

# **The Curly-Coated Retriever Illustrated Standard**



**The Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America**

**[www.ccrca.org](http://www.ccrca.org)**

**would like to thank all those who provided help and input to create this document.**

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## **General Appearance:**

This smartly upstanding, multi-purpose hunting retriever is recognized by most canine historians as one of the oldest of the retrieving breeds. Developed in England, the Curly was long a favorite of English gamekeepers. Prized for innate field ability, courage and indomitable perseverance, a correctly built and tempered Curly will work as long as there is work to be done, retrieving both fur and feather in the heaviest of cover and the iciest of waters. To work all day a Curly must be balanced and sound, strong and robust, and quick and agile. Outline, carriage and attitude all combine for a grace and elegance somewhat uncommon among the other retriever breeds, providing the unique, upstanding quality desired in the breed. In outline, the Curly is moderately angulated front and rear and, when comparing height to length, gives the impression of being higher on leg than the other retriever breeds. In carriage, the Curly is an erect, alert, self-confident dog. In motion, all parts blend into a smooth, powerful, harmonious symmetry. The coat, a hallmark of the breed, is of great importance for all Curlies, whether companion, hunting or show dogs. The perfect coat is a dense mass of small, tight, distinct, crisp curls. The Curly is wickedly smart and highly trainable and, as such, is cherished as much for his role as loyal companion at home as he is in the field.

## **Size, Proportion, Substance:**

Ideal height at withers: dogs, 25 to 27 inches; bitches, 23 to 25 inches. A clearly superior Curly falling outside of this range should not be penalized because of size. The body proportions are slightly off square, meaning that the dog is slightly longer from prosternum to buttocks as he is from withers to ground. The Curly is both sturdy and elegant. The degree of substance is sufficient to ensure strength and endurance without sacrificing grace. Bone and substance are neither spindly nor massive and should be in proportion with weight and height and balanced throughout.

## **Head:**

The head is a longer-than-wide wedge, readily distinguishable from that of all other retriever breeds, and of a size in balance with the body. Length of foreface is equal, or nearly equal, to length of backskull and, when viewed in profile, the planes are parallel. The stop is shallow and sloping. At the point of joining, the width of foreface may be slightly less than the width of the backskull but blending of the two should be smooth. The head has a nearly straight, continuous taper to the nose and is clean cut, not coarse, blocky or cheeky. Expression Intelligent and alert. Eyes-Almond-shaped, rather large but not too prominent. Black or brown in black dogs and brown or amber in liver dogs. Harsh yellow eyes and loose haws are undesirable. Ears-Rather small, set on a line slightly above the corner of the eye, and lying close to the head. Backskull-Flat or nearly flat. Foreface-Muzzle is wedge-shaped with no hint of snipiness. The taper ends mildly, neither acutely pointed nor bluntly squared-off but rather slightly rounding at the bottom. Mouth is level and never wry. Jaws are long and strong. A scissors bite is preferred. Teeth set straight and even. The lips are tight and clean, not pendulous. The nose is fully pigmented; black on black dogs, brown on liver dogs. Nostrils are large.

**Neck, Topline, Body:**

Neck-Strong and slightly arched, of medium length, free from throatiness and flowing freely into moderately laid-back shoulders. Backline-The back, that portion of the body from the rear point of the withers to the beginning of the loin, is strong and level. The loin, that part of the body extending from the end of the rib cage to the start of the pelvis, is short and muscular. The croup, that portion of the body from the start of the pelvis to the tail set-on, is only slightly sloping. Body- Chest is decidedly deep and not too wide, oval in cross-section, with brisket reaching elbow. While the impression of the chest should be of depth not width, the chest is not pinched or narrow. The ribs are well-sprung, neither barrel-shaped nor slab-sided, and extend well back into a deep, powerful loin with a moderate tuck-up of flank. Tail-Carried straight or fairly straight, never docked, and reaching approximately to the hock. Never curled over the back and should not be kinked or crooked. Covered with curls and, if trimmed, tapering toward the point.

**Forequarters:**

Shoulder blades are very long, well covered with muscle, and are moderately laid back at about a 55 degree angle. The width between shoulder blades is adequate to allow enough flexibility to easily retrieve game. Upper arm bones are about equal in length with shoulder blades and laid back at approximately the same angle as the blades, meaning the forelegs are set under the withers. The equal length of shoulder blade and upper arm bone and the balanced angulation between the two allows for good extension of the front legs. The forelegs are straight with strong, true pasterns. Feet are round and compact, with well-arched toes and thick pads. Front dewclaws are generally removed.

**Hindquarters:**

Strong and in balance with front angulation. Thighs are powerful with muscling carrying well down into the second thigh. Stifle is of moderate bend. The hocks are strong and true, turning neither in nor out, with hock joint well let down. Rear dewclaws are generally removed.

**Coat:**

The coat is a distinguishing characteristic and quite different from that of any other breed. The body coat is a thick mass of small, tight, crisp curls, lying close to the skin, resilient, water resistant, and of sufficient density to provide protection against weather, water and punishing cover. Curls also extend up the entire neck to the occiput, down the thigh and back leg to at least the hock, and over the entire tail. Elsewhere, the coat is short, smooth and straight, including on the forehead, face, front of forelegs, and feet. A patch of uncurled hair behind the withers or bald patches anywhere on the body, including bald strips down the back of the legs or a triangular bald patch on the throat, should be severely penalized. A looser, more open curl is acceptable on the ears. Sparse, silky, fuzzy or very harsh, dry or brittle hair is a fault. Trimming-Feathering may be trimmed from the ears, belly, backs of forelegs, thighs, pasterns, hocks, and feet. On the tail, feathering should be removed. Short trimming of the coat on the ear is permitted but shearing of the body coat is undesirable.

**Color:**

Black or liver. Either color is correct. A prominent white patch is undesirable but a few white hairs are allowable in an otherwise good dog.

