EasyAnatomy’s
Snapshot Guide to the Bones of the Canine Thoracic Limb
Thoracic Limb

The regions of the thoracic limb, or forelimb, are the shoulder, brachium (upper arm), antebrachium (lower arm), and the manus (forepaw). The manus is composed of the carpus, metacarpus, and digits. The bones of the thoracic limb include the scapula, humerus, radius, ulna, as well as carpal, metacarpal, digital, and sesamoid bones.
Scapula

The large, flat bone of the thoracic limb. Extrinsic and intrinsic limb muscles attach to the scapula. Extrinsic muscles attach the limb to the axial skeleton, and intrinsic muscles attach the scapula to more distal limb bones.
Scapula

The extrinsic limb muscles that attach the scapula to the axial skeleton form a muscular sling to support the body weight (there is no bony articulation between the scapula and axial skeleton in the dog).
Humerus

The bone of the brachium (upper arm). Proximally it articulates with the scapula in forming the shoulder joint; distally it articulates with the radius and ulna in forming the elbow joint.
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Left Humerus, Lateral Side

Greater tubercle
Deltoid tuberosity
Capitulum

Left Humerus, Medial Side

Lesser tubercle
Olecranon fossa
Intertubercular groove
Ulna

One of two bones of the antebrachium (forearm). Proximally it articulates with the humerus by the trochlear notch and with the articular circumference of the radius by the radial notch. Distally it articulates with the ulnar notch of the radius and with the ulnar carpal and accessory carpal bones.
The proximal ulna is formed by the olecranon, which serves as the insertion of the triceps brachii muscle.
Radius

The other of the two bones of the antebrachium (forearm). The radius articulates with the humerus proximally, and with the carpal bones distally. It also articulates with the ulna proximally by its caudal surface and distally by its lateral border.

The radius is the main weight-supporting bone of the forearm.
Radial (Intermedioradial) Carpal Bone

Largest bone in proximal row of carpal bones. Articulates proximally with radius and distally with all four carpal bones in the distal row of the carpus.

Forms part of the antebrachiocarpal joint, which is very mobile.
Carpal Bones

Found in the distal row of carpal bones. Articulate with metacarpals distally.

Form parts of the carpometacarpal joint.
Accessory Carpal Bones

Why important? Forms and important mechanical lever arm on the palmar aspect of the carpus; and is at risk of fracture in racing greyhounds.

What attaches here? Extensor carpi ulnaris m. (insertion), flexor carpi ulnaris m. (insertion).
Metacarpals

The “long” bones that make up the manus (forepaw). Articulate proximally with carpal bones to form carpometacarpal joint, and distally with proximal phalanx to form metacarpal-phalangeal joint.

Metacarpals 3 & 4 are considered the major weight-bearing bones of the manus.
Proximal Phalanges

For digits 2-5: The proximal phalanx articulates proximally to form metacarpophalangeal joint, and distally with middle phalanx to form proximal interphalangeal joint.

The vestigial first digit (the dew claw) has two phalanges in contrast to the other digits which have three phalanges.
Distal Phalanges (Digits 2-5)

Articulate with middle phalanx to form distal interphalangeal joint.
Distal Phalanx of Digit 1

The distal bony segment within this digit. Articulates with proximal phalanx to form interphalangeal joint.
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