

IRISH SOFT-COATED WHEATEN TERRIER

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 01/01/2019

ORIGIN

Ireland.

UTILISATION

Wheaten Terriers were always used by small farmers to kill vermin or help with the work about the farm. They were used for a long time in the difficult job of hunting badgers and otters.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The history of the Irish Soft-coated Wheaten Terrier has been somewhat obscured by its closeness to the other Irish Terrier breeds. The Wheaten is probably the oldest of the four breeds. Its existence, for at least 200 years, can be inferred from textual references to "soft-coated" dogs. The relation of the modern Irish Terrier to the Wheaten, though less well documented, appears to have been the result of deliberate breeding experiments. So the humble Wheaten probably has a fairly mixed ancestry. Despite the long history of the Wheaten, it wasn't until 1937 that the Soft-coated Wheaten was officially recognised by the Irish Kennel Club. The breed has grown steadily in popularity since, and is now well known world-wide.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

A hardy, active, short-coupled dog, well-built, giving the idea of strength. Not too leggy or too low to the ground.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Spirited and game. Good tempered. Most affectionate and loyal to his owners. Most intelligent. A trusty, faithful friend, defensive without aggression.

HEAD

In general, powerful without being coarse. Long, in good proportion to the body. Hair same colour as on body.

Cranial Region:

Skull: Flat and clean between ears, not too wide.

Stop: Defined.

Facial Region:

Nose: Black and well-developed.

Muzzle: Foreface not longer than skull.

Jaws and teeth: Jaws strong and punishing. Teeth large, regular, scissor, or level bite (i.e. edge-to-edge), neither undershot nor overshot.

Cheeks: Bones not prominent.

Eyes:

Dark to dark hazel, not too large, not prominent, well-placed.

Ears:

Small to medium, carried in front, level with skull. Dark shading on base of ear allowed and not uncommon, accompanied by a light wheaten-coloured overlay. This is the only area of the dog where undercoat is allowed. Rose or flying ears are objectionable.

NECK

Moderately long and strong, but not throaty.

BODY

Not too long. Length from withers to base of tail approximately the same as from ground to withers.

Back: Strong and level with even topline.

Loin: Short, powerful.

Chest: Deep, ribs well-sprung.

TAIL

Well-set, not too thick. Carried gaily but never over the back. The tail is docked so that two-thirds of its original length remains, assuming it is in proportion to the dog. An undocked tail is permitted.

[*refer note below]

LIMBS

Forequarters:

Shoulder: Fine, well laid back, muscular.

Forearm: Perfectly straight, viewed from any angle. Good bone and muscle.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: Well-developed with powerful muscle.

Thigh: Strong and muscular.

Stifle (knee): Bent.

Hock joint: Well let down, turned neither in nor out. Hind dewclaws should be removed.

FEET

Small, not spreading. Toenails preferably black, but varying dark colours allowed.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Straight action fore and aft, going and coming. Elbows tucked in. Side view: free, light, co-ordinated movement.

COAT

A single-coated dog.

- Texture soft and silky to the touch; not harsh. Young dogs excluded from this.
- Trimming permitted.
 - **Trimmed dogs:** Coat cut close at neck, chest, and skull, and left especially long over eyes and under jaw. Whiskers encouraged. Profuse feathering on legs. Body coat trimmed to follow the outline of the dog, but not sculpted. Tail trimmed close and neatly tapered.
 - **Untrimmed dogs:** The coat at its longest not to exceed 12,7cm (approx. 5"). Soft, wavy, or loosely curled with the sheen of silk. Under no circumstances should the coat be 'fluffed out' like a Poodle or an Old English Sheepdog. Dogs shown in this condition should be heavily penalised as they give a wrong impression of breed type.
- Special attention is drawn to puppy coat development. Pups are seldom born with the correct coat of maturity; care must be taken when assessing this point. They go through several changes of colour and texture before developing the mature adult coat. This usually occurs between 18 months and 2½ years. Pups are seldom born with the correct colour or texture coat. They can be born reddish, grayish, or sometimes, clear wheaten. The masks are generally black. Sometimes, there is a black streak down the centre back or black tips to the body coat. These dark markings clear away with maturity.

COLOUR

- A good, clear wheaten, with shades from light wheaten to a golden reddish hue.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 46cm – 48cm (approx. 18" – 19").

Females: Bitches somewhat less.

Weight:

Males: 18kg – 20,5 kg.

Females: Bitches somewhat less.

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.

*Regardless of the provisions of the current KUSA-adopted standard, docked or formerly docked breeds may be shown at all FCI- and KUSA-licensed shows in South Africa, whether their tails are docked or natural. Under no circumstances are Judges permitted to discriminate against exhibits on the grounds of docked or natural tails, and equal consideration for awards must be given to either.

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.

- Nervousness, viciousness.
- Nose any colour other than black.
- Undershot mouth. Overshot mouth.
- Over-all mature coat not clear wheaten colour.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Yellow eyes.
- Dull, thick, woolly, or cottony-textured hair.
- White coat. Brown coat.

Dogs carrying any of the above eliminating faults should never be bred from.

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FCI Standard No 40: IRISH SOFT-COATED WHEATEN TERRIER

FCI Classification: Group 3: Terriers

Section 1 – Large and medium-sized Terriers.
Without Working Trial