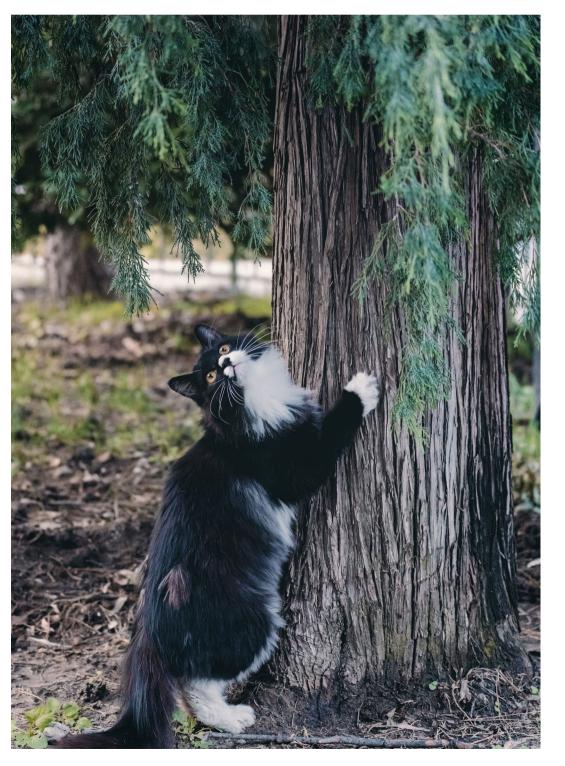


Sleeping, Observing, Wandering... All Day Long.

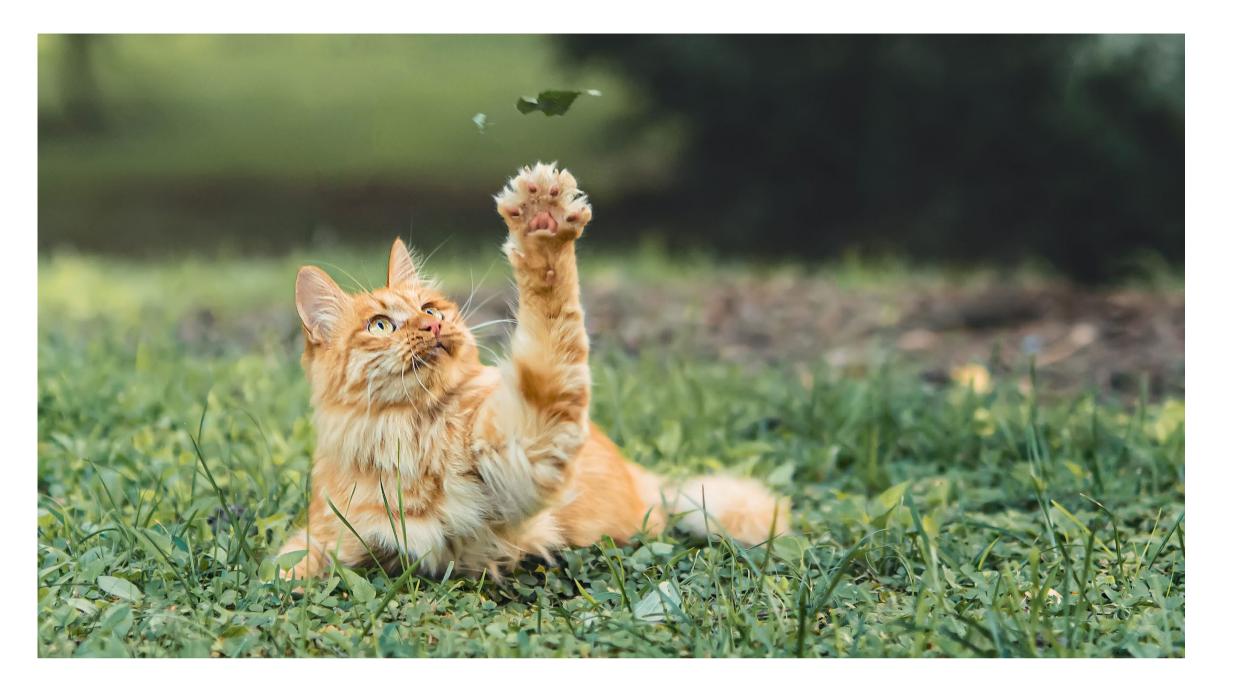




Cat

The cat(Felis catus) is adomestic species of smallcarnivorous mammal.[1] [2]It is the only domesticated species in the familyFelidaeand is commonly referred to as thedomestic catorhouse catto distinguish it from the wild members of the family. [4]Cats are commonly kept as house pets but can also befarm catsorferal cats; the feral cat ranges freely and avoids human contact.[5]Domestic cats are valued by humans for companionship and their ability to killrodents. About 60cat breedsare recognized by variouscat registries.[6]

