

POLISH HUNTING SPANIEL

(Polski Spaniel Myśliwski)

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ORIGIN: Poland.

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UTILIZATION: Hunting dog, type of flushing dog, used for birds and small game, occasionally predators. It is also an excellent tracking and retrieving dog. Works with passion in thickets on the land as well as in reeds and rushes chasing water birds.

FCI-CLASSIFICATION: Proposal: Group 8: Retrievers - Flushing Dogs - Water Dogs
 Section 2 : Flushing Dogs
 With working trial

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY: The first mention in Polish literature about hunting with spaniels comes from the 19th century. They accompanied pedestrian hunters in walks and hunts for the selected game, searching and flushing ducks in rushes as well as retrieving. Different breeds of spaniels were brought to the territory of what was Poland at that time together with French and English hounds imported for par force hunting. The dogs which were mainly used were Springers and Cocker Spaniels but also single Sussex and Field Spaniels.

At the beginning of the 20th century August Sztolcman wrote of them: *"...they could not move too far away from the hunter".* That's very important, as *...the task of the spaniels isn't to uselessly point to birds in the thickets but rather flushing them without pointing; flushing birds out of the hunters shooting range would be pointless".* That they formed one working type is proved by Sztolcman's statement where it is also written: *"All those breeds serve one purpose and without much damage they could merge into a one, intermediate breed..."*

Far off in Siberia members of the well known Kozięł-Poklewski family were hunting with spaniels and breeding them. The Sussex Spaniels were bred by the Pole Emeryk Nowicki living in Novoukrainka (a town now in Ukraine) from where they spread to Poland and into Russia.

The most well-known person was Princess Izabella Radziwiłł who was breeding spaniels under the "IWA" kennel name in the Mankiewicz estate in the region of Polesie. She imported many valuable Springer Spaniels including the most precious ROLICK of Harting – the English Champion and winner of Field Trials in 1930. The Princess owned Springer and Cocker Spaniels from the famous British kennel "of Ware" run by H.S.Lloyd and probably also Welsh Springer Spaniels. General Carton de Wiart, while residing in Mankiewicz, was also importing there Springer Spaniels from England. The kennel survived until 1939. After the outbreak of war, the dogs were seized and deported deep into Russia. Tales are still told today about their outstanding working abilities.

French breeds of dogs were less known. Stefan Błocki in 1933 wrote of them: *"The French dogs appear in Poland occasionally and mainly on the lands of former Russian partition. They are generally more delicate than the English and German dogs and require acclimatization."* Their coats were most often brownish red roan with patches or white markings. It was due to the colour of the animals from the foundation stock which was often brown with patches that was liked by hunters because it was similar to the colours of the forest [well camouflaged] and therefore hardly visible by the chased game.

In the early 1980's, the abundance of small game and difficulties with supplies resulted in increased interest in hunting dogs of small breeds. The spaniels proved to be just what was needed. At that time Dr. Andrzej Krzywiński, a scientist, naturalist, hunter and judge of hunting trials who ran the kennel "z Szerokiego Boru" became interested in spaniels. He was especially keen on the local types which had been preserved on the

former Eastern Borderlands of the Republic of Poland that had been used here and there in hunting and which matched the old descriptions passed down from generation to generation by hunters.

In the breeding program conducted since the 1990s the Polish Spaniels were selected for working abilities, temperament, hunting passion and the exterior appearance.

GENERAL APPEARANCE: Medium-sized dog of compact built providing great mobility and resistance for difficult working conditions mainly in fields, meadows, rushes, bogs and water. The dog is fairly strong boned in the limbs, its ears hanging and covered with fringes of longer hair. Feathering is present also on the tail, belly and back of the legs. The coat colour is most frequently chocolate roan with patches (brown with brown nose) of different shades, less often black roan. Fawn tan markings sometimes occur. The characteristic feature is the white tip of the tail.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS: A moderate sized dog (allowing him to move unnoticed in dense bushes and tall grasses), rectangular built with a ratio of height at withers to length of the body at 9:10-12. Bitches may be slightly longer. The ratio of length of muzzle to length of the skull is 1:1. Limb length from ground to elbow is equal to half the height at the withers. The medium length neck appears longer due to the well defined withers.

BEHAVIOUR/TEMPERAMENT: Balanced and self-possessed. Courageous and active at work. Capable of an excellent, tireless work in difficult terrain and in the water. Intelligent and easy to train. When scenting the game the dog crouches and crawls, waiting for the command to flush it by jumping and barking. The Polish Hunting Spaniel does not show aggression but may be wary towards strangers. Excellent hunting dog, good companion on walks and watch dog. Likes contact with people and familiar children.

HEAD: Noble, quite large but in proportion to the body.

CRANIAL REGION

Skull: Same length as the muzzle but slightly convex, the occiput well defined.

Stop: Slightly pronounced.

FACIAL REGION

Nose: black or brown, according to the coat colour; large, protruding ahead of upper lip. The nostrils wide open and mobile.

Muzzle: Well filled, deep and somewhat blunt. The nose bridge straight. The area below the eyes is well filled in and nicely chiselled.

Lips: The upper lip is fleshy, slightly pendulous, well overlapping the lower lip which is quite lean, in colour corresponding to the colour of the coat. Corners of the mouth well defined, with pronounced fold.

