

Louisiana Catahoula Leopard Dog Temperament

What's Good About 'Em,

What's Bad About 'Em

Louisiana Catahoula Leopard Dog Temperament, Personality, Behavior, Traits, and Characteristics, by [Michele Welton](#). Copyright © 2000-2011

One breeder says, "The Catahoula will not let you forget that you own a dog." The Louisiana Catahoula Leopard Dog, often called "King of the Stock Dogs," really belongs on a farm or ranch, for he is a serious worker who goes about his business with tremendous focus and assertiveness. This athletic, rugged dog requires at least an hour of running exercise each day. Without sufficient outlets for his high energy, he will become rambunctious and destructive.

Most Catahoula Leopard Dogs are reserved with strangers and naturally protective. Skittishness and sharpness can be problems in some lines, and Catahoulas need extensive socialization. He can be dominant and pushy with other animals, especially with other dogs of the same sex, and doesn't always cohabit well in multi-pet homes. He can be possessive of his food. Catahoula Leopard Dogs are independent and like to be in charge. You must be a confident leader or they will walk all over you. Overall, this is a capable, versatile companion when allowed to fulfill his working heritage. Otherwise, he may not be happy and can be too much dog to handle.

If you want a dog who...

- Is medium to large, tautly muscled, and athletic
- Has a short, easy-groom coat with an unusual color pattern
- Is a serious working dog who thrives on vigorous exercise and goes about his business with tremendous focus and assertiveness
- Makes a keen watchdog

A Louisiana Catahoula Leopard Dog may be right for you.

If you don't want to deal with...

- Vigorous exercise requirements
- Rowdiness and exuberant jumping, especially when young
- Destructiveness when bored or not exercised enough
- Suspiciousness or shyness when not extensively socialized
- Aggression toward other animals -- chasing instincts
- Strong-willed mind of his own, requiring a confident owner who can take charge
- Chasing and nipping at things that move: children, joggers, other animals, bikes, cars

A Louisiana Catahoula Leopard Dog may not be right for you.

More traits and characteristics of the Louisiana Catahoula Leopard Dog

If I was considering a Louisiana Catahoula Leopard Dog, I would be most concerned about...

1. **Providing enough exercise and mental stimulation.** Catahoula Leopard Dogs MUST have regular opportunities to vent their energy and do interesting things. Otherwise they will become rambunctious and bored -

- which they usually express by barking and destructive chewing. Bored Catahoula Leopard Dogs can make a shambles of your house and yard.

Catahoula Leopard Dogs are happiest living on a farm or ranch and allowed to work stock. If you simply want a pet for your family, and don't have the time or inclination to take your dog running or hiking or biking or swimming, I do not recommend this breed. They were never intended to be simply household pets, and their working behaviors are inappropriate in a normal household setting. Trying to suppress these "hardwired" behaviors, without providing alternate outlets for their high energy level, can be difficult.

2. **Providing enough socialization.** Many Catahoula Leopard Dogs have protective instincts toward strangers. They need extensive exposure to friendly people so they learn to recognize the normal behaviors of "good guys." Then they can recognize the difference when someone acts abnormally. Without careful socialization, they may be suspicious of everyone, which could lead to biting. Some Catahoula Leopard Dogs go in the opposite direction -- without enough socialization, they become fearful of strangers, which can lead to **defensive** biting.
3. **Animal aggression.** Many Catahoula Leopard Dogs are dominant or aggressive toward other dogs of the same sex. Many have strong instincts to chase and seize cats and other fleeing creatures. If anything goes wrong in the breeding, socializing, training, handling, or management of this breed, it is capable of seriously injuring or killing other animals.
4. **The strong temperament.** Catahoula Leopard Dogs are not Golden Retrievers. The best Catahoulas are versatile working dogs, capable of learning a great deal, but they have an independent mind of their own and are not pushovers to raise and train. Some Catahoula Leopard Dogs are willful, obstinate, and dominant (they want to be the boss) and will make you prove that you can make them do things. You must show them, through absolute consistency, that you mean what you say.

Please consider adopting an ADULT Louisiana Catahoula Leopard Dog...

When you're acquiring a Louisiana Catahoula Leopard Dog PUPPY, you're acquiring **potential** -- what he one day will be. So "typical breed characteristics" are very important.

But when you acquire an adult dog, you're acquiring what he already **IS** and you can decide whether he is the right dog for you based on that reality. There are plenty of adult Louisiana Catahoula Leopard Dogs who have already proven themselves NOT to have negative characteristics that are "typical" for their breed. If you find such an adult dog, don't let "typical breed negatives" worry you. Just be happy that you found an **atypical** individual -- and enjoy!

Save a life. Adopt a dog.