



ALLEY CAT RESCUE

AN ALLIANCE FOR CAT PROTECTION

Alley Cat Rescue, Inc. is a 501c(3) non-profit dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of cats everywhere.

www.SaveACat.org • 301-277-5595 • PO Box 96499, Washington, DC 20077

REPORT ON ALLEY CAT RESCUE'S AFRICAN WILDCAT PROJECT IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 2018, ACR launched the Kruger Park African Wildcat Project, funded by a generous three-year financial commitment from The Ayers Wild Cat Conservation Trust. The project's mission is to preserve the African wildcat's genetic purity and prevent hybridization. Invasive specialist Dr. Llewellyn Foxcroft conducted a study in Kruger Park in 2014 and found low levels on hybridization in the park. He suggested the best way to protect African wildcats was to create a corridor of sterilized feral cats on the borders of Kruger Park.

Hybridization between cats and African wildcats is a major concern for biodiversity conservation, and as habitats become increasingly fragmented, conserving genetic biodiversity has become even more important. In South Africa, it has been argued that the long-term viability of maintaining pure wildcat populations lies in large protected areas only, isolated from human populations. In particular, African wildcats living inside Kruger Park borders showed some concern, especially combined with the substantial human population density along the park's boundary.

In December 2018, ACR sent a South African feral cat expert Rita Brock to the Kruger Park area to survey the area and make contacts. She visited towns along the 220-mile border around Kruger Park as well as all the SPCAs and a few state veterinarians. Fortunately for ACR, we linked up with a great feral cat advocate Kerri Tremeer who had been sterilizing feral cats in the area for a few years. This advocate agreed to supervise the Kruger Park project for us.



*Top left to right: Volunteer, Nicci Baumann, Volunteer, Stacey Isham Fairbairn, Andie Condogiannis, Mercia Korb, Louise Holton
Bottom left to right: Kerri Tremeer, Charlene Barnes, Carika Roux*

The areas around Kruger Park that we have targeted are Hoedspruit, Phalaborwa, Hazyview, White River, Sabie, and a few smaller towns in the area. We have also sterilized a few cats in Acornhoek. To date, we have sterilized over 1,800 feral cats in the 220-mile boundary around Kruger Park.

The area with the largest feral cat population is Phalaborwa. This is the location that Dr. Marna Herbst, an African wildcat expert, advised me to focus on. So far, we have sterilized over 700 cats in Phalaborwa. This area is closest to one of the Kruger Park Gates and was the location where the scientists found the most hybrids.

In October 2019 I visited South Africa and surveyed the area, as well as hosted a successful one-day workshop at the Kruger Park Lodge. We gave away an extra 12 traps to all attendees. Kerri Tremeer from Kruger Park Alleycat Initiative who is leading our project there, posted a large map of the Kruger area and highlighted all the towns that have populations of cats to be sterilized, as well as noted the towns where we have worked.

Continued on page 3...

YOUR KITTY'S WILD ANCESTOR

LOUISE HOLTON

Did you know that our domestic housecats who sit on our laps and sleep on our beds come from a wild ancestor? This wild ancestor is the African wildcat, *Felis lybica lybica*. How many are there left in the wild? It's difficult to estimate the numbers as the cats are nocturnal, very elusive, usually live alone, and are well camouflaged.

For the definition of African wildcats, we turned to Dr. Jim Sanderson, the Founder and Director of Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation. Dr. Sanderson told us:

Felis lybica is a separate species with three subspecies.

In Eastern and Southern Africa, the subspecies is *Felis lybica cafra*.

Felis lybica lybica is the ancestor of the domestic cat.

Felis lybica ornata is the wildcat of Asia.

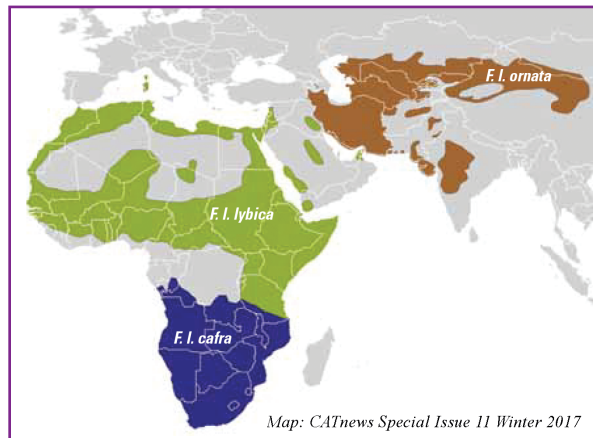
The domestic cat is now *Felis catus*, a separate species that was domesticated mostly from a lineage of *Felis lybica lybica* from Mesopotamia (Driscoll et al. 2007).