**Gait:**

The dual function of the Curly as both waterfowl retriever and upland game hunter demands a dog who moves with strength and power yet is quick and agile. The ground-covering stride is a well-coordinated melding of grace and power, neither mincing nor lumbering. The seemingly effortless trot is efficient and balanced front to rear. When viewed from the side, the reach in front and rear is free-flowing, not stilted or hackneyed. When viewed from the front or rear, movement is true: the front legs turn neither in nor out and the rear legs do not cross. Well developed, muscular thighs and strong hocks do their full share of work, contributing to rear thrust and drive. The extension in front is strong and smooth and in balance with rear action. Balance in structure translates to balance in movement and is of great importance to ensure soundness and endurance; extremes of angulation and gait are not desirable.

**Temperament:**

Self-confident, steadfast and proud, this active, intelligent dog is a charming and gentle family companion and a determined, durable hunter. The Curly is alert, biddable and responsive to family and friends, whether at home or in the field. Of independent nature and discerning intelligence, a Curly sometimes appears aloof or self-willed, and, as such, is often less demonstrative, particularly toward strangers, than the other retriever breeds. The Curly's independence and poise should not be confused with shyness or a lack of willingness to please. In the show ring, a correctly-tempered Curly will steadily stand his ground, submit easily to examination, and might or might not wag his tail when doing so. In the field, the Curly is eager, persistent and inherently courageous. At home, he is calm and affectionate. Shyness is a fault and any dog who shies away from show ring examination should be penalized. Minor allowances can be made for puppies who misbehave in the show ring due to over-exuberance or lack of training or experience.

Approved October 12, 1993  
Effective November 30, 1993

## HISTORY

*From the Audrey Nicholls book, The Curly-Coated Retriever, 1992, pages 1-7:*

*“There are two questions that the public invariably ask when they see the Curly-Coated Retriever. One is to ask what their origins are, and secondly how long they have been established. The answer to the latter question is fairly easy to find, but the former one has caused much speculation over the years. Of the several varieties of retriever, there seems much evidence to support the assertion that the Curly-Coated can claim a longer established history...*

*Many of the early authorities hold the opinion that the crisp curly coat was derived from the old type of close curled English water dog....*

*There have been water dogs and water spaniels for several centuries...and William Edwardes, writing to the East India Company in 1615 from Ajmere in India, about some dogs that had already been sent to him to use as gifts, says ‘some of the same, with some great curled water spaniels...worth to be valued of the king beyond things of greater worth.’*

*Several writers of the early nineteenth century acknowledge both types of dog, but Thomas Bell in British Quadriped (1837) writes ‘the peculiar qualities and propensities of this dog, its exquisite sense of smell, its sagacity, strength, and aquatic habits, have rendered it a most useful and important servant to a particular class of persons of the North of England and Scotland who principally by shooting water fowl, in the retrieving of which these dogs exhibit the highest degree of docility and hardihood.’*

*The Water Dog must not be confused with the Water Spaniel, from which indeed it differs considerably in size and proportions. It was of a much more robust make; the muzzle was short and stood out abruptly from the face, the ears were of moderate length; the hair was everywhere curled and shaggy by which the water was prevented from penetrating; the tail was short and somewhat erect, the colour generally black with more or less white, sometimes brown and white or nearly all white....*

*According to Phillip Asburton there was indisputable evidence that in Norfolk and probably in Lincolnshire where Robert Fitzooth, the Earl of Huntingdon (Robin Hood) lived, that Curlies existed from 1490 on, and also from the Crusades.*

*All the writers of the period take great pains to praise the exceptional retrieving powers and intelligence of these dogs along with their fondness of water and sagacity. Therefore the length of the breed’s history implies that its genetic make-up is sufficiently dominant to pass on its characteristics, particularly the curled coat. As S. M. Lampson says ‘a prototype is always subjected to modification, alteration and improvement since the human race always seeks to improve its handiwork’, but the next development in the breed’s history caused most problems. What exactly was this established water dog crossed with to produce the next version? The size of this next generation fell between the spaniel and the pointer. The original and prevailing colour on the continent was black, with crisp curly hair, black nose, white face, long black ears, the head and ears were covered with black curly hair, the feet and lower parts of the legs being white. There seem to be several breeds that may have been used, one being the Greenland dog or St. John’s Newfoundland. This was an established breed in the late 1700’s and is said to be the forerunner to our present Labrador. Certainly it had great prowess in the water and possessed a water-resistant coat, but personally I would think that only a few of these were used for cross breeding with already established dogs.*

## HISTORY

*Some use of this type of Newfoundland cannot be dismissed and would account for some of the larger headed Curlies that have been seen from time to time. The question that seems to cause the most trouble appears to be whether it was a poodle or Irish water spaniel that was used on the other half of the continent and in what order...*

*The Tweed water spaniel and the Llanidloes Welsh setter, now both lost to us, also featured the densely curled waterproof coat.*

*As there was considerable trade between this country (England) and the continents, and as we know that these dogs were kept for retrieving the fishermen's nets, it is more likely that while ashore cross breeding became a natural occurrence. On the continent there were breeds like the Poodle, Portuguese water dog, Wetterhound of Holland and others now extinct who all had the characteristic curly coat.*

*In 'Our Friend the Retriever' published in 1935 and edited by Rowland Johns it states: 'Before the Labrador appeared in this country, however, we had a dog approximating in size and coat to our present-day Curly Coat, as can be seen from many contemporary sporting prints of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries' and as far as weight of evidence goes it favours the Curly Coat as the doyen of all Retrievers.'*

*There was, of course, no fixity about type in those far-away days; no Kennel Club, no show standards; no judges except the inevitable people who know everything; and no field trials. To cross one breed with another was not regarded as an eccentric proceeding. Therefore the blood of the Curly Coat of the Georgian era became at various times intermingled with that of both the Old English and the Irish Water Spaniel, the Labrador, one or more breeds of Setter, and even the Poodle. From the first two and last he gained something of that rich astrakhan-like texture which distinguishes his outer-covering. Moreover the old-time Poodle was sturdier of frame than his latter-day descendants, and the modern Curly Coat owes something of his physique to the Poodle, and his retrieving propensities, for the Poodle had, and still have, a wonderful nose. As late as the eighties of the last century a fixity of type in Retrievers had not been attained and crosses were still being resorted to. In those days there was no fixity of colour either, and the liver-coloured Curly Coat was often found, although not held in as much esteem as the black variety....*

