

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL



Extended Breed Standard of

THE CURLY COATED RETRIEVER

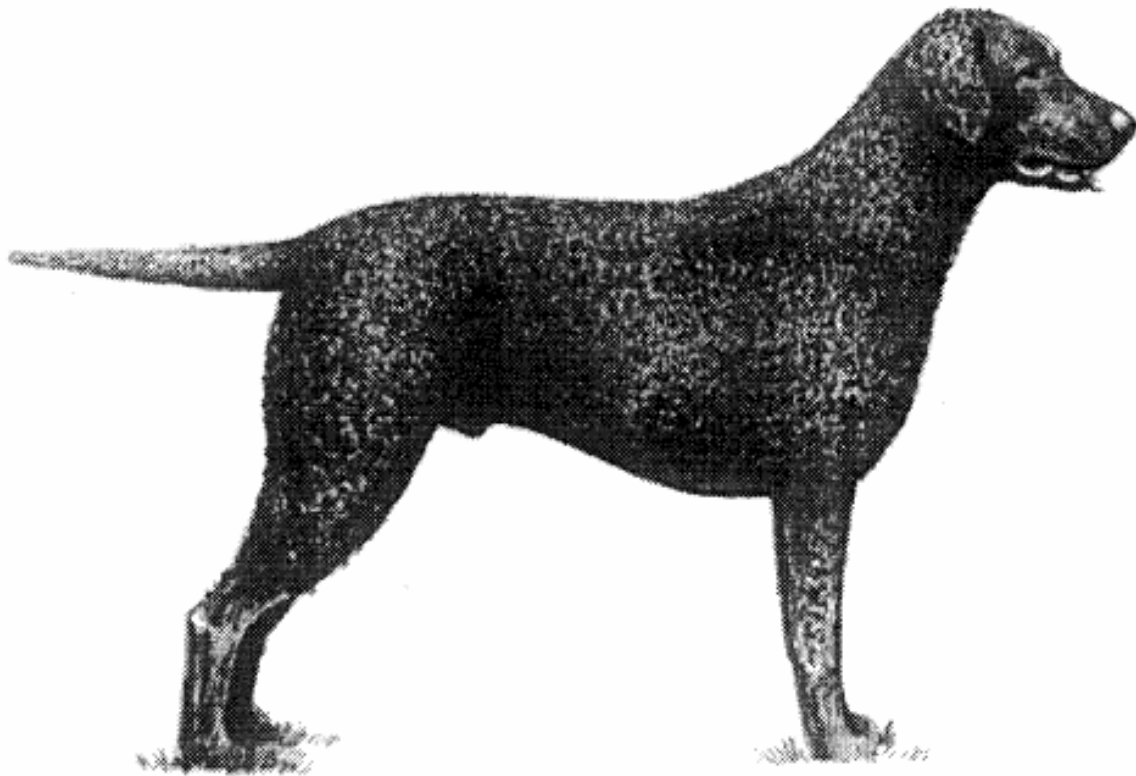
Produced by

**The Curly Coated Retriever Association
of New South Wales Inc.**

Kennel Club, London Standard, Revised July 1999
Revised Standard adopted in Australia May 2002
F.C.I. Standard No: 110

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BRIEF HISTORY

This smartly upstanding, multipurpose, hunting retriever is recognised by most canine historians as one of the oldest of the retrieving breeds. Developed in England, the curly was long a favourite of English gamekeepers. Unlike other retrieving breeds, Curlies were bred as a dual purpose dog used by gamekeepers, not only as a gundog, but also as a guard dog. A type of Curly was in existence back in the 1600's; this has been established from old sketches and paintings, but his ancestors will forever remain a mystery. Some theories are that it descended from the 16th century English Water Spaniel. Some even suggest that Setter and Pointer blood were also introduced. Whatever their origin, the Curly Coated Retriever remains a gentle, affectionate dog that retains its past breeding. It is easy to imagine our lovable Curly a century ago, guarding the estate of its master or following close at heel the gamekeeper who so lovingly bred and trained it, diving into icy waters, or retrieving a bird from thickets that surely slow up other retrievers.

- **GENERAL APPEARANCE:**

Strong, upstanding dog with a degree of elegance. Distinctive coat.

A key word in the Standard is UPSTANDING. If you get the correct structure of a tall ELEGANT dog with that aloof appearance, then you cannot fail to get an UPSTANDING dog.

Standing at 67.5 cms (27 ins) for dogs and 62.5 cms (25 ins) for bitches, the Curly is the tallest of the retrievers. His strength is in his head, compact body, well sprung ribs and depth of brisket, together with his bell boned legs. If the Curly looks weedy in any way, then he does not fulfil these requirements.

