The **cat** (***Felis catus***), also referred to as the **domestic cat**, is a small [domesticated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestication) carnivorous mammal. It is the only domesticated [species](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Species) of the family [Felidae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felidae). Advances in [archaeology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeology) and [genetics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetics) have shown that the [domestication of the cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestication_of_the_cat) occurred in the [Near East](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near_East) around 7500 BC. It is commonly kept as a [pet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pet) and [farm cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farm_cat), but also ranges freely as a [feral cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feral_cat) avoiding human contact. It is valued by humans for companionship and its ability to kill [vermin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vermin). Its retractable [claws](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claw) are adapted to killing small prey species such as [mice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mice) and [rats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rat). It has a strong, flexible body, quick [reflexes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reflex), and sharp teeth, and its [night vision](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night_vision) and [sense of smell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sense_of_smell) are well developed. It is a [social species](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_species), but a solitary hunter and a [crepuscular](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crepuscular) [predator](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predator). [Cat communication](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cat_communication) includes vocalizations—including [meowing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meow), [purring](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purr), trilling, [hissing](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/hiss), [growling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Growling), and [grunting](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/grunt)—as well as [body language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cat_body_language). It can hear sounds too faint or too high in [frequency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frequency) for human ears, such as those made by [small mammals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Small_mammal). It secretes and perceives [pheromones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pheromone).

Female domestic cats can have [kittens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitten) from [spring](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spring_%28season%29) to late [autumn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autumn) in [temperate zones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temperate_zones) and throughout the year in [equatorial regions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equatorial_region), with [litter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Litter_%28zoology%29) sizes often ranging from two to five kittens. Domestic cats are bred and shown at events as registered [pedigreed cats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pedigreed_cat), a hobby known as [cat fancy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cat_fancy). [Animal population control](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_population_control) of cats may be achieved by [spaying](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spaying) and [neutering](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neutering), but their proliferation and the abandonment of pets has resulted in large numbers of feral cats worldwide, contributing to the extinction of [bird](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird), [mammal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammal), and [reptile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reptile) species.

As of 2017, the domestic cat was the second most popular pet in the United States, with 95.6 million cats owned and around 42 million households owning at least one cat. In the United Kingdom, 26% of adults have a cat, with an estimated population of 10.9 million pet cats as of 2020. As of 2021, there were an estimated 220 million owned and 480 million stray cats in the world.

Taken from Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cat>