

Maine Coon Breed Advisory Committee Letter to Judges:

Concerns over Maine Coons on the GCCF Show Bench

In recent years we have seen a huge increase in importation of Maine Coons, many from Mainland Europe and we are finding that some of the imports, currently being shown and bred from, do not meet the GCCF standard. This is causing concern for both the BAC and judges.

They are being purveyed by some breeders as “modern”, “European” or “Russian” type and our much beloved balanced Maine Coons are being referred to as “old”, “Traditional” or “American” type. To protect our breed and its unique “look” we are now asking help from our judges.

What are we seeing that is incorrect?

1. Huge, outsized and very close set ears (less than an ear’s width apart in adults), often with extreme amount of tipping present, dominating the head.
2. Round or small deep set eyes.
3. Blue eyes (odd or both eyes blue) in cats that are not pure whites (Withhold all awards).
4. Eye set - Obliquely set eyes (oriental set) and/or very flattened upper eye lid (hooded) making the cat appear “slitty eyed” – losing the typical Maine coon expression.
5. Long narrow head, unfilled cheeks and lacking cheek breadth. (SOP - The head should be slightly longer than its width).
6. Extremely large muzzle and chin – dominating the head, losing balance. Also seeing an increase in undershot bites.
7. Short coat – not seasonal change related (being sold as ‘this enables the body to be seen more clearly and is better for maintenance’). We appreciate that young adults and kittens may have a shorter coat.
8. Spotted tabby pattern being registered as Mackerel tabby. Ticked tabby. Spotted and ticked pattern are not allowed in GCCF SOP and certificates/first place in kittens should be withheld.

It is vital that we retain the unique attributes of the Maine Coon and remember its origins as a large solid working cat with a coat that is capable of keeping the animal warm during cold winters. As a hunting cat with farm life background, we do expect large ears and a square muzzle with a firm chin but no one feature should dominate the rest of the cat - overall balance is the key.

The BAC are reviewing the SOP to make it easier for judges but this will take a little time. Meanwhile, if you see any of the above issues, please take the above points into consideration when placing Maine Coons in any class.

The MCBAC is holding a joint seminar with the Siberian BAC on Sunday 14th July 2024 at Mappleborough Green Village Hall and we welcome all judges and stewards to attend. For our full Maine Coon judges, your input on the day will help us to work towards producing a Standard of Points which covers the above issues and make it easy for judges to understand, and we look forward to seeing you there if you are able to join us.