One third of U.S. households have housecats, and more than 600 million cats live among humans in the world. And probably 600 million more live on streets and in alleyways. We have this wildcat to thank for our beloved companion animals!

Over the years the origin of the domestic cat, *Felis catus*, has been elusive. For many years, researchers believed that it was the Egyptians who first domesticated the cat. This is because around 3,500 years ago, Egyptian artists depicted cats in their art on wall paintings and on mosaics. Statues and paintings showed cats sitting under chairs and being worshiped as deities. The cat goddess Bastet, who rose to prominence around 1,000 B.C., was the Goddess of love and joy. Also at that time, the penalty for killing a cat was death. Pet cats who died were mummified and eventually buried with their dead owners. What made it easier to think the Egyptians domesticated *Felis lybica lybica* was that this wildcat also lived in Egypt and is easier to tame than other small wildcats like the Scottish and European wildcat.

Just in the last few years, genetic and archaeological discoveries changed this. Genetic findings showed that cat domestication began in the Fertile Crescent around 10,000 years ago, coinciding with the beginning of agriculture. The wildcats living here took advantage of the mice and

rats found around grain storages, and eventually humans started putting out food scraps for them. The cat most likely domesticated herself, as she saw an easy way to find food. The farmers liked having these wildcats around since they took care of the rodents, and continued to find ways to encourage them to stay. This was a mutually beneficial arrangement that still plays out today, as domestic cats are welcome to live in barns to keep rodents in check, and keep food storage relatively free from rodents.



To some extent, domestication of wildcats continues to this very day, as it does in parts of Africa, where wildcats often come in contact with villagers. Southern African wildcats living around the Satara Camp in Kruger Park have found that at night they can easily find scraps of meat left in camps around the areas where people barbeque.

Last year I visited Satara Camp and late one night we found a southern African wildcat next door to our bungalow. She was under a car cleaning herself like any Moggie would after a meal. She was not afraid of us but also wouldn't let us get too close! Even with only a flashlight on her, I could see her distinctive black feet, and the striped tail, plus the orange tinge to the backs of her ears, all so characteristic of the wildcat.

Alley Cat Rescue has been at the forefront of working to keep



© Willie van Schalkwyk

African wildcat in South Africa
www.willievanschalkwyk.co.za/

the southern African wildcat pure. Habitat loss, hunting, and cars all take a toll on the southern African wildcat, but hybridization has a significant effect as well. Because the cats are so similar in DNA, they interbreed very easily, and hybrids can still give birth to litters of kittens.

Conservation Status

The southern African wildcat is listed as “Least Concern” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), but they do say the species is declining. Wildcats are listed on Appendix 11 by CITES, which means the cat is not immediately threatened but does need trade sanctions to ensure their survival.



Domestic Tabbies

Sadly there is an imbalance of funding for the 33 species of small wildcats in the world. There is a tendency to support conservation efforts for big cats but not smaller cats. With only 1.2% of ALL funding for wildcats directed towards ALL cat species, there is an increased need for additional funding. The other 98.8% of wildcat donations goes towards

funding tigers, panthers, and other large cats. While Alley Cat Rescue loves ALL cats, we would like to see more funding put towards the small wildcats and of course support our project in South Africa: [Saving Your Kitty's Heritage](#).

Alley Cat Rescue is the first and only group in the world with an Action Plan to save this iconic species. There are groups in Scotland with a similar plan to save the Scottish wildcat.

Appearance

While southern African wildcats bear many physical similarities to the modern-day domesticated cats, there are some distinct differences. Southern African wildcats have unusually long front legs, which results in a gait similar to the cheetah. These longer front legs are seen in ancient bronze Egyptian statues. It gives the cat a very upright sitting

position which is completely absent in domestic cats and in hybrids.

