



Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue

Newsletter

Fall 2025

TIME TO PAWS AND REFLECT



Since the time our rescue was founded in 2000, our group

~ Laura Wyatt, Director, Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue

Adoption Alumni—Violet & Tiny



We met Tiny (above left) and Violet (above right) in 2018 when we were volunteering for Forgotten Ones in one of their adoption centres.

At that time, we had plans to adopt a single cat, but we had made a connection with two kittens, Tiny and Violet. We were trying to decide which one to adopt.

Both kittens were social and energetic, and they had great fun chasing one another. It was evident that Tiny and Violet had become best friends while they were in the adoption centre, and they loved to play together. Given their affection for one another, we knew we could not split them up, so we ended up adopting both.

We have now had them for seven years, and the pair still love to do things together—especially at mealtime. Whenever one of them goes to their food bowls, the other one follows close behind and patiently waits for the first arrival to finish before taking their turn.

They also will be found together in the foyer, waiting to greet us as soon as we walk in the door.

Violet and Tiny are super friendly and loving. They are extremely sweet and gentle, not just with each other but with everyone they meet

~ Delyan & Melanie

MAGNIFICANT MAYA



Maya's journey became the subject of *Big Cats About the House*, a PBS documentary.

The three-part series highlights Maya's development at the Big Cat Sanctuary and features the challenges of hand rearing a newborn jaguar.

Below: The first photo of Maya was taken when she arrived at the sanctuary at just five days old. She was very tiny and weighed less than two pounds.



Whether a homeless domestic cat or an endangered wild cat, cats big and small are being rescued by animal advocacy groups around the world.

The Big Cat Sanctuary in Kent, England, is a conservation charity specifically dedicated to the rescue and protection of wild cats. The initiatives undertaken by the sanctuary are vital to saving some of the planet's most endangered and iconic species from extinction. A newborn jaguar named Maya is one of the organization's amazing success stories.

MAYA'S FIRST WEEKS

Maya was only five days old and in a critically ill state when she arrived at the Big Cat Sanctuary. She had been rejected by her mother and was in urgent need of milk and care in order to survive.

Maya was showing signs of weakness and dehydration, and the only option was hand-feeding and human rearing. The process of caring for and feeding juvenile wild cats comes with many risks and challenges; however, it was deemed the best option for Maya.

Big-cat expert Giles Clark assumed the task of trying to save Maya, and he spoke about the responsibility: "In her first few months, she needed care around the clock, so I took her home. For me, raising Maya has been hard work, a team effort, and you can never underestimate the commitment it takes.

"But it's a privilege, nonetheless, to be up-close to a developing jaguar and witness her wild instincts emerging first-hand."

Giles' time, effort, and compassion in hand-rearing Maya played a fundamental role in her physical well-being. Constant and careful monitoring of her developmental milestones was required to ensure she would not just survive, but also thrive.

During the first few months, Maya did amazingly well—growing and getting stronger—but when she was about eight-weeks-old, her caregivers became concerned that she had developed some health issues. The team noticed that she was uncoordinated in her movements and appeared to have problems with her vision.

A medical assessment was deemed vital, so Giles drove a very vocal and squealing Maya 200 miles to Langford Small Animal Veterinary Centre in Bristol. Initial veterinary tests determined that Maya's brain and nervous system weren't functioning properly, and an additional diagnostic test was recommended. Maya underwent a MRI, the first time a jaguar was given that type of brain scan.

Even the MRI results, along with other tests, could not determine the cause for Maya's condition, and her future was uncertain. The only recommendation—and hope—was that Maya would improve over time with physical therapy.

To that end, Maya was given hydrotherapy sessions to help strengthen her hind legs and develop better coordination. Climbing frames were also built in the garden so that she could practice her balance, and slowly but surely Maya began to improve. Having good balance is for jaguars as it enables agile hunting, efficient movement on varied terrains, and safe landings. Fortunately, the therapies improved Maya's physical development.

MAYA GROWS UP

Once Maya grew stronger physically, the next undertaking was her emotional development. It was vital that Maya's natural instincts as an animal had a chance to evolve, but that was not a skill her human caregivers could teach. Maya could learn animal instincts only from another animal, and that task went to a Labrador dog named Duffy.

Cub jaguars learn chasing and stalking techniques, important skills they need as adults, by playing with their siblings and mother. Duffy became a substitute cub sibling, and the pair had regular play dates to help Maya develop typical jaguar behaviours, as well as to have some youthful fun.

