

ANIMALOLOGY: CATS AND OTHER FELINES

BY

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POPULAR CAT BREEDS

The Abyssinian is a very popular breed of cat. Although the exact origin of this cat is unknown, it was first officially recorded in 1871 in England. It was initially called the British Ticked cat. The Abyssinian wasn't 'fully incorporated' into the U.S. until the 1930s.

In addition, there are some physical similarities between this cat and the Ancient Egyptian cats. However, other theories point to South East Asia, the Indian Ocean, or a relation to the African wild cat. There's no reason for us to ponder about this. Let the experts deal with it.

The Abyssinian is a very intelligent, energetic, gentle, loving, and often distrustful of strangers, is social (with those it knows) and doesn't like to be left alone. It is slim, with large sized ears (must be cleaned on a regular basis) pointing slightly forwards, giving it an alert expression. The

coat is ticked. This cat can be trained to walk on leash. Abyssinians weigh 6 to 10 lbs.

The American Bobtail (Bobtail) was recently (2006) accepted for championship status by the Cat Fancier's Association (CFA).

The Bobtail is medium-large to large, highly intelligent, devoted and loving towards the whole family including dogs and other pets, has a wild cat and athletic appearance, a hunting gaze, muscular and is naturally bobtailed (naturally occurring short-tailed, 1 to 4 inches long). Also, it can be trained to play fetch and to be walked on leash. This cat is adaptable.

The Bobtail is devoted to its owner, has a dog like personality (the friendly and devoted part), and is recommended for persons who are in anguish or depressed. Don't worry you need not be in this category of mental state to have a Bobtail in your family.

Bobtails are easy going, well-behaved, and are sensitive to the mood of their owner. In addition, the American Bobtail is just as its name describes; a true American cat breed originating during the 1970s in the American Midwest.

The Bobtail may take up to 3 years to reach full maturity, comes in the short coated and long coated variety. Its coat is made to withstand severe temperatures. Short coated individuals need to be combed every 3 or 4 days, while the long coated need to be combed every other day. This cat breed is a product of nature. Bobtails weigh 7 to 16 lbs. sexual dimorphism is apparent in this cat breed.

The American Curl (Curl) is just that, an American breed of cat. This cat is known for its unusual looking ears that curve back and outwards, but should always be handled gently otherwise cartilage damage is possible. The curved ears are caused by a dominant mutation.

The curl is medium sized, very healthy, has a happy expression as a result of the shape of its ears, graceful, easy going, relatively quiet, loving and affectionate, good with children and other pets, and often follow their owner around the house. It may take up to 3 years for this cat to mature.

The original Curl was a long-haired stray female named Shulamith. This cat had unusual-looking ears. Shulamith was adopted by Joe and Grace Luga of Lakewood, California in 1981. Later, 2 of the 4 kittens were to later mature into curly eared cats. They were shown in Palm Springs in 1983. This look became popular immediately.

Curls are born with straight ears. The curling begins between 3 and 5 days after birth. It takes between 3 and 4 months for the ears to take their permanent form. Curls weigh 5 to 10 lbs.

The American Shorthair (ASH) is exactly as its name describes it as; it's a truly American breed. Although not specifically on the early pilgrims' ships' manifests, the ASH was nonetheless a passenger alongside the Pilgrims. Cats worked as protectors of food supplies (rodent killers) and of course were fun to have on the long and treacherous voyages. The recent ancestors of the ASH were from England.

Going back further in time the ancestors of the ASH were transported by the Roman invaders of England. As expected, they were 'employed' to help the protect food stocks of the invading army.

The ASH is medium-large, strong, sturdy, short-dense-coated, muscular, and has a solid bone structure.

The ASH is intelligent but may take up to 4 years to reach full maturity, is calm, a natural bird watcher, good with children and other pets and good natured. ASH weighs 8 to 15 lbs.

American Wirehair (AWH) cats are descended from a wirehair named Adam. Unfortunately, his siblings (5 others) didn't survive the mutation that 'manifested' the wirehair trait.

It all began on a farm in upstate New York in 1966. Adam was bred with other shorthaired cats. Proper breeding has created the AWH. The tips of the wirehair are hooked, and the overall coat is hard, dense, and springy.

The AWH is medium sized, active, quiet, independent, affectionate, playful, and can live with other animals and children. This cat is content to be on your lap or beside you. The AWH is social; people oriented.

The AWH is an overall healthy breed. The AWH weighs 8 to 15 lbs.

The Bengal is loved and awed by many people for its incredible markings, which resemble wild cats; their 'rosettes' are unique in the domestic cat world. If you love the look of jaguars, leopards and other marked cats but without the ferocity, danger, or large size the Bengal may be what you're looking for.

