



## *The History of the White Shepherd*

The **Weisser Schweizer Schäferhund**, or **Berger Blanc Suisse (White Swiss Shepherd)**, was often considered a [mutation](#) of the [German Shepherd](#), until recently when it was finally considered a separate breed after years of campaigning from White Shepherd enthusiasts. Currently, this breed is only recognised by the [FCI](#) and the [UKC](#), but more efforts are being made to give the breed worldwide recognition as a separate and distinct breed from the German Shepherd.

### **Appearance**

The White Shepherd as the name implies should be white with a medium length coat though a light cream color is also acceptable. The dog should be medium sized 24"-26" and 75-85 lbs for Dogs and 22"-24" and 60-70 lbs for Bitches. They should also be muscular with smooth curves.

### **Temperament**

Many people believe their temperament is the same as the [German Shepherd](#). However, many also feel the white shepherds have a less aggressive temperament compared to the traditional [German Shepherd](#).

### **History**

The History of the White Shepherd is the generally the same as that of the German Shepherd. The White Shepherd is the result of some breeders not wanting the white color so over time the white dogs became their [own breed](#).

White coated herding dogs of rural Germany were an essential part of the late 19th century breeding program that founded the German Shepherd breed. It is a historical fact that a white herding dog named Greif was the Grandfather of Horand von Grafrath, the dog acknowledged as the foundation of all contemporary German Shepherd Dog bloodlines. "Der Deutsche Schaferhund In Wort Und Bild" written by the recognized father of the breed, Rittmeister (Cavalry Captain) [Max von Stephanitz](#), in 1921 included a photo of a White German Shepherd directly descended from Horand.



Rittmeister Max Von Stephanitz December 1864 to April 1936

Information provided in early books on the German Shepherd Dog, such as "The Alsatian Wolf Dog" written by George Horowitz in 1923, as well as "The German Shepherd, Its History, Development and Genetics" written by M. B. Willis in 1977, make mention of white German Shepherds shown in Europe as early as 1882. From the very first German Shepherd Dog forward to the German Shepherds of today, the recessive gene for white colored coats has been carried in the DNA of the breed.

Shepherding was a common way of life for thousands of years all across Europe, including the countryside that is today called Germany. Over countless centuries shepherds used dogs to herd their sheep throughout the day, and guard them against wolf and bear predators at night. The Roman writer Columella in the 1st century A.D. published a 35-volume essay on agriculture entitled, "The Agricultural Arts" that stated, unequivocally, the dogs that guard the sheep are white in color. Earlier in history, the Roman historian and writer, Marcus Terrentius Varro (116-27 B.C.), described the guardians of the flocks as being invariably white in color. He also writes that, in his opinion, the shepherds preferred white dogs in order to be able to distinguish them from the wolves that usually attacked in the half-light of dawn or dusk.

Many descendants of the ancient shepherd's white dogs were present on 19th century German farms. In addition to the somewhat larger white guard and herding dog varieties, several varieties of medium sized shepherding dogs were also in use on German farms. These medium-sized shepherd dogs were especially fast and agile dogs that were particular well suited to moving and guiding sheep herds across the country side. These medium-sized dogs had coat colors of brown, grey, grizzled and white. For example, the medium-sized Puli, was known to have white coats and the Sharpsudel of Germany was always white. It is, therefore, a fact, that the modern German Shepherd Dog breed presents all of the coat colors, including white, of the breeds founding ancestors.

Across the regional landscape of 19th century German farms, Shepherds bred a wide variety of dogs to herd their sheep with no uniformity of size, color, or shape, except for what was common for their particular region. The only real interest was that herding dogs be physically and mentally sound so they could work tirelessly, competently and faithfully along side the shepherd. This was the landscape seen by Max Von Stephanitz in the 1880s.

As a young cavalry officer, Stephanitz's military duties often required him to travel across the German countryside. It was common for travelers like Stephanitz to board with rural families along the way. At that time most rural German farms had at least a few head of sheep and a herding dog or two to tend them. Stephanitz became fascinated with the German herding dogs and their working capabilities. He admired all the hard working dogs, but observed some dogs had a special look and bearing about them that he especially admired.

