

## The Saluki – A Breed Apart?

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**It** matters not which part of the globe you call home, or whether you care anything for dogs. The fact remains that if you have heard of the Saluki, the word association game that begins in your mind may include such evocative terms as aloof; Middle Eastern, highly valued; ancient breed; supreme elegance. In spite of its rarefied reputation elsewhere, in this part of the world where the breed is thought to have originated, the hyperbole and clichés about a Saluki's intrinsic value do not apply.

**There** are hundreds of websites extolling the illustrious origins of this dog. We learn from The Saluki Club of America that its origins, geographic location, predecessors -- are shrouded in mystery. This site, like so many others, informs us that 'the Saluki has been associated with the Middle East since antiquity'. The rich visual record of the breed 'which goes back at least 5,000 years' means nothing to the poor beasts dying in their own filth at the Friday Market.

They care not as they suffer, some too weak to stand that archaeological sites of the Middle East show images of Salukis on seals, in tomb paintings and on mosaics. It does not help young pups, starved by stall holders at pet shops to hear it spouted that 'the Saluki occupies a unique



position in the lives of its Eastern owners. Who cares that while ordinary dogs are considered "unclean" and may not be touched, the Saluki is accepted; or that the Saluki is permitted into the tents of nomads and homes of breeders'. Flowery prose is scattered across sites related to the 'revered Saluki.' We know however, that the saluki, as any other dog here is the subject of gross mistreatment or death at the hands of people who don't know or care about its celebrated past. Pet shop staff lack the insight to know that the 'product' should at least be able to stand upright if profit is to be made. It is hard to read that, 'The Saluki retains great respect today and continues to be valued for its beauty and athleticism. A testimony of the Saluki's enduring value in the land of its origin? No, no and no again.

**Words** are meaningless when on any day you can see young salukis suffering in pet shops here. The harsh fact is that the saluki is just as frequently abused as any other dog might be. There is no reverence evident when people who might be able to make a difference do not, cannot or will not. These dogs are living, (and dying) in licensed premises! How wrong is it that this is 'allowed', that licenses are not revoked, that prosecutions are not pursued? If the Saluki can be so abused, what hope is there for the less elite dogs of Kuwait?

**When** will people in authority who license pet shops in Kuwait begin, if not regular then occasional spot checks on these hideous places where animals are suffering? How can those responsible neglect their duties by failing to inspect premises which they have licensed? What makes this worse is that WSPA ([www.wspa.org.uk](http://www.wspa.org.uk)) have offered to bring in a training team, free of cost to the

municipality in order to work on establishing internationally agreed standards for pet shops & markets where animals are sold. The official response to this internationally recognised program? A deathly silence.

**Saluki** rescue groups exist all over the world; animal abuse occurs globally. The difference is that in the West you can call someone in authority and have the owners prosecuted, arrested or even jailed. In the UK and the US someone will take immediate action on an animal cruelty case. Here, no one cares & no one in authority will take action.



**These** images of abused salukis were taken in Kuwait recently. Some are of dogs suffering still at the Friday Market. Others are two young salukis rescued

by PAWS in the past few months; now recovering from neglect and abuse. The youngest was tied to the back of a quad bike; his owners dragging him along before we intervened. He was severely dehydrated and painfully thin, even by slim line saluki standards! The older saluki was found loose and scavenging for food. Like the other, he was severely malnourished although obviously a once owned pet. These are only two of the many salukis rescued by PAWS over the past five years.



**It's** not enough to blame the expatriate and untrained pet shop staff, although they could do more. These shops are owned and licensed to Kuwaiti citizens. It is they who are directly responsible for the abuse going on in their business premises. Ignorance is no excuse for neglect. Forget the illustrious past, forget the flowery language of the noble nomad and his faithful saluki; come down to the Friday market and witness for yourself the esteem, value and respect afforded to this illustrious breed. Here, the Saluki must suffer the fate of being subject to owners who care not a jot for its noble past. A breed apart? Sadly not.

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**Protecting Animal Welfare Society is a non profit, all volunteer charity. If you would like to contribute to our rescue, veterinary or spay/neuter programs please contact us. If you would like to sponsor a Saluki in recovery, please email for details on how you can help.**

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**Protecting Animal Welfare Society is affiliated to KEPS, Kuwait Environment Protection Society, WSPA, World Society for the Protection of Animals, the RSPCA International and MENAW, Middle East Network for Animal Welfare.**