The Bengal is medium to large, sleek, very muscular, curious and intelligent, is playful outside of and in water, is lively, active and people oriented, usually gets along with other cats and animals, but some individuals may be a bit jittery upon initial meeting.

The breeding of Bengals began in the 1960s. An Asian cat was bred with a domestic shorthair. The Bengal weighs 7 to 18 lbs.

Birmans are often referred to as the sacred temple cats of Burma. This is a beautiful silky-coated cat and white gloved on all four feet and has white laces up the back of its hind legs.

Birmans are pointed (darker coloured on their faces, ears, paws, and tail). Their eyes are always blue.

The Birman traces its origin to the temples of Burma (the Republic of the Union of Myanmar). It was recognized as a breed in Britain in 1966. The following year it was recognized in the United States as a breed. The Birman is medium sized and weighs 8 to 12 lbs.

The British Shorthair traces its ancestry back to the Roman invasion of England. The cats were employed as sentries over food stocks guarding against rodents. In addition the cats were loved and pampered by 'at least some' of the Roman Soldiers.

British Shorthairs can attain a very large size, are compact, strong, short legged, broad chest, thick tailed, and have rounded paws.

Don't be fooled by their size. British Shorthairs are known as 'gentle giants' because of their demeanour. They're loving, affectionate, quiet, gentle and good with children and other animals and aren't demanding. This is a healthy breed, in ideal indoor living conditions can live up to 20 years.

The British Shorthairs were admired by Harrison Weir, the father of the cat fancy (first cat show, 1871 in Crystal Palace) and he founded the National Cat Club in 1887. British Shorthairs weigh between 10 and 22 lbs.

The Cornish Rex (CR) is small, active, elegant-appearing, curly washboard coated, 'huge eared cat', slender and muscular bodied, tall legged, enthusiastic, looks like 'those' Egyptians cats moulded into statues. Far from the truth; the CR is a product of Bodmin Moor, in Cornwall, England (July 21, 1950).

A cat named Serena is the 'grandmother' of the CR and her son Kallibunker (Kalli) is considered the father of the CR. They were both owned by Mrs. Nina Ennismore.

The CR is very social; people oriented and should not be left alone for extended periods of time. This is a very playful and clownish cat. In fact, CRs have been known to play cat, using their 'paws' as 'hands' and throwing back the discus. This cat gets along well with children and other animals. Also, it's quite accepting of a human lap.

The CR doesn't have guard hairs and is easier on people with cat allergies. This CR weighs 5 to 10 lbs.

The Devon Rex (DR) is pixie faced, has a wavy, velvet-like coat, is medium-sized, huge eared, lightly built, prominent cheek-boned, an incredible jumper and has a low maintenance coat.

The DR is people oriented (likes to be cuddled), playful, calm, easy-going, intelligent and is a bigger eater than most other cat breeds.

The DR was noticed by Miss Cox in Buckfastleigh, Devon, England in 1960. Kirlee (curly-haired) a male was found as a stray or feral kitten.

Kirlee's coat resembled the rex mutation discovered further back in time. The DR weighs 6 to 9 lbs.

Exotics come in shorthair (SH) and longhair (LH). The SH exotic is bred with the same high standard as the Persian but has a short, plush, dense coat that is much easier to maintain.

Some exotics breeders and owners refer to their SH as the 'lazy man's Persian'.

Exotics aren't very vocal. They have a calm, docile, easy-going demeanour not getting mad very often. In addition, they retain their playful spirit throughout their lives. They become attached to their owner, often following him/her around in the home. Remember, Exotics are for indoors only. They're active and too baby-like.

Whether SH or LH the exotic cat has a large, massive head, thick neck, with small round-tipped ears.

The LH exotics require regular combing. Exotics weigh 7 to 12 lbs.

The Japanese Bobtail (JB) is like its name suggests of Japanese origin. In Japan this cat breed is 'personified' as a symbol of harmony and cordiality. It has existed in its native land for hundreds of years. This cat is given prominence in ancient stories, art prints, and in works of art.

The JB is medium sized, slender, high cheek boned, muscular, large eyed, large upright and expressive ears, has strong hind legs. Its most noticeable trait is its visibly short tail. The coat is medium length.

The JB is friendly, sociable and loves to be around humans. The JB weighs 6 to 9 lbs.

The Korat is a very old cat, dating back at least as far as 1350 C.E. during the Ayutha period. The Ayutha was basically a Siamese (now Thailand) Kingdom.

It was King Rama V that gave this cat breed its name; a name that wasn't difficult for non-Siamese peoples to pronounce. King Rama V was amazed at the utter beauty of the Korat.