His size and build create an outline of flowing curves, from the slightly arched, moderately long neck, through obliquely placed shoulders, into a short level back, and over a slightly sloping croup. His temperament, carriage and attitude combine to give him a grace and elegance unique to the breed. As his name denotes, his main intrinsic feature is his distinctive coat, differentiating him from all the other retrieving breeds, and its quality is of paramount importance, whether he is used as a companion, in the field, for the showring or for working. This jacket of tight-knit curls gives him a smart, neat appearance and apart from the coat, in silhouette alone, he is a CURLY.

- **CHARACTERISTICS:**

Intelligent, steady, reliable.

Of his many characteristics, his courage and endurance are of particular note, which combined with his steadiness and reliability, make him an ideal companion at home, on the bench, or in the field. He is wickedly smart and highly trainable with patience and understanding, for he is a slow maturing dog. A good Curly will go on and on, no matter how tough the going is.

- **TEMPERAMENT:**

Bold, friendly self-confident and independent. May seem aloof.

The Curly Coated Retriever is a bold, friendly, self-confident dog whose independence and discerning intelligence may give the impression that he is aloof. In general, the Curly is not an eager tail-wagger, like his other retriever cousins, but reserves such responses for family and friends. However, he is a willing worker who enjoys learning, and will usually keenly accept a challenge. The Curly is eager and courageous in the field, at home he is calm and affectionate, but will guard his territory well. The Curly's independence of mind is one of the traits which we Curly devotees find so attractive. It has been called stubbornness, pig-headedness and many other things, and his training needs to be done with firmness, but gentleness, from an early age. In the showring he should stand steady to all examinations – reluctance in a well-socialised dog should be penalised.

- **HEAD AND SKULL**

Head wedge-shaped in both side and front profiles. In proportion to body size. Slight stop. Foreface and skull equal length. Planes of skull and muzzle parallel. Nose black in blacks and brown in livers.

The overall expression should be one of kindness with intelligence. The head, which does not fully develop until about the third year, should balance with the rest of the body. It is long, well proportioned and wedge shaped when viewed from either angle, side or front, with a reasonably broad, flat skull and practically no stop when viewed from the front.

However, the positioning of the eyes, together with the eyebrows, gives a stop effect when viewed from the side. The head is smooth i.e. not covered in curls. The curls commence at the back of the skull, although some dogs have them commencing across the top of the skull and along the cheek (both are correct). Underneath they commence at the back of the lower jaw. The muzzle is long and strong, with strong jaws enabling the dog to effortlessly carry game. Some breeders prefer the upper plane of the muzzle to be level, while others prefer a slight rising of the nasal bones directly behind the wide, full nostrils. Either of these head types are acceptable and have no bearing on the working capacity of the dog. It should have a fully pigmented nose, black on blacks and brown on livers. The lips, although the tightest fitting of the retrievers, should not be snipy; the taper ends mildly, neither acutely pointed nor bluntly squared off, but rather slightly rounding at the bottom.



- **EYES**

Large, not prominent, oval shaped, obliquely set. Dark brown in blacks. In livers brown tone to blend with coat colour.

The eyes have the appearance of being almond shaped and are large, but not rounded or prominent and should give a kindly expression and, because of the shape of the head, will be slightly obliquely placed. They are protected by the brows which indicate a slight stop. It is important that the colour be dark enough in order to give a kindly expression. Expression is usually said to be an indicator of temperament, and this is why it is important. Yellow eyes, prominent eyes, loose haws, and eyes that are too large or too small and detract from the expression, are undesirable and should be viewed as faults.

- **EARS**

Rather small, set slightly above level of eye; lying close to head, covered with small curls.

The ears are short, a characteristic not always easy to breed, and are carried slightly forward. Ideally reaching no further than the inner corner of the eye. Covered with softer, more open curls than on the body, they frame the face, adding to the desired expression.



- **MOUTH**

Jaws strong and level with perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

The jaws are long, but not too long, so as to be inclined to be snipy. They should not have an excess of lip or cheek and are clean mouthed, with the flew just large enough to cover the mouth. The mouth is never wry.

- **NECK**

Strong and slightly arched, of medium length, free from throatiness and flowing freely into well laid back shoulders.

The neck is moderately long to enable the dog to swoop down without stopping, and retrieve his game. Purpose and function are most important in determining construction and form.

- **FOREQUARTERS**

Shoulders well laid back and muscular. Upper arm and shoulder blade approximately equal length. Forelegs straight with strong pasterns and set well under body.