Eventually Stephanitz became inspired with the idea that Germany should have a national herding dog that combined the work ethic of the most accomplished herding dogs with that special look and bearing he so admired. Stephanitz envisioned a German shepherding dog who was extremely intelligent, could reason and be a working companion to man. Further, the dog must be quick on his feet and well coordinated, protective, noble in appearance and bearing, trustworthy in character, physically sound in joint and muscle, and be born with an innate desire to please and obey the shepherd master. [This is the German Shepherd dog that we know and love today.](#) By 1891 Stephanitz started selecting the best herding dogs from across the German countryside for his breeding program, but Stephanitz was not alone in his passion to develop a national German Shepherding Dog.

The Phylax Society, active primarily between the years 1891-1894, was an organization of German shepherding dog fanciers that in many ways formed the foundations for the German Shepherd Dog Club of Germany. The Phylax Society documented shepherding dogs of varying sizes, types and colors, including white, to have been in all areas of Germany during the late 1800's.

Like Stephanitz, Phylax Society members were actively engaged in uniting the various sizes, types and colors, including white, of German shepherding dogs to produce a standard shepherding dog for Germany. Stephanitz corresponded with Phylax Society members and attended dog shows organized by the Society, thus adding to Stephanitz's already considerable understanding of bloodlines and breeding methods.

The Phylax Society provides an essential prolog to the modern German Shepherd story, both white and colored. The society ultimately did not long survive because it had no single vision of an ideal dog and no strong central figure to organizing and manage Society affairs. The Phylax Society essentially evolved into the German Shepherd Dog Club of Germany, organized and managed by Stephanitz, as many former Phylax Society members later joined with Stephanitz.

As interest in dog breeding continued to grow in Germany throughout the 1890's, one of the largest all breed dog shows to date took place in the Rhineland town of Karlsruhe on [April 3, 1899](#). Stephanitz, accompany by his friend Artur Meyer, attended the Karlsruhe Exhibition in his continuing search for shepherding dogs that could be added to his breeding program.



Photograph of Hektor Linksrhein Purchased by Rittmeister Max Von Stephanitz on [April 3, 1899](#) and Renamed Horand von Grafrath, The First Registered GSD SZ 1

Among the many shepherding dogs brought to the exhibition from a number of different German agricultural areas, Stephanitz saw a truly unique and noble looking shepherd dog name Hektor Linksrhein, born the 1st of January 1895 along with litter brother, Luch 155. The breeder of Hektor and Luch 155 was Herr Friedrich Sparwasser of Frankfort. Stephanitz at once recognized Hektor as his ideal German Shepherd Dog that he had been striving to develop in his own ten year long breeding program. He bought Hektor on the spot and renamed the dog Horand von Grafrath.



Hektor Linksrhein's maternal grandfather was a white-coated German shepherding named Greif von Sparwasser who was born in 1879. George Horowitz, renowned English Judge, German Shepherd (Alsatian) columnist, author and historian documents the background of Hektor Linksrhein (a.k.a. Horand von Grafrath) in his 1923 book, "The Alsatian Wolf-Dog." In his book Horowitz documents that the white-coated shepherd named Greif von Sparwasser, born in 1879, was presented at the 1882 and 1887 Hanover Dog Shows. Greif von Sparwasser was the father of gray-coated Lene SZ 156, mother of Hornad Von Grafrath.

Next, at the 1888 Hamburg Dog Show, Greifa, another white-coated shepherd, was presented and a third white-coated shepherd named Greif II was presented at the 1889 Cassel Show. The Master of Hounds of Beyenrode, Baron von Knigge, owned all three of the white-coated shepherds (Alsations) Greif, Greifa and Greif II. These white shepherds looked much like their ancestors, described by Milo Denlinger in his book, "The Complete German Shepherd Dog," used for centuries to herd sheep in North Germany. These dogs were described as very alert, well proportioned, erect eared white shepherd dogs. This line of dogs, therefore, contributed very important conformation and behavioral aspects to the modern German Shepherd Dog breed. Concurring information on Greif and Greifa is provided in "The German Shepherd Dog, Its History, Development and Genetics," written by M. B. Willis, B. Sc.Ph.D.



Photograph of Horand von Grafrath, SZ 1 and Marie von Grafrath, SZ 2

On [April 22, 1899](#), less than a month after Stephanitz purchased Hektor, who he renamed Horand von Grafrath, Stephanitz founded the German Shepherd Dog Club of Germany or [Der Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde](#), the SV, as he wrote the first entry into the new SV Stud Book – "Horand von Grafrath, SZ 1." Thus, Horand (a.k.a. Hektor) was documented as the foundation of the German Shepherd Dog breed. Membership of the SV German Shepherd Dog Club grew quickly and soon many breeders were using Horand's progeny, white and colored, as well as Horand's litter brother Luch 155 and his progeny, white and colored, to expand the German Shepherd Dog breed population. All breeders strictly followed Stephanitz's German Shepherd Dog breed standard and the German Shepherd Dog, white and colored, soon flourished.

