

Pet Chatter Magazine

Spring 2024 Edition

Pets do speak. They communicate with body signals and vocalizations which the human must learn.

Did You Know?



- * Experts estimate that half of a cat's day is spent on grooming.
- * A cat will rub his head on you to claim ownership (leaving their scent on you). This is sometimes called "bunting".
- * When your feline kneads your skin, it is a sign of contentment.
- * Healthy cats can jump about six times their body length.
- * In the battle of who does it better, cats have an estimated 100 different vocalization sounds. Dogs have 10.
- * Cats lying belly up is not an invitation for humans to pet them. It simply means they are content in their environment.
- * Cats deliver dead mice (and other such things) to their humans a gift. These "gifts" are thought to be a show of gratitude and affection.
- * Generally speaking, cats do not like the smell of citrus.
- * On average, cats sleep 12-16 hours each day.
- * It is believed that cats are the only mammals that do not taste sweetness.
- * There are more bones in a cat's body than in a human body. Humans have 206 bones while cats have 230.
- * There are whiskers on the back of a cat's front legs (called "carpal" whiskers). These whiskers are sometimes referred to as a cat's sixth sense.
- * Cats walk the same way camels and giraffes walk (move both right feet first, then both left feet). No other (known) animal walks this way.

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Domestic Rabbits

By, Pets Write Paw Staff

Despite countless people working hard to correct historic misunderstandings, there is still a lot of inaccurate information being documented about domestic rabbits.

Misinformation is confusing for those who want to get a rabbit. It also means that future generations of bunnies will be in danger of more harm. Humans have a history of cruelty and disturbing behavior toward these docile animals.

It's true. Rabbits have been terribly mistreated by backyard breeders, Easter-gift givers (gone wrong), meat and fur-industry workers - the list goes on. Still today, our furry friends are being subjected to cruelty due to research and test labs. Somehow, instructors and students in institutions of higher learning are still trying to justify their actions while the public allows it.



“In 2019, about 37% of the rabbits used in research were subjected to procedures involving pain and distress”. (NAVS)

Here are a few things we learned from years of rehabilitating rabbits with harsh beginnings:

- Credible education about this species is lacking. For example, a staggering number of people have been taught that rabbits are rodents. Rabbits are not rodents. They are lagomorphs;
- Rabbits are incredibly sensitive animals. In fact, they can literally be scared to death. They need calm, temperature-controlled, clean homes with lots of space to run, jump and play. Rabbits do not make good pets for small children or anyone who does not understand (or cannot meet) basic needs.
- There should be no *smell* when a rabbit is in the home (except hay). Proper litter materials should be used...litter boxes maintained daily. Rabbits are very easy to litter-train. Guests will typically smell a cat or dog long before they even know a properly-cared-for rabbit lives there;
- Most collegiate settings, including veterinary schools, do not have comprehensive rabbit-specific, specialty programs that cover best care practices for day-to-day pet ownership;
- Rabbits are prodigious groomers and work tirelessly to keep themselves clean. This information is widely misunderstood due to the majority of humans forcing them to live in filthy spaces such as backyard hutches, small cages, unmaintained sheds/barns, etc.;
- Many people still believe that their “purpose” for owning a rabbit somehow alters the way they should treat the animal. There is no good excuse for mistreatment or neglect of any species.

Helpful Sources:

[Bunny Conversations: The Entertaining Dialogue of Pet Rabbits: Brock, Jana: 9781543292558: Amazon.com: Books](#)
[Care - Rabbit.org](#)
[Rabbits Used in Research | National Anti-Vivisection Society \(navs.org\)](#)



What Are “Service” Animals?

