lounge to chill out. I'll confess, the lobby smelled a bit doggy, but in a nice way.

As we waited to go through a relaxed TSA screening and board the flight, several upbeat ladies

offered samples of Smush, a healthy premium dog snack that the Newfs loved.

Liz, an extremely friendly greeter, stewardess, and receptionist rolled into one, arrived and checked in passengers. She told me, "It's a dream job. There is an immediate connection through dogs before people even get on the plane."

On the flights since May, there have been no dog fights and no poops. Even the two Cane Corsos got along with the other dogs. This is quite an impressive record!

The trip from New York to San Francisco is divided

KATIE DOLAN

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into segments of approximately two and a half hours, which works well for people and pooch potty-breaks at each stop. In the air, people read while their dogs slept. Liz offered human refreshments and additional Shmush biscuits. Elsa, with teddy-bear fur, fit under the seat and promptly fell asleep after a morning of pats. Willow's front end stuck out into the aisle on the segment from New York to Chicago (Liz graciously stepped over her as she served everyone), but the problem was solved when we were reassigned to the bulkhead seat for the Chicago to Denver segment. Willow could comfortably lie down at my feet.

The camper van gatherings at dog shows create lifelong friendships, but sometimes you just need to get from Point A to Point B. So, the next time you need to travel with your Newfoundland, you might want to explore this relaxing, retriever-like flying option. And be sure to request the bulkhead seat!

—Katie Dolan,
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Newfoundland Club of
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Portuguese Water Dogs

RAISING CAINI—REARING PORTUGUESE WATER DOG PUPPIES

When I and my brood bitch make it through the whelp and all is well, I get to enjoy a few weeks when my main job is taking care of the dam and keeping her whelping box warm and clean. The pups start out as rather uninteresting potatoes with legs, and by the 10th day or so, they start opening their eyes and staggering about like drunken sailors and become more interesting.

By week three, they are toddling around, a few might try to escape, and they are starting to play, though clumsily, with their littermates. Except for early neurological stimulation exercises, I let my dam pretty much do all the work with the puppies the first

few weeks. But in my last two litters, I started exposing the puppies to novel odors (rabbit fur, pinecones, grass, and so on) before they opened their eyes and noted their responses to these substances (repelled, attracted, neutral). Once their eyes opened, I started introducing something new into their pen each day.

The big change comes in the fourth week, when I move the litter to a bigger space and start feeding the pups mushy food. The dam is still doing a lot of work to keep the pups clean, but this is when many breeders start introducing barrier challenges, singing/moving toys, different surfaces (tarps, carpets, wood), small cat tunnels, and so on.

Because I live in an old 1890s house, I move my litters from the quiet upstairs bedroom where they are whelped to my first-floor area between my living room and kitchen, where they are exposed to kitchen sounds and TV programs. Their