KUSA
Kennel Union of Southern Africa

PORTUGUESE WATER DOG

A Breed Standard is the guideline that describes the ideal characteristics, temperament, and appearance of a breed, and ensures that the breed is fit for function, with soundness essential. Breeders and Judges should, at all times, be mindful of features that could be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare, or soundness of this breed.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/01/2018

ORIGIN

Portugal.

UTILISATION

Assistance with fishing and retrieving, and companion dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

In ancient times, the Portuguese Water Dog could be found throughout the entire Portuguese coast. Thereafter, due to continuous changes in fishing methods, the breed was located mainly in the Algarve region, which is now considered as its original birthplace. Its presence on the Portuguese coast is probably very remote and thus, the Portuguese Water Dog should be considered as an autochthonous *[ed. indigenous]* Portuguese breed.

Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

A dog of medium proportions, bracoïd *[ed. off-square]* tending to rectilinear *[ed. rectangular]*, to slightly convex. Harmonious in shape, balanced, strong, and well-muscled. Considerable development of the muscles due to constant swimming.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- Of almost square shape, with the length of body approximately equal to height at the withers.
- The ratio of the height at the withers to the depth of the chest is 2 : 1.
- The ratio of length of skull to muzzle is 4 : 3.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Exceptionally intelligent; it understands and obeys easily and happily any order given by its owner. An animal with impetuous disposition, willful, courageous, sober, and resistance to fatigue. It has a severe, penetrating, and attentive expression, as well as remarkable visual and scent faculties. An excellent and resistant swimmer and diver, it is the inseparable companion of the fisherman, for whom it performs a multitude of tasks, both in fishing and in guarding, and protecting its boat and property. While fishing, it will willingly jump to sea to retrieve escaped fish, diving, if necessary; and likewise, if a net breaks or a cable becomes loose. It is also used as a liaison between boats and shore, or vice-versa, even at great distances.

HEAD

Well-proportioned, strong, and broad. Parallel longitudinal axes *[ed. parallel planes]* of the skull and muzzle.

Cranial Region:

Skull: Seen in profile, it is slightly longer than the muzzle (4 : 3). Its curvature is more accentuated at the back, and the occipital protuberance is pronounced. Seen from the front, the parietal bones are rounded with a slight depression in the middle; the front is slightly hollow, the frontal furrow extends to two-thirds of the parietal bones. The superciliary arches are prominent.

Stop: Well-defined and slightly behind the inner corners of the eyes.

Facial Region:

Nose: Wide, with well-open and pigmented nostrils. Black in black, white, and pied animals. In brown specimens, the nose is the same colour as the coat, but never marbled.

Muzzle: Straight, broader at the base than at the extremity.

Lips: Thick, especially in front. Commissures not prominent. Mucous membranes (palate, under the tongue, and gums) deeply pigmented in black; deep brown in brown dogs.

Jaws and teeth: Strong, healthy teeth, not visible when mouth is closed. Strong and well-developed canines. Scissor bite or pincer bite.

Eyes:

Medium-sized; noticeable and rounded in shape; set well apart and slightly slanted. The iris is black or brown, and the lids are thin and black-edged, brown in brown dogs. Unapparent conjunctiva.

Ears:

Set above the eye-line, held against the head, slightly raised from the rear and heart-shaped. Thin in texture, their extremity never reaches below the throat.

NECK

Straight, short, rounded, well-muscled, well-set and carried high; connecting to the body in a harmonious transition. Without ruff or dewlap.

BODY

***Topline*:** Straight; level.
***Withers*:** Wide and not prominent.
***Back*:** Straight, short, broad, and well-muscled.
***Loin*:** Short and well-connected to the croup.
***Croup*:** Well-proportioned, slightly sloping with symmetrical and non-apparent hip bones.
***Chest*:** Wide and deep. Its lower edge should reach the elbow. The ribs are long and well-sprung, providing great respiratory capacity.
***Underline and belly*:** Gracefully shaped and reduced in volume.