The cat is similar inanatomyto the other felid species: it has a strong flexible body, quickreflexes, sharp teeth, andretractable clawsadapted to killing small prey like mice and rats. Itsnight visionand sense of smell are well developed. Cat communication includes vocalizations like meowing, purring, trilling, hissing, growling, and grunting as well ascat-specific body language. Although the cat is asocial species, it is a solitary hunter. As apredator, it is crepuscular, i.e. most active at dawn and dusk. It can hear sounds too faint or too high infrequency for human ears, such as those made by mice and other small mammals. [7] It also secretes and perceives 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 registeredpedigreed cats, a hobby known ascat fancy. Population controlof cats may be achieved 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. It was long thought that cat domestication began inancient Egypt, wherecats were venerated from around 3100 BC,[11] [12]but recent advances in archaeology and genetics have shown that their domestication occurred in Western Asiaaround 7500 BC.[13]

Etymology and naming

The origin of the English wordcat,Old Englishcatt, is thought to be theLate Latinwordcattus, which was first used at the beginning of the 6th century.[21]It was suggested that cattusis derived from an Egyptian precursor of Coptic sau, 'tom-cat', or its feminine form suffixed with-t.[22]The Late Latin word may be derived from another Afro-Asiatic [23] or Nilo-Saharan language. The Nubian word may be a loan from Arabic qa ~ qi .

However, it is "equally likely that the forms might derive from an ancient Germanic word, imported into Latin and thence to Greek and to Syriac and Arabic".[25] The word may be derived from Germanic and Northern European languages, and

3 types of cats 4

ultimately be borrowed from Uralic, cf.Northern Samigáðfi, 'femalestoat', and Hungarianhölgy, 'lady, female on Zoological Nomenclatureruled that stoat'; fromProto-Uralic*kädwä, 'female (of a furred animal). [26]

The Englishpuss, extended aspussyandpussycat, is attested from the tris catus, of the European wildcat (F. 16th century and may have been introduced fromDutchpoesor fromLow Germanpuuskatte, related toSwedishkattepus, orNorwegianpus,pusekatt. Similar forms exist in LithuanianpuižėandIrishpuisínorpuiscín. The etymology of this word is unknown, but it may havearisen from a soundused to attract a cat.[27] [28]

A male cat is called atomortomcat[29] (or agib,[30]ifneutered). A female is called aqueen[31](or amolly,[32][user-generated source?]ifspayed), especially in a cat-breeding context. A juvenile cat is referred to as akitten. In Early Modern English, the wordkittenwas interchangeable with the now-obsolete wordcatling.[33]A group of cats can be referred to as aclowderor aglaring.[34]

Taxonomy

Thescientific nameFelis catuswas proposed by Carl Linnaeusin 1758 for a domestic cat.[1] [2]Felis catus domesticuswas proposed byJohann Christian Polycarp Erxlebenin 1777.[3] Felis daemonproposed byKonstantin Satuninin 1904 was a black cat from the Transcaucasus, later identified as a

domestic cat.[35] [36]

In 2003, the International Commission the domestic cat is a distinct species, namelyFelis catus.[37] [38]In 2007, it was considered asubspecies,F. silvessilvestris) following results ofphylogeneticresearch.[39] [40]In 2017, the IUCN Cat Classification Taskforce followed the recommendation of the ICZN in regarding the domestic cat as a distinct species, Felis catus. [41] Evolution

Main article:Cat evolution

Skulls of a wildcat (top left), a housecat (top right), and a hybrid between the two. (bottom center)

The domestic cat is a member of the Felidae, afamilythat had acom-

mon ancestorabout 10–15million years ago.[42]Thegenus-Felisdivergedfrom other Felidae around 6–7million years ago. [43]Results ofphylogeneticresearch confirm that the wild-Felisspecies evolved throughsympatricorparapatric speciation, whereas the domestic cat evolved throughartificial selection.[44]The domesticated cat and its closest wild ancestor arediploidand both

possess 38chromosomes [45] and roughly 20,000 genes.[46] Theleopard cat(Prionailurus bengalensis) wastamedindependently in China around 5500 BC. This line of partially domesticated cats leaves no trace in the domestic cat populations of today.[47]

Domestication

See also:Domestication of the cat

A cat eating a fish under a chair, amuralin an Egyptian tomb dating to the 15th century BC

