

Iceland Sheepdog

Origin & Purpose

The Iceland Sheepdog is Iceland's only native dog. It was brought to Iceland with the first Viking settlers (AD 874 – 930). The Iceland Sheepdog and its method of working adapted to the local terrain, farming methods and the hard struggle for survival of the Icelandic people over the centuries, making it indispensable in the rounding up of livestock on the farms. The Iceland sheepdog's popularity has increased over the last few decades and, despite the fact the breed is still very small in numbers, it is no longer considered to be in danger of extinction.

General Appearance

The Iceland Sheepdog is a Nordic herding Spitz, slightly under medium sized with prick ears and a curled tail. Seen from the side the dog is rectangular; the length of the body from the point of shoulder to point of buttock is greater than the height at withers. The depth of the chest is equal to the length of the foreleg. The expression is gentle, intelligent and happy. A confident and lively bearing is typical for this dog. There are two types of coat, long and short both thick and extremely weatherproof. There is a marked difference in appearance between the sexes.

Temperament

The Iceland Sheepdog is a hardy and agile herding dog which barks, making it extremely useful for herding or driving livestock in the pastures, in the mountains or finding lost sheep. The Icelandic Sheepdog is by nature very alert and will always give visitors an enthusiastic welcome without being aggressive. Hunting instincts are not strong. The Iceland Sheepdog is cheerful, friendly, inquisitive, playful and unafraid.

Size

Ideal height is:

Dogs: 18 inches (46 cm) and Bitches: 16 inches (42 cm).

Coat & Colour

Coat: Double coat, thick and extremely weatherproof.

There are two variants

Short haired

The outer coat of medium length, fairly coarse, with a thick, soft undercoat. The hair is shorter on the face, top of head, ears and front of legs, longer on the neck, chest and back of thighs. The tail is bushy and the hair length is in proportion to the coat.

Longer-haired

The outer coat is longer than the above, fairly coarse, with a thick, soft undercoat. The hair is shorter on the face, top of head, ears and front of legs, longer behind the ears, on the neck, chest, behind the forelegs and back of thighs. The tail is very bushy and the hair length is in proportion to the coat.

Colour: Several colours are permitted but a single colour should always be predominant. The predominant colours are:

- Various shades of tan, ranging from cream to reddish brown.
- Chocolate brown.
- Grey.
- Black.

White always accompanies the predominant colour. The most common white markings, which are often irregular, are a blaze or a part of the face, collar, chest, socks of varying length and tip of tail. Lighter shading often occurs on the underside of the dog from throat to tip of tail. On tan and grey dogs a black mask, black tips to the outer hairs and even occasional black hairs often occur. Black (tricolour) dogs have a black coat, white markings as mentioned above and traditional markings in any of the various tan colours on the cheeks, over the eyes (eyebrows) and on the legs. Patches of the above colours on a white background (pied) are permitted. White should not be totally predominant.

Head

Strongly built with close fitting skin. Skull slightly longer than muzzle. Triangular when seen from above or the side. **Skull:** somewhat domed. **Stop:** clearly defined though neither steep nor high. **Nose:** black, dark brown in chocolate brown and some cream dogs. **Muzzle:** well-developed, nasal bridge straight. Muzzle slightly shorter than skull. Tapering evenly towards the nose to form a blunt triangle when seen from both above

and from the side. **Lips:** black, close fitting, dark brown in chocolate brown and some cream dogs. **Cheeks:** Flat. **Bite:** scissor bite. Complete dentition. **Eyes:** of medium size and almond shaped. Dark brown. Slightly lighter in chocolate brown and some cream dogs. The eye-rims are black. Dark brown in chocolate brown and some cream dogs. **Ears:** erect and of medium size. Triangular with firm edges and slightly rounded tips. Very mobile, reacting sensitively to sounds and showing the dog's mood.

Neck

Moderately long and muscular with no loose skin. Slightly arched and carried high.

Forequarters

When seen from the front the forelegs are straight, parallel and strong. Normal angulation. Shoulders: oblique and muscular. Dewclaws: may be double. Forefeet: slightly oval toes well-arched and tight with well-developed pads.

Body

Rectangular and strong. The length in correct proportion to height and in harmony with general appearance. Level, muscular and strong. Loins: broad and muscular. Croup: moderately short and wide, slightly sloping and well muscled. Chest: long, deep and well sprung. Belly: only a slight tuck up.

Hindquarters

When seen from behind the hindlegs are straight, parallel and strong. Normal angulation. Thighs: broad and well muscled. Dewclaws: well-developed double dewclaws are desirable. Hindfeet: same as forefeet.

Tail

High set, curled over and touching the back.

Gait

Displays agility and endurance with good driving action covering the ground effortlessly.

Faults

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree.

- A solid black mantle or saddle on any of the various tan coloured dogs.

Serious Faults

- Lack of dewclaws.
- Yellow eyes.
- Round protruding eyes.

Note:

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.