TAIL

Natural, of medium set-on, thick at its base, tapering towards the end. Should not reach below the hock. When attentive, curls in a ring, not reaching beyond the middle of the loin. It is a useful aid for swimming and diving.

LIMBS

Forequarters:

General appearance: Strong and straight. Upright. Slightly sloping pasterns are admissible.
Shoulder: Slanting in profile and transversely. Strong muscular development.
Upper arm: Strong and medium in size. Parallel to the main body line.
Forearm: Long and strongly muscled.
Carpus (wrist): Strong bones, broader when seen from the front than from the side.
Metacarpus (pastern): Long and strong.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: Upright and well-muscled. Slightly sloping hocks are admissible.
Buttock: Strong and well-rounded.
Upper thigh: Strong and medium in length. Very well muscled. Stifle joint turned neither in nor out.
Lower thigh: Long and very well muscled. Turned neither in nor out. Well-slanting from front to back. All tendons and ligaments are strong.
Hock joint: Strong.
Metatarsus (rear pastern): Long. Without dewclaws.

FEET

Rounded and flat with slightly arched toes of medium length. The webbing, extending over the whole length of the toes, is composed of limp tissue and covered with abundant, long hair. Black nails are preferred but, according to coat colour, may also be white, striped, or brown. The nails do not reach the ground. Hard central pad and normal thickness in the other pads.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Easy movement with short steps at walk; light cadenced trot and energetic gallop.

SKIN

Thick, supple; not very tight; internal and external mucous membranes preferably pigmented.

COAT

The whole body is abundantly covered with strong hair, with no undercoat. There are two varieties: one long and wavy, and the other shorter and curly.

Long and wavy: Slightly shiny and woolly. On the head it forms a topknot of wavy hair. The hair in the ears is longer in the long and wavy variety.

Shorter and curly: Dense, lusterless, and forms compact, cylindrical curls. On the head it forms a topknot of curly hair.

Except for the underarms and groin, the coat is even all over the skin.

In this breed, partial clipping of the coat, when it is too long, is typical. The hindquarters, the muzzle, and part of the tail are clipped, leaving a plume of full-length hair at the tip of the tail.

COLOUR

The coat is

- ***Black or brown of various shades:*** White is accepted in the following locations: muzzle, topknot, neck, forechest, belly, tip of tail, and lower extremities of the limbs, below the elbows and hocks. Black pigment in black dogs, and brown in brown dogs.
- ***Solid white:*** The white coat must not be albino, consequently the nose, eyelids, and inside of the mouth should be pigmented in black.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 50cm – 57cm (approx. 19½" – 22½"); ideal height 54 cm (approx. 21").

Females: 43cm – 52cm (approx. 17" – 20½"); ideal height 46 cm (approx. 18").

Weight:

Males: 19kg – 25kg

Females: 16kg – 22kg

N.B. *Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.*

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 and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

Severe faults:

- Head: Too long, narrow, flat, or pointed.
- Muzzle: Too tapered or pointed.
- Eyes: Light, too protruding, or too sunken.
- Ears: Incorrect set, too big, too short, or folded.
- Tail: Heavy, dropped in action or raised perpendicularly.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy. Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Size: Over-sized or under-sized
- Jaws: Undershot or overshot.
- Eyes: Wall eye, uneven in shape or size.
- Deafness: Congential or acquired.
- Tail: Docked, rudimentary, or non-existent.
- Feet: Presence of dewclaws.
- Coat: Hair different from the described types.
- Colour: Albinism, marbled nostrils in whole or in part. Any other colour than the described type.

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FCI Standard No 37: CÃO DE AGUA PORTUGUÊS (PORTUGUESE WATER DOG)

FCI Classification: Group 8: Retrievers; Flushing Dogs; Water Dogs
Section 3. Water dogs
Without Working Trial