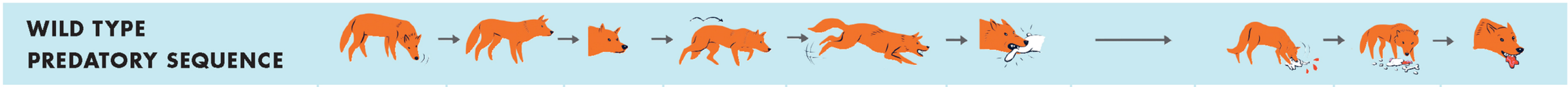
Predatory Motor Patterns

Graphic from the book, ***Dogs of the World*** by Lili Chin (2025, Ten Speed Press)



Breed Types	HUNT (Seek)	ORIENT (Attention)	EYE (Focus)	STALK (Approach)	CHASE (Pursue)	GRAB-BITE (Immobilize)	POSSESS (Carry-Hold)	KILL-BITE (Head-shake)	DISSECT	CONSUME
Hunting hounds may do most parts of the sequence except DISSECT and CONSUME.									X	
Herding dogs move animals without attacking or killing.	X		Headers			NIP! Heelers	X	X	X	X
Livestock guardians that display any predatory behaviors towards livestock are not used for guarding.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pointing dogs HUNT and stop at ORIENT or EYE without chasing.				X						
Retrievers are more motivated to HUNT and POSSESS things with their mouths (instead of GRAB-BITE)			X		X	SOFT MOUTH		X		
Bulldogs/catch dogs and bite sports dogs have a strong GRAB-BITE (holding without killing)							GRIP	X		
Terriers, whose traditional job is pest control, HUNT, GRAB-BITE, and KILL-BITE (aka head shake)										X
Scent-detection dogs HUNT and are rewarded with toy play (GRAB-BITE and POSSESS) or food (CONSUME).		MARK!				PLAY!				TREAT!

Domestic dogs rarely do the full predatory sequence. If an **X** behavior happens, the dog is disqualified from working or competitions. For instance, if a herding dog hunts the sheep, they will be pulled from working.

For centuries, people have selectively bred dogs to be more (or less) sensitized to environmental stimuli and to be more biddable (or independent), so that dogs can do the jobs that people want them to do. Predatory motor patterns - also referred to as "prey drive" - are genetically-anchored behaviors, activated by certain sights, smells, and sounds in the dog's environment, and shaped by learning.

Important things to know about predatory behaviors (hunting, chasing, biting, digging, etc.):
1. These are *natural* dog behaviors!
2. These are not necessarily breed-specific. The part of the predatory sequence that is most reinforcing to a dog varies from one individual dog to the next.
3. Dogs need outlets to do these behaviors, not punishment.

Get to know your dog and seek out a trainer who can show you SAFE and NON-AVERSIVE ways to connect with your dog and satisfy their needs!

Dogs of the World is available in all bookstores ©2025 Lili Chin doggiedrawings.net