

Rare Breeds of the World

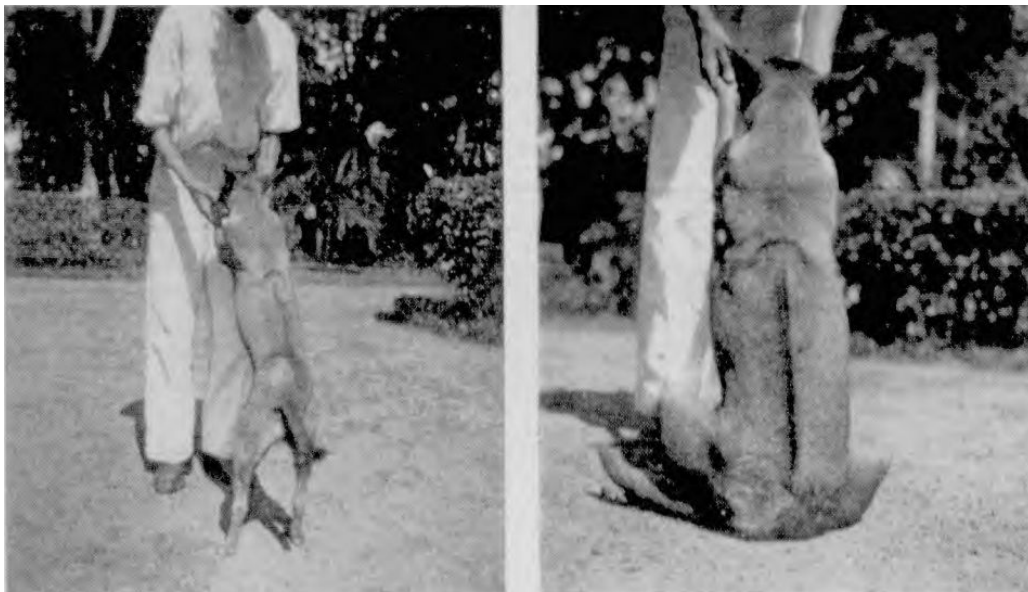
By "Canis"

Then there is the Phu-Quoc dog, the strange canine phenomenon of Siam. Here is a dog whose origin is problematic, whose peculiar ridge of reverse hair remains unique among the dog tribe, and whose history is, to say the least, quite interesting.

The father of the Rhodesian Ridgeback, itself not a very well-known race, the Phu-Quoc dog is one of the rarest breeds. Named after the island of Phu-Quoc in the Siamese Guld, the breed is now to be found on the Indo-Chinese mainland. But until a couple of years back, it had been more or less marooned on the isle, perilously close to annihilation.

As it is, the Phu-Quoc is difficult to obtain, even by the shooting-men who, knowing him as one of the best of the Asiatic hunting dogs, offer high prices for specimens of his breed.

His ridge of reverse hair is more clearly defined than on the [Rhodesian] ridgeback. It runs from the set-on without a break up to the nape of the neck, about two inches in front of his withers. At the summit of his ridge, he wears a crescent-shaped motif of stiff hair, a half-moon of the longest hair on his body. This crescent is absent on the [Rhodesian] ridgeback, but never a Phu-Quoc is to be seen without it.



These two photographs of the Phu-Quoc dog, the strange canine phenomenon of Siam, the first to be published in the United States, show how sharply defined is the famous ridge of topsy-turvy hair

[two images of a Phu Quoc Ridgeback with his owner, showing the dorsal ridge]
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In the days of the old Phoenician traders he was probably brought to the East African mainland, and the few which settled there founded the now established breed of Rhodesian ridgebacks, the ancestors themselves dying out of existence.

One or two were rescued, and from these were bred the pair which, for some time, was in the Jardin Acclimation-- The Zoological Gardens of Paris, France-- attracting great attention, but these have long since been dead.

No Phu-Quoc dogs were ever brought to England, but it is quite possible that in the future a typical male might be imported to put fresh ridge-producing blood in the British-bred ridgebacks. Perhaps the United States may beat the British breeders to it, and import one earlier?

The two photographs in the center of this page, I think, are the first to be published in America of a genuine Phu-Quoc dog and were taken especially to prove how sharply defined is this famous ridge of topsy-turvy hair.

The Phu-Quoc stands about 22 inches at the shoulder and weighs 60 pounds. His coat is short and smooth, but wiry on the back and mane. Colored black, tan or red, never white or with white markings.

The Indo-Chinese sportsmen, especially around the Saigon area of Northern Indo-China, are rallying around the breed to resuscitate it into its former fame as a hunting dog.