

Southern Connecticut Animal Trust, Inc.

Winter 2006

Dedicated to providing sanctuary and lifelong care to all homeless animals.

MEOW MORE THAN EVER!

By Jacque Lynn Schultz, C.P.D.T., Companion Animal Programs Adviser, ASPCA National Shelter Outreach.

Purrs, chirps, hisses and snarls...What exactly is your cat trying to tell you?

A stray tabby gives birth to a litter of three kittens under the lilac bush in a backyard. As she nurses them, she purrs; as they suckle, the kittens purr, too. When the queen shifts her weight to try to find a more comfortable nursing position, one of the kittens lets out a distress call, indicating he's trapped under his mother's weight. She readjusts herself, and the purring party continues.

One morning, the mother cat decides to move her litter to a safer spot. She deposits the first one inside the garden shed, and goes to retrieve the next one. Detecting the absence of his mother via his sense of smell, the kitten in the shed lets out a loud distress call, distinctly meant to reunite mothers and wayward kittens.

As the kittens mature, the queen spends more time away from the nest, hunting for prey to ensure enough milk for her growing crew. Each time she returns, she gives out a "burp" to her kittens.

When the kittens enter the weaning stage, the queen brings prey home to them, calling them over to it with a chirp. The kittens also begin to make chirping noises in anticipation for what they are about to receive. However, one night's dinner is interrupted when Mom lets out a long, low-pitched growl. The kittens scatter and retreat to safety inside the shed before the owl overhead can snatch one for his own evening meal.

As independent hunters, cats have limited need for an extensive vocal repertory. Cat-to-cat vocalizations are generally limited to communicating with one's kittens, one's sexual partners and one's potential enemies. There is also an array of vocalizations used by our furry friends when they attempt to communicate with us. By changing volume, intensity and number of repetitions of the vocalizations and backing them up with expressive body language and olfactory signaling, cats ensure their messages are received and that their needs are met.

Purring 101

The purr is the most common sound issued by cats—and yet one of the least understood. Kittens just a few hours old begin purring as they knead their mother's chest and nurse. The purr sound

is made both on the inhale and the exhale, with an instantaneous break between breaths. Built-up pressure created by the opening and closing of the glottis results in a sudden separation of the vocal folds, creating the purr. While purring is often heard when the cat seems content, those familiar with handling cats in pain or near death know that they also purr when under duress, the reason for which is yet unknown.

The Meaning of Meow

The second most common vocalization is the meow. Rarely heard between cats, this vocalization seems tailor-made for communication between cats and humans. Early on, cats notice that meowing brings attention, contact, food and play from their human companions. Some behaviorists suggest that certain cats seem to alter their meows to suit different purposes, and that some guardians can differentiate between, say, the "I'm Hungry!" meow" from the "Let Me Out!" meow.

The meow is the most often used of the vowel patterns—vocalizations produced with the mouth first open and then gradually closing.

- The sound cats make when highly aroused by the sight of prey is called chirping.

- When a cat is frustrated (such as when an indoor cat finds he is unable to get to the birds at the feeder), you may hear him chatter.

- When a neonate kitten is cold, isolated from his mother or trapped, he issues a distress call—also sometimes called an anger wail. As the kitten matures, the distress call is used when play is too rough or the cat finds something else to protest.

A Hiss Is Just a Hiss?

All threat vocalizations are produced with the mouth held open. These sounds mirror the cat's intense emotional state. A hiss is uttered when a cat is surprised by an enemy. A high-pitched shriek or scream is expressed when the cat is in pain or fearful and aggressive. Snarling is often heard when two toms are in the midst of a fight over territory or female attention. And a long, low-pitched growl warns of danger.

Southern Connecticut Animal Trust

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President	Cathy Blacker
Treasurer	Maggie Cabral
Secretary	Lori Pfeiffer

With 2006 coming to a close...

NOW'S THE TIME

to make that year-end, tax-deductible charitable contribution to SCAT!

SCAT is a 501c(3) non-profit organization, and all donations are gratefully acknowledged with a receipt for income tax purposes.

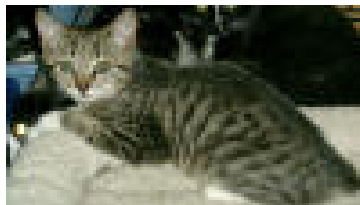
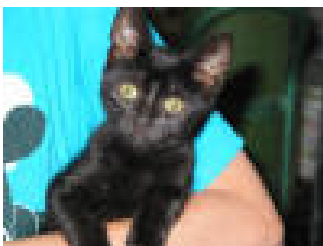
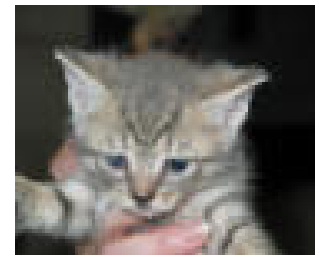
Funds will be used to continue our work helping homeless animals in southern Connecticut. This includes the cost of housing, medical care, food, etc at our Stamford shelter, as well as covering our Trap Neuter Release program to prevent the further proliferation of strays in our communities. Anything that you can contribute to help is greatly appreciated!