The next critical milestone for Maya was to be weaned off human companionship and be introduced to her own species. That required a gradual process that began by letting her spend time in previously occupied cat enclosures so she could become familiar with the scent of other sanctuary cats. It was important that Maya be exposed to her

DISTANT RELATIVES

All living felines, including domestic cats, belong to the family Felidae, which is theorized to have evolved around 10 to 15 million years ago from a small, tree-dwelling ancestor called Proailurus.

Scientists believe big and small cat lineages diverged from a common ancestor about 11.5 million years ago,

Maya (below) is a powerful and muscular animal and, although she is vastly different from domestic felines, she is a distant relative of your pet.





Jaguars are typically associated with the ground, but they are actually excellent climbers and will scale trees in search of food or shelter.

Above: Maya's enclosure has a variety of vegetation, including trees, which satisfies her natural instinct to climb.

species' smell, as it plays a vital role in jaguars' survival, communication, and reproduction.

The final stage for Maya's transition to living life as a typical jaguar was to move her from the "cub cabin" in which she had been raised to an enclosure of her own. It was a gradual process and, initially, Maya would spend the day in her own enclosure and then went back to her cabin to spend the night with her keepers. At six months old, Maya made the permanent move into her enclosure and daily human interactions stopped.

It was suitable for Maya to be the lone cat in her new habitat, as jaguars are solitary creatures and socialize with others only for breeding purposes. Her enclosure (left) was designed and built to meet her specific needs and to ensure she was safe and content.

Maya is now eight years old, and thriving. She has become an incredible ambassador for wild cats and brings much-needed attention to their plight. The main threats to big cats worldwide result from human activities, and many species are considered vulnerable, endangered, and/or critically endangered.

Fortunately, Maya's incredible journey has garnered a lot of attention and has helped raise much-needed funds and awareness for big cat conservation. 🐾



IT'S THE START OF THE GIVING SEASON!

Three Ways You Can Support Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue and Help Cats in Need

PARTICIPATE in GIVINGTUESDAY On December 2, 2025, join the global generosity movement by making a donation to Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue. On the days leading up to GivingTuesday, visit our Facebook page, where we will feature cats that will benefit from your contribution.

PURCHASE In-Honour Holiday Cards For many of our supporters, Forgotten Ones In-Honour cards have become a traditional and meaningful gift for family and friends. Cards are available for a minimum donation of \$10.00 per card.

Holiday cards can be purchased at Tru Pet, 10520 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill, Tek (905) 508-1112.

ATTEND a Fundraising Event Forgotten Ones will be at the **Annual Christmas Market** hosted by Newmarket Farmers Market on November 22, 2025, and our very popular **Holiday Bake Sale** will take place at Tru Pet on 13, 2025.

For updates about our 2025 Fall Fundraising Campaign, visit our Facebook Page. We thank you for your support and wish you a Happy Holiday Season!

Donations can be made at: canadahelps.org



TALENTED TONIC



Body Language Says it All

Melissa Millett is lauded for her ethical standards and positive reinforcement techniques when training her pets. That approach results in animal entertainers who delight in their performing experiences.

Tonic's comfort level on set is evident as he will walk around with a vertical tail—which is a cat's body language for relaying happiness.

"Tonic comes out like he's having the time of his life", Melissa says. "He loves the work, and he walks around with his tail high."

Above: The bond between Melissa and Tonic is evident as he is relaxed and content perching on her shoulder.

Melissa Millett is an internationally recognized animal trainer, who has experience in family pet obedience training, pet show performances, and training animals for film and TV roles. She is the founder and director of In Dogs We Trust, a pet training business in London, Ontario.

Melissa's career trajectory began in 1998 when she started training her own dog for canine obedience contests as a hobby. Her skills and passion in the field resulted in Melissa opening In Dogs We Trust in 2010. Millett's pets became so adept at doing tricks that she began featuring them at fairs and festivals to promote her business.

Initially, only dogs starred in Melissa's shows, but her ability to train cats to do tricks as well led her to include feline performances. A movie animal trainer who attended one of Millett's pet shows recognized Millett's skills and suggested she train her pets for film roles—which she did!

One of Millett's current stars is a cat named Tonic, a fluffy Siberian Forest Cat. Tonic had been homeless before he joined Millett's household, which at that time included four other rescue cats and a very confident two-pound chihuahua.

Tonic was just a year old when he got his first acting job in the 2019 remake of *Pet Sematary*. He was cast as the sweet and loyal family cat. The role was very close to Tonic's off-camera personality, so it wasn't too much of an acting stretch for him.

Following that, he was cast in the 2023 horror movie *Thanksgiving*, and his latest appearance was in the recently released movie *Caught Stealing*.