The neck flows into well laid back shoulders which are muscular and deep without any hint of bossiness. The humerus is of sufficient length and laid back so that the elbow is beneath the wither. The chest should be deep and wide, allowing plenty of heart and lung room. The ribbing should come down level with the elbows; there must be sufficient width for the foreleg to reach out and not to make the dog gait wide. The forelegs should be straight with short, strong, flexible pasterns; the elbows are well placed under the brisket. A sufficiency of bone is essential and this bone should be round. Remember that the front assembly is the area of the dog which supports the weight when moving, turning and retrieving game, and should be devoid of all weakness.

- **BODY**

Chest deep with well sprung ribs, oval in cross section with brisket reaching elbow. Forechest visible. Ribs well back into short, deep and powerful loin. Slight tuck up to flank. Topline strong and level. The dog should be slightly longer in body, measured from point of shoulder to point of buttock, than in height from withers to ground.

The chest is decidedly deep and not too wide. While the impression of the chest should be of depth and not width, the chest is not pinched or narrow. THIS BREED IS SLOW TO MATURE AND YOUNG DOGS MAY NOT HAVE THE REQUIRED DEPTH and it is well to take this into consideration when judging. 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. A slight waist is evident before the rounded hindquarters which are very muscular and broad.

The dog is slightly longer in length from point of shoulder to rear projection of the upper thigh (*point of buttock*) than height from withers to ground. The dog is only slightly longer than its height, the body proportions are slightly off square. The Breed Standard has recently been amended to clarify this point, which incorrectly required the breed to be considerably longer than his height.

The topline is level with a slight flowing curve over the croup, to a tail set off the end of a sloping croup. It is important that there is length to the croup as this determines the width of the thighs.

- **HINDQUARTERS**

Strong, muscular. Moderate turn of stifle. Hocks well let down and well bent.

Strong and in balance with front angulation and overall structure. Thighs are powerful with muscling carrying well down into long and well developed second thigh. Width of thighs should be such as to give overall balance and a marked, but not exaggerated, bend of stifle. This should not be confused with straight or stilted stifles which will, inevitably, make the dog high in rear with a consequent weak movement. Hocks (rear pasterns) are strong and true. As a breed, they do tend to move close at the hocks, but should never be cow-hocked, sickle-hocked or bowed in or out. Drive in the hindquarters is needed both in and out of the water. Rear dewclaws are generally removed.

- **FEET**

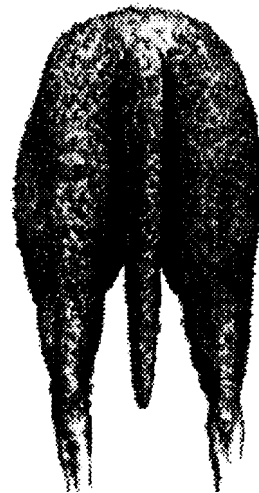
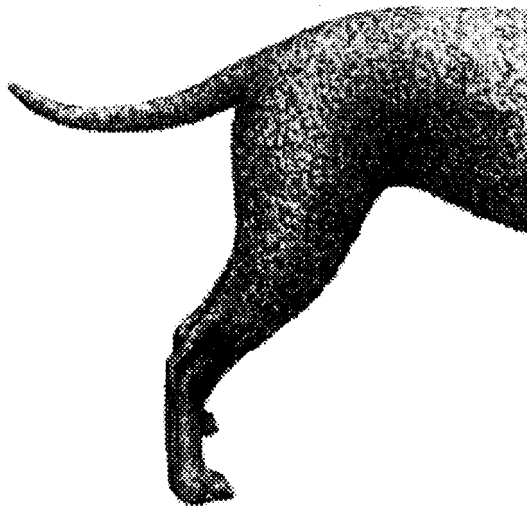
Round, tight, with well-arched toes.

The round, compact feet have thick, tough pads and are rather small for the size of the dog. Weak flat feet are useless, being unable to carry the weight and causing the dog to break down before the day's work is finished. Although not mentioned in the standard, webbing is considered a necessity to facilitate the water retrieving capabilities of the dog.

- **TAIL**

Flows from topline. Should reach approximately to hock; carried straight on a level with topline when moving

The tail should flow from a gently sloping croup and be set neither too high nor too low. It is a very strong tail which the dog uses with great force. The tail is thick and strong at the root and tapers gradually to the tip. A gay, crooked or kinked tail should be regarded as a fault. It should never be a rat tail, as in the Irish Water Spaniel. The tail should, throughout its entire length, be completely surrounded with short curls.