The genetic influence of Horand's maternal grandfather, white-coated Greif, was significant given Horand was line-bred and inbred with his own offspring in the expansion and refinement of the new breed after 1899. Horand von Grafrath was bred to 35 different bitches, including his own daughters, producing 53 litters, of which, 140 progeny were registered with the SV. Horand's litter brother Luchs 155 was also widely bred in the same way in the expansion of the modern German Shepherd breed. All of Horand's and Luchs 155's offspring carried the white genetic factor, inherited from white-coated maternal grandfather Greif, which in turn was forwarded on to all subsequent generations of the breed. Of the many genetic traits that became firmly entrenched in the founding breeding program, the white-coat color gene figures prominently, even to this day.



Photograph of Berno v.d. Seewiese

From the founding of the SV through the mid-1930's, white-coated German Shepherds were the same in stature and status as color-coated German Shepherds. Stephanitz published his 776-page book on the German Shepherd in 1921, in which, he included a photograph of a celebrated White Shepherd, Berno von der Seewiese, who was a direct descendant of Horand von Grafrath, (a.k.a. Hektor) the father of the breed. Berno v.d. Seewiese, born in 1913 was one of the first whites to be registered with the SV and was in a direct line down from Horand von Grafrath through Horand's equally famous, and some said even more handsome, son Hektor von Schwaben. In his 1921 book, Stephanitz stated, "The coloring of the dog has no significance whatsoever for service." Clearly, the founder of the breed had no preference for one particular color over any other.

The prime directive of Stephanitz breeding mandate was that the German Shepherd Dog breed must embody all the qualities of a working herding dog. He maintained that the beauty is in the working abilities of the dog; muscle, bone, joint, proud look and bearing, intelligence, stamina and work ethic were the primary strengths sought in the breed. To ensure this prime directive of breeding was honored Stephanitz created the Koerung, a survey, in which the dogs were thoroughly examined, judged, and deemed fit or unfit for breeding – coat color never disqualified a dog from Stephanitz's German Shepherd breeding standard.



Ann Tracy and her White German Shepherds

In 1913 the German Shepherd Dog Club of America was established with the registry of Queen of Switzerland (AKC # 115006) and the adoption of Stephanitz's breed standard. One of the founders of the German Shepherd Dog Club of America and one of the earliest German Shepherd Dog breeders in America was Ann Tracy of New York. Ann Tracy's breeding program, using Stephanitz's German Shepherds imported from Germany, produced white-coated Shepherds almost immediately. A litter that whelped on [March 27, 1917](#) in Tracy's kennel contained four white puppies: Stonihurst Edmund, Stonihurst Eric, Stonihurst Eadred and Stonihurst Elf. These four white German Shepherds are believed to be the first white Shepherds bred and born in the United States and are the first to be registered with the American Kennel Club. In the early 1920's, H. N. Hanchett of Minnesota and [Geraldine Rockefeller Dodge](#) of New York imported additional German-bred German Shepherd Dogs, including some white-coated dogs, to the United States. Thus, the white-coated German Shepherd Dog had an early and prominent entry in North America.



Geraldine Rockefeller Dodge and her German Shepherds

The beauty of these White German Shepherds became increasingly admired throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico in the years after World War I and its popularity was equal to that of color-coated German Shepherd Dogs. The German Shepherd Dog of America, white and colored, then flourished on a parallel path with their German cousins until the 1930s.



Hitler and his dog Blondi on the terrace of the Berghof.

Unfortunately, the White German Shepherd Dog is yet another victim of the German [Nazi](#) movement of the 1930's and 40's. In the 1930's members of the [Nazi party were the "elite" and dominated every aspect of German society, even German Shepherd dog breeding](#). Many of the elite did not agree with Stephanitz that the breed should embody, first and foremost, the qualities of a working shepherd dog without regard to coat color. The predator wolf appearance of the colored German Shepherd Dog increasingly symbolized everything German in the eyes of the Nazi Party, and partly because Hitler loved the breed, SV politics became an extension Nazi politics. [Adolf Hitler even bred German Shepherds](#) and while he was Chancellor he would exhibit them in shows.

