

SE Region August 2010 Newsletter

Meet Your Neighbors

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Mystic Melody

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What breed do you work with..?? Siberians!

How long..?? 4 years

If you could, what other breed of cat would you like to work with..??.. Hands down, Maine Coons. Doesn't need any further explanation, just look at them!

What is your most memorable win..?? My first RW SGC of my own breeding; Mystic Melody Oopsy Daisy. She was the first girl I ever kept for my breeding program because I saw something in her that apparently no one else saw. I was told several times by fellow breeders she was not good enough and would never get any titles, but obviously, they were wrong.

How did you start in the world of cats..??.. Actually – believe it or not – I am allergic to cats. It has always been controlled with medication though since I am such a cat lover and can't live without them. A few years ago (sad story, get the hankies out) I hit a mama cat on the highway. When I stopped the car to find her I heard peeping coming out of the high grass, and out comes this little, maybe 4 week old brown tabby baby who's mommy I probably just hit. I took the mama cat and the baby in my car and drove to my vet. Mama cat did not survive but the baby was fine and needed a home, so I took him home and was determined to find this little cutie a place to live. The first few days, he lived in our bedroom, and much to my surprise, I had no allergic reaction whatsoever. This was definitely a first for me so I became curious and started looking on the internet if there was such a thing as a hypo-allergenic cat. As soon as I hit search, tons of website with siberians popped up. The little man as a kitten actually very much looked like a siberian kitten and that is how it all started. I got my first two cats from Moscow and Saratov Russia and have been showing and breeding siberians ever since. And the little baby...? He was so cute, so sweet, so everything I love about cats, that we named him Oliver, and he is now our 4 year old couch potato who runs the house and keeps everyone in check.

What, if any other hobbies..?? Let's see, farmville, treasure isle, frontierville and tons of other very addictive facebook games, writing, photography, traveling (and then especially to my home country), watching soccer, family time, kitty time, showing my cats, skypeing with my friends overseas and sitting on the couch watching absolutely nothing on tv ignoring the 5 piles of laundry that are screaming my name.

Meet The Breeds

Sokoke

General Description

The Sokoke is a lean, medium sized, ticked modified classic tabby, found as a naturally occurring native breed in the greater Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Preserve area in the coastal zone of Kenya, Africa. A peace-loving, keenly aware and intelligent shorthaired breed, the Sokoke is playful and family oriented, forming close bonds with both feline and human family members. The Sokoke is a rare breed and is unique in that it has a see-through ticked tabby pattern, with ticking in both the ground color and pattern itself, even including the tail tip. This camouflaged pattern can also include outlining over the shoulders and below the spine. They have a tip-toe gait in the rear that becomes more pronounced when they are excited. Leggy, with large upright ears and lithe, graceful movements, they are moderately active and easy to keep.

History

The Sokoke is a naturally occurring Native Breed, evolving on its own without human intervention, so a timeline is not available to pinpoint when it actually became a breed. We know the Giriama tribal elders in its native Kenya could describe the Sokoke in detail, using the term Khadzonzonzo meaning come pretty one. The Giriama were the first people to discover and live with this distinctive breed. In 1978, a British/Kenyan woman named Jeni Slater discovered wild kittens on her coconut plantation and was fascinated by their unusual looks. She chose to pen two of them that she later bred together. She introduced the Sokoke breed to her Danish friend, Gloria Moeldrup, who imported the first two Sokokes to Denmark in 1984. Three more cats were imported in 1991 and another was imported to Italy in 1992. Together, these cats created a foundation for the Sokokes known as the Old Line. In January 1994, FIFe recognized the Sokoke as a Championship breed. Fast forward to 2000/2001...A British/Kenyan lady named Jeannie Knocker living on the Kenyan Coast near Watamu researched the Sokoke breed her neighbor Jeni Slater had discovered. With the help of her native gardener, Sammy, she obtained some more Sokokes. Sammy recognized the pictures she showed him and had local children in outlying villages bring cats to her as they found them in brushy pasture areas near the Arabuko-Sokoke Preserve. When the financing fell through for a film the cats were to star in, her son, Will, used the Internet to contact Sokoke breeders in Europe. Good news: there were now new cats with desperately needed new bloodlines available for import. These cats were known as the New Line: some went to Europe and were registered with FIFe in 2003 and seven were imported to the USA. In 2004, TICA accepted the Sokoke as a Registration-Only Breed. On May 1st, 2008 the Sokoke had met the criteria to advance to TICA's Preliminary New Breed status, eligible for show. With the combination of the Old Line and the New Line, the Sokoke has an exciting future as it continues its development in TICA.