*The question of which came first among the Curly-Coated Retriever, the Irish Water Spaniel, or the Standard Poodle is one which will probably never be satisfactorily settled. Few would deny that their backgrounds are inextricably mixed. Few would deny too that all have been in existence for centuries in somewhat similar form to that which we see today. All that we do know with any certainty is that the breed as we know it today had evolved in its form by the early 19th century....*

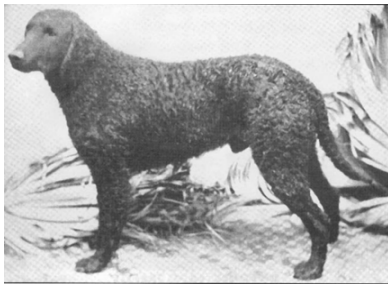
*The Curly-Coated Retriever first appears as a show dog at Birmingham in 1860. Apparently the first prize on that occasion was won by 'a big course dog' – called Wyndham – bred by Mr. W. Brailsford and owned by Mr. Gorse, with a liver bitch owned by Lord Alfred Page coming second, the Curlies held their own against their wavy coated cousins. It must be realized that up until 1864 all the retriever varieties were shown together...."*

*Thank you Audrey Nicholls.*

## HISTORY

*Curly-Coated Retrievers were often owned and hunted by the common man, rather than the wealthy, upper class gentry of the time. And as most of the good hunting grounds were owned and protected by the landed gentry, the average hunter was reduced to hunting in the worse possible areas such as bogs and swampy areas as well as the banks of the river Thames where swan were a popular game bird. This upstanding, tenacious, long legged, powerful swimmer could tackle all environments, good and bad. Poachers on the rich estates loved the loyalty and quiet nature of the Curly-Coat. The light absorbing curled coat was additional protection for their nefarious hunting night forays when capture could mean death.*

*As these common people could generally afford to feed only one dog, the Curly-Coat was not just the family hunter, but watch dog as well. Their legendary loyalty and discerning nature coupled with high intelligence made them an excellent general purpose family dog in addition to being an avid hunter. Their tenacity for game of all kinds and excellent nose made them known as a "pot dog"; the dog able to put food on the table at a time when you only could eat what you could hunt and find.*



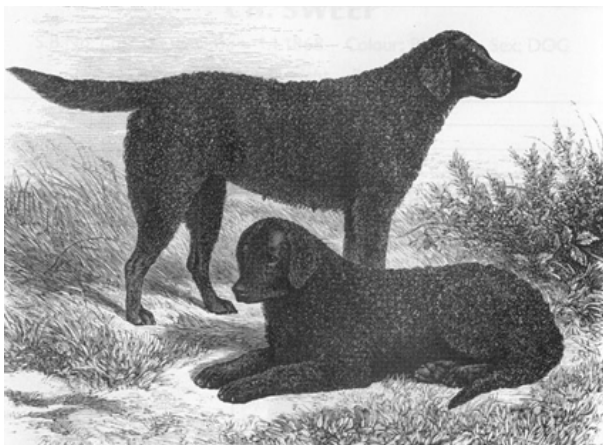
*Tiverton Victor 1887*



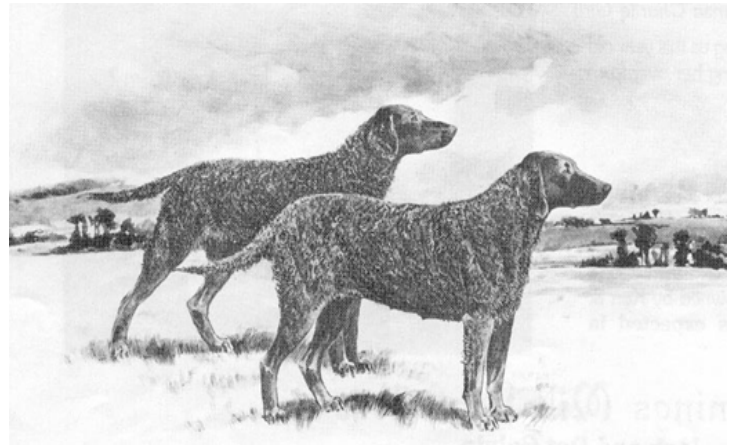
*Kynysa Drake 1919*



*Sadie of Snape 1937*



*1869 painting*



*1891 painting*



# HISTORY

## *Developed in England*



*A favorite of English Gamekeepers*

## *Maintaining Breed Type*



*1880 painting*



*2000 photograph*



**The actual verbiage from the breed standard is in bold type.**

*Commentary and explanations are in italics.*

## GENERAL APPEARANCE

This smartly upstanding, multi-purpose hunting retriever is recognized by most canine historians as one of the oldest of the retrieving breeds. Developed in England, the Curly was long a favorite of English gamekeepers.

Prized for innate field ability, courage and indomitable perseverance, a correctly built and tempered Curly will work as long as there is work to be done, retrieving both fur and feather in the heaviest of cover and the iciest of waters. To work all day a Curly must be balanced and sound, strong and robust, and quick and agile.

Outline, carriage and attitude all combine for a grace and elegance somewhat uncommon among the other retriever breeds, providing the unique, upstanding quality desired in the breed.

In outline, the Curly is moderately angulated front and rear and, when comparing height to length, gives the impression of being higher on leg than the other retriever breeds.

In carriage, the Curly is an erect, alert, self-confident dog.

In motion, all parts blend into a smooth, powerful, harmonious symmetry.

The coat, a hallmark of the breed, is of great importance for all Curlies, whether companion, hunting or show dogs. The perfect coat is a dense mass of small, tight, distinct, crisp curls.

The Curly is wickedly smart and highly trainable and, as such, is cherished as much for his role as loyal companion at home as he is in the field.