The Nazi party confiscated entire kennels owned by Jewish breeders and appointed Nazi party officials to oversee the remaining kennels and breeders. These overseers were not experienced breed people and were unqualified to evaluate individual dogs' contributions to the breed; their decisions were often impulsive and not in line with Stephanitz's prime directive for breeding. Dogs, and sometimes even their owners, who didn't fit Nazi ideals of the moment were immediately culled. Hitler disliked Stephanitz, who would not join the party and submit to his breed dictates, and Nazi breed overseers continuously attempted to banish breed founder and club president Stephanitz from the Dog Club. When Stephanitz resisted they even threatened him with a concentration camp according to Stephanitz's daughter. After thirty-six years of managing the German Shepherd Dog Club of Germany, he gave up and left the club in 1935. He died one year later on [April 22, 1936](#).

The Nazis, including Hitler, saw the white coat as an undesirable trait, and further charged that the

white-coated dogs' genes paled the darker coated dogs' colors. They thought the purity of the German Shepherd breed was polluted by the white-coated members of the breed. In the flawed eugenics science of the Nazi mentality, all manner of breed ills were attributed to the gene for the white coat color. Such problems as deafness, blindness, albinism, mental instability, sterility and degeneration and loss of vigor were associated with and blamed on the white dogs. Once these beliefs took root, they flourished and grew and remain to this day. Nazi Germany barred white German Shepherds from the conformation ring and began to [cull](#) white puppies from litters.

By the end of World War II, thousands of German Shepherd Dogs in Germany had been slaughtered, as the military confiscated any dog they could find for military service in the final years of the war, regardless of breeding value. While the few German Shepherd Dogs that managed to survive World War II almost represent a new start for the breed in Germany, they nonetheless embodied the foundation stock established by Stephanitz and his breeding standard.

Regrettably, the idea, that German Shepherd Dog breed purity is polluted by white-coated members of the breed survived beyond World War II. White-coated puppies born in Germany after the war were not documented in any way and they were immediately culled out of new litters, as is true to this day. Even so, the gene for white coats continues to circulate in the German Shepherd Dog of Germany breed gene pool and white-coated puppies continue to present in litters to this day. Unfortunately, we have no official record of white-coated German Shepherd Dogs presented in "standard-color" litters in Germany since 1935. A few White German Shepherd Dogs did manage to survive the Nazis and WWII in Germany and Holland. Descendants of these lucky white-coated dogs that trace their heritage directly to the white GSDs of the early 1900s survive to this day, despite not being allowed registration by the SV.

In America, the full diversity of the German Shepherd Dog gene pool was not impacted by World War II and White German Shepherds were fully accepted, registered and shown at AKC dog shows through the 1950s. In fact, White German Shepherds found increasing popularity throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico and their numbers were on the up swing. Then, through the late fifties and early sixties, influential members of the German Shepherd Dog Club of America endorsed the German Club's mandate for "breed purity" and mounted a campaign to exorcise all dogs with the white gene from the gene pool. An impossible goal given the gene for white coats was so entrenched in gene pool at the very foundation of the breed!

There are many misconceptions about white-coated German Shepherd Dogs and the gene that expresses their coat color. First and foremost, white German Shepherd Dogs are NOT albinos. Albinos lack all pigment where white German Shepherd Dogs have brown eyes and black pigment on their noses, around their mouth, on their paw pads, around their eye rims have dark skin and nails.

The white gene is recessive and only expresses coat color. The white gene is not linked to poor health, temperament, color paling in the entire breed, or any other negative trait in breed's genetic make-up. The white coat gene is actually a masking gene that masks the real color and pattern of the dog. A white German Shepherd Dog can carry genes for any color and pattern found in the breed, including, black, black and tan, black and red, black and silver, black and cream, blue, liver, sable, saddled and bi-colored.

White shepherds are unjustly blamed for color dilution or paling for the entire breed because the white gene can mask expression of genetic coding for diluted (pale) colors such as a black and silver, black and cream or liver. German breeders of the 1930's misinterpreted pale offspring of white dogs, masking a pale colored coat, as an undesirable result of a "white" generic trait rather than the actual expression of genetic coding for diluted (pale) colors from the breeding pair. Even today, influential members of the German Shepherd Dog Club of America identify color paling in the entire breed as one

of the primary justifications to “cull” white coated shepherd puppies from new litters.

