



## Official Standard for the Spanish Water Dog

**General Appearance:** A rustic breed of the Iberian Peninsula, the Spanish Water Dog is a sturdy, athletic dog of medium size and weight that is suited to perform a variety of tasks including herding, hunting, and assisting fishermen. His working ability is attributed to an intense desire to please. In profile, the Spanish Water Dog is slightly longer than tall. His distinctive rustic curly, single coat is a hallmark of the breed. He must always be shown in a natural coat and *never* be aesthetically groomed in any way. Traditionally, he has a docked tail; today, all tail lengths are equally acceptable.

**Size, Proportion, Substance:** *Size*-Height at the withers: Dogs, 17 ½ to 19 ¾ inches; Bitches 15¾ to 18 inches. *Weight*- In proportion to height. *Proportion*-Measured from point of shoulder to buttocks and withers to the ground 9:8. *Substance*- Solidly built, robust, muscular with moderate bone but neither coarse nor refined.

**Head:** *Head*- is in balance with the body. *Expression* is alert and attentive. *Eyes* are slightly oblique, very expressive and have a shade of brown from hazel to dark chestnut, with the color harmonizing with the coat. *Ears* are set above eye level. They are dropped, and triangular in shape with slightly rounded tips. The tips should not reach past the inside corner of the eye. *Skull* is broad and flat. Occiput is not prominent. Ratio of cranium to muzzle is 3:2. Stop is apparent but not abrupt. *Muzzle* is wide at the base, tapering slightly to the tip, strong lower jaw, never snipey. Cheeks are well filled below the eyes. Planes of skull and muzzle are parallel. Nose is of the same color or slightly darker than the darkest color of the coat and has well defined nostrils. Beige or white dogs may have either black or brown pigment. Lips are well fitting, labial corners well defined and are pigmented as the nose. Flews are tight. Scissors *bite* preferred, level bite accepted. Teeth are strong with full dentition.

**Neck, Topline, Body:** *Neck* is strong and moderate in length, blending smoothly into the shoulders. Back is straight and topline is firm and level. *Body* is robust. The body is slightly longer than tall in an approximate ratio of 9:8 measured from the point of shoulder to the point of buttocks. Chest is broad and well let down, reaching the elbows. Depth of chest to height at withers is 50 percent. Loin is short. The length of the back comes from the length of the ribcage, not from that of the loin. Croup is slightly sloping. *Tail* is set smoothly into the croup neither high nor low. The tail is historically docked; today all tail lengths are equally acceptable. Docked tails are docked between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> vertebrae. Full length tails reach approximately to the hock. Some individuals display a brachyury (natural bob-tail) gene which can shorten the tail anywhere from an almost full tail to no tail at all. Preferred carriage is scimitar-like, carried either high or low. Preference is not to be given to docked or undocked tails. Skin is supple and adheres closely to the body.

**Forequarters:** Shoulders are well-muscled and well-laid back and approximately the same length as the upper arm. Elbows are close to the chest and turn neither in nor out. Legs are straight, and strong with moderate bone. Pasterns are strong and flexible. Front dewclaws may be removed. Feet are round and compact. Toes are tight and well arched.

**Hindquarters:** The hindquarters give an impression of strength and energetic impulsion. Angulation is in balance with the front. Upper thigh is well muscled. Stifle is well bent. Second thigh is well developed. Hock joint is well let down. Rear pastern is short and perpendicular to the ground. Dewclaws if present are to be removed. Feet are as the front.



**Color:** The Spanish Water Dog may be solid (in its various shades of black, brown, beige, or white), Irish-marked or parti-color where one of the colors must be white. Disqualifications- Tricolor, tan-point, parti-color where one of the colors is not white, or albino.

**Coat:** The rustic coat is a hallmark of the breed. Any brushing, scissoring, aesthetic trimming or sculpting of the coat destroys breed type and must be penalized so severely as to eliminate the dog from competition. The hair is a single coat, always curly and of a wooly texture. For shows, the recommended extended length of the coat is between 1-6 inches to demonstrate the quality of the curl or cord. There is no preference for length of coat within this range. The sole breed clip is a utilitarian kennel clip, one length all over the entire dog. Left to grow long, coats will develop roughly pencil-thin cords that are distinct from those of other breeds in their degree of felting: from loose to tight, with the quality of the curl being evident throughout. Cords must have natural fish-hook curls at the tips indicating a lack of scissoring or shaping. Puppy coats: Puppy coat (up to 15 months) may be wavy and somewhat softer than adult coat. Most puppy coats will not form cords. Disqualification- Smooth or wavy coat.

**Gait:** Movement is efficient, free, smooth, and ground covering. Balance combines good reach in forequarters with front foot reaching the nose, and equally strong drive in the rear. As speed increases, the feet converge toward the centerline of gravity while the back remains firm and level.

**Temperament:** The Spanish Water Dog is faithful, obedient, lively, hard-working, and watchful. He is highly intelligent with an outstanding learning ability. His loyalty and protective instincts make him a self-appointed guardian to his owner, his family and his property. He should be neither timid nor shy, but is naturally suspicious of strangers. He is very affectionate with his own people.

**Disqualifications:**

*Tricolor, tan-point or parti-color, where one of the colors is not white, or albino.*

*Smooth or wavy coat.*

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