*Dog*



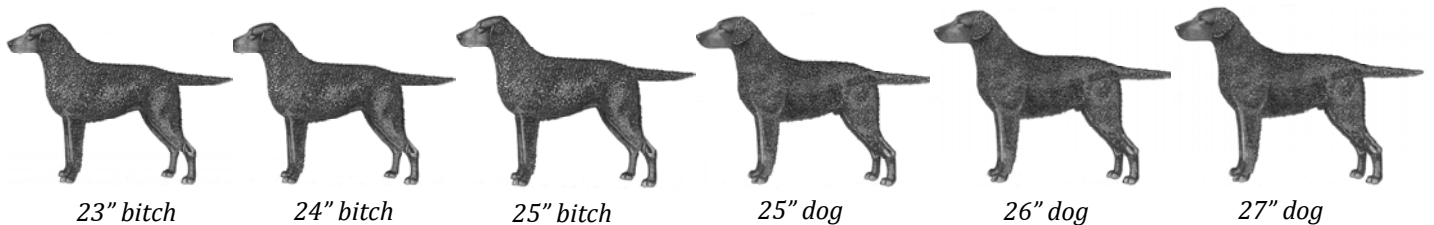
*Bitch*

## S I Z E

### *Ideal Heights (in inches) of the retrievers*

	<i>Curly-Coat</i>	<i>Chesapeake Bay</i>	<i>Flat Coat</i>	<i>Golden</i>	<i>Labrador</i>	<i>Nova Scotia Duck Toller</i>
						
<i>Dog</i>	25 - 27	23 - 26	23 - 24½	23 - 24	22½ - 24½	18 - 21
<i>Bitch</i>	23 - 25	21 - 24	22 - 23½	21½ - 22½	21½ - 23½	17 - 20

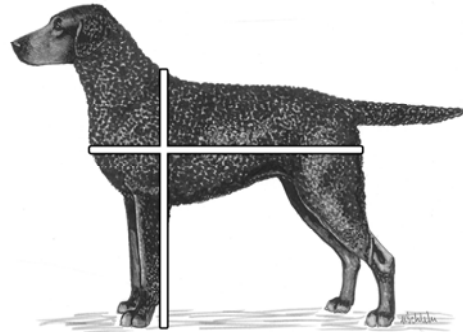
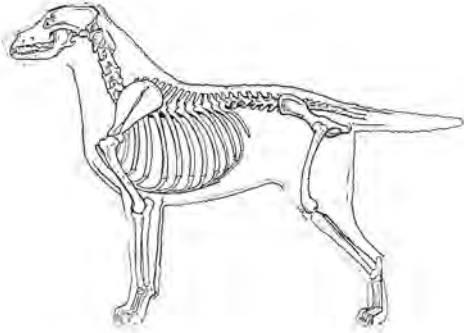
**Ideal height at withers: dogs, 25 to 27 inches; bitches, 23 to 25 inches. A clearly superior Curly falling outside of this range should not be penalized because of size.**



*The breed standard allows for variation of size. Judges should be well aware of the caveat in the standard, however. A curly falling outside these ranges of size should be "clearly superior" including in type, coat, and movement. All Curly-Coated Retrievers should have similar substance, proportion in balance with their size. Type should remain the same.*

## PROPORTION

The body proportions are slightly off square, meaning that the dog is slightly longer from prosternum to buttocks as he is from withers to ground.



The depth of the chest from the withers to bottom of brisket should equal the length of the foreleg from the bottom of the brisket to the ground. As we also call for a decidedly deep chest, the length of legs must be proportional to this deep chest. The combination of a deep chest and good length of leg aids in the upstanding look that is desired in the breed.

The length of the body of the Curly-Coated Retriever is in the rib cage. Length in rib cage supports the body structure, provides room for internal organs, and is the girder of the Curly-Coated Retriever architecture. The loin must be strong and of a short length. The back, which is measured from the rear point of the withers to the beginning of the loin, must be long enough to allow for front and rear legs to extend because the Curly is both a water retriever and an upland game dog. A Curly too short in back is undesirable as is a Curly too long in loin. A Curly too short in back and length of rib will not allow free-flowing movement of both front and rear legs nor the lung power to do a full day's work. A Curly too long in loin will exhibit weakness in movement and power when asked to work all day.



*Too high on leg, too square*

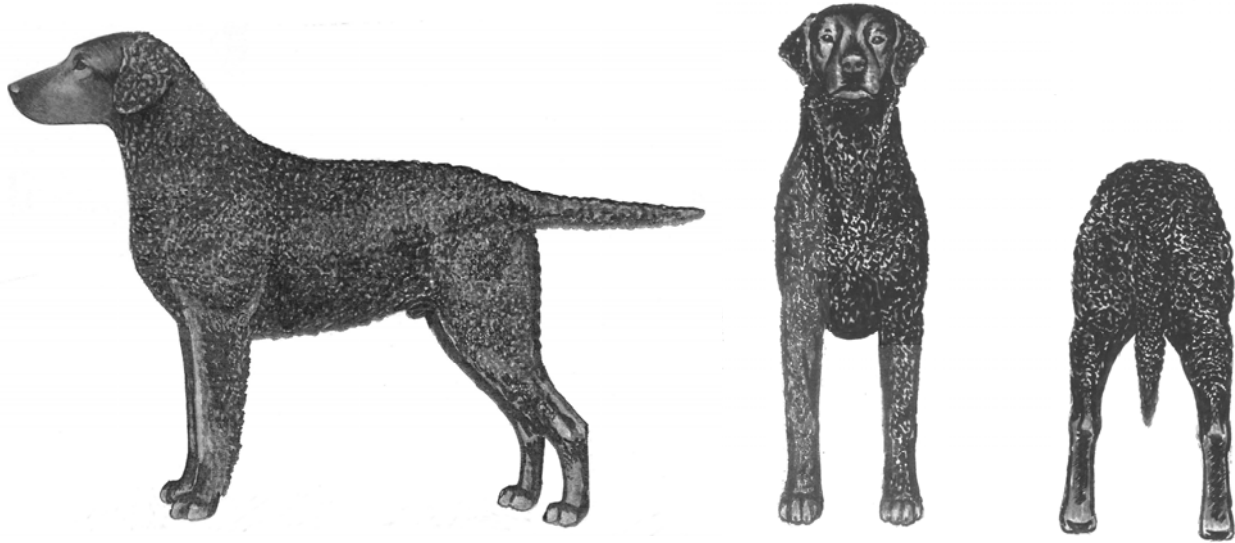


*Correct*



*Too long of body & loin,  
"tubular " appearing*

## SUBSTANCE



**The Curly is both sturdy and elegant. The degree of substance is sufficient to ensure strength and endurance without sacrificing grace. Bone and substance are neither spindly nor massive and should be in proportion with weight and height and balanced throughout.**

