Cats

The cat (*Felis catus*) – also known as the domestic cat or housecat – is a small furry domesticated carnivorous mammal that is valued by humans for its companionship and for its ability to hunt vermin and household pests. Cats have been associated with humans for at least 9,500 years and are currently the most popular pet in the world.

As *The New York Times* wrote in 2007, "Until recently the cat was commonly believed to have been domesticated in ancient Egypt, where it was a cult animal", but a study that year revealed that the lines of descent of all house cats probably run through as few as five self-domesticating African Wildcats (*Felis silvestris lybica*) circa 8000 BC, in the Near East.

Physiology

Their physiology generally resembles that of other carnivorous mammals but displays several unusual features probably attributable to cats' descent from desert-dwelling species. For instance, cats are able to tolerate quite high temperatures: humans generally start to feel uncomfortable when their skin temperature passes about 112°F (44.5°C), but cats show no discomfort until their skin reaches around 126°F (52°C), and can tolerate temperatures of up to 133°F (56°C) if they have access to water.

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Domesticated cats

Cats are a common companion animal in Europe and North America, and their worldwide population exceeds 500 million. In 1998 there were around 43 million cats in Western Europe, 33 million in Eastern Europe, seven million in Japan and three million in Australia. The concept of a cat breed appeared in Britain during the late 19th century. The current list of cat breeds is quite large: with the Cat Fanciers' Association recognizing 41 breeds, of which 16 are "natural breeds" that probably emerged before humans began breeding pedigree cats, while the others
were developed over the latter half of the 20th century. Some of the original cat breeds are considered subspecies and have received names as such in nomenclature (although this is not supported by feline biologists). Some of these cat breeds are:

- **F. catus anura** – the Manx – The Manx cat is mainly recognized by its appearance as it does not have a tail.

- **F. catus siamensis** – the Siamese – Siamese cats are amongst the most commonly recognized Oriental cats, a type of cat with a long body and elegant posture. Also, they are famous because of their blue almond eyes. They are called "people cats" because of the affection they show to their owners.

- **F. catus cartusenensis** – the Chartreux – The Chartreux is a natural French breed, which is easily recognized by its size, grayish color and double coat. These cats are also famous because of the paradox of their massively built body and smiling expression and sweet voice.

- **F. catus angorensis** – the Turkish Angora – Turkish Angoras are one of the ancient, naturally-occurring cat breeds, having originated in central Turkey, in the Ankara (historically known as Angora) region.

*(adapted from Wikipedia)*