Depending on where they live, their coat colors range from light, sandy stripes in the deserts to dark gray/brown stripes in forested areas. They have stripes around their face that range in color from dark ochre to black. The two larger stripes run horizontally on the cheek, from the outer corner of the eye to the jaw. A smaller stripe runs from the inner corner of the eye to the tip of the nose, and there are four to six stripes across the throat. Their hind legs are also striped, and they have two dark rings that circle the front legs. African wildcats have a dark stripe that runs along their back, while their flanks are lighter in color. They have vertical pale stripes on their sides, which often fade into spots. The end of their tail has two to three rings and a black tip, and their feet are usually black underneath. In terms of size and weight they are closely comparable to the domestic cat.

References and Further Reading:

Bryner, Jeanna. “House Cats’ Wild Ancestor Found.” LiveScience, Purch, 28 June 2007, www.livescience.com/7299-house-cats-wild-ancestor.html.

Driscoll, Carlos A, et al. “The Near Eastern Origin of Cat Domestication.” Science (New York, N.Y.), U.S. National Library of Medicine, 27 July 2007, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5612713/

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Dr. Jim Sanderson, PhD., Founder and Director of Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation (SWCCF); <https://smallcats.org/>

...continued from page 1

Since launching the project in 2018, we have made tremendous progress in sterilizing feral cats in the Kruger Park area. By consulting with local experts, ACR has been able to establish best practices and raise awareness throughout communities regarding the threat of hybridization facing the African wildcat. Our work, in

conjunction with feral cat advocates, scientists, SPCAs, and state veterinarians, has made this on-going project successful and effective. Through our efforts, the genetic purity of the African wildcat is actively being preserved for generations to come!

ACR ANNOUNCES 2020 FERAL FIX CHALLENGE

Alley Cat Rescue launched Feral Cat Spay Day in 2010 to encourage the veterinary community to offer free and low-cost trap-neuter-return services to those who care for community cats. In 2017 ACR expanded the challenge from one day to a whole month in order to decrease the number of kittens being born on the streets. To date, more than 1,500 participants in the U.S. and globally have spayed or neutered nearly 80,000 community cats as part of this program.

For 2020, ACR is launching the Feral Fix Challenge. As a result of the pandemic and the subsequent closure of spay/neuter clinics, the Challenge will be extended through the end of October in order to sterilize cats before kitten season begins. Participating vets are critical



ACR Extends FFC

to this project, as are the generous donors who help pay for these services out of their pockets. About six million animals enter shelters every year, and approximately 2 million animals are killed. Cats make up roughly 45% of these deaths. Furthermore, more than 50% of kittens born on the streets needlessly suffer and die every year. But with the generous donations of time and services offered by vets, and with your ongoing support, we can make a significant impact and reduce the numbers of kittens born on the streets. Please contact your vet and invite them to join the Feral Fix Challenge today!

More information on the FFC and how to invite your vet to participate can be found on ACR's website at: <http://www.saveacat.org/the-feral-fix.html>

ACR RESCUES KITTENS DURING PANDEMIC

While rescuing kittens is a rewarding and vital part of ACR's mission, it is not always easy. Many of the kittens ACR rescues are found abandoned, sick, suffering, and sometimes on the brink of death. Even when the best veterinary care is provided as soon as possible, not all kittens always pull through. These losses are never easy to experience, but there is always hope to be found in the little fighters who overcome the odds and grow into thriving, happy, and healthy young kittens. Here are a few stories of cats and kittens ACR rescued during the pandemic, and an update on how they are doing today.

In April, Bubbles and Squeak were found in a box outside a shelter that was closed because of the pandemic. While Squeak was good condition, Bubbles had an awful infection, was anemic, malnourished, and dehydrated. After additional evaluations, it was determined that Bubbles was suffering from a neurological disorder called cerebellar hypoplasia, which is also called 'Wobbly Cat Syndrome', meaning that she struggles with controlling her fine motor skills, balance, and coordination. Despite this, the pair were placed in a foster home together, and Bubbles has made tremendous improvement. She is doing well, gaining weight every day, and running around like crazy. Due to Bubbles' condition, she relies heavily on her

brother, so when they are ready for their forever home they will need to be adopted as a pair, so Bubbles can continue to have her brother by her side.

