

31st August 2001

Cat Facts

Cats Protection Week: 8 – 15 September 2001



- ***Number of domestic cats in the UK***

- 1999: 7.7 million.
- Number of cat-owning households in 1999: 5 million
- 1979: 4.9 million.
- Number of cat owning households in 1979: 3.7 million
- A 1999 survey found that there are 47 million cats in Europe.
- Cats Protection estimates there are nine million stray cats and one-and-a-half million feral cats in the UK.

- ***Demographics of cat ownership***

- In 1999, 59.9% of cat-owning households had one cat with the remainder having two or more.
- Cat ownership is greatest in the South of England in owner-occupied dwellings (22.7% of cats) or local authority homes (also 22.7% of cats). Privately rented homes account for just 13.3% of cats.
- The highest level of cat ownership is amongst the 35 – 44 age group. 27.8% of people in this age group own a cat.

- ***Reasons for growth in cat ownership and decline in dog ownership.***

- Cats are now the UK's favourite pet. Increased urban living and modern, working lifestyles increasingly favour cat ownership over dog ownership.
- The most common reasons for having a cat are: companionship (27%) and love (31%).

- ***Pedigree cats***

- Whilst no figures exist for the number of pedigree cats in the UK, the Governing Council of the Cat Fancier (GCCF) register 32,000 pedigree cats each year.
- 10% of cats owned by Cats Protection volunteers are pedigree.

- ***Where we obtain our cats***

- A survey of Cats Protection non-volunteer members found that their cats came from the following sources:

Cats Protection	17%	Adopted local stray	14%
Another rescue organisation	16%	Personal rescue	10%
Neighbour/friend	23%	Other source	12%
Breeder	8%		

- **Missing cats**

- Microchipping a cat increases its chances of being reunited with its owner should it become lost.
- Cats Protection has helped to reunite 45,000 lost cats with their owners during the past decade.
- 6% of calls to Cats Protection's Helpline relate to lost cats.

- **Health issues: lifespan, veterinary queries, nutrition, reproduction, neutering.**

- **Lifespan:** cats live for 14 - 16 years on average. Better nutrition and veterinary care means cats are now living longer. It is not unusual for a cat to live for 20+ years.
- **Common veterinary-related enquiries** received by Cats Protection: fleas (20%), vaccinations (19%), hand-rearing kittens (12%), FIV (10%), neutering (9%), death of cat (8%), birth of kittens (8%), pregnancy (7%), allergies (7%).
- **Nutrition:** A cat's sense of taste is around 200,000 times greater than that of a human's. Cats are true carnivores and must be fed nutrients of an animal origin in order to meet their nutritional needs. They should not be fed a vegetarian diet.
- **Reproduction:** From the age of six months, a healthy female cat can have up to three litters a year with five or six kittens in each litter. In just five years, a female cat that hasn't been spayed can be responsible for 20,000 descendants.
- **Neutering:** Neutering is the only sensible way to reduce the UK's unwanted and stray cat population. Neutered cats are less likely to defend their territory. Fewer fights mean they are also less likely to catch feline diseases such as FIV and FeLV. Neutered cats wander less and therefore reduce their chances of injury or death through involvement in a road traffic accident.

- **Costs of keeping a cat**

One-off costs:	Neutering and microchipping Carry basket, litter tray	Minimum £25 each. Minimum of £30
Annual costs:	Vaccinations/boosters Pet insurance	Minimum £25 annually Average figure of £100
Other:	Food and litter Cattery fees Treats/toys	Minimum of £15 a month From £6 per day From £5 a year

- **Cat coat colours**

- Ginger, tabby and grey are the most popular cat coat colours amongst those rehoming a Cats Protection cat. The least popular are black and black-and-white.

- **Celebrity Cat Lovers**

- Charlie Dimmock, Jenny Seagrove, John Cleese, Emma Bunton, Thaila from allSTARS, Alan Titchmarsh, Anthea Turner, Wendy Turner-Webster, Ann Widdecombe, Miranda Richardson, Erika North, Matthew Kelly, Hugh Grant, Zoe Ball.

- **Sources of information:**

The Pet Food Manufacturers Association (PFMA) website.
Cats Protection surveys and internal information.