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Curly-Coated Retrievers



THE TAIL BALD SPOT

I have mentioned this spot before when discussing coats. Recently, I was asked about this by a first-time owner of a 7-month-old Curly-Coated Retriever pup, and I decided to describe it in greater depth.

I call this bald spot the *I.T.*, for "infernial triangle," which it is! While it lasts, it certainly spoils the appearance of the coat on the tail.

The *I.T.* is located about one-third of the way down the tail. Some Curlies have this *I.T.*, others do not. It simulates a triangle in shape and, at first, one may notice a thinning of the hair in that area. This usually, but not always, progresses to a small

area of no hair. The Curly has no undercoat, and so any coat problems seem all the more obvious. Some veterinarians think this is a skin problem, but usually it clears up on its own and fills in as the dog matures. There is a scent gland there; it may be oily. I haven't found it related to any other coat problems. One of my Curlies, who later went through a period of baldness, never had it; others who had it ended up with good coats. It seems that the majority of Curly pups may have it during their first year, and then the area fills in.

Different remedies have been suggested to hasten the return of the hair. However, patience is usually the answer, as it often fills in when the pup grows more coat or has a change of coat. For more information and a web site that shows a photo of a Curly with this spot, contact me.

Another annoying tail issue in our breed is the hairless tail tip. Some Curlies are real "tail bashers" and when in close quarters will bang the tip of the tail so much that it bleeds. If one does not try to protect this area, a callous may form and the coat may never grow there.

One sees quite a few Curlies at some shows with hairless tail tips. If you catch this early, various remedies may help. Keeping your

tail-banging Curly in a metal crate can also exacerbate the problem enough that the tail starts bleeding. I once owned a bitch who did not have an abundance of coat on her tail and when traveling in our RV, would make quite a mess. I tried knitting her a tail cover, but the coat was so sparse that she never did grow hair on her tail tip.

Our next annual national specialty will be held in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, on May 7-11. The last one at this site was outstanding. All the events, except for field events, were held on the grounds of the host hotel. For more information, contact me or visit the Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America web site, www.ccrca.org. —Ann Shinkle, P.O. Box 350790; Grand Island, FL 32735; annshinkle@aol.com +

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