Baby Cantsbee and his mom CeCe were rescued in May after CeCe was left at the veterinary hospital ACR uses while she was in middle of giving birth. As they treated CeCe, the staff called ACR to see if we would be able to take them in. Unfortunately, there were complications during birth and CeCe lost two of her babies, but Cantsbee was born healthy via C-section. However, due to the large incision on CeCe's abdomen, it was difficult for her to care for Cantsbee at first. She had no energy, was on IV fluids, and daily medications. Cantsbee was bottle fed while CeCe recovered, but once she started feeling better it was immediately obvious. She began feeding, grooming, and snuggling with baby Cantsbee all the time. They are now together in a foster home and continuing to improve every day.



Rooibos, along with his five siblings, were also rescued

Rescue Story: Rooibos

by ACR during the pandemic. The five other siblings, Honeybush, PeriPeri, Tulsi, Zaatar, and Berbere, were diagnosed with UTIs, but Rooibos was suffering with more severe issues. He had very deformed back legs, which was likely caused as a result of being one of six in the litter with a small mom. To treat his legs, he is having lots of physical

therapy, warm water soaks, and laser treatment every day. Despite ACR's best efforts, Rooibos lost his right foot due to atrophy. However, it is not slowing him down in the least! He is continuing to eat, gain weight, and improve each day. He is the smallest of the kittens, but is growing stronger and healthier each day.

URGENTLY NEEDED: A Used Car for Los Angeles



Alley Cat Rescue is always on the move, whether it's traveling to and from TNR (trap-neuter-return) projects, transporting cats, taking strays to the vet for medical treatment, or driving to a managed colony to ensure they are taken care of and well-fed. It is important that we have a reliable vehicle to ensure a safe way to transport these sweet alley cats!

We urgently need a van to transport feral cats in traps to the spay clinic several times a week in Los Angeles. Los Angeles is currently undergoing a crisis, where thousands of unsterilized cats are roaming the streets. Alley Cat Rescue is doing our best to help stop kittens from being born on the streets. 50% of these kittens get sick from treatable diseases and can die if left untreated.

We're also looking for a donation of another vehicle for our program in Maryland. Do you have a car or van to help us with our daily operations?

Please contact us to learn more about vehicle donation. Not only is your contribution tax deductible, you will gain peace of mind knowing that your old vehicle is being used to save cats' lives!



Help Save Cats' Lives by Supporting Our Work

Planned Giving

Annuities can help you reach your personal financial goals and strengthen your commitment to our work helping cats. Enjoy tax savings and turn appreciated assets into income for yourself. Charitable gift annuities allow you to make a gift of \$10,000 or more and receive fixed interest payments for life, as well as tax deductions. For more information, contact your financial planner or get in touch with us:

Alley Cat Rescue
Phone: 301-277-5595
Email: acr@saveacat.org
Mail: PO Box 585, Mt. Rainier, MD 20712

Wills and Bequests

You can support our work for cats long into the future by including Alley Cat Rescue, Inc. in your estate plans. This will ensure that the love and care you show for cats continues on, and provides you with the peace of mind that your legacy will provide for cats in need. Contact your financial planner to determine the best way to support Alley Cat Rescue, Inc. in your estate plan.

Suggested bequest language: "I give (specific dollar amount or property) to Alley Cat Rescue, Inc., having its principle office at 3906 Rhode Island Ave., Brentwood, MD 20722, for its general purpose to help stray, abandoned, and feral cats and kittens. Tax ID: 52-2279100."

CALL TO ACTION

In 2012, a bill advocating on behalf of the welfare of ear-tipped cats was introduced by Councilwoman Mary Lehman in Prince George's County, MD. Ear-tipping helps identify a feral cat who has been spayed or neutered. The procedure involves the surgical removal of 1/4 tip of the left ear (or right ear in California). It is performed by a licensed veterinarian, typically during the spay/neuter surgery while the cat is under anesthesia. Ear-tipping is safe and is especially important as it prevents an already spayed or neutered cat from being re-trapped.



According to the bill, when ear-tipped cats in TNR programs are trapped by animal control, most will be immediately returned to their colony, as opposed to being impounded or killed in shelters. However, should an ear-tipped cat enter the Prince George's County Shelter, the shelter must use all due diligence to provide electronic notification to all local animal rescue organizations and all animal care organizations who have provided proof of their experience with ear-tipped cats. The shelter must allow three working days from the time of the notification for an organization to rescue the ear-tipped

cats, and the release of the cats will be at no cost to the rescue organization.