Each movie role required Melissa to devote months to training Tonic. She teaches Tonic to do each action in stages and motivates him with treats and toys.

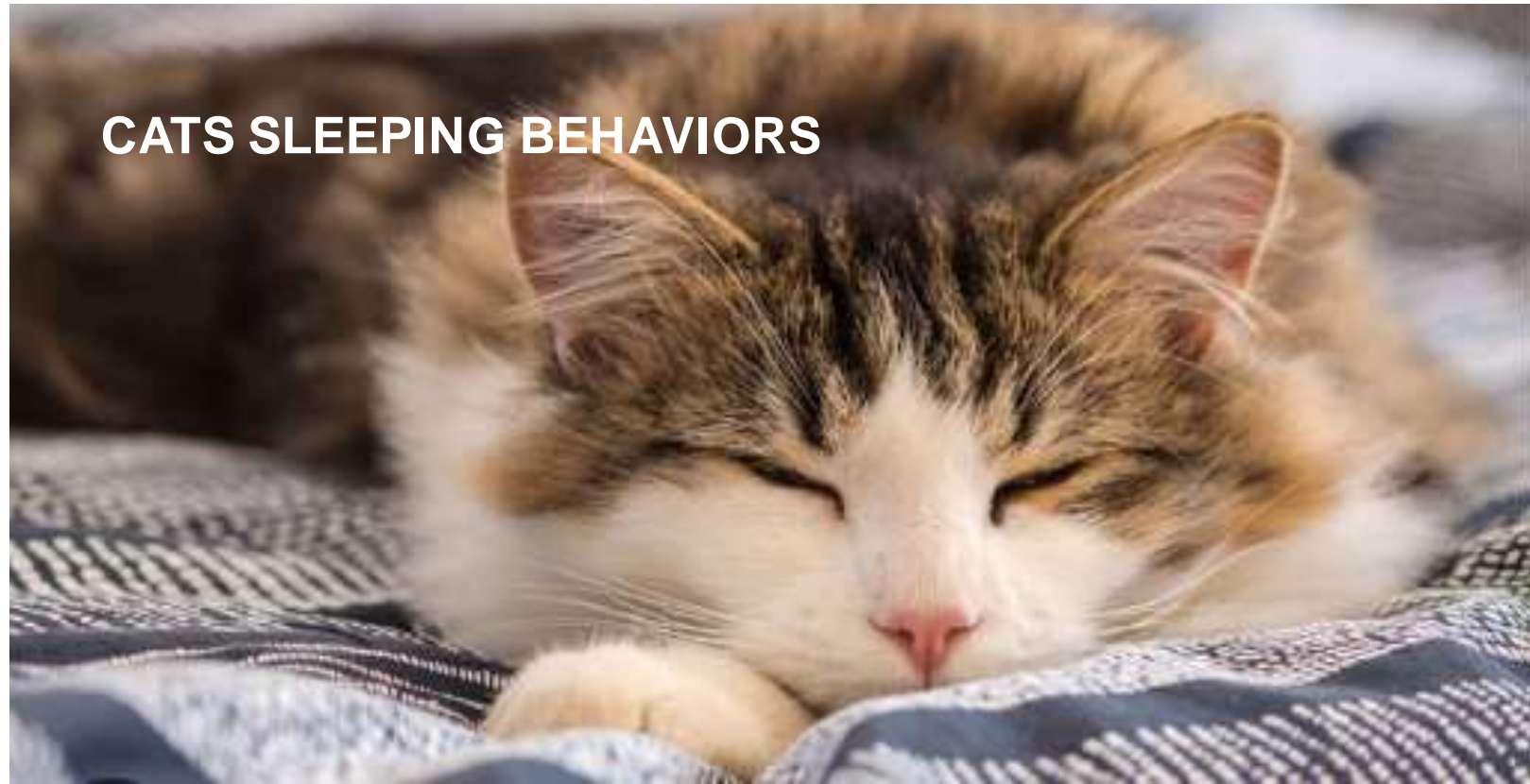
However, when they are on location and getting ready to film, it is Tonic who sets the pace. "He goes to the mark, which says, 'Yes, I'm ready,'" Millett says. "After maybe 10 or 12 rounds, he won't get on the mark again, and that's his way of saying, 'Yeah, we've had enough. You've got enough out of me.' He knows that he's the boss, he's in control."

On the set of *Caught Stealing*, Tonic was given his own trailer and a green room outfitted with toys and food. Millett says that when Tonic is on location, he always draws a crowd.

During the press tour for *Caught Stealing*, the film's lead actor Austin Butler commented on working alongside Tonic: "Yeah, he's a big star," Austin said. "I mean, when he doesn't feel like doing something, he will not do it."