By the mid-1960's the color white was made a disqualification in the [GSD Breed Standard](#) as defined by the German Shepherd Dog Club of America (GSDCA.) The disqualification was then approved by the American Kennel Club (AKC) and on [April 9, 1968](#), the White German Shepherd Dog was outlawed from the AKC show ring. Up until that time, white-coated German Shepherds were eligible to compete in conformation dog shows the same as standard-colored German Shepherds. While the German Shepherd Dog Club of America wanted to [cull](#) white-coated shepherds from the breeding pool, the AKC refused to withhold them from registration. Hence, even today, white is prominent in the colors registered with the AKC! Even so, influential members of the German Shepherd Dog Club of America have recently re-intensified their 45 year campaign to eliminate white coated shepherds from the breed and are lobbying the AKC to stop registering white coated shepherds. The newer alternative to the GSDCA named the [The United Schutzhund Clubs of America Inc.](#) also disqualifies white-coated German Shepherds.

During the 1960s, with the White German Shepherd Dog becoming ever more popular, friction developed between breeders of the White German Shepherd Dog and the standard-colored German Shepherd Dog that continues to this day. Genetic problems appearing in the German Shepherd Dog breed continue to be blamed on the White German Shepherd by the "standard-colored" German Shepherd Dog Clubs of both Germany and America. This point has been refuted innumerable times by leading White German Shepherd Dog breeders and modern geneticists using state of the art DNA methods. So far, the German Shepherd Dog Clubs of both Germany and America do not accept the modern genetic evidence that white-coated German Shepherd Dogs and color-coated German Shepherd Dogs stem from the same ancestral dogs and are otherwise genetically identical. For over 40 years, [White German Shepherd Dog supporters](#) have worked to change the GSDCA German Shepherd Dog Standard in order to return the White German Shepherd once again to the AKC conformation show ring, and to eliminate the practice of [culling](#) white-coated puppies from standard-colored breeder's litters.

As the “standard-color” German Shepherd Dog Club of America moved to expel white-coated members of the breed in the 1960's, White German Shepherd Dog supporters formed their own clubs to protect the white-coated dog's interests. In 1964, White German Shepherd Dog supporters in Sacramento, California formed the first White German Shepherd Dog Club to safeguard the white dogs. With the 1968 expulsion of white-coated German Shepherd Dogs from the AKC conformation dog show ring, White German Shepherd Dog supporters across the United States joined with the Sacramento club in 1969 to form the White German Shepherd Dog Club of America.

The White German Shepherd Dog Club of America adopted Stephanitz's German Shepherd Dog breed standard and formally recognized the white dog as a member of Stephanitz's German Shepherd Dog breed. This new national club quickly scheduled conformation dog shows for White German Shepherd Dogs and organized efforts to protect the interests of white-coated German Shepherd Dogs. In 1977, the White German Shepherd Dog Club of America changed its name to [The White German Shepherd Dog Club International, Inc.](#) (WGSDCII) and continues in the United States to this day under that name. Through the club's efforts, the AKC continues to this day to register white Shepherds in their German Shepherd Dog breed registry and to allow White German Shepherd Dogs to show in AKC's obedience show rings and compete in AKC tracking, herding, and temperament trial events.

Since 1977 many other white Shepherd clubs independently formed in the United States and other countries around the world. In the United States a new organization named [The White German Shepherd Dog Club of America](#) (WGSDCA) was founded in January 1997. The WGSDCA was originally named the White German Shepherd Dog Fanciers, but the name was changed in 2002 to better reflect the goals of the organization. Like the WGSDCII the WGSDCA sponsors independent



conformation dog shows using qualified judges to award championship points and titles to white dogs and colored dogs that carry the white-gene. Both clubs also promote Schutzhund-style activities including agility, obedience, tracking and various working trials. [Schutzhund](#) is a dog sport that was developed in Germany in the early 1900s to test the German Shepard dog's behavior and abilities to a predetermined breed ideal.

Both the WGSDCII and WGSDCA organizations today continue to lobby the German Shepherd Dog Club of America and American Kennel Club for the reunification of white-coated and color-coated members of the breed under one breed standard. The Constitution of both clubs state that the FIRST objective of the Club shall be: to preserve the name and heritage of the white-coated German Shepherd Dog as an integral and inseparable part of the German Shepherd Dog breed. Breeders affiliated with WGSDCII and WGSDCA typically selectively pair color-coated sires and bitches that carry the white recessive gene and/or white-coated dogs directly out of or by color-coated bitches and sires to produce litters that include white-coated puppies.