The Korat is small to medium sized, compact, with high muscle and low fat proportion. As is the case, muscle weighs more than fat so don't be fooled by the Korat's small appearance. Their eyes are large, short-coated and always silver-blue, muscular, large rounded but non-bulging eyes and large ears covered with very short hair.

Korats are friendly, active, picky eaters, intelligent, can be territorial, vocal about what they want, very faithful (sometimes a bit possessive) towards their human friend, playful

(can play fetch), and can be trained to be walked on a leash. The Korat weighs 6 to 10 lbs.

The Main Coon (MC) was first discovered in the state of Maine and is the state cat therein. The official recording took place in 1861. It was conveyed (through folklore) that the Main coon was a result of mating between feral or semi-wild cats and raccoons; hence its name.

The MC is the oldest natural longhaired cat breed in America. The MC is medium to large, long and rectangular bodied, broad chest and muscular, large wide set eyes.

The MC is known as a gentle giant, getting along with children and other animals. This is a very popular cat breed in America. The MC can weigh 10 to 25 lbs. As with cat breeds in general, males are larger than females.

The Manx has an inherited mutation of the spine. The ideal Manx is tailless. Some Manx cats do have a tail or a stub. This cat is most notably known for its tailless body.

The Manx is medium sized, large-eyed, solid, above average bone structure, muscular and has a broad chest. The Manx's hind legs are noticeably longer than its forelegs. This causes the Manx to hop-run, and enables it to jump to incredible heights.

The Manx is a social, friendly, cat, a good family member and also good with children. In addition, it's intelligent, playful (can be taught to play catch and fetch), loves water (even playing in it).

The Manx originated in the Isle of Mann. It is believed that the Manx contains 'some' British Shorthair in its genes. However, it is unknown how the tailless nature of this cat first developed. The Isle of Mann was a docking port for ships, thereby creating a wide range gene pool.

Manx come in shorthair and longhair. They weigh roughly 12 lbs.

Many Munchkins are born with noticeably short legs. This phenomenon is a naturally occurring mutation. Two females claim 'motherhood' to the short-legged Munchkins.

Their home was the Southern United States, more specifically running freely on the Boscobel Ranch. Like Dachshund dogs, they have a normal body length but with unusually shortened legs. In the recent past short legged Munchkins were referred to as 'baby legs' while normal sized legged Munchkins were referred to as 'long legs'.

In 1944 The Veterinary Record of the U.K. and Dr. William-Jones recounted several generations of short limbed cats.

In early 1950s Stalingrad a lone short-legged cat was a known resident of the city. But it wasn't until 1990 that a captive breeding program was begun to establish these cats as an official breed.

A Louisiana cat named Blackberry and his son, named Toulouse were also used to strengthen the gene pool.

Munchkins are medium sized, playful, like to run around and chase things, and are not hampered by their short legs, are outgoing, intelligent, adventurous and confident. Their coat should be groomed on a regular basis. The Munchkin weighs 6 to 9 lbs.

The Norwegian Forest Cat (NFC) is a true Norwegian cat, and as such has adapted to colder climates by developing a thick, dense, cold and rain resistant coat. This is a tough cat able to endure horrendous Scandinavian winters. It's referred to as the Skogkatt or Skaukatt (forest cat) in its native Norway.

Their forebears or mix were likely transported to Scandinavia by other Europeans. NFC in turn, accompanied the Vikings on Voyages, maintaining optimum security of the food supply on board.

The NFC is a new breed in the United States. However, this cat breed has been in Scandinavia for eons; so long they're in folk tales and mythical stories. The NFC takes up to 5 years to reach full maturity.

The NFC got their first break in the 1930s when several individuals were displayed in Germany. They were loved instantaneously!

The NFC is a large, well muscled, gorgeous and large eyed, bushy tailed, thick coated, good natured with people including children and also other animals, curious, and intelligent. The NFC weighs 12 to 20 lbs. However, some 'extra large' individuals can weigh 22 lbs.

The Persian and the Siamese are the most widely known of cat breeds in the world.

The Persian is medium to large sized, soundly proportioned, large eyed, short and heavy boned legs, large paws, has a massive head, round headed, thick necked, relatively short tailed, small ears appearing wide apart and low on the head, elegant looking, short and broad nosed set between the large eyes; this gives the Persian a flat-faced appearance.

The Persian has a long, soft and glossy coat that should be combed daily. The Persian is calm, has a soft meow, friendly and social, playful, placid and cuddly and is a good family pet; gets along with children and other animals.

The Persian is an old breed, and as its name suggests it's originally from Iran. From the late 19th century they were further 'moulded' by the British. These beautiful cats were referred to as Angoras by the British. Today they're commonly referred to as Longhairs or Persian Longhairs.