*Judges are encouraged to feel the bone of the foreleg. Judges should understand a Curly may be asked to retrieve a 15 pound goose in heavy cattails and water one day and run through a meadow the next day to find, flush and retrieve a pheasant or rabbit. Strong, substantial bone and depth of body (a decidedly deep chest) will give the Curly the adequate tools to do both.*

*The Curly-Coated Retriever's elegance comes from a longer leg than that of other retriever breeds and a longer head and muzzle than a Labrador or Golden retriever. Elegance does NOT come from a lack of bone. A correct Curly has much more body and bone than that of a Standard Poodle or a Flat Coated Retriever.*

*The Curly is the tallest of the retrievers and, as such, demands a body and bone substance and weight to support this height.*

SUBSTANCE



*Too broad of chest*



*Correct breadth*



*Too narrow, setter-like*



*Too heavy, massive*



*Too weedy, light of bone*



*Correct*

## HEAD

The head is a longer-than-wide wedge, readily distinguishable from that of all other retriever breeds, and of a size in balance with the body.



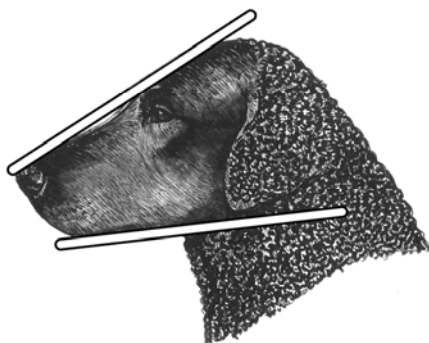
Muzzle is wedge-shaped with no hint of snipiness. The taper ends mildly, neither acutely pointed nor bluntly squared-off but rather slightly rounding at the bottom.

The lips are tight and clean, not pendulous.

**Backskull--Flat or nearly flat.**

Length of foreface is equal, or nearly equal, to length of backskull and, when viewed in profile, the planes are parallel.

The stop is shallow and sloping.



*The wedge shape is apparent from the side, from the front., and from above.*



## HEAD

The stop is shallow and sloping. At the point of joining, the width of foreface may be slightly less than the width of the backskull but blending of the two should be smooth.

The head has a nearly straight, continuous taper to the nose and is clean cut, not coarse, blocky or cheeky.

Backskull--Flat or nearly flat

The taper ends mildly, neither acutely pointed nor bluntly squared-off but rather slightly rounding at the bottom.

Foreface--Muzzle is wedge-shaped with no hint of snipiness.



*Bitch*

*Dog*



## HEAD



**Expression--Intelligent and alert.**

**Eyes--Almond-shaped, rather large but not too prominent.**

**Black or brown in black dogs and brown or amber in liver dogs. Harsh yellow eyes and loose haws are undesirable.**

**Ears-- Rather small, set on a line slightly above the corner of the eye, and lying close to the head.**

*When judging the Curly-Coated Retriever, it is important to understand the description of the eyes as it relates to hunting function. The eye shape and placement is extremely important for a breed expected to perform brilliantly in upland and waterfowl retrieving. The almond shape, provides one of the most functional and injury proof canine eye shapes. The lower edge of the eye is a very gentle curve without loose haws. The tight curve protects the dog's eye while pounding through a field of dusty sunflowers after a pheasant or while waiting in a duck blind as cattail fibers flow over the dog's face. Round, prominent eyes would give less protection against seeds, vegetation, and other debris.*

*Common Head Faults*



*Correct Head*



*Domed and rounded back skull*



*Short snipey muzzle, throaty*



*Dish faced, non parallel planes*



*Non-parallel planes, snipey, throaty*



*Blocky Head, level eyes, with too much stop*

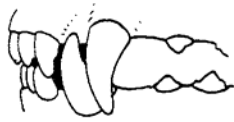


*Round, eyes*



*Long ears*

## HEAD



**Mouth is level and never wry. Jaws are long and strong.**



**A scissors bite is preferred. Teeth set straight and even.**

*Good mouth construction is very important for dogs having to carry all types of furred and feathered animals in their mouth. "Teeth set straight and even" implies even rows of teeth without noticeable gaps. Missing teeth, misaligned teeth, weak jaws all contribute to poorly handled game in the field.*



**The nose is fully pigmented; black on black dogs, brown on liver dogs.**

**Nostrils are large.**

*Remember that these dogs often have to swim and run with their mouths full of game, so open and large nostrils are very important to the field function of the Curly-Coated Retriever.*

## NECK AND BACKLINE

**Neck--Strong and slightly arched, of medium length, free from throatiness and flowing freely into moderately laid-back shoulders.**



**Backline--The back, that portion of the body from the rear point of the withers to the beginning of the loin, is strong and level. The loin, that part of the body extending from the end of the rib cage to the start of the pelvis, is short and muscular. The croup, that portion of the body from the start of the pelvis to the tail set-on, is only slightly sloping.**

*The strong, level back joining with the short, muscular, and powerful loin and correct pelvic assembly gives the Curly-Coated Retriever the ability to work all day, every day with their legendary work ethic. The short, strong, and muscular loin is very important for the endurance necessary to work all day in often punishing environments. A longer than desired loin reduces their endurance in the field. Flattened croups impede their swimming abilities and overall efficiency while running afield. Such poor construction causes inefficient movement that takes much greater effort to complete the tasks at hand.*

# TOPLINE

*Correct Topline*



*Incorrect sloping topline*



*Incorrect weak topline, too much dip in topline, too high in rear*



*Incorrect flat croup, high tail set*



*Incorrect flat croup*



*Incorrect topline which is too steep in croup with a low tail set*

## BODY

Body--Chest is decidedly deep and not too wide, oval in cross-section, with brisket reaching elbow. While the impression of the chest should be of depth not width, the chest is not pinched or narrow. The ribs are well-sprung, neither barrel-shaped nor slab-sided, and extend well back into a deep, powerful loin with a moderate tuck-up of flank.