Their number one argument for reunification is that a white-coated founding member of the breed contributed crucial conformation and behavioral traits to the breed and that founding dog's DNA contribution, including his recessive gene for white hair, continues to circulate in the German Shepherd Dog breed gene pool to this day. White-coated puppies presenting into a "colored" German Shepherd Dog breeder's litters are often killed in an effort to eradicate white dogs from the breed. At the same time color-coated puppies from the same litters, who in some numbers carry the recessive white coat gene, are sold and often used to produce new litters. Further, color-coated sires and bitches that produce white puppies, thus proving they carry the white recessive gene, are most often used again and again to produce new puppy litters who then carry the white recessive gene forward. White-coated puppies, therefore, may always be present in German Shepherd Dog breed litters in some numbers. This is why the [American Kennel Club](#) and [Canadian Kennel Club](#) continue to register white-coated dogs when white and colored dog breeders choose to appreciate or at least acknowledge the white-coated German Shepherd Dog's certainty in the breed.

Those who support reunification further argue that coat color in the Shepherd breed should not be a basis for separate breed registries when varying coat colors in other AKC recognized breeds show as one breed or as a color variety of the breed. Separating the breed just to show in AKC conformation dog shows is ultimately not in the best interests of either color-coated or white-coated members of the German Shepherd Dog breed. Further, if the White German Shepherd Dog were to be separated into a new AKC recognized breed, white-coated dogs born to "colored" German Shepherd Dogs would not be eligible for AKC registration. Finally, reunification supporters contend that the initial small gene pool diversity of a separate "white-only" Shepherd breed is the never the most healthy genetic circumstance, regardless of animal species.

The AKC and CKC are not the only dog registries in North America, or indeed, the world. Established in 1898, the [United Kennel Club](#) (UKC) started as a club for fanciers of a few breeds, with emphasis on working-hunting qualities. Today, the UKC is the largest all-breed performance-dog registry in the world, registering dogs from all the United States and 25 other international countries. The German Shepherd Dog has always been recognized by the UKC as a breed that includes white coats as well as various colored coats.

The UKC breed standard for the German Shepherd Dog states in part, "the German Shepherd Dog comes in many colors and white. Regardless of coat color, the dog's nose, lips, and eye rims must have dark pigment." White-coated German Shepherd Dogs are qualified to compete equally in all 12,000 annually licensed UKC events including conformation shows, tests of herding and working ability, and other performance events in which those dogs can prove their instincts and heritage. White German Shepherds can show in conformation events in a variety of other clubs too, including: the [American](#)

[Rare Breed Association \(ARBA\)](#), the [International All-Breed Canine Association \(IABCA\)](#), the [National Canine Association \(NCA\)](#), and the [Canine Kennel Club \(CKC\)](#). The WGSDCA awards championship points based on wins in many, but not all, of these clubs.

Even though the UKC fully accepts white-coated German Shepherd Dogs, many original North American supporters of a unified white/colored breed standard have determined the German Shepherd Dog Clubs and Kennel Clubs of America and Canada are on an unalterable path to discredit and eradicate the white-coated German Shepherd Dog. Many white Shepherd supporters had already given up their efforts to promote a unified white/colored breed by 1998 when the [German Shepherd Dog Club of Canada](#) finally won its 30-year campaign to have the white-coated dogs expelled from [Canadian Kennel Club](#) sanctioned Conformation Dog Shows. (Like the AKC, the CKC continues to register white Shepherds in their German Shepherd Dog breed registry and allow White German Shepherd Dogs to show in AKC's obedience show rings and compete in AKC tracking, herding, and temperament trial events.) This disenfranchised group of White German Shepherd supporters decided the White Shepherd could find acceptance and finally cast off the lie that it is genetically defective only through its own separate breed recognition and registration. Their resolve for a separate White Shepherd breed registration has only strengthened as the German Shepherd Dog Clubs of America and Canada have continued pressure on the Kennel Clubs of each country to stop registering white-coat dogs as members of German Shepherds Dog breed.

