



From THE ROYAL CANIN DOG ENCYCLOPEDIA

Portuguese Water Dog

The Portuguese Water Dog is a breed of working dog as classified by the American Kennel Club. Portuguese Water Dogs are originally from the Portuguese region of the Algarve, from where the breed expanded to all around Portugal's coast, where they were taught to herd fish into fishermen's nets, to retrieve lost tackle or broken nets, and to act as couriers from ship to ship, or ship to shore. Portuguese Water Dogs rode in bobbing fishing trawlers as they worked their way from the warm Atlantic waters of Portugal to the frigid fishing waters off the coast of Iceland where the fleets caught cod to bring home. Portuguese Water Dogs were often taken with sailors during the Portuguese discoveries.

In Portugal, the breed is called Cão de Água (pronounced Kow-de-Ah-gwa; literally "water dog"). In its native land, the dog is also known as the Algarvian Water Dog ("Cão de Água Algarvio"), or Portuguese Fishing Dog (Cão Pescador Português). Cão de Água de Pêlo Ondulado is the name given the wavy-haired variety, and Cão de Água de Pêlo Encaracolado is the name for the curly-coated variety.

The Portuguese Water Dog is a fairly rare breed; only 15 entrants for Portuguese Water Dogs were made to England's Crufts competition in 2002 and 38 in 2010/ Though some breeders claim they are a hypoallergenic dog breed, there is no scientific evidence to support the claim that hypoallergenic



National Dog - The Ring LEADER Way Breed Feature

dog breeds exist. However, their non-shedding qualities have made them more popular in recent years. PWDs have a single-layered coat that does not shed, however any person with dog allergies who seeks a dog with these qualities should actually spend time with the animals before purchasing, to test whether the dog is truly non-allergenic to them.

DESCRIPTION

The closest relatives of the PWD are widely thought to be the Barbet and Standard Poodle. Like Poodles and several other water dog breeds, PWDs are highly intelligent, can have curly coats, have webbed toes for swimming, and do not shed. However, Portuguese Water Dogs are more robustly built, with stout legs, and can have a wavy coat instead of tightly curled. If comparing the structure to that of a Poodle, there are significant differences between the two breeds. The Portuguese Water Dog built of strong substantial bone; well developed, neither refined nor coarse, and a solidly built, muscular body. The Portuguese Water Dog is off-square, slightly longer than tall when measured from prosternum to rearmost point of the buttocks, and from withers to ground. Portuguese Water Dog eyes are consistently black, and their coats can be black, brown, black and white or brown and white.

Male Portuguese Water Dogs usually grow to be about 20 to 23 inches (51 cm to 58 cm) tall, and they weigh between 40 and 60 pounds (18 kg to 27 kg), while the females usually grow to be about 17 to 21 inches (43 cm to 53 cm) tall, and they weigh between 35 and 50 pounds.

Most PWDs, especially those shown in conformation shows, are entirely black, black and white, brown, or silver-tipped; it is common to see white chest spots and white paws or legs on black or brown coated dogs. "Parti" or "Irish-marked" coats, with

irregular white and black spots, are rare but visually striking. "Parti" dogs are becoming more common in the United States. However, in Portugal the Breed Standard does not allow more than 30% white markings. Overall, white is the least common Portuguese Water Dog color, while black with white markings on the chin ("milk chin") and chest is the most common color combination.

COAT TYPES

This breed does not shed its hair. The hair is either wavy or curly. Many dogs have mixed pattern hair: curly all over the body but wavy on the tail and ears.

From the Portuguese Water Dog Club of America Revised Standard for the Portuguese Water Dog come these descriptions of the two coat types

- Curly coat: "Compact, cylindrical curls, somewhat lusterless. The hair on the ears is sometimes wavy."
- Wavy coat: "Falling gently in waves, not curls, and with a slight sheen."



White is one of the less-common colours among PWDs



Black and white wavy

If left untended, the hair on a PWD will keep growing indefinitely. Problems associated with this include the hair around the eyes growing so long as to impede vision, and matting of the body hair, which can cause skin irritations. For these reasons, PWDs must be trimmed about every two months and the coat brushed every other day.

This is not the breed for those humans wishing to have a low maintenance breed. In addition to the grooming, this breed requires daily exercise and consistently firm yet positive training techniques.

Although it is possible to groom them at home, many owners find it easier to pay a professional groomer and, to avoid matting, they brush out the coat regularly between groomings.