*Chest too barrel round*



*Correct Oval Shape*



*Not enough fill between forelegs and slab-sided*

*A correctly shaped deep chest is critical to the ability of the Curly-Coated Retriever to function well in sometimes difficult hunting environments. A barrel-ribbed ribcage may be capacious, but lacks the ability to increase volume for heavy work and impedes the efficient movement needed to work all day. A slab or flat sided spring of rib has reduced lung capacity, reducing endurance, strength, and stability when swimming.*



*Correct*



*Shallow, lacking decidedly deep chest*



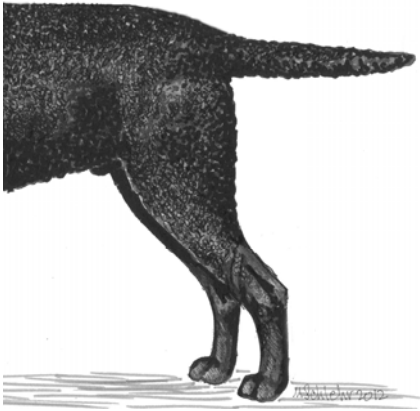
*Long of loin, tubular appearing*



*Showing too much tuck up*

## TAIL

**Tail--Carried straight or fairly straight, never docked, and reaching approximately to the hock. Never curled over the back and should not be kinked or crooked. Covered with curls and, if trimmed, tapering toward the point.**



*Correct Tail Set and Carriage*



*Showing low tail set*



*Showing high tail carriage and high set*

*A correct straight tail*





## FOREQUARTERS

Shoulder blades are very long, well covered with muscle, and are moderately laid back at about a 55 degree angle. The width between shoulder blades is adequate to allow enough flexibility to easily retrieve game. Upper arm bones are about equal in length with shoulder blades and laid back at approximately the same angle as the blades, meaning the forelegs are set under the withers. The equal length of shoulder blade and upper arm bone and the balanced angulation between the two allows for good extension of the front legs.



*A Good Front*

*Properly angulated shoulder  
Chest is decidedly deep  
Forelegs set well under the body  
Pastern strong and true  
Feet are round and compact*



*Incorrect Front*

*Short Upper Arm – Incorrect  
Correct lay of shoulder blade  
However, bone of upper arm should be as long as shoulder blade  
Legs set too far forward on body*



*Incorrect Front*

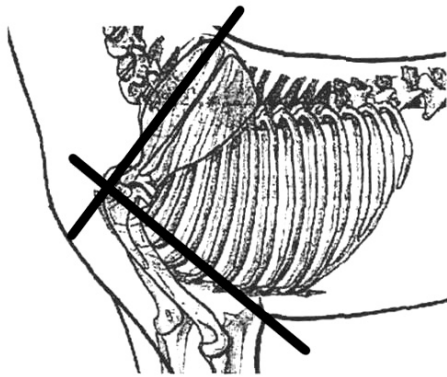
*Upright lay of shoulder  
Not enough angulation to upper arm  
Legs set too forward on body  
Usually has a lack of fore chest*



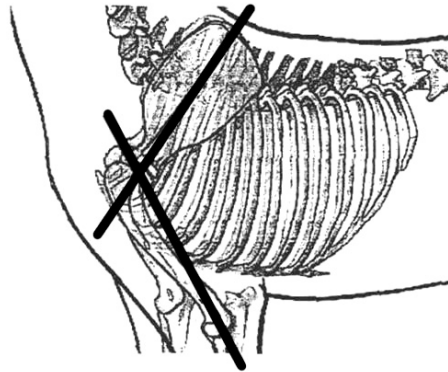
## FOREQUARTERS

**Shoulder blades are very long, well covered with muscle, and are moderately laid back at about a 55 degree angle.**

*There has been some confusion regarding the "55 degree angle" terminology within our standard. The angle judges see and feel may appear to be a 45 degree angle, but the structural reality indicates that it is more correctly identified as 55 degrees. This phrase within our standard is NOT a desire for a more upright or open shoulder assembly, but rather a wish to never develop extremes of angulation such are found in German Shepherds. Maintaining a moderate, workman-like, efficient, hunter is our primary concern. As a durable hunting companion, we need our forequarters to reflect the proper structure for maximum efficiency in the field. This entails a good lay of shoulder and upper arm construction with a good forechest with a decidedly deep oval chest.*



*The Angle We See*



*The Actual Angle*

## FOREQUARTERS

The forelegs are straight with strong, true pasterns. Feet are round and compact, with well-arched toes and thick pads. Front dewclaws are generally removed.



*Correct slope of pastern*



*Incorrect upright pastern*



*Incorrectly knuckled over*



*Correct Foot, round, compact, thick pads, with well-arched toes*



*Incorrect flat foot*



*Incorrect foot with splayed toes*

## HINDQUARTERS



**Strong and in balance with front angulation.**



**Thighs are powerful with muscling carrying well down into the second thigh. Stifle is of moderate bend.**

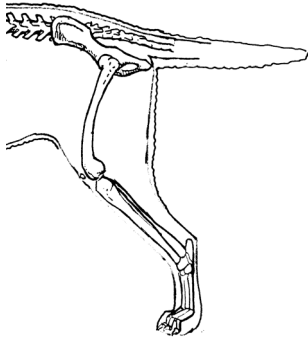
*Powerful thighs are extremely important to a dog who must work all day running, swimming, twisting, and turning.*

**The hocks are strong and true, turning neither in nor out, with hock joint well let down. Rear dewclaws are generally removed.**

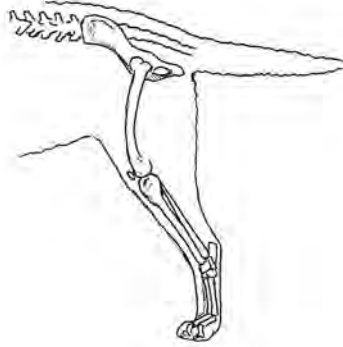
*Please note the muscling on the second thigh which helps locomotion on land and in the water.*



