

BREED COLUMNS

HERDING GROUP

Another Pembroke club published a magazine record for the club and its members every two years. It is a way to preserve club history and allowed members to share their accomplishments for those years.

The *PWCCA Handbook* has an Honor Roll section open to any Pembroke that earned an AKC title of record up until the deadline for that year's edition. A color photo and three-generation pedigree, breeder, and own provide a historical record for the fancy. The Obituary section is free. Owners can include a brief paragraph with the color photo of their beloved Pembroke.

The *Handbook* serves as a history of the breed, going back to the first edition in 1970. The club's quarterly *Newsletter* provides results of all the specialty shows.

PWCCA Scholarship

The PWCCA will award up to \$2,000 to one or more qualified students currently enrolled or who

plan to be enrolled in an institute of higher education. This includes high school seniors, high school graduates, and those already enrolled in higher education. This scholarship is open to all U.S. citizens. Applicants are not required to be a member of the PWCCA or a Pembroke Welsh Corgi regional club. Completed applications must be received by June 1. See the PWCCA website for details.

—Lynda McKee,
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Pulik

CARING FOR THE SENIOR DOG

The Puli is known for athleticism, intelligence, humor, intensity, and its unmistakable corded coat. As puppies, they are agile, opinionated, and eager to work. Over time, the bounce softens, the muzzle grays, and your once-tireless companion begins to measure steps more carefully.

Pulik are generally long-

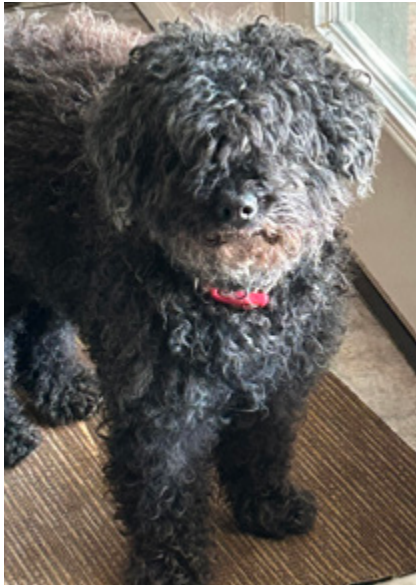
lived, often reaching 12–15 years, with some exceeding that. (At present, one of my Pulik is 17; she still participates in household life and plays ball, though misses seeing many of the throws.) Longevity reflects genetics, responsible breeding, body condition, nutrition, activity, veterinary care, and environment.

Responsible breeding—including health testing and careful selection—supports vitality, but genetics are only part of the story. Maintaining proper body condition—fit and well-muscled, not underfed—is among the most powerful influences on longevity. Avoiding excess weight protects joints, organs, and overall health. Regular veterinary care, dental maintenance, parasite prevention, and attention to subtle changes are equally important.

Lifestyle matters. Pulik thrive on mental engagement and structured activity. Dogs that stay physically and mentally active into

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Senior Pulik: Eve, 17 years young; Eve's litter sister Celosa; Gabby, 15 years young, in anti-skid socks.

care can restore comfort and function.

Consistent, moderate exercise is preferable to sporadic bursts. Daily walks on forgiving surfaces (such as grass or turf) maintain muscle tone without stressing joints. Ramps, non-slip flooring, anti-skid socks, and orthopedic bedding can help improve comfort. Some senior Pulik need help accessing furniture or favorite resting spots.

For many, the corded coat remains defining, but priorities shift. Cords may thin, skin may become more sensitive, and grooming tolerance may decline. Owners often shorten or thin cords to reduce weight and improve hygiene. Protective clothing can help during colder months. Regular checks beneath cords for lumps, irritation, or infection remain important.

Senior Pulik often sleep more deeply, aiding



midlife often transition more smoothly into senior years. Arthritis, particularly in hips, knees, and shoulders, becomes more common. Because Pulik are stoic and driven, early discomfort

may be easy to miss. Subtle signs—hesitation before jumping, reluctance on stairs, shorter stride, slower turns—deserve attention. Pain management, massage, and veterinary chiropractic

COURTESY DAGMAR FERTL, CHRISTINA SOLIS, AND PAM ERSTLING

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recovery. Longer naps and sound nighttime sleep are normal and should not be mistaken for lethargy.

