

Cat

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This article is about the species that is commonly kept as a pet. For the cat family, see [Felidae](#). For other uses, see [Cat \(disambiguation\)](#).
"Cats" redirects here. For other uses, see [Cats \(disambiguation\)](#).

Chat	Chien	Cochon
1	2	3

The **cat** (*Felis catus*) is a [domestic species](#) of small [carnivorous mammal](#).^{[1][2]} It is the only domesticated species in the family [Felidae](#) and is often referred to as the **domestic cat** to distinguish it from the wild members of the family.^[4] A cat can either be a **house cat**, a [farm cat](#) or a [feral cat](#); the latter ranges freely and avoids human contact.^[5] Domestic cats are valued by humans for companionship and their ability to kill [rodents](#). About 60 [cat breeds](#) are recognized by various [cat registries](#).^[6]

1	POULET
2	CURY
3	FRAISE

The cat is similar in [anatomy](#) to the other felid species: it has a strong flexible body, quick [reflexes](#), sharp teeth and [retractable claws](#) adapted to killing small prey. Its [night vision](#) and sense of smell are well developed. [Cat communication](#) includes [vocalizations](#) like [meowing](#), [purring](#), trilling, hissing, [growling](#) and grunting as well as [cat-specific body language](#). A [predator](#) that is most active at dawn and dusk ([crepuscular](#)), the cat is a solitary hunter but a [social species](#). It can hear sounds too faint or too high in [frequency](#) for human ears, such as those made by [mice](#) and other small mammals.^[7] Cats also secrete and perceive [pheromones](#).^[8]

Female domestic cats can have kittens from spring to late autumn, with litter sizes often ranging from two to five kittens.^[9] Domestic cats are bred and shown at events as registered [pedigreed cats](#), a hobby known as [cat fancy](#). [Population control](#) of cats may be effected by [spaying](#) and [neutering](#), but their proliferation and the abandonment of pets has resulted in large numbers of feral cats worldwide, contributing to the extinction of entire bird, mammal, and reptile species.^[10]

Cats were first domesticated in the [Near East](#) around 7500 BC.^[11] It was long thought that cat domestication began in [ancient Egypt](#), where [cats were venerated](#) from around 3100 BC.^{[12][13]} As of 2021, there were an estimated 220 million owned and 480 million stray cats in the world.^{[14][15]} As of 2017, the domestic cat was the second-most popular pet in the United States, with 95.6 million cats owned^{[16][17][18]} and around 42 million households own at least one cat.^[19] In the United Kingdom, 26% of adults have a cat with an estimated population of 10.9 million pet cats as of 2020.^[20]