



Rescue Guide: Is It An Otterhound?

Since there are not many Otterhounds in the world (in 2012, there were an estimated 600 Otterhounds, globally), Otterhounds often get mistaken for other dog breeds in rescue environments. This guide is designed to help determine if a dog is an Otterhound, and if yes, who you can contact to make sure the Otterhound is properly cared for and re-homed.

Some key facts about Otterhounds:

- **Size:** Otterhounds are large dogs - adult Otterhounds are usually 70 to 110 lbs., but can range anywhere from 60 to 130 lbs. Otterhounds are also 23-28 inches tall at their shoulder.
- **Coat:** Otterhounds have shaggy, coarse coats, which can be almost any color (see below). An Otterhound's fur can be anywhere between 2-6 inches in length. Otterhounds will not have a silky-coat like an Irish setter or a short coat like a Labrador.
- **Coat Color:** Otterhounds can come in many color combinations, but the most common colors for an Otterhound are black & tan (can be light gray and blonde with a "saddle"), wheaten/blonde, red grizzle, liver & tan (can vary from medium dark brown to very light), black (or almost black with lighter markings on the head and feet), and white or off-white with patches (may be very faint).
- **Head:** Adult Otterhounds have large heads, which are described as long, but not wide.
- **Ears:** Very long, low-set ears - the ears themselves are long and will have long hair; the ears are low-set meaning that the ear attaches fairly far down on the side of the head rather than on top like an Airedale or higher up on the head like a Golden Retriever.
- **Eye color:** Some variation of brown or hazel, never blue.
- **Feet:** Otterhounds have large, webbed feet.
- **Tail:** Otterhounds have a long tail with the same (or coarser) texture as the coat. A happy Otterhound will generally carry their tail up.
- **Voice:** Otterhounds will often bay in addition to barking, which is a prolonged deep and resonant sound that is different than the clipped nature of a bark or the high pitch of a dog howl.
- **Drinking Style:** Otterhounds generally don't just lap water, but rather immerse themselves in it. It is not uncommon for an Otterhound to place their entire head (with a good portion of the ears) into a water bowl, often resulting in their beard carrying and dripping water everywhere.

If you think you have an Otterhound, please contact the Otterhound Club of America (OHCA) rescue coordinators at rescue@otterhound.org for assistance. The OHCA is committed to preserving this rare breed and will make every effort to ensure a rescue Otterhound is properly cared for and re-homed.

Sample Pictures of Otterhounds:

An adult Otterhound. Note the size, head and ear length.



The tan dog on the left is a lightly built, short eared Otterhound; the black mixed breed on the right is known to NOT be any part Otterhound.



Mixed Breed



The color alone doesn't tell you - this one below IS an Otterhound



Check ear length - this Otterhound's ears are not very long (for an Otterhound, anyway)!



Labradoodles are not Otterhounds or even scent hounds. Below are some labradoodles.



Many nice dogs in shelters may be labeled as Otterhounds as those pictured below. However, they probably have no Otterhound in them.



Young Otterhounds



Young Otterhounds. Coats will be shorter, but ears will still be long.