By, Pets Write Paw Staff / ADA Website

“A disability can take many forms, including bodily functions such as those of the neurological, respiratory, digestive, circulatory, and reproductive systems.” Here are a few examples of disabling conditions where service dogs might be used (this is not a full listing):

Physical Problems:

Asthma (or other breathing problems)
Allergy Alert
Blindness (& partial blindness)
Deafness (& partial deafness)
Cardio Vascular
Stroke
Diabetes
Dizziness/Balance problems
Epilepsy or Seizures and/or General
Medical Alert

Emotional Dog Qualifications:

Depression
Bipolar disorder
Mood disorder
Fear/phobias
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
Suicidal Thoughts/Tendencies
Adjustment Disorders
Generalized anxiety disorder
Social anxiety disorder
Panic disorder

Service dogs are protected under federal law

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), an individual with a disability is entitled to a service dog to help them live their lives normally. The ADA protects disabled individuals by allowing them to bring their *service dog* with them to most places that the public is permitted, including restaurants, hotels, housing complexes, and even in air travel. Any dog can be a service dog, and service dogs do not have to be professionally-trained. The important thing is that the dog is trained to be a working animal and not a pet.

The Americans with Disabilities Act has a specific definition of a disability, and it states essentially that a disability is a **physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities** of such individual.

Source Credit: ADA Service Dogs:

[ADA Requirements: Service Animals | ADA.gov](#)

For Complete List, see ADA Registry: [What Are The Different Types Of Assistance Dogs? | ADA Assistance Dog Registry](#)

“Some” Species Protected? Not Good Enough.



Animal “Protections” in the U.S.

The **Animal Welfare Act** became law in 1966. It established basic standards for housing, nutrition, veterinary care and humane treatment for research animals. To be clear, **The Act** only covered some mammal species and left out others. It did not make using animals for testing and/or research illegal.

Establishing “standards” for using animals in lab testing and research is different than making a law which would have banned these practices. There are countless animals (including dogs, cats, rabbits, rats, monkeys, birds...) stuck in labs here in the U.S. and in other countries waiting their turn to be experimented on.

The **Public Health Service Policy (PHSP)** also exists. It pertains to the humane (we believe this term is used loosely) use of Laboratory Animals. Note: Using the label “*laboratory animal*” does not excuse the *harm* being done to these creatures, and/or *potential harm* they are subjected to in labs and research facilities.

Typically, the **PHSP** only applies to university labs. Research facilities and labs are required to adhere to state and local regulations. Some states in the U.S. have stronger animal welfare laws, but that does not stop the welfare of countless animals from being sacrificed for [*insert reason here*].

Helpful Sources:

[Animal Welfare Act | National Agricultural Library \(usda.gov\)](#)

[20 Animal Testing Statistics You Need to Know in 2024 | Animal World \(animal-world.com\)](#)

[Arguments against animal testing | Cruelty Free International](#)

Realities of Rescue Work

By, Jana Brock

How many cats, dogs and other pets are lost, stolen or abandoned in a year's time? Here in America, estimates can range from a few million to 10 million or more. No one knows the actual number because comprehensive reporting systems do not exist. Even if one did, it could not possibly account for all the animals in shelters or left on streets to fend for themselves all across this country.

Here is what we do know: **The number of animals in need is extremely high.**



Who has enough space for every unwanted or lost pet? Shelters, rescuers and others make room wherever they can, but at-capacity comes quickly. All shelters have limitations.

In addition to not enough space, humans can only responsibly care for so many animals at a time. The costs involved also imposes limitations.

Regardless your role in the caretaking of animals in need, this type of work is not a money-maker. Typically, it costs more to help our furry friends than what we can earn running a registered business. Donations help, but that has a lot of restrictions. Fundraising is a time-consuming, difficult task.

An emergency veterinary bill for one rescued animal that arrives sick or injured can be very costly.

Even when intakes have no emergency needs, there are other expenses such as vet exams, spay or neuter surgeries, food, water, species-specific supplies and housing. For the many who do this work on the side, they must also take into account the considerable amount of time involved and the limited hours available each day.

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Realities of Rescue Work...continued

People in this line of work do it for the same reason you adopt family pets from shelters. They want to make a positive difference in the life of an animal that needs a second chance.