Despite Tonic's somewhat diva attitude, Butler admires his feline co-star and describes him as "amazing, smart, and a scene-stealer." 🐾

CATS SLEEPING BEHAVIORS



Domestic cats retain strong natural instincts from their wild ancestors, and these hard-wired behaviours are evident in their sleeping habits. The length of time they sleep, how deeply they sleep, and where they sleep are inherited through their lineage.

How Much Do Cats Sleep?

Although our pets are now domestic, their habit of sleeping for many hours during the day is a result of the evolution of their species. Their wild ancestors required sleep in order to conserve their energy to hunt, chase, and kill their prey. Our cats may only hunt the occasional mouse, but their instinct to sleep and prepare to hunt carries on.

The amount of time a cat spends sleeping can depend on a cat's life stage. Kittens are still growing and developing, so they're likely to need up to 20 hours of sleep per day, while adult cats need 15 hours or less.

It's common for senior cats to spend more time asleep than younger cats, as they are typically less active due to age-related health conditions or mobility loss.

Is a Cat Always in a Deep Sleep?

The sleep of cats is polyphasic, which means they sleep multiple times each day, rather than the one long nightly period that is typical for humans.

Feline sleep patterns include a light doze and a deeper sleep. During light sleep, cats stay somewhat aware of their surroundings. A light-sleeping cat might keep one eye half-open to watch for anything unusual, and you may notice your



Crepuscular Creatures

Contrary to popular belief, cats aren't completely nocturnal, rather, they are crepuscular. They belong to the group of animals that are active during the dawn and dusk hours and sleep during the day.

A cat's crepuscular nature allows it to be awake at day-break to prey on diurnal birds, and at twilight to prey on nocturnal rodents.

As a result, cats spend most of the day sleeping and waiting for the prime hunting hours.

The Sleep Debate

Studies on the association between pet ownership and sleep quality and sleep disorders have varied results.

Pet ownership may be beneficial for an owner's quality of sleep as pets offer a sense of security and companionship, which may result in improvements in levels of anxiety, stress, and depression.

Alternatively a study conducted by Mayo Clinic sleep researchers found more than half of the patients seeking consultations at their sleep clinic were pet owners complaining of nightly sleep disturbances caused by their furry companions.



cat's tail gently swishing from side to side during rest. Additionally, the ears remain erect and might even turn or angle toward sounds in the environment. Generally, a cat stays in light sleep for 15 to 30 minutes at a time.

Cats engaged in light sleep are ready to wake up and spring into action, which is an innate behaviour. Even cats that are domesticated and safe from the immediate dangers of the wild retain this hypervigilance and are always on the alert for threats.

A cat's deeper sleep, known as REM sleep, is a short period of deep rest that typically lasts five to seven minutes. You can identify deeper sleep, as a cat will be completely still, will breathe slowly, and have eyes fully closed. This important deep-sleep phase is when a cat's body can repair and regenerate.

Why Do Cats Sleep with You?

In the wild, bonded cats sleep next to each other for protection, comfort, and warmth. Researchers believe cats sleep next to humans for the same reasons.

Instinctively, cats feel most vulnerable when they are sleeping during the night hours, when their guard is down, and if there is the chance of being attacked by a predator. Your pet's compulsion to curl up close to you, or on top of you, during the night is a sign that your cat trusts you and feels protected by your presence.

Another reason cats often sleep on, or snuggled up beside, their humans is for warmth—another behaviour embedded in their DNA.

Cats' ancestors were desert dwellers, and their bodies evolved to thrive in warmer conditions. Finding warm environments was essential for their existence during the cold desert nights and cooler parts of the day. This instinct remains strong in modern cats, and your pet will sleep in your bed to absorb your body heat and stay warm.

Is My Cat Sleeping Too Much?

How much a cat sleeps varies from pet to pet. Breed, diet, and lifestyle make a difference in how much cats sleep, along with age.

No set amount of sleep indicates a health or behavioural problem with your cat, but it is important to understand your pet's normal sleep patterns. If your pet's slumber habits change significantly, it could be a sign of one of following issues.

Boredom Sometimes cats sleep more because they're bored. While sleeping might not seem like a big deal,

boredom can lead to other problematic behaviours in cats, such as destruction, constant meowing, and over-grooming.

To stay engaged and prevent boredom, cats need stimulation throughout the day in the form of vertical territory (cat trees or windowsill perches), puzzle feeders, and regular playtime with you or interactive toys.

