



Oct. 2010

## Irish Water Spaniel Fact Sheet

So you're considering adding an Irish Water Spaniel to your family! This fact sheet has been provided to help you better understand the needs and requirements of this rare breed. The primary goal for all of our puppies is that they are placed in homes where they will be a loved and cherished family member for their entire lives. Irish Water Spaniels want to be around their people and need to be family members. They are not suited to outdoor living. Our puppies must be raised as indoor dogs.

First off, let us address the subject of shedding/hair loss. Although Irish Water Spaniels do not shed heavily like a Golden Retriever or a Labrador Retriever, they do lose hair. You will not find hair all over your furniture or clothing, however, you will find little "tumbleweeds" of hair that tend to gather along the corners of your rooms. Irish Water Spaniels are a heavily coated breed and require regular grooming. They should be thoroughly brushed with a pin brush at least once a week, bathed every 6-8 weeks (more frequently if needed) and regularly trimmed with scissors, for a show coat; or clipped if keeping a shorter pet/field coat. This will keep your IWS' skin healthy and the coat in good condition and matt free.

Irish Water Spaniels are members of the Sporting Group, and as such require a fair amount of exercise. An hour or so a day of fast paced activity such as brisk walks, fetching a ball, hiking, swimming, etc. should be sufficient to keep your dog in good physical condition. If you're looking for a "couch potato" this is not the breed for you! Dog activities such as obedience, agility, dock-diving, tracking and field work,

are all great activities for adult Irish Water Spaniels. But please note, activities that require a constant strain or consistent pounding on the joints, such as agility, jumping, jogging with your dog on hard pavement, extended lengths of time catching Frisbees or chasing tennis balls, should be strictly avoided until the puppy is at least 18 months old. Failure to do so can lead to bone spurs, stress fractures, arthritis, and/or hip dysplasia. We strongly discourage you from participating in Flyball. Although this is great fun, and the dogs seem to enjoy it, we know of several dogs who have incurred permanent spinal and shoulder injuries as a result of the repetitive, high impact contact and pivoting required of this sport.

Also, we'd like to stress how important it is to socialize, socialize, socialize. Irish Water Spaniels can be shy if they are not well socialized at a young age. Your puppy will have been exposed to many, many things, and many, many people by the time you bring him home. However, as he goes to his new home his "world" is now drastically changing so continued socialization is vital. We highly recommend enrolling your puppy in a puppy kindergarten class at around 12 to 16 weeks of age. This will give your puppy the

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opportunity to meet lots of new people and also give him the chance to meet and play with other puppies in a monitored, safe, controlled environment. We also highly recommend continuing with professional/formal training classes to the next level at 6-9 months of age. Puppies can go through a "fear imprint period" somewhere around 6-14 months of age, so continued socialization will help ensure your puppy gets through that.

As we previously mentioned, attending training classes will give your puppy an opportunity to be around other dogs in a monitored, safe, controlled environment; teach your puppy good puppy manners; and offers the important benefit of having professionally trained people to

help you and your puppy get off to a great start. The time you invest in your puppy now will pay off when he/she becomes an adult dog. Preventing an unwanted behavior is far easier than having to correct an unwanted behavior. Remember in all your training the key to having a great dog is plenty of daily exercise and mental stimulation. Always try to set yourself and your pup up for success!! To quote a reputable training center "A TIRED dog is a good dog, an EXHAUSTED dog is a GREAT dog!!!!"

Please feel free to call us anytime you have any questions!

Mindy Garbarino  
148 Fairview Avenue  
Port Chester, NY 10573  
Home: (914) 937-4947,  
[mgarbarino1@optonline.net](mailto:mgarbarino1@optonline.net)  
Cell: (914) 419-3270

Kim Kezer  
86 High Street  
Amesbury, MA 01913  
Home: 978-388-1295  
[kim@kezer.net](mailto:kim@kezer.net)  
Cell: 617-974-4781