



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB<sup>SM</sup>

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## Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### ***AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB CELEBRATES IRISH DOG BREEDS IN SPIRIT OF ST. PATRICK'S DAY***

**New York** – In honor of St. Patrick's Day on Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, the American Kennel Club celebrates seven purebred dogs of Irish heritage that are AKC registrable or are in the AKC miscellaneous class. Additional information, including the full breed standards, links to Parent Club web sites and video clips of each breed, is available at [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org).

♣ **The Irish Setter** is a likable dog: friendly, loving, loyal, and protective. An active, aristocratic bird dog, rich red in color, substantial yet elegant in build, he enjoys the company of children. In fact, he takes a while to grow up himself. He's usually about three years old before he settles into adulthood. He likes plenty of room to run, vigorous exercise, and loving attention. The earliest ancestors of the Irish Setter were not solid red; in fact, they were red and white.

The Irish Setter is a member of the Sporting Group and was first recognized by the AKC in 1878.

♣ Of great size and commanding appearance, the **Irish Wolfhound** --tallest of all dogs-- is remarkable in combining power and swiftness with keen sight. Despite his size, this shaggy-coated sighthound has a peaceful and quiet personality. He is affectionate and loves to be with people. He makes a good pet because he is quiet indoors, after he has outgrown his puppy years. In just six months, these puppies weigh about 100 pounds.

Irish Wolfhounds are called, interchangeably, "Irish dogs," "Big Dogs of Ireland," "Greyhounds (or Grehounds) of Ireland," "Wolfdogs of Ireland," "Great Hounds of Ireland." Irish Wolfhound is the more modern name.

By the year 391 A.D., the breed was known in Rome, when the first authentic mention of it was written by the Roman Consul Quintus Aurelius, who had received seven of them as a gift which "all Rome viewed with wonder."

The Irish Wolfhound is a member of the Hound Group and was first recognized by the AKC in 1897.

♣ **The Irish Terrier** is one of the oldest of the terrier breeds. First record of the Irish Terrier being shown as a recognized breed dates back to 1875 in Glasgow, Scotland.

His temperament reflects his early background: he was family pet, guard dog, and hunter. He is good tempered, spirited and game. A loyal and friendly dog, he'll hardily adapt to any situation, which proves his deep loyalty to his owner. Not only will he be an enthusiastic playmate for children, he'll guard them and the home with fierce determination and pluck.

The Irish Terrier is a member of the Terrier Group and was first recognized by the AKC in 1885.

♣ **The Irish Water Spaniel** presents a picture of a smart, upstanding strongly built sporting dog. Great intelligence is combined with rugged endurance and a bold, dashing eagerness of temperament. Distinguishing characteristics are a topknot of long, loose curls, a body covered with a dense, crisply curled liver colored coat, contrasted by a smooth face and a smooth "rat" tail. In the late 1100s, the breed was known as "Shannon Spaniels," "Rat-Tail Spaniels" or "Whip-Tail Spaniels." A dog of this breed - Champion Poole's Ide Skylark – was awarded the Sporting Group Winner at the 2003 AKC/Eukanuba National Championship.

The Irish Water Spaniel loves people and becomes deeply attached to his family. He is cautious around strangers. Because of his size and devotion to the family, he makes an impressive watchdog.

The Irish Water Spaniel is a member of the Sporting Group and was first recognized by the AKC in 1878.

♣ **The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier** enjoys games, especially with children. Most take pleasure in meeting strangers, whether people or other animals. He will greet friends with great joy, and loves to go places with the family. The Wheaten is a quick learner, with a steady mind, and likes plenty of exercise every day.

The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier is a medium-sized, hardy, well-balanced sporting terrier, square in outline. He is distinguished by his soft, silky, gently waving coat of warm wheaten color.

Of special note is the Wheaten's connection to St. Patrick's Day. The first Wheaten appeared in a show ring at the Irish Kennel Club Championship Show on March 17, 1937, and the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America was founded on March 17, 1962.

The Soft Coated Wheaten is a member of the Terrier Group and was first recognized by the AKC in 1973.

♣ **The Kerry Blue Terrier** originated in Ireland and is a hardworking breed that has been used to hunt on land and water, to guard homes and farms, to kill rodents, and even to

herd and drive sheep and cattle. He has also been used in England as a police dog, for trailing and guarding. A dog of this breed - Champion Torums Scarf Michael - was awarded Best in Show at the 2002 AKC/Eukanuba National Championship.

The Kerry is an all-round working and utility terrier. The breed was used in Ireland and England for hunting small game and birds, and for retrieving from land and water.

The Kerry Blue is a member of the Terrier Group and was first recognized by the AKC in 1922.

♣ **The Glen of Imaal Terrier** -- "There is a glen, Imaal, in the Wicklow Mountains that has always been, and still is, celebrated for its terriers." This 19th-century reference is to the beguiling Irish breed we now know as the Glen of Imaal Terrier. Initially bred to rid the home and farm of vermin, and hunt badger and fox, these rugged dogs also had a unique task for which they were expressly designed to perform; they were turnspit dogs. The turnspit was a large wheel which, when paddled by the dog, would turn a spit over the hearth -- a canine propelled rotisserie, if you will. Game and spirited with great courage when called upon, otherwise the Glen is gentle and docile. Although generally less easily excited than other terriers, the Glen is always ready to give chase.

The Glen is a member of the Miscellaneous class.

♣ The other native breeds of Ireland are the Kerry Beagle and the Irish Red & White Setter. The latter is enrolled in AKC's Foundation Stock Service.

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The American Kennel Club (AKC), founded in 1884, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of purebred dogs. The AKC maintains the largest registry of purebred dogs in the world, oversees the sport of purebred dogs in the United States, and along with its 4,500 licensed and member clubs, educates the general public about responsible dog ownership. More than 15,000 competitions for AKC-registered purebred dogs are held under AKC rules each year including conformation, agility, obedience, tracking, herding, lure coursing, hunt tests, and field and earthdog trials. Affiliate AKC organizations include the AKC Canine Health Foundation, AKC Companion Animal Recovery and the AKC Museum of the Dog. For more information, visit [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org).