

= Norwegian Forest cat =

The Norwegian Forest cat (Norwegian : Norsk skogkatt or Norsk skaukatt) is a breed of domestic cat originating in Northern Europe . This natural breed is adapted to a very cold climate , with top coat of glossy , long , water @-@ shedding hairs , and a woolly undercoat for insulation . Although this is uncertain , the breed 's ancestors may have been a landrace of short @-@ haired cats brought to Norway by the Vikings around 1000 AD , who may also have brought with them long @-@ haired cats , like those ancestral to the modern Siberian and Turkish Angora breeds . During World War II , the breed became nearly extinct until efforts by the Norwegian Forest Cat Club helped the breed by creating an official breeding program . It was registered as a breed with the European Fédération Internationale Féline in the 1970s , when a local cat fancier , Carl @-@ Fredrik Nordane , took notice of the breed and made efforts to register it . Currently , the Norwegian Forest breed is very popular in Norway , Sweden , Iceland and France .

It is a big , strong cat , similar to the American Maine Coon breed , with long legs , a bushy tail and a sturdy body . The breed is very good at climbing , since they have strong claws . The lifespan is usually 14 to 16 years , though kidney and heart diseases have been reported in the breed . Specifically in this breed , complex rearrangements of glycogen branching enzyme (GBE1) can cause a perinatal hypoglycaemic collapse and a late @-@ juvenile @-@ onset neuromuscular degeneration in glycogen storage disease type IV .

= = History = =

The Norwegian Forest cat is adapted to survive Norway 's cold weather . Its ancestors may include black and white shorthair cats brought to Norway from Great Britain some time after 1000 AD by the Vikings , and longhaired cats brought to Norway by Crusaders . These cats could have reproduced with farm and feral stock and may have eventually evolved into the modern @-@ day Norwegian Forest breed . The Siberian and the Turkish Angora , longhaired cats from Russia and Turkey , respectively , are also possible ancestors of the breed . Norse legends refer to the skogkatt as a " mountain @-@ dwelling fairy cat with an ability to climb sheer rock faces that other cats could not manage . " Since the Norwegian Forest cat is a very adept climber , author Claire Bessant believes that the skogkatt folktale could be about the ancestor of the modern Norwegian Forest breed . The name Norse skogkatt is used by some breeder and fancier organisations for the modern breed .

Most likely the ancestors of the Norwegian Forest cat served as ships ' cats (mousers) on Viking ships . The original landrace lived in the Norwegian forests for many centuries , but were later prized for their hunting skills and were used on Norwegian farms , until they were discovered in the early twentieth century by cat enthusiasts .

In 1938 the first organisation devoted to the breed , the Norwegian Forest Cat Club , was formed in Oslo , Norway . The club 's movement to preserve the breed was interrupted by World War II . Owing to cross @-@ breeding with free @-@ ranging domestic cats during the war , the Norwegian Forest cat became endangered and nearly extinct until the Norwegian Forest Cat Club helped the breed make a comeback by developing an official breeding program . Since the cat did not leave Norway until the 1970s , it was not registered as a breed in the Fédération Internationale Féline (FIFe) , the pan @-@ European federation of cat registries , until Carl @-@ Fredrik Nordane , a Norwegian cat fancier , took notice of the breed , and made efforts to register it . The breed was registered in Europe by the 1970s , and in the American Cat Fanciers Association in 1994 . In 1978 , it was recognized in Sweden , and in 1989 , they were accepted as a breed in the United Kingdom by the Norwegian Cat Club of Britain .

The Norwegian Forest breed is very popular in Norway and Sweden . Since 2003 , it has been the fifth most popular cat breed in France , where there are about 400 to 500 births per year .

= = Breed description = =

The Norwegian Forest Cat is strongly built and larger than an average cat . The breed has a long ,

sturdy body , long legs and a bushy tail . The coat consists of a long , glossy , thick and water @-@ repellent top layer and a woolly undercoat and is thickest at the legs , chest and head . The profile of the breed is generally straight .

The head is long with an overall shape similar to an equilateral triangle , a strong chin , and a muzzle of medium length ; a square or round @-@ shaped head is considered to be a defect . The eyes are almond shaped and oblique , and may be of any colour . The ears are large , wide at the base , and high set , have a tufted top , are placed in the extension of the triangle formed by the head , and end with a tuft of hair like the ears of the lynx . All coat colors are accepted except chocolate and lilac and the dilutions fawn and cinnamon . Since the cats have very strong claws , they are very good climbers , and can even climb rocks .

Norwegian Forest cats have a quiet voice but can develop a loud voice if kept in a house with a dog . They are friendly , intelligent , and generally good with people . The Norwegian Forest cat has a lot of energy and can be very demanding of attention . Those cats that live primarily outdoors become swift and effective hunters , but the breed can also adapt to indoor life . If bought from a registered breeder in the USA , they tend to cost from \$ 550 to \$ 800 . The cats usually live to be 14 to 16 years old . As they are heavy @-@ boned and tall , they require more food than most other domestic breeds . Males are considerably heavier and larger @-@ boned than females .

= = = Health issues = = =

There have been kidney and heart diseases reported in the breed . In an experiment directed by John C. Fyfe , Rebecca L. Kurzhaas , and others , it was concluded that a complex rearrangement in the breed 's Glycogen branching enzyme (GBE1) can cause both a perinatal hypoglycemic collapse and a late @-@ juvenile @-@ onset neuromuscular degeneration in glycogen storage disease type IV in the breed . This disorder , while rare , can prove fatal to cats that have it . There are DNA tests available for GSD IV , and it is highly recommended (some cat associations obligate their Norwegian Forest cat breeder members) to carry out the DNA test before using such animals for breeding . PawPeds provide a pedigree database which comes together with health programmes , through publishing each single cat 's test result , to provide useful information for breeders to make a well @-@ informed breeding decision . The breed has also been known to suffer from hip dysplasia , which is a rare , partially hereditary disease of the hip joint .

= = = Breed societies and clubs = = =

Norsk Skogkatt Society , UK
Norwegian Forest Cat Club , UK
Viking Cat Club , UK