While the body slows, the mind often remains sharp. Many Pulik retain problem-solving abilities and a desire for purpose, sometimes becoming more routine-oriented with age. Research, including work by Dr. Pongrácz, suggests that dogs participating in sports or mentally and physically challenging activities may show less severe cognitive aging.

Some senior Pulik experience cognitive decline, or canine cognitive dysfunction. Signs include disorientation, confusion, altered sleep-wake cycles, decreased recognition of familiar people or dogs, changes in house training, and increased anxiety or irritability. Early recognition, environmental adjustments, and enrichment activities help maintain quality of life.

Aging affects Pulik differently. Some adapt with resilience, staying engaged despite limitations. Others

struggle more noticeably. Changes in hearing, vision, mobility, or cognition can affect security. Occasionally, senior dogs show signs resembling human depression—less interest in activities, altered sleep, reduced social engagement. These should not be dismissed as “just old age.” Medical causes should be ruled out, but emotional adjustment is also part of aging. Age-related urinary or fecal incontinence may occur and requires patience, understanding, and sometimes medical or lifestyle interventions.

Environment matters. Many Pulik function beautifully with attentive owners who adjust routines, provide reassurance, and maintain inclusion. In multi-dog homes, calm companions offer comfort. Some senior dogs prefer quiet spaces. Both responses reflect temperament interacting with aging; the key is recognizing your dog’s needs. Owners must be patient with daily changes and be ready to make accommodations such as assisting

with stairs, managing incontinence, or adjusting meals for metabolism shifts.

Respecting changing preferences is important. Some seniors enjoy continued involvement; others prefer shorter interactions and more rest. Observing and honoring these cues fosters confidence.

Twice-yearly senior wellness exams are advisable. Trend monitoring through bloodwork can detect early shifts in kidney, liver, thyroid, or metabolic function. Dental health deserves attention, as chronic oral inflammation affects systemic health. Vision and hearing changes are common. Thoughtful environmental adjustments—nightlights, clear pathways, predictable furniture placement—help seniors navigate safely.

Many Pulik remain alert, engaged, and active well into their teens. Thoughtful adaptation, rather than restriction, is key. Reducing unnecessary strain while preserving meaningful activity allows

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them to age on their own terms.

Longevity reflects inherited strengths, responsible breeding, preventative care, conditioning, nutrition, environment, emotional support, and sometimes good fortune. Owners' attention to body condition, engagement, veterinary partnership, and daily care has a profound impact.

Recognizing that each Puli ages individually is equally important—some remain resilient and social, while others require quieter support. Patient understanding and consistent care make all the difference.

The senior Puli may no longer launch as high or spin as quickly, but the steady gaze, quick intelligence, and unmistakable presence remain. In many ways, the older Puli is not a diminished version of the young athlete, but a distilled one—thoughtful, observant, and deeply attuned to the people they have always watched over.

Caring for them now is less about extending time

at any cost and more about preserving quality: mobility, comfort, purpose, and connection. When these elements are supported, the Puli's final chapters can be as rich and meaningful as the exuberant beginning.

AKC Resources:

Aging in Dogs: Physical and Mental Signs Your Dog Is Getting Older -

<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/health/aging-in-dogs-physical-mental-signs/>

Can Dog Sports Keep Dogs Sharper as They Age? - <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/sports/dog-sports-senior-dogs/>—Dagmar Fertl,

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[Puli Club of America](#)

Swedish Vallhunds

LOOK BEYOND THE RIBBONS WHEN CHOOSING A STUD

“An important issue in breeding is the popular-sire syndrome. This occurs when a stud or tom is used extensively for breeding, spreading his

genes quickly throughout the gene pool. There are two problems caused by the popular-sire syndrome. One is that any detrimental genes which the sire carries will significantly increase in frequency—possibly establishing new breed-related genetic disorders. Second, as there are only a certain number of bitches or queens bred each year, overuse of a popular sire excludes the use of other quality males, thus narrowing the diversity of the gene pool.”

“The popular-sire syndrome is not limited to breeds with small populations. Some of the most populous breeds have had problems with this syndrome. Compounding this, there are several instances where a popular sire is replaced with a son, and even later a grandson. This creates a genetic bottleneck in the breeding population, narrowing the variety of genes available. [...]

“The problem with the popular-sire syndrome is