Over-capacity shelters are a growing problem for dogs, cats, bunnies and all types of pets. So, what happens to the ones that are not adopted, fostered or otherwise housed? Though some shelters are committed to no-kill policies, here is the reality. A high number of pets are in a no-more-room category. They are euthanized.

Here are some ways you can help:

- ◆ Adopt your pets from shelters or others who work with animals in need. Do not purchase pets from backyard breeders or people who otherwise use them as a source of income (eventually, no earnings will require them to stop!);
- ◆ Make sure every pet you own gets spayed/neutered;
- ◆ Never *dump* or *abandon* your pet, thinking it can fend for itself;
- ◆ Donate whatever you can to your local animal shelters. They need pet-related supplies 24 hours a day, and also money to pay high vet bills;
- ◆ Volunteer at local pet shelters, human societies, sanctuaries...et cetera;
- ◆ Offer to adopt/rehome a pet from a neighbor, friend or family member who is unable or unwilling to provide proper care;
- ◆ Report animal abuse, neglect and/or cruelty to the authorities or animal-welfare organizations, even if the mistreated animal has been labeled as “*farm/ag*”. Using animals for purposes other than pet ownership is common. However, that does not give animal owners the right to be neglectful, abusive or cruel.

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

[How to report animal abuse & cruelty | The Humane Society of the United States](#)

[US Missing Pet Epidemic and Euthanasia Statistics: Uncovering Facts \(peeva.co\)](#)

[Animal Shelter Euthanasia - American Humane - American Humane](#)

[How Animal Shelters Work | HowStuffWorks](#)

[Let's Get Out of the Way of Getting Pets into Homes - HASS \(humananimalsupportservices.org\)](#)

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Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTI)



If your cat is...

- 1) using the litter box a lot more than normal;
- 2) straining to urinate;
- 3) grooming (licking private area more than normal);
- 4) passing blood in the urine;
- 5) urinating outside the litter box;
- 6) passing strong-smelling urine (stronger than normal);
- 7) generally more tired...

...he/she may have a urinary tract infection.



UTIs cause pain and discomfort. Overweight, elderly (or cats that do not exercise enough) are at greater risk. However, cats in other situations can also get UTIs. If not treated, UTIs can lead to kidney and other problems.

To be safe, have your cat examined on a regular basis, just as you would other pets. If you notice irregular symptoms, regardless what you think may be wrong, call a veterinarian immediately. Your meow! will thank you.

POUNCE!

Pouncing is a feline behavior which is learned as a kitten.

Cats stalk prey and then jump (pounce) on it. They are hunters, by nature. In order to have the advantage, cats learn to sneak up on their prey quietly. This allows them to catch mice and other prey without being detected.

Of course, cats also pounce when they are just playing.



Paws and Claws

By, Jana Brock

You take your cat to the veterinary clinic and dutifully listen to the *expert* explain there is a bit of discomfort to the cat immediately following an onychectomy (declawing surgery). But don't worry. It won't cause long-term harm. That is the historic narrative.

Today, we have more information. Thanks to advancing animals sciences, a high number of compassionate veterinarians agree: declawing cats should not be done, except in rare, medically-necessary cases.

Information on this topic is well documented in recent years. Like so many mistakes made by past generations, the *experts* were wrong. This surgery goes well beyond removing "nails" (claws). It also damages part of the toe bones which house a myriad of pain-causing nerves.

"Declawing is the surgical amputation of all or part of a cat's third phalanges (toe bones) and the attached claws. Most often the procedure involves the front paws only, but sometimes the claws are removed from all four paws."

American Veterinary Medical Association

Studies show that following such a surgery, a high number of cats (*over 70% of those studied*) had complications, including pain which cannot be accurately measured by humans. The truth is, many post-surgery cats suffered physical consequences long after healing.

To list a few: hesitation in walking/bearing weight on the paws; hemorrhaging; wounds reopening; paralysis; balance issues; a sharp decline in natural-for-cat behaviors; diseases which were not present prior to surgery, and other post-surgery complications.



