

## Rare Breed Spotlight: The Schapendoes

**This veteran herder refuses to be forgotten.**

*Alice Bixler*

Take a cup of Polish Lowland Sheepdog, add 1/4 cup Puli, 3 tablespoons of Bearded Collie, 2 teaspoons of Bergamasco, a dash of Briard and a pinch of Old English Sheepdog. Stir well and voila – you have the Schapendoes. Historians debate whether this Dutch breed was a combination of other shaggy herding dogs or simply evolved from the same root stock that produced the better-known breeds. However, one look offers convincing evidence that it's part of the family.

### Breed development

The Schapendoes traces back to the 1800s. Wherever pastures and flocks of sheep were found in the Netherlands, Schapendoes were there working tirelessly and joyously. Breed numbers started to decline when sheep farmers began importing Border Collies from England to handle herding duties. By World War I, the Schapendoes was rarely seen.

But the breed had a friend in P.M.C. Toepoel, a Dutch inspector, publicist and canine authority who wanted the native Netherlands herder to survive. Often referred to as the founder of the Schapendoes, Toepoel headed a group of fanciers that began promoting the breed during World War II, and the Schapendoes population increased.

The Dutch breed club, the Vereniging De Nederlandse Schapendoes, formed in 1947, and the Schapendoes first appeared in dog shows that same decade. A breed standard was drawn up in 1954. Holland's hairy herders were provisionally recognized in 1952 by Raad van Beheer, the Netherlands kennel club, and in 1971, the breed was granted official recognition.

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