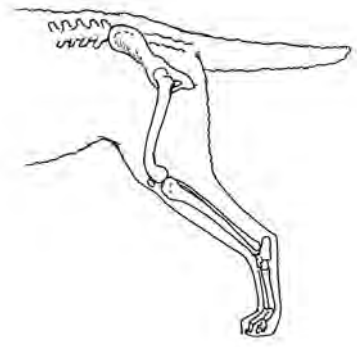
# HINDQUARTERS



*Correct Angles*



*Too steep of angle,  
straight stifle*



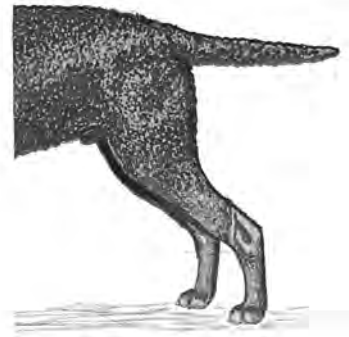
*Over angulated, too  
long of second thigh*



*Not enough width and  
breadth of thighs*



*Not enough angulation,  
straight stifle*



*Too long of second thigh,  
over angulated*



*Croup too flat*



*Croup too steep,  
low tail set*



*Hocks not well let down,  
too long of the hock*

## COAT

The coat, a hallmark of the breed, is of great importance for all Curlies, whether companion, hunting or show dogs. The perfect coat is a dense mass of small, tight, distinct, crisp curls. (General Appearance section)

The coat is a distinguishing characteristic and quite different from that of any other breed. The body coat is a thick mass of small, tight, crisp curls, lying close to the skin, resilient, water resistant, and of sufficient density to provide protection against weather, water and punishing cover.



*Correct Body Coat*

*The curls on the ideal coat are small, crisp, distinct, tightly wound, short and springy and must lie close to the body. The coat should be dense enough to provide protection against all environments. Each individual curl can be unfurled and then when let go will immediately spring back to its original shape. Large open curls, loosely curled or spiraling coats are not correct and do not give the necessary protection in the field.*

*\*\*\* The photos displayed in the entire coat section are for depiction of the coat only. \*\*\**

## COAT

*The feel of the coat will be crisp, with an almost hard, yet springy feel to the touch, but never harsh or wiry. There is NO difference between the liver colored or black colored coat quality and quantity.*



## COAT

**Curls also extend up the entire neck to the occiput, down the thigh and back leg to at least the hock, and over the entire tail.**



*The optimum coat will have curls starting at the occiput. There should be a nice clean distinction between the curly and non-curly/smooth haired area on the top of the skull. In prior years, this demarcation line of curls was called a “bonnet” as it gave the impression of the edge of a bonnet tied to a head. These small, tight, crisp curls continue down around the neck covering the body and chest, extending to the elbows and hocks, with the tail fully covered in curls.*

**Elsewhere, the coat is short, smooth and straight, including on the forehead, face, front of forelegs, and feet.**



*The face, front of forelegs, pasterns, hocks, and feet all have smooth, short, straight hair. The backs of the forelegs will have curls or curly wisps of hair. The ears are often trimmed but they should show some evidence of a wavy or curly coat. The Curly tail has curls everywhere and is not a “rat” tail like that of an Irish Water Spaniel, although the tail is often trimmed fairly close for the show ring.*

*When left un-trimmed, the ears and tail will grow loose curls forming a curly fringe or the tail may become bushy on some dogs.*

*The Curly-Coated Retriever should be presented in clean condition but the coat does have a somewhat “lanolin” feel to it due to the water resistant oils present. Though the coat looks to have a “velcro” like appearance and texture that would easily pick up debris lying on the ground or flying through the air, the correct coat is surprisingly very resistant to retaining any burrs, debris, or other matter. This breed does not have an undercoat, just tightly curled hair.*

**Trimming--Feathering may be trimmed from the ears, belly, backs of forelegs, thighs, pasterns, hocks, and feet. On the tail, feathering should be removed. Short trimming of the coat on the ear is permitted but shearing of the body coat is undesirable.**

*The correct coat truly distinguishes this breed from all other breeds with its unique, short, close lying, crisp, tight curls that do not need to be clipped or trimmed to keep it from growing too long. The Curly-Coated Retriever should be presented in a clean and tidy manner.*



## COAT

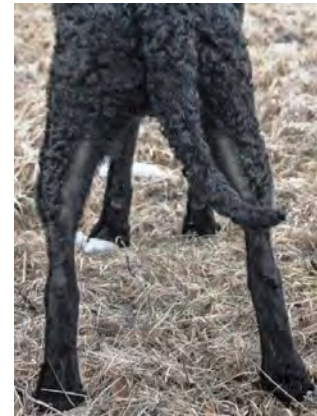
**A patch of uncurled hair behind the withers or bald patches anywhere on the body, including bald strips down the back of the legs or a triangular bald patch on the throat, should be severely penalized.**



*Throat patterning*



*Bald strips*



*Partial bald strips*

*Curlies should be well coated on the backs of the legs and on the throat and throughout the body. The absence of coat or balding coat on the body is indicative of a hereditary coat pattern issue that may or may not be permanent. The quality of the coat should be judged on the day it is presented, not on a past or a future outcome for the coat.*

*With all types of coat patterning and bald patches, the severity varies greatly. The very mild cases can be sometimes difficult to detect. However the moderate to severe cases are obvious and judges should be able see the missing coat if they look for it. This coat issue is the only "severely penalized" item in the breed standard and should be judged accordingly on the day of a dog show. Patterned dogs will be shown occasionally and there are a number of reasons, but the most common is a dog which had the unfortunate timing to lose their coat after entries closed and the owner does not want to break a major or affect the points being awarded. The judge must severely penalize any coat patterning or balding detected on the day of the show.*

**A looser, more open curl is acceptable on the ears. Sparse, silky, fuzzy or very harsh, dry or brittle hair is a fault.**



*Faulty wavy coat, lacking tight curls*



*Faulty poor curl coverage on side of body*

# COAT

## *Samples of Coat Patterning in Curlies:*



## COLOR

**Black or liver. Either color is correct. A prominent white patch is undesirable but a few white hairs are allowable in an otherwise good dog.**

*A few white hairs on the chest are acceptable but a large white patch is very undesirable. White hairs from small wounds garnered during hunting seasons or as a result of aging around the face, legs, and body should not be penalized. Many Curly-Coated Retrievers that are shown are also personal hunting dogs or perform in hunt tests and as such can encounter thickets that scratch or pierce the skin during their pursuit of the game. These "battle wounds" are badges of honor to us.*



