

Hunting Style of the Irish Water Spaniel

The Irish Water Spaniel is a versatile, all-purpose hunting dog, as adept at finding and retrieving upland game birds as it is at retrieving waterfowl. Training and field experience can affect the degree to which the IWS exhibits the hunting style described below. The following is an overview of the typical characteristics shown by an IWS while hunting upland game.

The IWS will cover ground efficiently and at a moderate pace, allowing it to maintain its endurance throughout a day in the field. Due to its size, the IWS is capable of covering a large field in short order. The IWS possesses an excellent nose, strong drive and great intelligence and will use both ground and air scent to find and flush game. The IWS will generally maintain a reasonable working distance, quartering gun to gun if trained to do so, although windshield wiper-like quartering may not be typical. Rather than spending time in unproductive areas, it will focus on those areas that are more likely to hold birds, showing no reluctance to enter even the most dense cover.

After finding game, the IWS may pause, hesitating as it attempts to locate the bird using sight or scent. A determined drive toward the bird then completes the flush. Both hard and softer flushes are equally acceptable. The IWS should show no reluctance to retrieve to the handler from either land or water.

The IWS are excellent markers and water retrievers, showing eagerness to enter the water with entries varying from deliberate to bold. They will often times find the most expedient route to the bird and back to the handler.