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Water Dog Club of  
Greater Chicagoland!

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We are always looking for  
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strong as our membership!

Membership: Gary Novak [gnovak384@gmail.com](mailto:gnovak384@gmail.com)  
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We love our breed!

The  
Portuguese  
Water Dog

Learn about the  
breed and our  
Regional Club!



# Portuguese Water Dog Breed Standard

## General Appearance

Known for centuries along Portugal's coast, this seafaring breed was prized by fishermen for a spirited, yet obedient nature, and a robust, medium build that allowed for a full day's work in and out of the water. The Portuguese Water Dog is a swimmer and diver of exceptional ability and stamina, who aided his master at sea by retrieving broken nets, herding schools of fish, and carrying messages between boats and to shore. He is a loyal companion and alert guard. This highly intelligent utilitarian breed is distinguished by two coat types, either curly or wavy; an impressive head of considerable breadth and well proportioned mass; a ruggedly built, well-knit body; and a powerful, thickly based tail, carried gallantly or used purposefully as a rudder. The Portuguese Water Dog provides an indelible impression of strength, spirit, and soundness.

## Size, Proportion, Substance

**Size--Height** at the withers--Males, 20 to 23 inches. The ideal is 22 inches. Females, 17 to 21 inches. The ideal is 19 inches. **Weight**--For males, 42 to 60 pounds; for females, 35 to 50 pounds. **Proportion**--Off square; slightly longer than tall when measured from prosternum to rearmost point of the buttocks, and from withers to ground. **Substance**--Strong, substantial bone; well developed, neither refined nor coarse, and a solidly built, muscular body.

## Head

An essential characteristic; distinctively large, well proportioned and with exceptional breadth of topkull. **Expression**--Steady, penetrating, and attentive. **Eyes**--Medium in size; set well apart, and a bit obliquely. Roundish and neither prominent nor sunken. Black or various tones of brown in color. Darker eyes are preferred. Eye rims fully pigmented with black edges in black, black and white, or white dogs; brown edges in brown dogs. Haws are dark and not apparent. **Ears**--Set well above the line of the eye. Leather is heart shaped and thin except for a small opening at the back, ears are held nicely against the head. Tips should not reach below the lower jaw.

**Skull**--In profile, it is slightly longer than the muzzle, its curvature more accentuated at the back than in the front. When viewed head-on, the top of the skull is very broad and appears domed, with a slight depression in the middle. The forehead is prominent, and has a central furrow, extending two-thirds of the distance from stop to occiput. The occiput is well defined. **Stop**--Well defined. **Muzzle**--Substantial; wider at the base than at the

nose. **Jaws**--Strong and neither over nor undershot. **Nose**--Broad, well flared nostrils. Fully pigmented; black in dogs with black, black and white, or white coats; various tones of brown in dogs with brown coats. **Lips**--Thick, especially in front; no flew. Lips and mucous membranes of the roof of the mouth, under tongue, and gums are quite black, or well ticked with black in dogs with black, black and white, or white coats; various tones of brown in dogs with brown coats. **Bite**--Scissors or level. **Teeth**--Not visible when the mouth is closed. Canines strongly developed

## Neck, Topline, Body

**Neck**--Straight, short, round, and held high. Strongly muscled. No dewlap. **Topline**--Level and firm. **Body--Chest** is broad and deep, reaching down to the elbow. **Ribs** are long and well-sprung to provide optimum lung capacity. **Abdomen** well held up in a graceful line. **Back** is broad and well muscled. **Loin** is short and meets the croup smoothly. **Croup** is well formed and only slightly inclined with hip bones hardly apparent. **Tail**--Not docked; thick at the base and tapering; set on slightly below the line of the back; should not reach below the hock. When the dog is attentive the tail is held in a ring, the front of which should not reach forward of the loin. The tail is of great help when swimming and diving.

## Forequarters

**Shoulders** are well inclined and very strongly muscled. **Upper arms** are strong. **Forelegs** are strong and straight with long, well muscled forearms. **Carpus** is heavy-boned, wider in front than at the side. **Pasterns** are long and strong. Dewclaws may be removed. **Feet** are round and rather flat. Toes neither knuckled up nor too long. Webbing between the toes is of soft skin, well covered with hair, and reaches the toe tips. Central pad is very thick, others normal. Nails held up slightly off the ground. Black, brown, white, and striped nails are allowed.

## Hindquarters

Powerful; well balanced with the front assembly. **Legs**, viewed from the rear, are parallel to each other, straight and very strongly muscled in upper and lower thighs. **Buttocks** are well developed. **Tendons** and hocks are strong. **Metatarsus** long, no dewclaws. **Feet** similar in all respects to forefeet.

## Coat

A profuse, thickly planted coat of strong, healthy hair, covering the whole body evenly, except where the forearm meets the brisket and in the groin area, where it is thinner. No undercoat, mane or ruff. There are *two varieties of coat*:

**Curly**--Compact, cylindrical curls, somewhat lusterless.

The hair on the ears is sometimes wavy.

**Wavy**--Falling gently in waves, not curls, and with a slight sheen.

**No preference will be given to coat type, either curly or wavy.**

**Clip** Two clips are acceptable:

**Lion Clip**--As soon as the coat grows long, the middle part and hindquarters, as well as the muzzle, are clipped. The hair at the end of the tail is left at full length.

**Retriever Clip**--In order to give a natural appearance and a

smooth unbroken line, the entire coat is scissored or clipped to follow the outline of the dog, leaving a short blanket of coat no longer than one inch in length. The hair at the end of the tail is left at full length.

**No discrimination will be made against the correct presentation of a dog in either Lion Clip or Retriever Clip.**

## Color

Black, white, and various tones of brown; also combinations of black or brown with white. A white coat does not imply albinism provided nose, mouth, and eyelids are black. In animals with black, white, or black and white coats, the skin is decidedly bluish.

## Gait

Short, lively steps when walking. The trot is a forward striding, well balanced movement.

## Temperament

An animal of spirited disposition, self-willed, brave, and very resistant to fatigue. A dog of exceptional intelligence and a loyal companion, it obeys its master with facility and apparent pleasure. It is obedient with those who look after it or with those for whom it works

## Summary Statement

The Portuguese Water Dog is spirited yet obedient, robust, and of unexaggerated, functional conformation; sure, substantially boned and muscled, and able to do a full day's work in and out of the water.

## Faults

Any deviation from the described ideal is a fault. However, those inherent characteristics that are imperative for the maintenance of proper type, and therefore cannot be overlooked, are listed as Major Faults.

## Major Faults

- 1. Temperament**--*Shy, vicious, or unsound behavior.*
  - 2. Head**--*Unimpressive; small in overall size; narrow in topkull; snipey in muzzle.*
  - 3. Substance**--*Light or refined in bone; lacking in muscle.*
  - 4. Coat**--*Sparse; naturally short, close-lying hair, partially or over all; wispy or wiry in texture; brittle; double-coated.*
  - 5. Tail**--*Other than as described. Extremely low set. Heavy or droopy in action.*
  - 6. Pigment**--*Any deviation from described pigmentation; other than black or various tones of brown eye color; pink or partial pigmentation in nose, lips, eyes, or eye rims.*
  - 7. Bite**--*Overshot or undershot.*
- Approved January 15, 1991**  
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