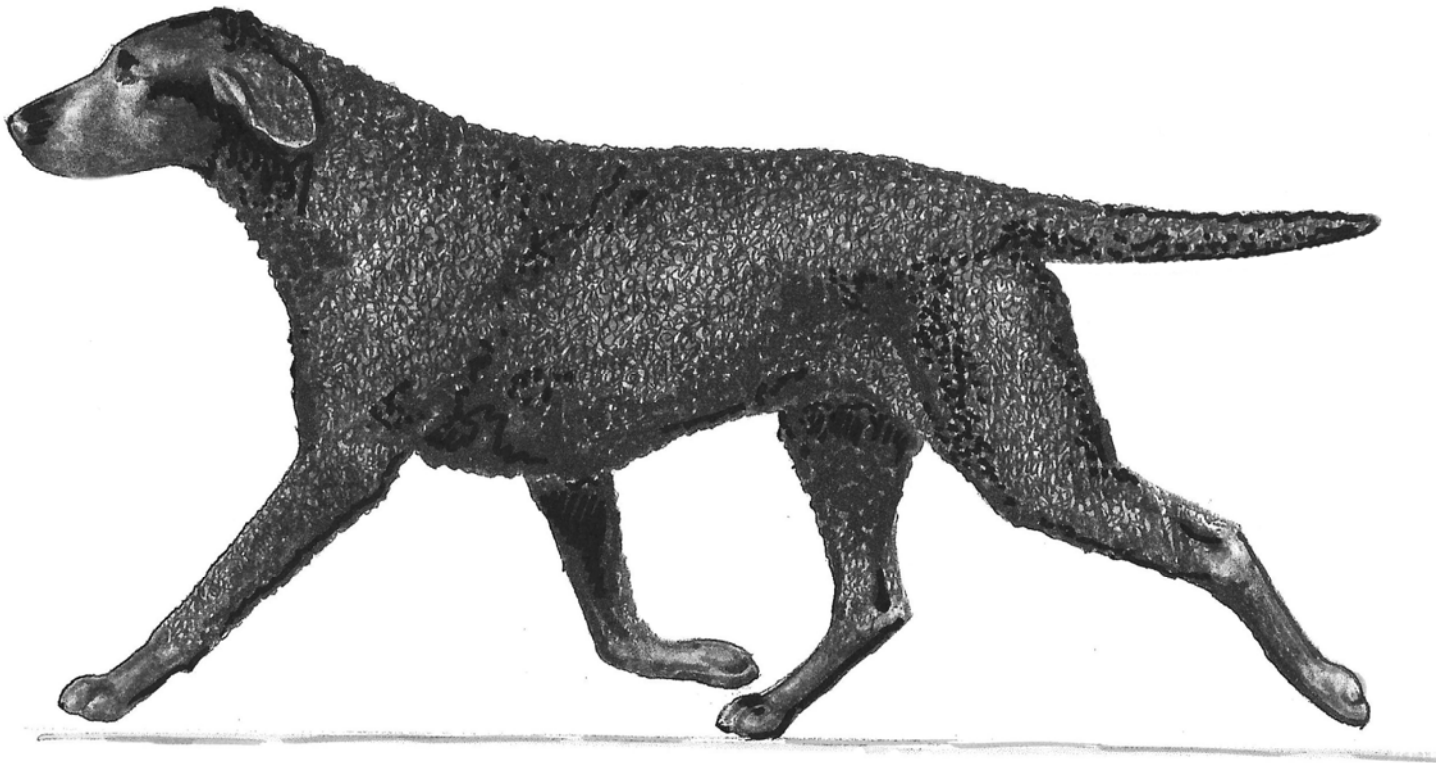
*The Liver color is the true color of "liver". Liver shades may vary, darker shades are preferred. It is NOT a deep brown chocolate, light tan, or brassy orange.*

*The Black color is a coal black without red tinges to the coat.*



## GAIT

The dual function of the Curly as both waterfowl retriever and upland game hunter demands a dog who moves with strength and power yet is quick and agile. The ground-covering stride is a well-coordinated melding of grace and power, neither mincing nor lumbering. The seemingly effortless trot is efficient and balanced front to rear. When viewed from the side, the reach in front and rear is free-flowing, not stilted or hackneyed.



# GAIT

When viewed from the front or rear, movement is true: the front legs turn neither in nor out and the rear legs do not cross. Well-developed, muscular thighs and strong hocks do their full share of work, contributing to rear thrust and drive. The extension in front is strong and smooth and in balance with rear action. Balance in structure translates to balance in movement and is of great importance to ensure soundness and endurance; extremes of angulation and gait are not desirable.



*Correct Forward Movement*



*Toeing In*



*Moving too close*



*Tied at elbows, wide of center line*



*Winging, out at elbows*



*Correct Rear Movement*



*Bowed rear*



*Cowhocked*



*Moving too close*



*Crossing over*

## TEMPERAMENT

Self-confident, steadfast and proud, this active, intelligent dog is a charming and gentle family companion and a determined, durable hunter. The Curly is alert, biddable and responsive to family and friends, whether at home or in the field. Of independent nature and discerning intelligence, a Curly sometimes appears aloof or self-willed, and, as such, is often less demonstrative, particularly toward strangers, than the other retriever breeds. The Curly's independence and poise should not be confused with shyness or a lack of willingness to please. In the show ring, a correctly-tempered Curly will steadily stand his ground, submit easily to examination, and might or might not wag his tail when doing so. In the field, the Curly is eager, persistent and inherently courageous. At home, he is calm and affectionate. Shyness is a fault and any dog who shies away from show ring examination should be penalized. Minor allowances can be made for puppies who misbehave in the show ring due to over-exuberance or lack of training or experience.

*Curly-Coated Retrievers are a very versatile breed with a very loving nature. Their innate intelligence and trainability allows owners and families an opportunity to explore many different venues for activities. Their work ethic and loyalty is legendary.*



*Family Companion*



*Agility*



*Waterfowl Hunting*



*Upland Game Hunting*



*Tracking*



*Search & Rescue*