Personality

The Sokoke is best described as a package: sensitive/interactive, intelligent/curious, intuitive/peace-loving, moderately active, and territorial. They are family-oriented, and very aware of hierarchy and placement, with both their feline counterparts and humans. The Sokoke pays close attention to its humans, and loves to sit on the back of the couch or drop to the feet of their favorite people as a greeting, or a simple request to "not take another step until you pet me!" It is common for Sokokes to perch near a window, where they watch and wait patiently for their people to arrive home-they also have an uncanny ability to "read" owners' emotions, communicate with soft, barely audible chattering noises and occasional louder, alarming calls if they sense danger coming. Sokokes often play in sudden spurts, even when older, and kittens can amuse themselves with a simple coin for hours, hide it, and then play with it another day. They are very entertaining companions that bond fiercely, requiring a full commitment from their humans to mirror their devotion.

Traits

The Sokoke stands apart from other domestic purebreds due to its unique color & pattern and interactive behavior. Recent DNA testing as part of the Cat Genome Project has placed it in a small, separate branch of the Asian Cat Breed Group with other felids that are descended from the Arabian wild cat. Close relatives are the Lamu Island cats and the Kenyan Coastal street cats. Like other Asian Group shorthairs, the Sokoke has a thin, slightly hard coat texture with very little undercoat. It is a short-haired breed, rather upright on its legs, with an elegant grace and beauty.

Now that DNA testing has placed the Sokoke in the Asian Group, it is not surprising that some of the Old Line cats have the oriental voice and extreme legginess of other members of the Asian Group or that they sometimes throw pointed kittens. It is unknown whether the colorpoint gene was introduced solely by an outcross black street cat used early on in Kenya. So far, the Genome Project has proven that genetic material is shared with the two other distinctly different looking street cats and Lamu Island cats. However, in the samples that were tested, English genetic material did not show up in large enough amounts to have enough influence to be noted.

Of the three, the Sokoke is the only pedigreed breed that has a consistent set of traits.

The Sokoke is a medium sized cat, lithe and athletic with a surprisingly muscular body that belies its outward appearance. Especially in the Old Line, male tend to be very hard-bodied with a hard, thin, stiff-feeling tail. The body has a rigid feel when they are standing or crouching but are all muscle when picked up. However a relaxed Sokoke is amenable to carrying and holding. The New line does not exhibit the Old line's hard tail, and so breeders must work hard to ensure that combination breedings will not lose this unique trait. Females typically are slightly finer-boned and smaller than males, and not quite as hard-bodied and muscular. As youngsters, two types of Sokoke are seen: one with a slightly rounder face and a slightly thicker, deeper body; the other more oriental-looking in type with a slender, leggier body and a longer face. Either one can throw the other it seems, with differences often evening out as the cats mature. The TICA breed standard recognizes Brown (Black) modified classic tabby only; however some of the Old Line cats were known to carry for the pointed gene and so tabby points occasionally appear. And recently one pair of the New Line Kenyan imports produced melanistic (Black) kittens. Some of the combinations of the Old and New lines have produced pointed kittens and recently they also produced a blue kitten and a longhair.

The New line TICA imports tend to be quieter than many of the older, inbred Old Line cats and as a whole the breed does not seem to be extremely vocal as was previously reported. Sokokes have a consistent, elegant air about them that their owners cherish and draw quick admiration from people seeing them for the first time. Their unique ticked pattern and ground coloring combined, from a distance gives a "see-through" effect, and provides an eye-catching appeal.

(I got to handle a Sokoke at the Buckeye Ohio show July 24 & 25 and was just amazed at this breed... They feel like no other cat...)

(Taken from the TICA breed pages.) Laurie Patton

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Recipe of the Month

HOBO CASSEROLE

Submitted by Laurie Patton

1 lb. ground beef
1 small onion
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 bag frozen peas & carrots
1 can biscuits
Salt, pepper, garlic powder to taste

Cook beef + onion in iron skillet and drain. Add back to skillet and add peas & carrots, cream of mushroom soup, cook until bubbly. Add all to a casserole pan, place biscuits on top. Bake in oven on 350 degrees until biscuits are golden brown about 10 – 15 minutes.

** Leftover mashed potatoes, cornbread, Bisquick can also be used instead of biscuits**

Cat Recipe of the Month

Cookies for Cats

1 cup whole wheat flour
1 tsp catnip
1/3 cup milk
1/3 cup powdered milk
2 tbl butter or vegetable oil
1/4 cup Soy flour
1 egg
2 tbl Wheat germ
1 tbl Unsulfured molasses

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix dry ingredients together. Add molasses, egg, oil and milk. Roll out flat onto oiled cookie sheet and cut into small, cat bite-sized pieces. Bake for 20 minutes and let cool. Store the cookies in a sealed container.

Submitted by Laurie Patton



Did You Know...??..