During the late 1990's the [American White Shepherd Association \(AWSA\)](#) organized in the United States and the [White Shepherd Club of Canada \(WSCC\)](#) organized in Canada to advance the interests of purebred White Shepherds as a separate and distinct breed of working and herding dog. These organizations petitioned both the AKC and CKC to recognize the white-coated dog as a separate White Shepherd breed, but as of January 2007 neither kennel has approved the petitions. In 1999 the [United White Shepherd Club \(UWSC\)](#) organized as a United Kennel Club affiliate and immediately petitioned for a new UKC White Shepherd breed classification.

The UKC accepted the UWSC's petition and created a new and separate White Shepherd breed conformation standard and registry. The UKC now recognizes both the new White Shepherd breed standard as well as the original German Shepherd Dog breed conformation standard where white and colored dogs continue to be considered together as one breed. The UKC's decision to register White Shepherd Dogs and White German Shepherd Dogs in separate breed registries is an acknowledgement of the two main truths articulated by breed unification and breed separation advocates: The recessive gene for white coats will continue to circulate in the colored German Shepherd Dog breed gene pool and increasing numbers of White Shepherd breeders worldwide are rapidly refining and expanding a distinct breed line of White Shepherd dogs.

Since the early 1990's White Shepherd breeders affiliated with AWSA, WSCC and UWSC have continually paired and repaired only white-coated German Shepherd Dog sires and bitches for several generations to breed what is today considered a "pure" White Shepherd breed. Using Stephanitz's original German Shepherd Dog standard, breeders have successfully founded a North American White Shepherd breed that closely resembles Stephanitz's vision of an ideal Shepherd Dog, similar in conformation to German Shepherd Dog breed progenitor white-coated Greif von Sparwasser and early White German Shepherd Dog Berno v.d. Seewiese depicted in Stephanitz's 1921 book. (Even so, it is a genetic reality that the DNA coding for German Shepherd Dog colored coats will continue to circulate in the "pure" White Shepherd breed gene pool just white coat genes continue to circulate in the colored German Shepherd Dog breed gene pool.) All three clubs promote and organize [Schutzhund](#)-style working trials and conformation dog shows.

Notably, the new White Shepherd breed has been readily adopted in many countries around the world. White German Shepherd Dogs and White Shepherd Dogs have become increasingly popular

throughout Europe and other parts of the world. Many European breeders have imported North American White Shepherd dogs, some originally registered as AKC or CKC White German Shepherd Dogs, to build their own separate pure White Shepherd breeding programs. Today, European populations of the white dog, along both the White German Shepherd Dog and "separate" White Shepherd breed lines (,but increasingly along the "separate" White Shepherd breed line over successive breeding generations) have grown quite large. It must be noted too that a few small lines of white German Shepherd Dogs (still recognized by that name by the breeders and owners) remain in Germany and Holland that trace their heritage directly to the white German Shepherd Dogs of the early 1900s, even though they have not enjoyed registration by the SV since 1935.

Since June 1991, White Shepherd dogs have been registered as a separate breed with the Swiss Stud Book and one or more White Shepherd dog breed clubs have organized in Denmark, Austria, France, Czech Republic, Switzerland, the U.K, Slovenia, Belgium, Germany and Holland. As of January 2007, White Shepherd clubs in several countries including Austria, Germany, France, Cech Rep., Slovakia, and Denmark have associated with a parent club named [Berger Blanc International](#). In the year 2002 Berger Blanc International petitioned the [Fédération Cynologique Internationale \(F.C.I.\)](#) (English translation, World Canine Federation) to recognize the White Shepherd as a new and separate breed. The F.C.I. accepted the petition and now recognizes the White Shepherd breed as the "Berger Blanc Suisse."

White German Shepherd Dog breed and White Shepherd Dog breed clubs also exist in Australia, New Zealand.

### **External links**

- [Berger Blanc Suisse International](#)
- [American White Shepherd Association](#)
- [United White Shepherd Club](#)
- [United Kennel Club](#)
- [White Swiss Shepherd Dog Club of Australia](#)
- [White Shepherd Health & Genetics Project](#)
- [White German Shepherd Dog Club of America, Inc. \(WGSDCA\)](#)
- [White Shepherd Online Forums](#)
- [White German Shepherd Dog Club International](#)
- [White Shepherd Club of Canada](#)
- [International White Shepherd Federation](#)
- [OPED by Internationally Respected Show Judge, Fred Lanting](#)
- [Taken from Wikipedia Encyclopidia - Berger Blanc Suisse](#)



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