Rear view of tail showing it covered in curls.

- **GAIT/MOVEMENT**

Effortless, powerful gait with good extension and drive. Parallel movement. At speed legs tend to converge.

To fit its purpose in the field, the Curly should move with strength and vigour, yet be quick and agile. In the showing, 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 is free flowing, strong and smooth and in balance with the rear action. The front action should not be stilted or hackneyed. When viewed from front or rear, movement is true; the front legs turn neither in nor out and the hindlegs do not cross. Well developed, muscular thighs and strong hocks (rear pasterns) do their full share of work, contributing to the rear thrust and drive.

The legs tend to converge towards a centre line when trotting speed increases (termed single tracking). This natural tendency to converge should not be confused with weak movement.

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.

Curlys are also notorious for pacing at certain speeds.

Again, young dogs may not have the required strength in their hindquarters and, until it develops, a weakness may be apparent in this area.

- **COAT**

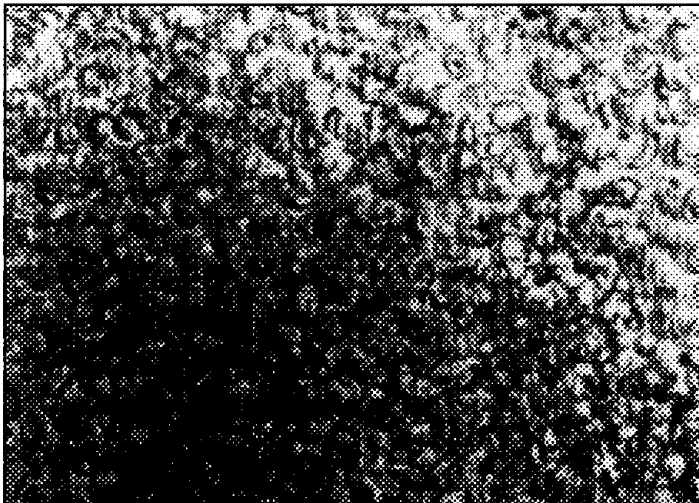
Body coat a thick mass of small, tight, crisp curls lying close to skin, extending from occiput to tip of tail; without undercoat or bare patches. Elsewhere hair smooth.

The coat is the most important feature of the breed. As the name states, it is a curly coated retriever; not a wavy coated retriever.

The body coat should be one 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. The dog should be covered from the occiput over the ears, down the body to the tip of tail and behind the legs with small, screw type, astrakhan curls. Elsewhere the coat should be short, smooth and straight, including on the forehead, face, front of forelegs and feet. There is a slight feathering on the back of the forelegs. The coat is naturally oily and should feel crisp and almost wiry to touch and be so thick that the skin may not be seen except when the coat is separated. A looser, more open curl is acceptable on the ears. As this breed is slow to mature, some dogs do not acquire a correct coat until about two years of age.

Youngsters may have a frizzy type of coat and this should be taken into consideration when judging. However, it is important that the coat is in no way open, loose, soft or patchy, as these are quite uncharacteristic of the breed. A bald patch or bald strips down the back of the legs, or a triangular, bald patch on the throat, should be severely penalised.

CORRECT COAT IS PARAMOUNT



Curlies do shed at certain times, especially bitches before coming into season, and it is quite noticeable, as there is no undercoat. A Curly that is out of coat should not be in the showing as the judge is unable to know whether the dog has a poor quality coat, or if it is just “out of coat”.

Most handlers prefer to dampen down the coat with water prior to entering the showing as this defines and enhances the curl.

- **COLOUR**

Black or liver.

There are two colours, solid dull black, or solid dark liver. A prominent white patch on the chest is unacceptable, but a few white hairs are allowable on an otherwise good dog. A good liver will be hard to distinguish from a black at dusk. Liver dogs do vary in intensity of colour and will fade, especially on the ears in summer if living outside, but again, the darker the liver the better. There should be no colour preference in the ring as both are equally acceptable.

Nails are dark in both black and liver dogs. White hairs on the feet or toes is unacceptable.

- **SIZE**

Ideal height at withers:

<i>Dogs</i>	<i>67.5 cms (27 ins)</i>
<i>Bitches</i>	<i>62.5 cms (25 ins)</i>

For a Curly falling outside this range, type and breed characteristics should on no account be sacrificed to size alone.

In order to ensure his fitness for his purpose in life and to achieve the desired overall balance throughout, the Curly Coated Retriever's bone structure should be in harmony with weight and height, neither spindly nor massive.

- **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.

Note: Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

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