In addition to physical consequences, many cats display behavioral changes. They may stop covering their "potty" in litter boxes or become aggressive toward humans and other animals (they start biting & fighting). Some refuse to use litter boxes entirely. Other observable changes have been documented.

Some experts believe these behavioral changes are in retaliation to the humans who forced them through this surgery. However, history has shown us over and over again that humans who (allegedly) cause harm to animals will try to justify it using whatever excuse the general public will believe.

A growing number of veterinarians refuse to perform any onychectomy because they regard it as animal cruelty. Perhaps the *experts* who continue to recite outdated narratives to justify those surgeries could climb up on the operating table, have *their own* toes butchered and THEN tell everyone whether it caused harm.

It should be noted that even today, some veterinarians still declaw cats, arguing "scientific" studies are lacking. Historically, medical and veterinary practices were not as evolved as they are today. Science was also "lacking" when procedures were performed which, in today's day and age, would be considered serious crimes. Know better...and do better.

Scratching is a natural behavior for our feline friends. If you are not able (or willing) to accommodate a cat's base nature, then choose a different type of pet.

Kindness Matters.



Canine Logic



What Humans Find Entertaining Is Normal For Us Woofs!

- ◆ Barking at a mirror. Clearly, you do not recognize a threat when you see one. Don't worry. I will keep you safe;
- ◆ Zoomies. Like other species, us Woofs! have extra energy sometimes. I'm not entirely sure why you find that funny, but whatever;
- ◆ Growling at inanimate objects. That intruder on the front porch you call "*Statue*" will eventually slip in the door unnoticed. When he does, I'll be ready;
- ◆ Talking to our kind through digital screens. If you want to see me communicate with other canines, turn the channel to Dog TV. We can talk all day long;
- ◆ Pushing my food bowl toward you (it isn't going to fill itself).



- ◆ Tail chasing. Sometimes, a random object just comes out of nowhere, taunting me. It's every bit as fast as I am and really hard to catch. Weird.
- ◆ Heavy sighs. When I lay down with my head between my paws and sigh heavily, it may be frustration. Training humans is exhausting.

By: Gypsy (Senior Editor. Woof!)

Many animal shelters across the country were forced to close their doors the past few years. That brought a lot of attention to the growing problem of animals in need. There are many ways to make a paws-i-tive difference where you live. Here is one article you may find helpful:

[Animal Shelters are Predicting Another Crisis. Here's How You Can Help \(southernliving.com\)](https://southernliving.com)

Advancing Anti-Cruelty Laws

Thanks to those who work hard to advocate for the welfare of animals, laws have been passed across America to protect cats from being subjected to declawing procedures. Of course, surgeries can be performed when medically necessary, but veterinarians must adhere to strict guidelines in those cases.

States like New Jersey fine veterinarians who conduct this surgery. Practitioners can also be sentenced to jail. States that have not yet passed these laws often have cities which have made it illegal to practice declawing within city limits.

Many other countries have also made it illegal to perform these surgeries, including Germany, Brazil, New Zealand, Australia and Israel.



Indoor Cats and Boredom

Like other pets, indoor cats can get bored which increases bad behaviors. Enrichment activities are crucial for your cat's health and happiness.

Here are some ideas to keep your feline friend entertained:

- * Give them plenty of space to run, play, eat and rest;
- * Provide cat trees or wall perches. Cats like to climb and “perch” in high places (consider mounting “steps” up a wall);
- * Make sure they have safe hiding places;
- * Have a good scratching post...or several;
- * Make a “catio” area where your indoor cat enjoy a confined, outdoor space;
- * Place pet stairs next to hard-to-reach spots. Cats love climbing;

Provide cat toys and play with lasers. Keep a radio or television on. Play “cat” or “dog” tv when you can't be home. There are lots of ideas and great options to keep your kitty entertained.

Your cat will be happier and so will you!