Having a cat companion can also reduce boredom-related behaviours and will give your pet the opportunity to engage in natural feline interactions, like grooming and play. However, it is important to ascertain that the cats are compatible and to take the time to introduce them properly.

Anxiety As with humans, cats are affected by stress. One way cats express stress or anxiety is by changing their sleep patterns. If they're suddenly sleeping more than usual, it could be a sign they're feeling overwhelmed or anxious about something in their environment.

Sickness Certain illnesses and diseases can also make your cat sleep more than usual. These include hyperthyroidism, diabetes, kidney diseases, heart disease, liver disease, and cancer.

Why Do Cats Sleep in Weird Places

Domestic cats' ancestors lived a solitary life, coming together only to mate. Their hunting style was adopted to catch small, individual prey rather than engaging in cooperative group hunts. As they did not have a pack to protect them, they chose their sleep spots strategically.

High Locations A cat's instinct to sleep in high places stems from their wild ancestors who used high spots for safety from predators and to gain a vantage point for hunting. For domesticated cats, this instinct translates to a desire for security, a good view of their territory, and a quiet place away from household commotion. High perches also provide a sense of control and can help them avoid conflict with other pets.

Snug, Small Spaces Sometimes cats like to feel that they are hidden away. In this case, they will choose places with only one entrance (and exit) so that they can carefully watch and defend only one direction.

When they are enclosed, they know that they do not have to "watch their back". This is part of the reason that cats like to hide in boxes or baskets.

The safety of being enclosed on three sides is appealing because it is defensible and low profile. Your cat can let her guard down and only think about danger coming from one spot in a good hiding place.

Additionally, smaller, enclosed spaces warm up faster, making them a cozy choice. 🐾

Comforting Quarters

Cats may seek out unusual spots like drawers, cardboard boxes, or bags for their resting places out of instinct.

Cats like small spaces because they provide a sense of security, warmth, and are a way to manage stress.

These instincts stem from their wild ancestors who used enclosed areas like dens as a spot where they could hide from predators or ambush prey.

The snug fit of a small space also helps them maintain their body heat, making them feel cozy and secure.





Celi and Mobi - Silent Love

It has been fourteen months since we welcomed Mobi and Celi into our hearts and our home. Such a joy they are! They keep us on our toes, as most of the time they are both are very active.

We think Mobi is a large breed cat, as he is big, and he is also very clumsy. Whenever we hear something crashing down, the first question that comes to mind is "What's Mobi up to?" He is curious to investigate every nook and corner, but gets scared and spooked easily, and then knocks over everything lying in his escape path.

Little Celi is very skinny, feisty, and agile—like a Ninja. She can jump up to and down from any high place (like the top of a tall bookshelf, cabinet, or door) without disturbing or knocking down anything. And when she wrestles with Mobi, she can pin him in one second flat.

Mobi and Celi always love to sleep or cuddle together. They share the bed with us, and each claims their own corner. They love to roll around on the floor, waiting to be scratched and to have belly rubs. Every time we come home, even from brief errands, they will run to greet us as soon as we open the front door.

The only issue about both cats is that they don't like to be picked up, hugged, or held. And strangely--and sadly--they don't seem to know how to purr. They show the signs that they enjoy being petted or rubbed, but never make any sound the way that most cats do. We hope this may change and improve with time.

Thanks to all of the staff at Forgotten Ones Cat Rescue who made possible this joyful living arrangement among two humans and two mischievous felines. ~ Geoge & Suree



Finnegan & Kieran - Comforting and Cuddly

I adopted Finnegan and Kieran in July 2024. Finnegan settled in a few hours after I got him home. He was happy to be around me right from the start.

Aggressively cuddly Kieran was a challenge. He was always close by, but would run away when I tried to pet him. It took a few weeks, but when he was comfortable, he was all over me—sleeping with me at night, crawling on my lap, and snuggling in when I try to work.

Finnegan has zero survival instincts because he is just about the friendliest cat I've ever known. He doesn't hesitate to introduce himself to guests and usually has them petting him within a few minutes. He's so aggressive about loving on my guests, he's managed to startle a few of them!

Kieran is more cautious, but still very friendly to strangers. When I'm sick, Kieran leaves my side only to eat, drink, or use the litterbox

I bought them a great cat tree, and they both love hanging out high up in it. Kieran also loves sleeping in a laundry basket next to the window, and they spend at least a few hours every night sleeping next to me, purring softly.

Thank you to your organization for Kieran and Finnegan. I really can't explain how much joy they bring into my life. I have a stressful job, and they are a consistent source of calm and peace for me, before, during, and after work. For the rest of my life, I will be grateful to your organization for their wonderful companionship. ~ Evan