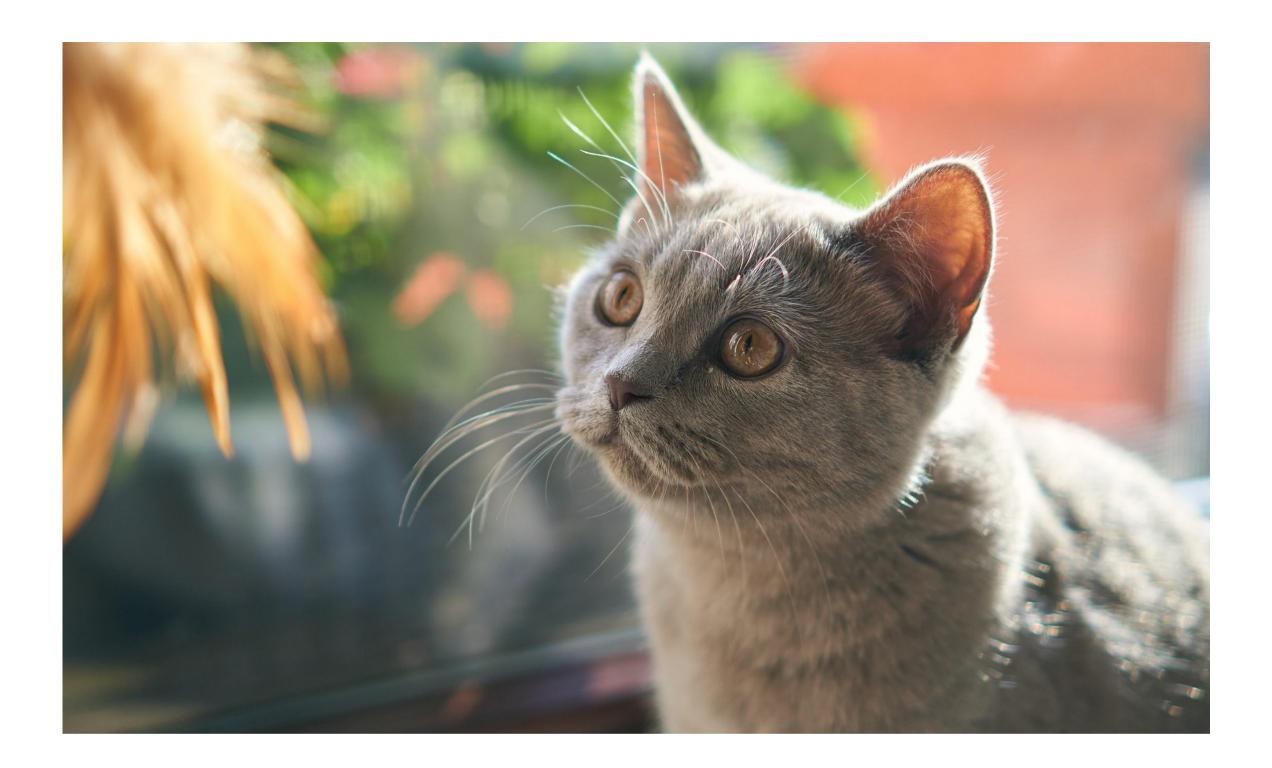


The Cat



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 catorhouse catto distinguish it from the wild members of the family. [4] Cats are commonly kept as house pets but can also befarm cats or feral 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 60 cat breedsare 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, andretractable 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 meowing, purring, trilling, hissing, growling, and grunting as well as cat-specific body language. Although the cat is a social species, it is a solitary hunter. As a predator, 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 registered pedigreed cats, a hobby known ascat 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] 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 inWestern Asiaaround 7500 BC.[13]

2021,there an estimated 220 milowned and 480million stray cats in the world.[14] [15] As of 2017,the domestic cat was the second most popular pet in theUnited States, 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

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Latinwordcattus, which was first used at the beginning of the 6th century.[21] It was suggested thatcattusis derived from an Egyptian precursor of Coptic

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au, 'tomcat', or its feminine form suf-

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. North-

loan fromAra

ern Samigáðfi, 'femalestoat', andHungarianhölgy, 'lady, female stoat'; fromProto-Uralic*käďwä, 'female (of a furred animal)'.[26]

The Englishpuss, extended pussyandpussycat, is attested from the 16th century and may have introduced been from Dutchpoesor fromLow Germanpuuskatte, related toSwedishkattepus, or-Norwegianpus, 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. InEarly Modern English, the wordkittenwas interchangeable with the now-obsolete wordcatling. A group of cats can be referred to as aclowderor aglaring.