Jaws/Teeth: Teeth white, quite large. Jaws fairly broad with almost parallel corresponding rows of premolars and molars, which at the incisor region are set in a slightly rounded arc. The bite natural (scissors bite, pincer bite acceptable). Full dentition desirable but not required.

Cheeks: Quite lean, filled, visibly chiselled below the eyes, merging gently into the cranial region of the skull.

Eyes: Medium sized, not too deeply set, almond or triangular-shaped, of friendly expression. The white of the eye is not visible. Colour from light to dark hazel corresponding to coat colour. The eyelids fairly thick, well fitting to the eyeball.

Ears: Hanging, not too broad at the base (which is parallel to the top line of the skull), lying close to the cheeks. The length of the ear usually reaches the nose. Set at the level of the outer eye corner or slightly above. The ear lobes broaden slightly from the base towards the gently rounded tip. Covered by fairly long hair forming fringes. When the dog is working or alert the ears are mobile and carried slightly higher.

NECK: Medium length, well muscled with oval cross-section, well fitted into the ribcage. The upper line of the neck is extended by the withers. The skin on the neck is lean, not forming folds nor dewlap.

BODY:

Top line: Smooth, not broken or visibly arched.

Withers: Well defined, gently merging into the neck and the back. In males higher and more pronounced.

Back: Straight, neither saddled nor arched; fairly broad and well muscled.

Loin: Broad, muscular, of medium length. Slightly arched loin permissible. In older, actively hunting dogs, the back may be slightly depressed.

Croup: Fairly broad and muscular, straight or sloping very gently to the base of the tail.

Chest: Deep (in adult dogs often reaching below the elbow), of fairly long brisket, visibly extending to the rear, very capacious, with long and oblique ribs. The length of the body results from the length of the ribcage.

Underline and belly: only slightly tucked-up, flanks filled and quite short.

TAIL: Medium length, set not too high, reaching at least the hock joint, covered with moderately dense hair, often ended with a light tip or so-called "tracer". At the bottom a plume forming sparse and not too long fringes. When the dog is at rest, the tail is carried low and curved slightly upwards; in action it may be carried a bit higher than the top line.

FOREQUARTERS :

General appearance: Seen from the front straight and parallel. The distance from the elbow to ground is equal to the half of the height at the withers.

Shoulders : Quite short and oblique, well muscled, close-fitting to the body. The angle of the shoulder joint is not very open.

Upper arms: About the same length as the shoulder blades or shorter, set obliquely back. Together with shoulders are closing gently to the sides of the ribcage.

Elbows: Loosely attached to the body, not turning in nor out, set parallel with each other and with the middle axis of the body; constitute the beginning of parallel forearms.

Forearms: Straight, lean, of fairly strong bone, without protuberances, of oval cross-section, longer than upper arms.

Carpus (Wrist): Lean, compact and smooth, without traces of deformation and excessive protuberances.

Metacarpus (Pastern): lean, of a thickness corresponding to the wrist and forearm, seen from the side straight or only slightly sloping forward.

Forefeet: The toes rather long, elastic, little arched, with large, thick and firm pads. The nails quite thick, short, matching the coat colour. On the toes and between them are longer hair which form so called "slippers".

HINDQUARTERS :

General appearance: Seen from the rear straight and parallel with each other (parallel lines connecting the ischial and heel tuberosity on adequate side of the dog). When seen from the side they are set slightly "behind the dog" and well angulated.

Thigh: Not too long, set wide apart, very well muscled.

Stifle (Knee): The stifle joint lean and well pronounced with marked angulation.

Lower thigh: About the same length as the thigh or shorter; well muscled.

Hock joint: Well marked, lean, without protuberances, with well pronounced angulation.

Metatarsus (Rear pastern): Medium length, lean, smooth and elastic, vertical to the ground.

Hind feet: compact, slightly oval-shaped, the toes shorter than in forefeet, little arched and elastic. The nails thick, short, matching the coat colour. The pads large, thick and firm; longer hair between toes.

GAIT / MOVEMENT: Movement when trotting should be free, flexible in joints, agile and parallel. The limbs move freely, presenting fairly long stride, but should not be lifted high above the ground. The movement must be economical. When working with a hunter, the dog moves easily and quickly, low above the ground, on bent legs, crouching and sitting on the ground, alternately with sudden changes of direction, stopping or springy jumps.

SKIN: Not too thick, without folds or wrinkles, not forming dewlap, well fitting to the body, all over the surface covered with hair of different length.

COAT:

HAIR: medium length, with undercoat, but not too long on the head and body. The hair straight, soft, resistant to atmospheric conditions, covering all the body. Longer hair forms fringes on ears, outer and back side of limbs, forechest, knee fold, bottom side of the belly and the plume on the tail. The hair shows no tendency to curl or form waves.

COLOUR: Most often roan with patches of different size and shape. Most prevalent is a chocolate colour (brown with brown nose) of different shades; occasionally black roan. Specimens with a predominance of white background with brown or black patches and slight roaning occur rarely but are typical. There also can be an occurrence of dogs with fawn tan markings. The characteristic feature is the white tip of the tail.

SIZE:

Height at withers: males: 43 - 48 cm +/- 2 cm
 females: 39 - 44 cm +/- 2 cm

Weight: 12-26 kg

FAULTS : Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog and its ability to perform its traditional work.

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS :

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities shall be disqualified.
- Lack of the type required in the breed standard

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.

ANATOMICAL FEATURES