IMPROPER COAT

Occasionally, a dog may have what is termed an "improper" coat. This genetic condition causes the dog to have an undercoat. Because improperly coated PWDs do not adhere to the Breed Standard, they may not be shown in conformation competition. Otherwise they are completely healthy and have all the excellent traits of the breed. They should not be used in breeding programs, because improper coat is an inherited condition.

GROOMING

The hair of PWDs grows continually and requires regular brushing and cutting or clipping. The lion cut is the only one permitted in Australasia.

The hindquarters, muzzle, and the base of the tail are shaved and the rest of the body is left full length. This cut originated with the fishing dogs of Portugal. This is the traditional cut and perhaps the most functional, given the breed's main historical significance as a fisherman's companion. The lion cut diminished the initial impact and shock of cold water when the breed jumped from the boats, as well as providing warmth to the vitals. The hindquarters were left shaved to allow easier movement of the back legs and the breed's powerful, rudder-like tail.

VOCALISATION

Portuguese Water Dogs have a multi-octave voice. They tend to be quiet dogs although they will warn when the home is approached, and they will communicate their desires vocally and behaviourally to their owner. Their bark is loud and distinctive. They may engage in "expressive panting", by making a distinct "ha-ha-ha-ha" sound as an invitation to play or to indicate a desire for nearby food. They sometimes whine.

The PWD's biddability, high intelligence, and tendency to vocalise and then seek out its human master when specific alarms occur make it an ideal hearing-ear or deaf-assistance dog. PWDs can be readily trained to bark loudly when a telephone rings, and then to find and alert a hard-of-hearing or deaf master.

TEMPERAMENT



Portuguese Water Dogs are active and well-suited to many dog sports

They make excellent companions. They are loving, independent, and intelligent and are easily trained in obedience and agility skills.

Once introduced, they are generally friendly to strangers, and enjoy being petted, which, due to their soft, fluffy coats, is a favour that human beings willingly grant them.

Because they are working dogs, PWDs are generally content in being at their master's side, awaiting directions, and, if they are trained, they are willing and able to follow complex commands. They learn very quickly, seem to enjoy the training, and have a long memory for the names of objects. They are generally considered too small to be used as service dogs or guide dogs for the blind, but they make unusually good therapy dogs and hearing dogs (assistance dogs for the deaf).

A PWD usually stays in proximity to its owners, indoors as well as outdoors. This is typical of the breed. Though very gregarious animals, these dogs will typically bond with one primary or alpha family member. Some speculate that this intense bonding arose in the breed because the dogs were selected to work in proximity to their masters on small fishing boats, unlike other working dogs such as herding dogs and water dogs that range out to perform tasks. In any case, the modern PWD, whether employed on a boat or kept as a pet or a working therapy dog, loves water, attention, and prefers to be engaged in activity within sight of a human partner. This is not a breed to be left alone for long periods of time, indoors or out.

As water dogs, the PWD's retrieving instinct is strong, which also gives some dogs tugging and chewing tendencies.

A PWD will commonly jump as a greeting. Owners may choose to limit this behavior. Some PWDs may walk, hop, or "dance" on their hind legs when greeting or otherwise enthusiastic. Some PWDs will stand upright at kitchen counters and tables, especially if they smell food above them. This habit is known as "counter surfing" and is characteristic of the breed. Although it can be a nuisance, many PWD owners evidently enjoy seeing their dogs walking, hopping, standing up, or "countering" and do not seriously discourage these activities.

While they are very good companions to people who understand what they need, Portuguese Water Dogs are not for everyone. Because of their intelligence and working drive, they require regular intensive exercise as well as mental challenges. They are gentle and patient — but not "couch potatoes", and boredom may cause them to become destructive.

EARLY HISTORY

One theory is that some of the rugged Asian herding dogs were captured by the Berbers, a people who spread slowly across the face of North Africa to Morocco. Their descendants,

the Moors, arrived in Portugal in the 8th century, bringing the water dogs with them.



At home in the water

Another theory purports that some of the dogs left the Asian steppes with the Goths, a confederation of German tribes. Some, (the Ostrogoths), went west and their dogs became the German poodle, called in German the poodle-hund or puddle-dog, that is, water-dog. Others, (the Visigoths), went south to fight the Romans, and their dogs became the Lion Dog, groomed in the traditional lion cut. In 400 CE, the Visigoths invaded Iberia (modern Spain and Portugal, then known as Hispania) and the dogs found their homeland.

