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Dog Breeds: Meet the Irish Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier

🕒 May 25, 2022 🔖 Committees, Partner News, Scientific

Staying up to date with common, let alone rare, health risks in susceptible dog breeds can be difficult. In this regular feature, our Educational Partner, the [International Partnership for Dogs \(IPFD\)](#), signposts resources on a particular breed and highlights breed-specific diseases

Meet the Irish Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier



IPFD's latest in the Get a GRIHP! series offers a [Globally Relevant Interactive Health Profile on the Irish Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier](#)¹. This relatively healthy breed has a lifespan of generally 12-15 years of age; many are active and agile well into older ages. Wheaten terriers are not a common breed; they are listed as a vulnerable breed by the Kennel Club, UK with fewer than 300 registered dogs per year; in the USA they have only come close to cracking the top 50 most popular breeds (see Figure 1). As terriers, they need good training, and to be kept active. As shown in the GRIHP article, like most terriers, the Wheaten has a rate of Veterinary Events (VCE) similar or very slightly higher than that of All Breeds. And, happily, the median age at first VCE was 7.9 years of age for ISCWT. The most common causes of morbidity are neoplasia and renal conditions¹.



Most countries have breed clubs that are actively reviewing health conditions. Genetic diversity is important, as for any less common breed. Required, recommended, and recognized conditions are listed by country (See Figure 1), but most of the conditions listed are not overly common. See IPFD's recent highlights on a paper by WSAVA's Hereditary Disease Chair, Dr. Jerold Bell on Degenerative Myelopathy²; this test may be relevant as an exclusion test for individual dogs, but, as for other breeds, should generally not be used as a significant breeding tool. Interestingly, recent work suggests that Wheatens are among the breeds which are most sensitive to noises, a condition which is being shown to be highly heritable^{3,1}.

For the right owner, with a fenced backyard, Irish Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers can be a great pet - enthusiastic, people friendly, adventurous and inquisitive.

Irish Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers - Health Screening Summary - by country									
R1-Mandatory for registration; R2-Recommended; R3- Recognized									
Condition	Ireland	UK	US	Finland	Sweden	Norway	Netherlands	France	Germany
Hip dysplasia	R2	R2	R2	R2	R2	R2	R2	R1	R1
Elbow dysplasia	R2			R2					
Eye Exam	R2	R2	R2	R2	R2		R1	R2	R2
PLE / PLN	R2	R2	R3	R2	R2	R2			R2
Renal dysplasia			R2	R3	R2	R2			
Degenerative myelopathy *	R2	R2	R3	R2					
Microphthalmia with Multiple Ocular Defects - DNA test - RBP4			R3	R2	R2		R2		R2
Character tests			R3	R2	R2	R3	R2	R2	R2
Genetic diversity		R2		R2	R3		R1		

Irish Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Registrations

AKC - ISCWT Registrations

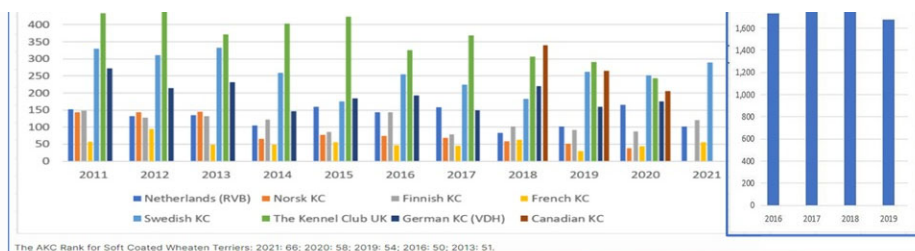


Figure 1: This well-recognized breed is relatively uncommon in most countries. * Degenerative Myelopathy testing is unlikely to be relevant in this breed. See reference, below.

References

1. Get a GRIHP! on Irish Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers <https://dogwellnet.com/content/health-and-breeding/breeds/breed-specific-health-reports/get-a-grihp-on-irish-soft-coated-wheaten-terriers-r775/>
2. Correcting the confusion around Degenerative Myelopathy <https://dogwellnet.com/blogs/entry/236-correcting-the-confusion-around-degenerative-myelopathy/>
3. Salonen, M., Sulkama, S., Mikkola, S. et al. Prevalence, comorbidity, and breed differences in canine anxiety in 13,700 Finnish pet dogs. Sci Rep 10, 2962 (2020). <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-59837-z>

The International Partnership for Dogs (IPFD) is a non-profit working for dog health, well-being, and welfare. This article has been prepared by its Veterinary Science Officer, Dr Brenda Bonnett, DVM PhD.



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