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Research

Cat ownership in Australia: Barriers to ownership and behavior

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This paper reports the results of an owner-answered survey on cat ownership in Australia. We focused on the potential difficulties in acquiring and maintaining pet cats in a country where the cat population has consistently declined since 1988. Additionally, we collected information on owner observations of their cats'™ temperaments, house-soiling activities, and biting behaviors. Owners'™ answers suggest that the reason for the decline in numbers of pet cats in Australia is more complex than simply a reduced supply associated with a high rate of neutering. Behavioral components of interest that emerged from this survey included a possible role for coat color and confident temperaments, a lack of association between litterbox attributes and elimination outside of the box in this feline population, and some potentially important associations between feline signaling behaviors and biting. Roles for client education and further research are discussed.

Keywords

observed behavior; normal behavior; household; cat behavior

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