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

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

Domestication

populations of today.[47]

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 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 the Middle Easternmainland.[48]

Scientists therefore assume that African wildcats were attracted to early human settlements in theFertile Crescentby rodents, in particular thehouse

tion, whereas the domestic cat evolved mouse(Mus musculus), and were throughartificial selection.[44] The tamed by Neolithic farmers. This mutualrelationship between

farmers early tamed and cats lasted thousands of years. Asagricultural prac-

ticesspread, 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-Greecedates to around 1200 BC. Greek, Phoenician, Carthaginian and Etruscantraders introduced domestic cats to southern Europe.[50]During theRoman Empirethey were introduced to Corsica and Sardinia before the beginning of the 1st millennium.[51] By the 5th century BC, they were familiar animals around settlements in-Magna GraeciaandEtruria.[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]

5 The Cat purring and meowing 6

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-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 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 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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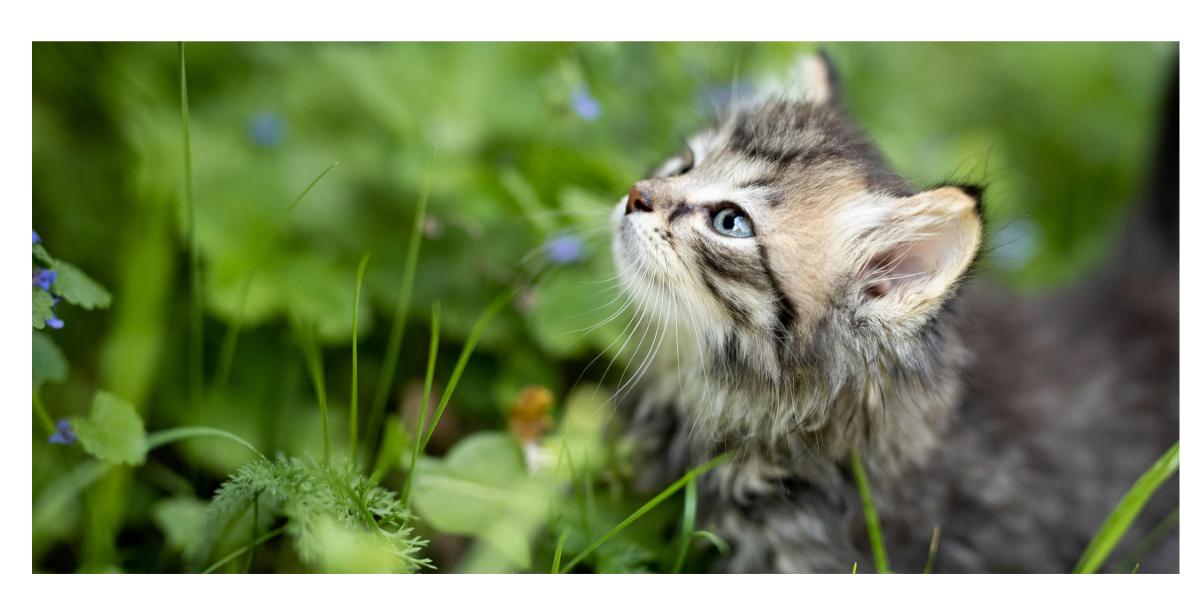
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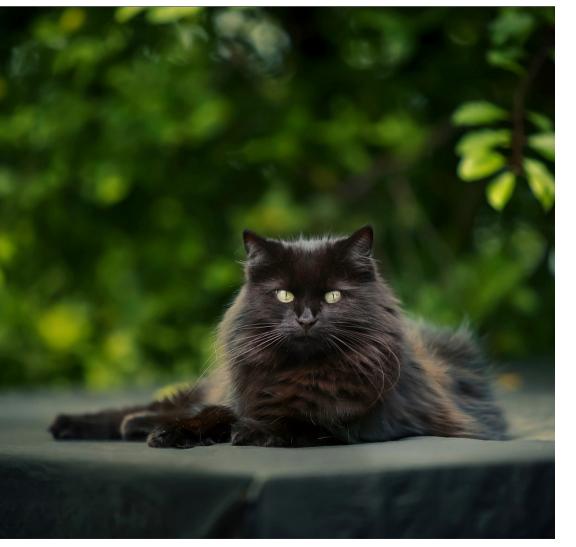
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