

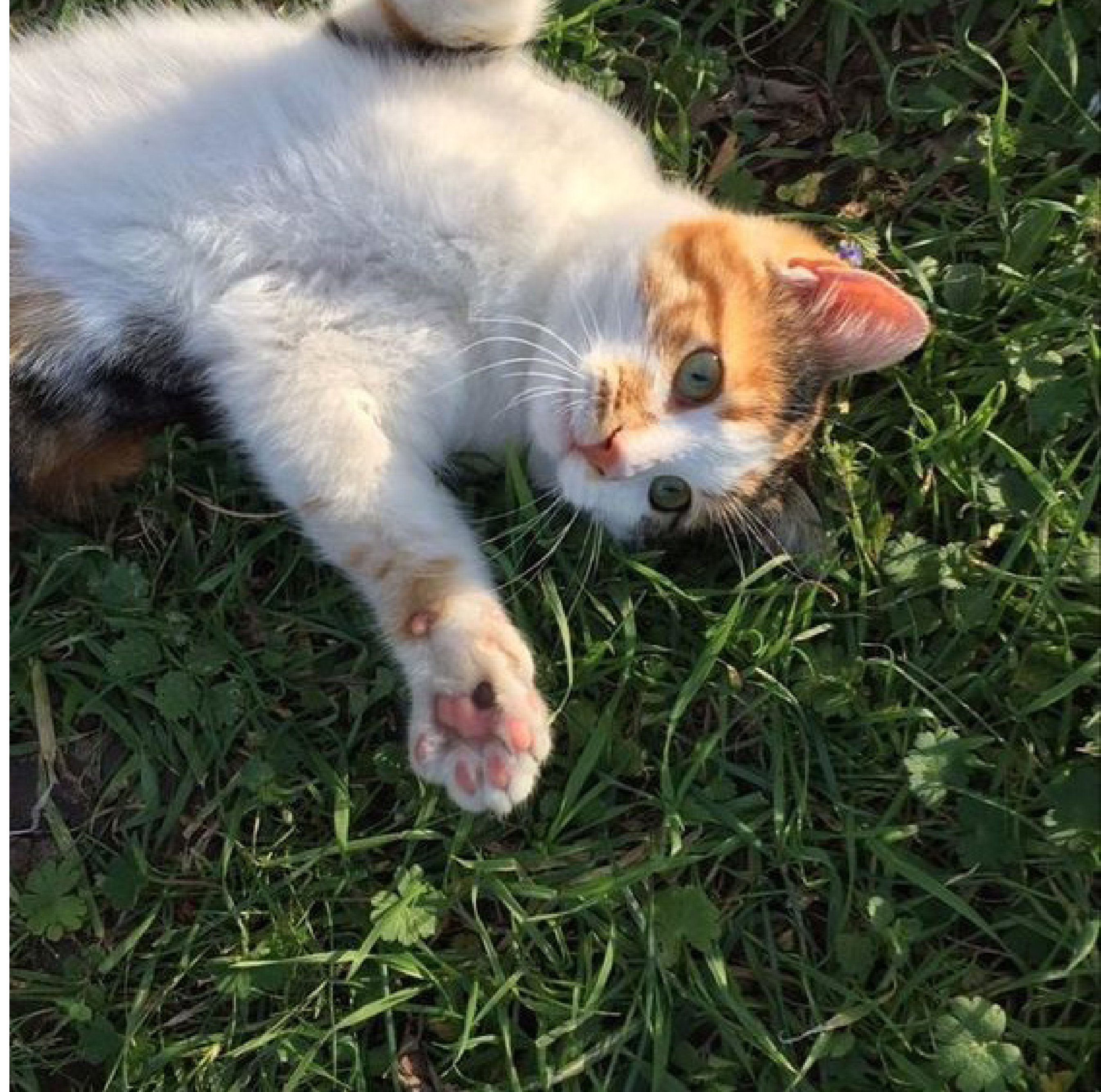
STAY HOME STAY UP TO DATE



Cat

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 commonly referred to as the domestic cat or house cat to distinguish it from the wild members of the family.[4] Cats are commonly kept as house pets but can also be feral cats; the feral cat 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]

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 like mice and rats. Its night vision and sense of smell are well developed. Cat communication includes vocalizations like me-



owing,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 infrequencyfor human ears, such as those made bymiceand other small mammals.[7] It also secretes and perceivespheromones.[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 byspayingand-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]