Don't forget to ask if your employer has a matching funds program - it could double your donation!



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

From all the cats at SCAT



Is Your Indoor-Only Cat Bored Stiff?

If your indoor-only cat is overweight, destructive, or aggressive, it may be because he's bored out of his mind. "Indoor-only cats need more stimulation than their indoor/outdoor counterparts," says Ingrid Johnson, a cat behaviorist at The Cat Clinic of Roswell. Without adequate intellectual challenges, indoor-only cats get cranky.



Try these tips to stimulate your feline friend's brain:

1. Provide foraging balls and boxes. These inexpensive toys require a cat to think and can be purchased at any pet supply store. Or you can make your own from shoe boxes. Cut holes in the sides of the box a little smaller than a ping pong ball, then fill the box with treats, balls, and a paperweight. Tape the lid shut. Cats will forage in the box for the food, and the ping pong balls act as obstacles to provide mental stimulation.
2. "The ultimate thrill for a cat is the hunt, stalk, chase, pounce, and kill," says Ingrid. You can provide stalking and hunting opportunities indoors by leaving food, treats and toys hidden throughout the house.
3. Find toys that mimic your cat's play. Since not all cats are food motivated, this requires paying attention to what really gets your cat going. An inexpensive toy called a Cat Dancer mimics a fly, so a cat who naturally chases bugs will be stimulated by it. A similar item, the Feline Flyer, mimics a bird's actions. Laser pointers create easy interactive play between you and your cat.
4. Placing ping pong balls in the bathtub provides hours of fun, especially for kittens who have energy to burn.
5. Put wind-up bath toys in a water-filled sink; you can find these in the baby section of any store.
6. Water fountains are considered environmental enrichment. "It's different than the plain old boring water bowl," Ingrid explains. "You should provide a regular water bowl in addition to the fountain in case the cat is fearful, but they can play in the stream of water and it's just something different." A drinking fountain has the added benefit of encouraging water intake.
7. Bring the outdoors inside. "Bring in a tree branch and let them explore it," says Ingrid. "If it's a safe plant, let them chew on the leaves to get their foliage intake.
8. The Old Stand-Bys: "Paper bags, boxes, or anything new you buy that has safe packaging will keep them busy for hours," Ingrid says.
9. Environmental enrichment DVDs: These programs, taped just for cats, feature close-ups of small prey and are sound-intensive. Check out www.kittyshow.com and www.videocatnip.com to purchase.
10. Create feline friendly surroundings: Cat condos made with real tree bark, like those available from www.angelicalcat.com, provide good scratching surfaces and are lovely additions to your home.
11. Screened-in porches and decks provide the perfect opportunity for indoor cats to safely experience the outdoors. Check out www.midnightpass.com for a variety of enclosures.

Keeping your indoor-cat's mind stimulated is important for the overall wellbeing and happiness of your little friend. For more ideas on environmental enrichment, visit The Cat Clinic of Roswell at www.catclinicofroswell.com.

Kelly L. Stone lives in Lawrenceville. To learn more about her, visit www.kellylstone.com

ASPCA Cold Weather Tips

Brrrr...it's cold outside! The following guidelines will help you protect your companion animals when the mercury dips.

