

Spanish Water Dog (Perro de agua español)

Origin & Purpose

The Spanish Water Dog is an ancient and rustic multi-purpose dog of the Iberian Peninsula. Intelligent and versatile, traditionally the breed's duties included that of a shepherd dog, hunting dog, and assistant to fishermen.

General Appearance

The Spanish Water Dog is a rustic, well-muscled, robust, medium-sized dog of moderate proportions. Slightly longer than tall, he is a sturdy, compact, dog with a distinctive curly coat that can form cords. He is always to be shown in a natural rustic coat. Preferred gait is a trot. Gender differentiation should be apparent.

Temperament

Loyal and highly intelligent, and possessing a strong working drive, the Spanish Water Dog is a versatile and biddable breed with a strong desire to please. Alert and attentive, he is very vigilant of the environment, protective of his owner, family and property. May appear aloof or suspicious of strangers, which should not be penalized in the ring. He should not be shy, or aggressive.

Size

Slightly longer than tall, 9:8 when measured from point of shoulder to ischial tuberosity, and height of withers to the ground. Solidly built, he should be robust and muscular with moderate bone, neither coarse nor refined.

Height at withers:

Dogs: 17 1/2 - 19 1/2 inches (44 to 50 cm)

Bitches: 15 1/2 - 18 inches (40 to 46 cm)

Weight should be in proportion to height creating a dog of sturdy (but not cumbersome), medium build.

Coat

A defining feature of this breed, the coat should appear very rustic with a distinctive woolly texture that will show strong curl when short. When long, the coat may form cords, roughly cylindrical (never flat) in shape with the curl of the coat evident in natural kinks along the cord length, as well as within the body of the cord. Cords will have a tapered, hook-like curl at the tips.

Curls may be tight or loose, and thickness of coat will vary between dogs. Texture may vary on different parts of the body, but the mature coat should never be silky or wavy. Maintaining the rustic nature of the breed is highly valued. While no preference is given to dogs being presented in short or long coat, there should be no evidence of aesthetic grooming or trimming. Ideally, coat length should not exceed 6" or 15 cm (extended), and should not be less than 1" or 2 cm (extended) so that the quality of coat texture and curl can be determined. The length of coat is to be the same over the entire body. Sculpting and/or shaping, as well as cords with blunt ends indicating significant scissoring, will be penalized severely. Minimal hygienic trimming is allowed, but should not be noticeable on presentation. The coat is never to be brushed or combed. The coat of immature dogs (up to 15 months of age) is typically softer in texture, and may have considerably less curl than that of an adult dog.

Colour:

Acceptable colours are any solid colour in various shades of black, brown, beige or white, or bicolour with any of the above colours and white as the second colour. The nose is of the same color or slightly darker than the darkest color of the coat. Beige or white dogs may have either black or brown pigment. Skin can be pigmented brown or black, or without pigment according to the colour of the coat. Albinism, tri-colour, tan-point, brindles, or bi-colour where the second colour is not white are not accepted.

Head

The head is to be in balance with the body, and should appear neither fine nor coarse. The top skull is broad and flat with good breadth of back skull; occiput is not prominent. Planes of the skull and muzzle are parallel; ratio of cranium to muzzle is 3:2. The stop is apparent but not abrupt.

The muzzle is strong, wide at the base, tapering slightly to the tip, but is never snipey. The lower jaw is strong. Teeth are strong with full dentition. Scissor bite is preferred, level bite is acceptable. The nose has well defined nostrils. Lips are well fitting with well-defined labial corners and pigmented as the nose. Cheeks are well filled below the eyes.

The dropped ear is triangular and slightly rounded at the tip, set just above eye level. The tips should not reach past the inside corner of the eye.

Expression is alert and attentive. Eyes are slightly oblique, and vary in shades of brown from hazel to dark chestnut, with the color harmonizing with the coat..

Neck

Of moderate length, the neck should be tight, muscular, and strong, setting well into the shoulders.

Forequarters

From the front, the forelegs are straight, parallel, and strong, with moderate bone. Brisket is of moderate depth and fill. Elbows are close to the chest and neither turn in nor out. Shoulders are well muscled and oblique with moderate angulation (in balance with rear), and molding smoothly into the contours of the body. Pasterns are short and slightly sloping. Feet are round and compact; toes are tight and well arched.

Body

Length of body to height at withers is 9:8 measured from point of shoulder to the ischial tuberosity. The body should appear robust and strong, with the chest oval in shape and having good spring of rib. Broad and well let down, the chest reaches to the elbows. The depth of chest from withers to elbow, elbow to ground is 1:1.

The back is strong and level to a slightly sloping croup, and appears solid, even in movement. Loin length is moderate; the length of body comes from the length of the ribcage, not from the loin. The underline shows a slight tuck up. Skin is supple and adheres closely to the body.

Hindquarters

Viewed from behind, the hind legs are straight and parallel. Thighs are strong and well muscled. Angulation is moderate (in balance with forequarters). Hocks are well let down; the rear pastern is short and perpendicular to the ground. Feet are as in front.

Tail

The tail is set smoothly into the croup, neither high nor low. The tail may be docked per tradition, left full, or exhibit a naturally occurring bobtail (from no tail to partial tail). All tail lengths are equally acceptable.

Gait

Movement is energetic and athletic, able to travel over varied terrain. At a full trot, the Spanish Water Dog covers ground smoothly and efficiently. Reach and drive should demonstrate both strength and economy of movement. The feet move towards the center line as speed increases.

Fault

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.

Serious Faults:

- Brushed coat
- Aesthetic scissoring to sculpt the coat
- Blunt cord ends on a corded dog
- Flat cords
- Saddleback
- Narrow Chest
- Deviation in height of more than ½ inch (1 cm) from standard either way

Disqualification

- Smooth or wavy coat (except in immature dogs as above)
- Albinism, brindle, bi-colour where the second colour is not white, tan points, tricolour
- Light blue eyes
- Undershot or overshot jaw
- Aggressiveness or extreme shyness