Lehman's legislation was a response to the county's animal kill rates, which were alarmingly high. According to a report from the county's Department of Environmental Resources, 11,542 cats were euthanized from 2009 to 2011, with about 37 percent of them feral. The county also had a 300 percent increase in feral cat intakes, from 410 in 2009 to 1,642 in 2011

The passing of this bill was a tremendous victory for feral cats and TNR groups in Prince George's County, but ACR wants to expand this lifesaving project to other jurisdictions in the country. Contact your local animal control agencies and ask them about their policy regarding catching, impounding, and releasing ear-tipped cats. Additionally, the National Animal Care & Control Association (NACA) can be reached by mail at:

National Animal Care & Control Association

40960 California Oaks Rd. #242

Murrieta, CA 92562

Online: <https://nacanet.memberclicks.net/contact#/>

Phone: (913) 768-1319

to protect the well-being of animals, cats included.

If you live in one of these 44 states, contact your state senators and representatives and tell them that these barbaric and archaic laws must be abolished now.

OVERTURN FEEDING BAN IN GREEN BAY

In Green Bay, Wisconsin, the feeding of feral cats is not allowed. According to the city ordinance, if someone feeds and provides shelter to a feral cat, it makes that individual the owner, and therefore responsible for the animal.

The city ordinance bans feeding any kind of animal out in public, if it's a feral animal, or if it's a domesticated cat but feral.

Violators could face fines and citations in Green Bay if they are found to be in violation of the ordinance. Contact Green Bay mayor Eric Genrich today and urge him to lift the feeding ban and support the practice of TNR to control feral cat populations.

Address:

100 N Jefferson Street, Green Bay City Hall, Green Bay, WI 54301, Phone: (920) 448-3005

Email: Fill out the contact form on his website at <https://greenbaywi.gov/formcenter/Mayor-5/Contact-the-Mayor-126>

ADOPT DON'T SHOP

At Alley Cat Rescue, we strongly recommend that you obtain your new cat from a shelter or adoption agency. According to the Humane Society of the United States, of the 6-8 million cats and dogs that enter shelters each year, more than half are euthanized. More than 75% of cats that enter shelters die a preventable and unnecessary death.

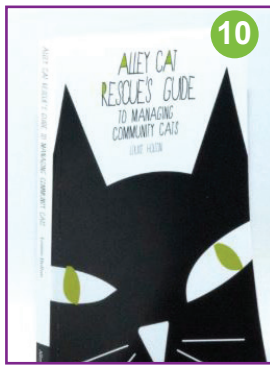
There are many shelters across the U.S. that have happy, healthy kittens, and senior cats who are looking for a special person.

We urge you to visit your local shelter and give one of these special shelter cats a loving and forever home.

BAN THE CONSUMPTION OF CAT MEAT IN THE US

In the United States, we are quick to condemn China and Korea for eating cat meat. While this is a significant problem that needs to be addressed, in shocking news, consuming cat meat is legal in 44 states right here in America. Only Michigan, Virginia, California, Hawaii, New York, and Georgia specifically prohibit the consumption of cat meat.

This is completely unacceptable in the 21st century, and especially so in the United States. America is a country that advocates for animal welfare and continues to pass legislation



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3	Grey Cat Face T-shirt	\$11	S M		\$
4	White Cat Face T-shirt	\$11	S M XL 2XL		\$
5	African Wildcat T-shirt	\$16	M L XL		\$
6	Navy Blue Hooded Sweatshirt	\$15	S M		\$
7	Grocery Tote	\$5	N/A		\$
8	Canvas Handbag: Green, Grey, Blue, Black	\$12	N/A		\$
9	African Wildcat Shoulder Tote Bag	\$10	N/A		\$
10	Cat Rescue's Guide to Managing Community Cats Paperback Book	\$9	N/A		\$
11	ACR Bracelet	\$10	S M L		\$
12	African Wildcat Bracelet - Help save the African Wildcat	\$10	S M L		\$

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**There is a flat shipping rate of \$7.00 for ALL purchases.

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