It was long thought that cat domestication began inan-cient Egypt, wher cats were veneratedfrom around 3100 BC,[11] [12]but recent advances in archaeology and genetics have shown that their domestication occurred in-Western Asiaaround 7500 BC.[13]

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 theUnited 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.[20]

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

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Development of cat breeds started in the mid 19th century.[57] An analysis of the domestic cat genome revealed that the ancestral wildcat genome was significantly altered in the process of domestication, as specific mutations were selected to develop cat breeds.[58] Most breeds are founded on random-bred domestic cats. Genetic diversity of these breeds varies between regions, and is lowest in purebred populations, which show more than 20 deleterious genetic disorders.[59] 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 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.[10]

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A cat with a purple and blue ribbon bow around its neck.

Thecat(*Felis catus*) is adomestic speciesof smallcarnivo-rous mammal.[1] [2]It is the only domesticated species in the familyFelidaeand is commonly referred to as the-domestic 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, an-dretractable clawsadapted to killing small prey like mice and rats. Itsnight visionand sense of smell are well devel-oped.Cat communicationincludesvocalizationslikeme-owing,purring, trilling, hissing,growling, and grunting as well ascats-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 infrequencyfor human ears, such as those made bymiceand other small mammals.[7] It also secretes and perceivespheromones.[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 ascats fancy. Population controlof cats may be achieved byspayingand-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]

It was long thought that cat domestication began inancient Egypt, wher cats were veneratedfrom around 3100 BC,[11] [12]but recent advances in archaeology and ge-netics have shown that their domestication occurred in-Western Asiaaround 7500 BC.[13]

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 theUnited 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.[20]

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 sug-gested thatcattusis derived from anEgyptianprecursor ofCoptic ⲩⲁⲩ, ‘tomcat’, or its feminine form suffixed with-t.[22]The Late Latin word may be derived from anotherAfro-Asiatic [23]orNilo-Saharanlanguage. TheNu-bianwordkaddiskaʼwildcat’ andNobiinkadisare possible sources or cognates.[24]The Nubian word may be a loan fromArabic قَا ~ قِي .

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 fromUralic, cf.Northern Samigádfi, ‘femalestoat’, andHungarianhölgy, ‘lady, female stoat’; fromProto-Uralic*kădŭä, ‘female (of a furred animal)’.[26]

The Englishpuss, extended aspussyandpussycat, is attest-ed from the 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]ifneu-tered). A female is called aqueen[31](or amolly,[32][us-er-generated source?][ifspayed), especially in a cat-breed-ing context. A juvenile cat is referred to as akitten. InEarly Modern English, the wordkittenwas interchangeable with the now-obsolete wordcatling.[33]A group of cats can be referred to as aclowderor aglaring.[34]

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Taxonomy

Thisscientific name*Felis catus*was proposed byCarl Linnaeusin 1758 for a domestic cat.[1] [2]*Felis catus domesticus*was proposed byJohann Christian Polycarp Erxlebenin 1777.[3]*Felis daemon*proposed byKonstantin Satuninin 1904 was a black cat from theTranscaucasus, later identified as a domestic cat.[35] [36]

In 2003, theInternational Commission on Zoological No-menclatureruled that the domestic cat is a distinct spe-

cies, namely*Felis 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 fol-lowed 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 acommon ancestorabout 10–15million years ago. [42]Thegenus*Felis*divergedfrom other Felidae around 6–7million years ago.[43]Results ofphylogeneticresearch confirm that the wild*Felis*species evolved throughsym-patricorparapatric speciation, whereas the domestic cat evolved throughartificial selection.[44]The domesticated cat and its closest wild ancestor arediploidand both pos-sess 38chromosomes [45]and roughly 20,000 genes.[46] Theleopard cat(*Prionailurus bengalensis*) wastamedinde-pendently in China around 5500 BC. This line of partially d ancestor arediploidand both possess 38chromosomes [45]and roughly 20,000 genes.[46]Theleopard cat(*Prion-ailurus bengalensis*) wastamedindependently in China around 5500 BC. This line of partially Thescientific name*Felis catus*was proposed byCarl Lin-naeusin 1758 for a domestic cat.[1] [2]*Felis catus domes-ticus*was proposed byJohann Christian Polycarp Erxlebenin 1777.[3]FWestern Asiaaround 7500 BC.[13]

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