The earliest known indication for thet-



amingof anAfrican wildcat(F. lybica) wasexcavatedclose by a humanNeolithicgrave inShillourokambos, southernCyprus, dating to about 7500-7200 BC. Since there is no evidence of native mammalianfaunaon Cyprus, the inhabitants of this Neolithic village most likely brought the cat and other wild mammals to the island from theMiddle Easternmainland. [48]Scientists therefore assume that African wildcats were attracted to early human settlements in the-Fertile Crescentby rodents, in particular thehouse mouse(Mus musculus), and were tamed by Neolithic farmers. Thismutualrelationship between early farmers and tamed cats lasted thousands of years. Asagricultural practicesspread, so did tame and domesticated cats.[13] [6]Wildcats of Egypt contributed to the maternalgene poolof the domestic cat at a later time.[49]

The earliest known evidence for the occurrence of the domestic cat in Greecedatestoaround1200BC.Greek,Phoenician, Carthaginian and Etrus cantraders pirethey were introduced toCorsi-

caandSar-

abefore

the beginning of the 1st millennium.

familiar animals around settlements

inMagna GraeciaandEtruria.[52]By

the end of the Western Roman Em-

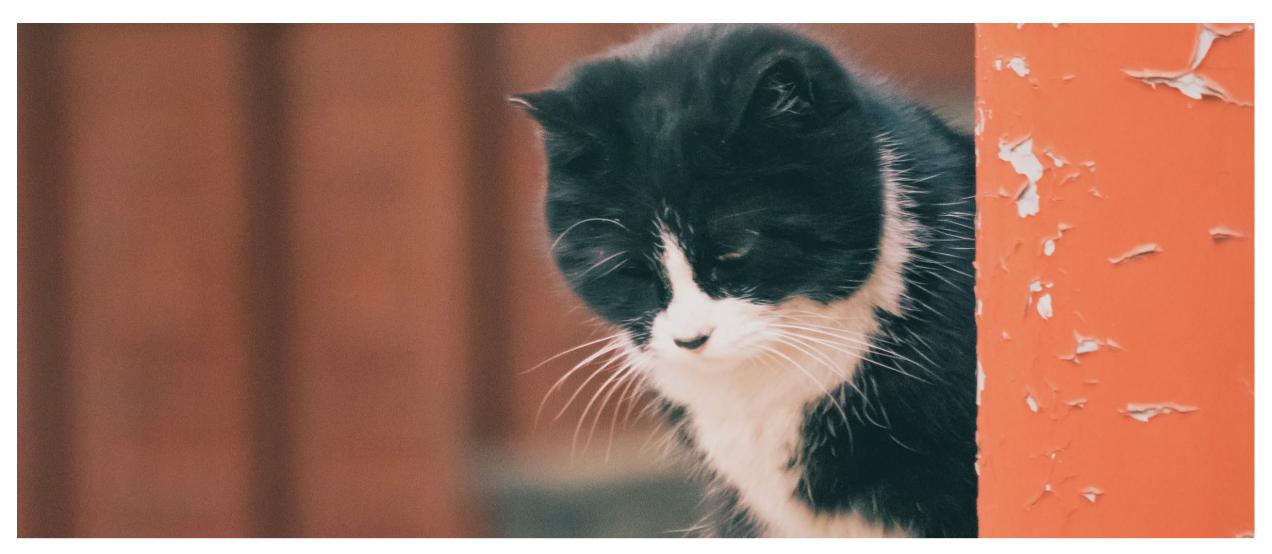
domestic cat lineage had arrived in

introduced domestic cats to southern During domestication, cats have un-Europe.[50]During theRoman Em- dergone only minor changes in anatomy and behavior, and they are still capable of surviving in the wild. Several dini- natural behaviors and characteristics of wildcats may havepre-adaptedthem for domestication as pets. These traits include their small size, social nature, obvious body language,

love of play, and high intelligence. CaptiveLeoparduscats may also display affectionate behavior toward humans but were not domesticated.[53]House cats often mate with feral cats.[54] Hybridisation between domestic and other Felinae speciesis also possible, producing hybrids such as theKellas catinScotland. [55] [56]

Development ofcat breedsstarted in the mid 19th century.[57] An analysis of the domestic catgenomerevealed that the ancestral wildcat genome was significantly altered in the process of domestication, as specificmutationswere selected to develop cat breeds. [58] Most breeds are founded on ran-[51] By the 5th century BC, they were dom-bred domestic cats. Genetic diversityof these breeds varies between regions, and is lowest in purebred populations, which show more than 20 pire in the 5th century, the Egyptian deleteriousgenetic disorders.[59]

aBaltic Seaport in northernGermany. Cat Thecat(Felis catus) is adomestic spe-



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As of 2021, there were an estimated 220 million owned and 480million stray cats in the world.[14] [15] As of 2017, the domestic cat was the second most popular pet in the United States, with 95.6million cats owned[16] [17] [18] and around 42 million households owning at least one cat.[19]In theUnited Kingdom, 26% of adults have a cat, with an estimated population of 10.9million pet cats as of 2020.

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