

Video showings on Nov 14th: **Domestic cat**

Video 1, from National Geographic

Study of farm cats, on a British farm with about 70 cats by David MacDonald of Oxford University in England. Additional info from Web (*Science News*, Sept 15, 2001):

Text removed due to copyright reasons.

Females do not simply congregate to get food from the farmer, etc. They form a society for mutual aid with kitten rearing, nursing, protection.

Protection from males is extremely important: As with lions, a male will attack and quickly kill kittens that are not his offspring. This can promote his “fitness” but not the females’ fitness.

The females in a group appear to be genetically related, but it was not clear whether exceptions occur, and how often.

Other studies, in the USA, have also found social preferences in farm cats, but some have found that cats will socialize with both genders equally. Some studies, however, observed neutered animals.

Study of town cats by a biology teacher, who surveyed cat’s prey in the village of Felmersham, England: Most of the pet cats are let outside for part of every day. They killed and brought back to the house an average of 14 small animals per cat every year. Considering the total number of pet cats, if results for the one town hold for other towns,

this hunting behavior is a very significant factor in culling of small wild animal populations, especially mice and voles.

For details and additional information of this type, obtained in follow-up studies, see

http://www.abdn.ac.uk/~nhi775/cat_predation.htm

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hcpb/species/nuis_exo/dom_cat/dfgcatbiblio.shtml [**A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FERAL, STRAY, AND FREE-ROAMING DOMESTIC CATS IN RELATION TO WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**, Compiled by Ronald M. Jurek, Wildlife Biologist, Nongame Bird and Mammal Program, Wildlife Management Division (California Department of Fish and Game), updated 2002.

Originally from: Jurek, R. M. 1994. A bibliography of feral, stray, and free-ranging domestic cats in relation to wildlife conservation. Calif. Dep. of Fish and Game, Nongame Bird and Mammal Program Rep. 94-5. 24 pp.

Video 2, from PBS "Nature" with George Page

Claim that lions are the only group-living cats, a claim countered by the study presented in Video 1.

Details of biting attack FAPs are very similar among various members of the cat family.

Hunting ranges: ½ to 40 acres per cat; males have larger ranges. Scent-marking of these ranges; different cats may dominate an area at different times of day.

Confrontations occur, and are often resolved without actual fighting.

Hunting develops in young cats from imitation of mother, and her training activities. (Without this, cats will not become hunters, despite their having the necessary FAPs.)

Details of the mating sequence are very similar in tigers and domestic cats. Mate choice by females; initial repulsion of male is usual. Copulations are repeated up to 16 times. (Cf lions, where the number is much higher.)

Scent-marking behaviors are also very similar: marking with sides of head/ cheeks, claws, urine spray. Some of these behaviors are common in house cats, especially when there are more than one cat in the house.

Studies of cat vocalizations: about 15 basic calls, which are combined to give about 25 different vocalizations with distinct meanings. Purring, at 25 vibrations/sec, is deliberate, in situations of contact maintenance.