A Portuguese Water Dog is first described in 1297 in a monk's account of a drowning sailor who was pulled from the sea by a dog with a "black coat, the hair long and rough, cut to the first rib and with a tail tuft". *History of the Portuguese Water Dog*, Kathryn Braund and Deyanne Farrell Miller, *The Complete Portuguese Water Dog, 1986, webpage: DeLeao.*

These theories explain how the Poodle and the Portuguese Water Dog may have developed from the same ancient genetic pool. At one time the Poodle was a longer-coated dog, as is one variety of the Portuguese Water Dog. The possibility also exists that some of the long-coated water dogs grew up with the ancient Iberians. In early times, Celtiberians migrated from lands which now belong to southwestern Germany. Swarming over the Pyrenees, circulating over the whole of western Europe, they established bases in Iberia, as well as in Ireland, Wales, and Brittany. The Irish Water Spaniel and Kerry Blue Terrier are believed by some to be descendants of the Portuguese Water Dog.

MODERN DAY

The PWD was a breed on the verge of extinction when, during the 1930s, Vasco Bensaude, a wealthy Portuguese shipping magnate, began to seek out fishermen's dogs and utilize them in a breeding program to re-establish the breed. Bensaude's kennel was named Algarbiorum, and his most famous dog was Leão (1931–1942), a very "type-y" fisherman's stud dog who was bred to so many different females that

about half of the pedigreed Portuguese Water Dogs in existence can trace their lineage back to him. Bensaude was aided by two Portuguese veterinarians, Dr. Francisco Pinto Soares and Dr. Manuel Fernandes Marques. His work was carried on by Conchita Cintron de Castelo Branco, to whom he gave his last 17 PWDs and all his archives.



A PWD competes during a water trial at Chatfield State Park in Colorado

Dr António Cabral was the founder of the Avalade kennels in Portugal. Ch. Charlie de Avalade (Charlie), a brown-coated dog, and C. B. Baluarte de Avalade (Balu) were two of his many famous PWDs. He registered his first PWD in 1954, after Bensaude had pioneered the re-establishment of the breed in Portugal. Cabral worked with Carla Molinari, Deyanne Miller, Sonja Santos and others to establish PWDs in the US. The "Mark of Cabral" is a triangular shape of different color/textured hair, usually a few inches from the base of the tail. You can see it more easily on a fresh lion clip—it can look like the clipper got too close.

Deyanne Miller is the single person most responsible for the rise of the PWD in America. In 1972, the Millers, along with 14 other people, formed the Portuguese Water Dog Club of America, Inc. (PWDCA). She worked with dogs from both the Cintron and Cabral lineages to establish a stable genetic pool of PWDs in the United States at her Farmion kennels. Another early US breeder of PWDs was the actor Raymond Burr.

The curly coat type PWD: A dog with this type of coat can be susceptible to distichiasis. As with all purebred dogs, PWDs are vulnerable to certain genetic defects. Due to the limited gene pool for this breed, conscientious breeders carefully study pedigrees and select dogs to minimize the chance of genetic disease and improper coat. Unfortunately, like many breeds, a growing popularity has encouraged breeding by people who are not knowledgeable about the breed.

Ingrown eyelashes (distichiasis) occurs in some curly-coated breeds, but is not particularly common in PWDs. Ingrown eyelashes will rub the eye causing extensive corneal ulcerations. The condition is minor so long as it is not ignored, and can be surgically treated if necessary.



The curly coat type PWD: A dog with this type of coat can be susceptible to distichiasis



Official portrait of "Bo Obama", a PWD and the presidential pet of Barack Obama and his family.

Bo was given to the Obama family by the late Senator Ted Kennedy. The photo was taken on the South Lawn of the White House.

Famous Portuguese Water Dogs

"US Senator the late Ted Kennedy was the owner of three Portuguese Water Dogs: Splash, Sunny, and Cappy. Splash serves as the fictional narrator in Kennedy's children's book called My Senator and Me: A Dog's-Eye View of Washington, DC.

* BARK team members feature Portuguese Water Dogs who retrieve home run balls that land in McCovey Cove, the body of water adjacent to AT&T Park. During every Sunday San Francisco Giants home game, these talented canines will work from boats and dive after splash hit baseballs that land in the water during batting practice and the game.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_Water_Dog