1. Keep your cat inside. Outdoors, felines can freeze, become lost or be stolen, injured or killed. Cats who are allowed to stray are exposed to infectious diseases, including rabies, from other cats, dogs and wildlife.
2. During the winter, outdoor cats sometimes sleep under the hoods of cars. When the motor is started, the cat can be injured or killed by the fan belt. If there are outdoor cats in your area, bang loudly on the car hood before starting the engine to give the cat a chance to escape.
3. Never let your dog off the leash on snow or ice, especially during a snowstorm—dogs can lose their scent and easily become lost. More dogs are lost during the winter than during any other season, so make sure yours always wears ID tags.
4. Thoroughly wipe off your dog's legs and stomach when he comes in out of the sleet, snow or ice. He can ingest salt, antifreeze or other potentially dangerous chemicals while licking his paws, and his paw pads may also bleed from snow or encrusted ice.
5. Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter, as a longer coat will provide more warmth. When you bathe your dog in the colder months, be sure to completely dry him before taking him out for a walk. Own a short-haired breed? Consider getting him a coat or sweater with a high collar or turtleneck with coverage from the base of the tail to the belly. For many dogs, this is regulation winter wear.
6. Never leave your dog or cat alone in a car during cold weather. A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold and causing the animal to freeze to death.
7. Puppies do not tolerate the cold as well as adult dogs, and may be difficult to housebreak during the winter. If your puppy appears to be sensitive to the weather, you may opt to paper-train him inside. If your dog is sensitive to the cold due to age, illness or breed type, take him outdoors only to relieve himself.
8. Does your dog spend a lot of time engaged in outdoor activities? Increase his supply of food, particularly protein, to keep him—and his fur—in tip-top shape.
9. Like coolant, antifreeze is a lethal poison for dogs and cats. Be sure to thoroughly clean up any spills from your vehicle, and consider using products that contain propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol. Visit the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center for more information: www.asPCA.org/apcc
10. Make sure your companion animal has a warm place to sleep, off the floor and away from all drafts. A cozy dog or cat bed with a warm blanket or pillow is perfect.



Don't drive yourself crazy shopping, only to buy more stuff that your family and friends don't really need or want. **This year, honor the animal-lovers in your life with a charitable contribution in their name!** Your consideration and thoughtful gift will not be taken for granted.

Ways to Help Every Day



Tag Sale Donations

Tag sales are one of our biggest fundraisers. You can help by donating items such as housewares, appliances, toys, and sporting goods (no clothing or books, thanks). Please call 359-1439 if you have items to donate.

Click on 'Volunteering' at www.adoptatscat.org for more ways to help!



SNET Community Connections

You can now help raise money for SCAT while you talk on the phone! With SNET Community Connections, you can designate SCAT to receive 5% of every dollar you spend on long distance calls. For more information or to sign up, call 1-800-635-SNET and reference SCAT ID #3016



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SCAT is registered with **igive.com**, a program that allows you to "donate" to SCAT... free! Simply shop online at any of over 350 of your favorite stores (e.g. 1-800-Flowers, Amazon, Best Buy, Drugstore.com, PETSMART, and many others). Reference SCAT and up to 27% of each purchase you make will be redirected to SCAT! Not only is this completely free to you, you can also get discounts for yourself with special igive.com partner offers. For an extra \$5 for SCAT, use the following URL: www.igive.com/html/refer.cfm?causeid=20478



Recycle Printer Cartridges

Don't throw out your empty ink jet and laser cartridges! Bring them in to help SCAT and the environment. We recycle empties for cash - see www.cashforcritters for more information and a list of eligible cartridges (e.g. Epson cartridges are not allowed, but most others are accepted). Bring them in to one of our events, or call for a drop-off location. If you are able to collect many from work, friends, and family, let us know and we can arrange pickup!



SCAT Web Site

Our www.adoptatscat.org site has more information about our group, volunteer opportunities, and adoption forms. Click on "Our Kittens" or "Our Cats" to see photos and descriptions of animals waiting to be adopted.



SCAT T-Shirts

For \$12 you can have your very own SCAT T-Shirt, with a color logo on the front and web address on the back. Call 359-1439 and specify S, M, or L. New: XL, XX, and XXX sizes available for \$15. Wear it and help spread the word about cat and kitten rescue in Southern Connecticut!



Matching Donation

Making a donation to SCAT? See if your employer has a matching donations program. If so, you can easily double your donation! SCAT is a 501c(3) non-profit organization.



Cat Food and Litter Donations

When you take care of nearly 80 cats a day, food and litter runs out quickly! To donate pet supplies, please call Lori at 569-9849. The cats will thank you!

Yes! I would like to help.

Name _____

Phone _____ email _____

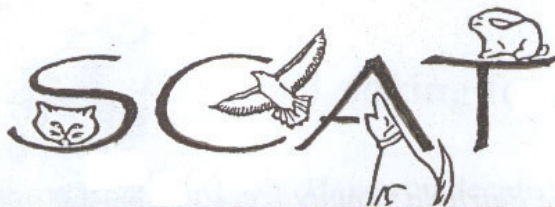
Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

- I am enclosing \$_____ in support of animal care.
- I would like to make my donation in honor / in memory of (please circle one) _____
- I am interested in volunteering.
- I have items I would like to donate.
- My gift will be matched by my company _____ (company form enclosed)

Please ask your employer if they have a matching gift program. It could double your donation!
Your contributions are fully tax deductible. S.C.A.T. is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization.

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