

## Rare Breed Spotlight: The Finnish Lapphund

**After thousands of years of development, this Nordic breed is a true heart-warmer.**

*By Alice Bixler*

Archaeological excavations in Norway unearthed a 7,000-year-old canine skeleton similar in construction to today's breeds of that region. This discovery suggests that before Stonehenge or the pyramids of Egypt or the Great Wall of China were built, a rugged type of dog accompanied the nomadic people in northern Scandinavia.

Those dogs were forerunners of the type now known as spitz, or Nordic, breeds. Their human companions were (and still are) the Sami people, who reside in an area dubbed Lapland or Sápmi. (This territory, which spans the northernmost sections of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, has no official geographic boundaries.)

Originally nomadic, the Sami people relied on reindeer for food and clothing, following the migrating herds across the terrain of the Arctic Circle. During the 1500s, the Sami people slowly abandoned their wandering ways and began dwelling in settlements. Their livelihood changed from hunting to herding, and their dogs made the transition from running down reindeer to rounding them up.

Want to read the full story? Pick up the December 2009 issue of DOG WORLD today, or [subscribe](#) to receive the best dog articles, dog news, and dog information every month!