

Sleeping, Observing, Wandering...



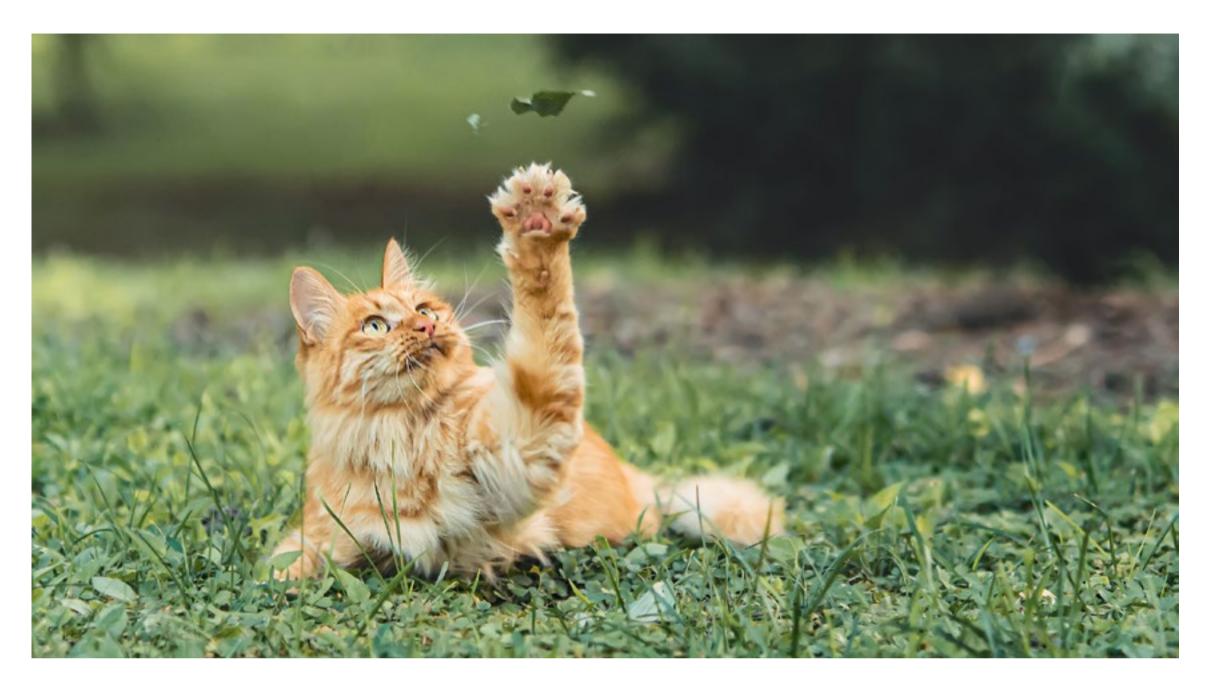


Cat

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 communicationincludesvocalizationslikemeowing, 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 iscrepuscular, i.e. most active at dawn and dusk. It can hear sounds too faint or too high infrequencyfor human ears, such as those made bymiceand other small mammals.[7]It also secretes and perceivespheromones.[8]

The cat(Felis catus) is adomestic species of smallcarnivorous

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 byspayingandneutering, 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 Asia around 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, 'tomcat', 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 kaddîska' wildcat' and Nobiinkadīs are possible sources or cognates. [24] 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 ultimately be borrowed from Uralic, cf. Northern Samigáðfi, 'femalestoat', and Hungarianhölgy, 'lady, female stoat'; fromProto-Uralic*käďwä, 'female (of a furred animal)'.[26] The Englishpuss, extended aspussyandpussycat, is attested from the 16th century and may have been introduced from-Dutchpoesor fromLow Germanpuuskatte, Main article:Cat evolution 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 by Johann Christian Polycarp Erxlebenin 1777.[3]Felis daemonproposed by Konstantin Satuninin 1904 was a black cat from the Transcauca sus, later identified as a domestic cat.[35]

In 2003, theInternational Commission on

Zoological Nomenclatureruled that the domestic cat is a distinct species, namelyFelis catus.[37] [38]In 2007, it was considered asubspecies,F. silvestris catus, of theEuropean wildcat(F. silvestris) 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**

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 acommon ancestorabout 10–15million years ago.[42] ThegenusFelisdivergedfrom other Felidae around 6–7million years ago.[43]Results ofphylogeneticresearch confirm that the wildFelisspecies evolved throughsym-

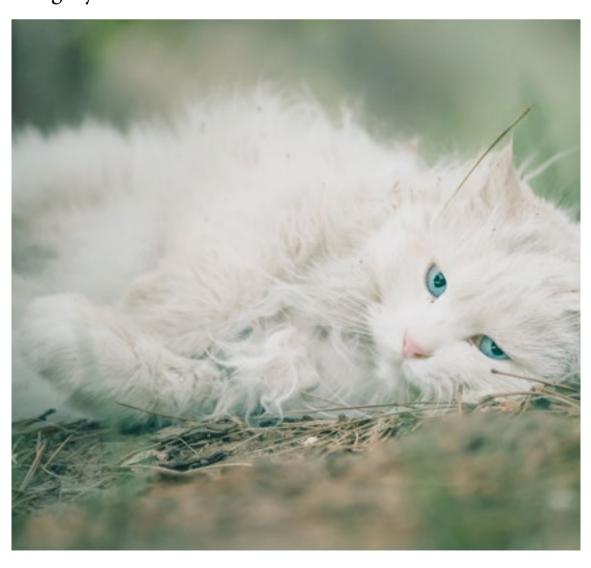
patricorparapatric speciation, whereas the domestic cat evolved throughartificial selection.[44]The domesticated cat and its closest wild ancestor arediploidand both possess 38chromosomes [45] and roughly 20,000 genes.[46]Theleopard cat(Prionailurus bengalensis) wastamedindependently in China around 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 thetamingof an African wildcat (F. lybica) wasexcavated close by a human Neolithic grave 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 the Middle 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 pool of the domestic cat at a later time.[49] The earliest known evidence for the occurrence of the domestic cat inGreecedates to around 1200 BC. Greek, Phoenician, CarthaginianandEtruscantraders introduced domestic cats to southern Europe. [50] During the Roman Empirethey were introduced to-CorsicaandSardiniabefore the beginning of the 1st millennium.[51]By the 5th century BC, they were familiar animals around settlements in Magna Graecia and Etruria. [52] By the end of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century, the Egyptian domestic cat lineage had arrived in aBaltic Seaport in northernGermany.[49] During domestication, cats have undergone only minor changes in anatomy and behavior, and they are still capable of surviving in the wild. Several natural behaviors and characteristics of wildcats may havepre-adapted them for domestication

as pets. These traits include their small

size, social nature, obvious body lan-

guage, 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 be-

on random-bred domestic cats. Genetic diversity of these breeds varies between regions, and is lowest in purebred populations, which show more than 20 deleteriousgenetic disorders.[59]

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tween mestic and other Felinae speciesis also possible, pro ducing hybrids such as the Kellas catin-Scotland.[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



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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 95.6 million 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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