

The following is a brief history of the American Whippet Club's stance regarding the improperly named Longhaired Whippet.

In 1982-1983, the Board of Directors of the American Whippet Club (AWC) approved a special committee to examine questions raised by a breeding experiment conducted by Walter Wheeler in which Wheeler reported that he had been able to produce purebred, longhaired Whippets. The Committee requested and received information from 36 breeders in the US and Great Britain. It also consulted experts in canine genetics, received data from the American Kennel Club (AKC) and other sources including Walter Wheeler and examined photos taken by AWC Committee Chair Dr. Charles Billings during his visit to Wheeler's home.

The Committee concluded that these animals, regardless of their origin, differed materially and substantially from the approved Standard of the Whippet breed, from the animals produced by all other Whippet breeders, and from the classic purebred Whippet as known worldwide. The Committee also concluded that these differences were so substantial that the longhaired animals must be considered to be an emerging but separate and distinct breed of coated miniature sighthound not withstanding the fact that a major part of its primal bloodlines may have come from the documented Whippet genetic pool.

Because of these findings, the Committee recommended that the approved Standard of the Whippet breed be amended to impose a disqualification for longhaired animals. This was passed and changed.

They also found that a substantial number of these animals were registered with the AKC as purebred Whippets. The linking of Wheeler's bloodlines in published breed records posed a serious potential threat to the classic Whippet so the Committee petitioned AKC requesting that registration of certain dogs bred by Wheeler and represented to be purebred "longhaired Whippets" be cancelled. The Board of Directors of the AKC concurred and the registration of 45 litters and 82 individual dogs were removed from AKC's Stud Book.

In recent years a gene (MDR1) responsible for drug sensitivity has been identified in several herding breeds, including the Shetland Sheepdog (assumed by many to be the source of the long coat in Wheeler's dogs). This gene has recently been identified in the designer breed, the Silken Windhound (SW), a mixture of Borzoi and Whippet. Many of the foundation Whippets used in the creation of the SW originated from Wheeler's kennel and SW breeders now readily admit that his dogs were not purebred Whippet. Because the MDR1 gene is not found in either Whippets or Borzoi, this further proves the inclusion of other breeds in the creation of the original "Longhaired Whippet" as defined by Walter Wheeler.

Based on the research done in the early 80's by the AWC Special Review Committee, and genetic proof of the MDR1 gene in offspring from Wheeler's dogs, the AWC feels that the proponents of this designer breed need to stop promoting these animals as a variety of Whippet as well as change their name so that there is no implication that they are a variety of a recognized dog breed.

Further, the AWC Code of Ethics for members states:

"Each member should understand and accept the breed standard as presented by the American Whippet Club and should, whenever breeding a litter or allowing the use of a stud dog, direct all possible efforts to producing individuals of quality that conform to that standard.

All other puppies or adults offered for sale shall be registered, or eligible for registration, and the breeder or owner of the dog shall be in full accordance with the rules of the American Kennel Club regarding record keeping, registration, sale, and transfer of dogs."

In line with this, regardless of today's culture of rapidly appearing mixed-breed designer dogs, be they puggles or labradoodles, or a small, longhaired sighthound cross, the Board of the AWC is tasked:

(a) to unite those people interested in the breeding, showing, racing, coursing and generally improving the Whippet breed for the purpose of exerting effectually a combined influence upon all matters affecting the breed;

(b) to urge members and breeders to accept the standard of the breed as approved by the American Kennel Club as the only standard of excellence by which Whippets shall be judged.