

# The American Water Spaniel

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### Background

American Water Spaniels were developed during the early 19th century in the United States and originated along the Fox and Wolf Rivers. They were bred to be able to hunt on land or in water. Breeds involved with the development of the American Water Spaniel included the English Water Spaniel, the Irish Water Spaniel, the Curly Coated Retriever, Native American dogs, the Poodle, and the Sussex Spaniel.

Over the years the breed's numbers began to dwindle for three primary reasons: a reduction in the duck population, an evolution of hunting styles, and an influx of hunting dogs after World War II. The new dogs including setters, pointers, and other spaniels who specialized in hunting.

Fred J. Pfeifer; a doctor from New London, Wisconsin; saved the breed by setting up kennels. The American Water Spaniel was made the state dog of Wisconsin in 1985.

The American Water Spaniel was recognized by the American Kennel Club in 1940.

### Sizing up

- Weight: 25 to 45 lbs.
- Height: 15 to 18 inches
- Coat: Double, curly topcoat
- Color: Shades of brown-black
- Life expectancy: 10 to 13 years

### What's the American Water Spaniel like?

The American Water Spaniel is the definition of a family dog. He's calm, loving, alert and very easygoing. Despite being calm he does have energy reserves and demands a lot of exercise. His alert nature makes him a

great watchdog but he does tend to bark a little more than you may want him to; you can improve this behavior by training early and consistently.

The American Water Spaniel, during training, responds best to positive reinforcement. Harsh words and negativity will make him lose interest and fall into stubbornness. Be patient, American Water Spaniels mature a little slower than most other breeds.

The American Water Spaniel's coat needs to be brushed two to three times per week. Always use a comb first to prevent and remove mats and tangles.

### Health

The American Water Spaniel is generally a healthy breed but watch for any of the following:

- [Cataracts](#)
- Progressive retinal atrophy
- [Hypothyroidism](#)
- [Allergies](#)
- [Epilepsy](#)
- [Diabetes](#)
- [Hip dysplasia](#)

### Takeaway Points

- The American Water Spaniel is an excellent watchdog.
- The American Water Spaniel is great with children.
- The American Water Spaniel is an outdoorsy kind of dog and would make an ideal companion for someone who likes to hike, jog, or bike.
- The American Water Spaniel would make a great hunting buddy.

*If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian -- they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.*