The flat, rounded face appeared later as a result of American moulding. The flat faced look is often a medical

drawback in dogs and cats. Breathing problems and nasal draining are two of the apparent problems regarding flat faced cats and dogs.

If it were solely up to me I'd phase out the flat faced look in favour of a normal, healthy looking cat look. The health of the cat is of optimum importance. What we perceive as beautiful, cute, or ugly is irrelevant if our choice is detrimental or harmful to the 'displayed cat'. In addition, it should be noted that the original Persians DID NOT have the flat faced look. Why do 'we humans' keep doing this?

The Ragdoll is unique in the cat world because it has a 'pacifist instinct' or you could call it a 'non-aggressive instinct' in that it WILL NOT DEFEND ITSELF! This cat must be kept indoors at all times, if outdoors it must be kept in a safe, enclosed area, or if walked should be carried or taken on leash. If the latter, owners should be absolutely weary of any potential predators.

Years ago I saw an extremely pissed off, aggressive dog try to rip apart a Ragdoll. Thank GOD the owner of the dog was able to keep it from killing the poor kitty (but only within a few inches of it). Shockingly, the Ragdoll showed no fear, apprehension, flight, or anger. It casually stared at the 'oncoming dog'. The cat didn't even blink or wince. It had no idea what was going on, even though the dog was going nuts, barking, growling, snarling, baring its teeth, frothing at the mouth, and whatever else.

This is why if it were up to me I would phase out the pacifist gene. Look, I'm not talking about removing the friendly cat in the Ragdoll or any other cat. However, there's a limit to friendliness and pacifism. A nice, friendly cat is what many cat lovers want.

The Ragdoll wouldn't make it as a stray. Even a defanged/declawed cat would know when to flee danger. The Ragdoll is too laid back, restrained, calm and friendly. Mind you, those are very nice traits in a cat but the defensive instinct must be a subsequent trait.

The Ragdoll traces its history early 1960s California where an Ann Baker bred a female Persian to a Birman. A female Burmese was later 'incorporated' into the breeding program.

In 1971, Baker formed the International Ragdoll Cat Association (IRCA). She patented the name 'Ragdoll' in 1975.

The Ragdoll is large and heavy set, large hindquarters and chest, long and muscular body, large blue eyes, large rounded ears, much soft fur but doesn't tend to mat. However, their fur should be combed occasionally. Ragdolls weigh 10 to 20 lbs.

Siamese are by far the most 'distinguishable' and 'recognized' cats in the whole world. As a child, I remember 2

Siamese cats in our household. Unfortunately, I was highly allergic to them therefore my parents had to give them away.

The Siamese is one of the oldest cat breeds (mid-14th century) in the world. Originating in Siam (Thailand) they're regal, streamlined, light, beautiful, vivacious, extremely vocal (meow much), love to be with their owner and become attached, are good lap cats, active, very intelligent and trainable, but can sometimes be self-centered.

The Siamese is a breed that draws out a love or hate emotion by humans. They're very vocal, and sometimes their pitch can reach squeaky levels. It's annoying for some folks, therefore, if you're looking for a quiet, non-demanding cat, DO NOT GET A SIAMESE! However if you want a highly energetic vocal cat do your research and if you think you're up to it get a Siamese. One last thing, as a general rule many Siamese don't get along with other cats.

The Siamese is good with children, especially energetic children. Owners must ensure that their children are gentle with their Siamese. These cats are fragile.

The Siamese is a very beautiful cat, especially its piercing blue eyes, large wide spaced ears. It has a short, easy to manage creamy based coat, can live 15 to 20 years in an indoor and ideal environment. Some individuals have been known to live more than 20 years. Siamese weight category is light or lower than average, I couldn't find specific stats.

The Angora can be medium or small sized, large and beautiful-eyed, silky-haired, long-bodied, playful for life, adorable, and often black and white. This cat appears graceful and balanced. It may be the oldest of the long-haired breeds, loved by the people of Turkey, its government, and many around the world.

The Angora originated in Turkey. More specifically, it roamed the streets of Ankara. It was an ingrained part of city life. People saw Angoras as part of life.

In the 1940s it was widely believed that the purebred Angoras were near extinction. Fortunately, the Government of Turkey at the time acted quickly. In 1917 a protected zoo colony was formed in the Ankara Zoo. Thankfully, the breed was saved from extinction.

Blue-eyed Angoras can be partially or completely deaf, depending on which eye is blue; one or both of them. I hope this feature is soon phased out because all cats rely heavily on their sense of hearing. Angoras weigh 6 to 11 lbs.

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