Clay cat litter came about by accident. In 1948 a neighbor by the name of Kay Draper went into her local sawmill to pick up some sawdust for her cat's litter tray. She had been using ash, but was fed up with it being tracked all over her house. Ed Lowe, the son of the owner offered her some clay, known as Fullers Earth, which was used to absorb grease. Ed realized he was onto something, and started marketing the product in pet shops & at cat shows. It took a while to take off, but eventually it became a multi million dollar business.

Sir Isaac Newton invented the cat flap.

An ailurophile is a person who loves cats. The word ailuro is from the ancient Greek word for "cat".

More cats are left handed than right handed. Out of every 100 cats approximately 40 are left-pawed, 20 are right-pawed, and 40 are ambidextrous.

The ridged pattern on a cat's nose pad is as individual as a human fingerprint.

At their fastest, cats can run at 30mph.

A group of kittens is called a kindle.

A group of cats is called a clowder.

The cat is the only domesticated animal NOT mentioned in the bible.

Male cats used to be called "rams" or "boars", however in 1760, an anonymous author wrote a book entitled "The Life & Adventures of a Cat" in which the central character was a male called Tom the Cat. This book was hugely popular & the name tom cat quickly replaced "ram" or "boar".

A cat's pulse is between 130 - 240 beats per minute.

A cat's gestation is between 61 - 70 days.

Cats have 30 vertebrae. Humans have 25.

The normal body temperature is 102 degrees F.

Like humans, kittens have "baby" teeth, which are replaced with their adult teeth from around 6 months of age.

Cats perspire through their paws.

Cats breathe at a rate of 20 - 30 breaths per minute.

The cat's front paws have 5 toes & their back paws have 4. However, some cats have more than this number of toes. When a cat has more than 18 toes, it's called a "polydactyl". Poly comes from the Greek word "polys" which means many or more than one. Dactyl also comes from a Greek word "daktylos" or finger.

Cat urine glows under "black light".

Cats don't kill their prey with their claws, the claws are used to hold onto the prey, the teeth are used to kill the prey.

The claws on the cat's back feet aren't as sharp as the claws on the front feet because they can't retract into the toe, therefore they're continually being worn down by walking.

Cats have existed longer than humans.

Cats walk on their toes.

Cats can jump 5 times their height.

The domestic cat is the only species of cat that can hold it's tail vertically while walking.

Cats have the largest eyes in proportion to their body size of all mammals.

Cats usually have 12 whiskers on each side of it's nose.

Grooming Tips

for those who may not know it, tip for both shows and grooming:

Always carry baby powder and or corn starch for those messy oopsie poopsies. lol!

If fortunate enough to have a solid piece to pluck out with paper towels do so, then and in the case when things aren't so solid, heavily cover w/ baby powder or corn starch, although I prefer the baby powder if things are especially runny from an ill cat on the road as corn starch with thicken as intended more when wet.

Then after covered as well as possible w/a coating of powder, comb through removing as much as the mess as possible which should not stick to your comb or smear through the fur as much now.

Continue doing this to remove as much as possible, wipe any persistent spots with the cleaner of choice or wet wipe, then powder again and comb through repeatedly. IF you have the time, let the powder stay on to allow spot to completely dry and then comb through to separate the hairs. The powder helps absorb any moisture, helps keep the strands of hair separate so they don't clump together and the baby powder or the corn starch helps absorb and cover any odors and doesn't have you trying to wrestle a cat in a sink or stress trying to get your hands on a blow-dryer that won't upset the show hall or send your kitty to the moon via every nail it possessed through your delicate flesh. :-) lets hope you never actually have to use this at a show, but just in case.....

StacEy Asby

Step 1

Start with a good brushing, especially if your cat has long hair. Most cats enjoy this activity and it will help to detangle and loosen any debris.

Step 2

Do yourself a favor and trim the cat's nails before proceeding to the bath. It's even better to do this the day before you plan to bathe the cat, giving her ample opportunity to dull sharp edges of her nails on a scratching board or post.

Step 3

Clean the cat's ears (outer only) with a cotton ball moistened with a cleaning solution formulated for this purpose. In a pinch, rubbing alcohol will work fine too.

Step 4

Prepare the bath in a sink or tub, whichever is more accessible for you. Don't use too much soap and make sure it's a mild one, such as a vegetable-based soap. Harsh detergents can strip the natural oils from hair and skin and leave both looking dry. Do not allow soap to get onto the cat's face or in the ears.

Step 5

Believe it or not, a vinegar rinse is the best thing to bring shine to a cat's coat. Use 1/2 cup distilled white vinegar diluted in a full gallon of warm water. Then rinse the vinegar solution thoroughly with warm water.

Step 6

Wrap the cat in a thick towel and hold her closely to absorb excess water. You may need to change the towel once or twice.

Step 7

Follow up with drying the cat with a blow dryer on a low, cool setting.

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