

PAWS FOR EFFECT



*The PolyTrak
Newsletter
January 2008*

Volume 2 - Number 1
Copyright 2008 PolyTrak
All rights reserved

Maine Coon Polydactyl



International Database



Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

January 2008 – Vol. 2 – No.1



A LOOK BACK AT 2007 and FORWARD TO 2008!

This month's "*Paws for Effect*" will look at what all of us in the "Poly" movement did in 2007 and what can we look forward to in 2008 and beyond. None of us have a crystal ball and can say for certain where we will be in another year, but we feel 2007 was a major turning point for the Maine Coon polydactyl and this growing momentum will carry us through this year with some great accomplishments.

You may find this month's "*Paws for Effect*" will be jumping around a bit from subject to subject, in that we will try to hit the high spots of 2007 and how that may continue in the New Year.



DK*Mystery Coons Yuna Madalenn P from Kreiz ar Mor



2007 à 2008

2008 à 2007

by Ken Bussard

An old saying goes something like: "We can't know where we are going, unless we know where we have been". So in this light, maybe we should pause and look at our past accomplishments to see what we should strive for in the coming year. Time and History have a way of putting things in perspective and can provide valuable insight to our future actions.

At PolyTrak, we had a very successful year. It was our first full calendar year of operation, since our founding in March of 2006. We entered the year with 4 volunteer staff members and were very fortunate to secure the knowledge and services of a fifth member in September. This allowed us to begin expanding our Heritage section for the tracing of current polys back to the foundation Maine Coons. Kitty is our Heritage Coordinator on the PolyTrak staff. Since all of us are volunteers working on the PolyTrak website, time can be a factor. We all have jobs, family and personal commitments to attend to. We felt that an additional person would be a great asset to PolyTrak. Miriam Muller from Cattery van Siduroy graciously joined our group in the fall of this year to help all of us in the research needed for the Website in all areas, in particular the Heritage section. She carries the title, Research Coordinator and brings a wealth experience to the table. Admittedly we do not have a lot of new heritage info posted yet, but a lot of work has been going on in late 2007 behind-the-scenes and will magically appear in the future. Soon you will be able, in a matter of a couple of clicks, find the poly line of any listed poly. A lofty goal, perhaps, but again in the theme of this article...we need to know the lines and what has happened the past to better plan breeding and show programs today and in the future.



Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

January 2008 – Vol. 2 – No.1



Navaho Warrior P of van Siduroy

New functionality was also added to our website in 2007. You can now browse through any of our kitten, sire and dam listings and with one or two clicks views information about all of the offspring listed for breeders, parents of kittens (and by default littermates) as well as the Cattery associated with each kitten or cat. Judging by our web statistics, this feature is being used extensively by our visitors, since the number of pages viewed and total time per visit has increased. More people are spending more time at PolyTrak researching cats and kittens. This does nothing but raise awareness of the “Poly” and the various Maine Coon Polydactyl breeding programs around the World. This is another important reason why those of you working with polys should submit your information. You are creating added exposure to your personal program as well as contributing to statistical and general knowledge of polydactylism. With over eight and one million successful requests to date, the “word” is getting out about the Maine Coon polydactyl.



If animals could speak the dog would be a blundering outspoken fellow, but the cat would have the rare grace of never saying a word too much.

- Mark Twain



Jig-saw puzzles were a fun feature we also added in 2007. We presently have over 20 pictures of PolyTrak listed cats and kittens that have been converted to jigsaw puzzles on our site. We have received several comments from viewers enjoying this feature and appreciative of seeing their cat picture, along with his or her statistics listed. This is a fun way of providing exposure to the sometimes-dry number and facts associated with polydactylism. We even have a person in the United States that visits PolyTrak almost on a weekly basis just to work 3 or 4 puzzles. This may be a person who would have never visited PolyTrak or learned about the polydactyl. So it is another of the tools we can use to educate and inform the general public about the Maine Coon Polydactyl. Out of the several favourable comments and “Thank You”s we received we have had only one cranky response asserting that PolyTrak is using these puzzles and pictures for commercial purposes. We would like to assure everyone that PolyTrak is all volunteer and non-profit and we are not selling pictures, email addresses or any information for use by any 3rd parties. The puzzle pictures you see on our website along with the JavaScript code required to make the puzzle work are stored on the Jig-Zone website. It is necessary for the picture to reside at their site and transferred to PolyTrak in the form of a puzzle. These are stored in a pass worded PolyTrak account not accessible by anyone except through “back-door” scanning and searching. In addition we at PolyTrak were required to enter into an agreement with Jig Zone stating PolyTrak would not use any of the puzzles for commercial purposes. Rest assured no one at PolyTrak or Jig Zone is making a nickel from contributed pictures and the puzzle in question was removed from our site and replaced by another contributor’s picture.

In the same theme of security of information, PolyTrak has taken several measures to increase protection of our scripts and coding, as



Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

January 2008 – Vol. 2 – No.1

well as your cat, kitten and Cattery information. Much of this is very boring and is somewhat proprietary, but there are a few measures we have talked about publicly in this Newsletter during 2007. With high volume of visits to our site, security and attempted hacking is a constant concern. Some of the most important things that PolyTrak uses for protection are encrypting all Cattery, breeder and fancier email addresses. It may look normal to you on the website, if you were to click on one of these email links, but behind-the-scenes to the web-bots, spammers and email-harvesters it is nothing but gibberish and is not easily translated into a valid email address. Another problem that arose in 2007 was attempts to download the scripting code and database data in a back-door attempt to get information. With the aid of our ‘web hosting provider’, we have monitors watching for these hacks and to date we have trapped and banned at least 4 of these people. Recently a new spamming technique was developed to take advantage of websites that using submission forms. Since PolyTrak uses submission forms in several places on the site, including submitting cat, Cattery and kitten information, we were inundated with a flurry of Sire submissions all containing website links to pornographic sites. This matter has been resolved also along with a few others that have not been discussed. We feel that your willingness to share information with the poly community is great, and we are doing our best to safeguard this information. Sometimes one can “over protect” and prevent legitimate access. If you, as a visitor, are having problems viewing anything on PolyTrak and are not able to resolve it on your end, drop us an email and we will look further into the matter.



Firedevils Legolas

These are a few of the many changes and new items added to the PolyTrak website during 2007. We have many new ideas and plans for 2008 in the “mill” right now. Watch for new and interesting changes coming to PolyTrak!

On a statistical note: We have noted a big increase in Catteries that are working with Maine Coon poly in 2007. Although some breeders have not submitted information to our database there was also a large increase in the number of cats and kittens listed this year also.

PolyTrak started 2007 with 36 Catteries listed in our participants’ database. As the year came to an end, we now have 60 Catteries. This is an increase of 24 new listings for 2007. A few of these have not submitted breeder or litter information, but for the most part, these are new breeding programs that are now working with the pedigree Maine Coon poly. In addition we received listings for 27 new Sires that were part of a poly litter breeding. We started the year with 25 Sires listed and that total jumped to 52 by the end of the year...a more than 100% increase. The same percentage increase was noted with the Dams. January 1st, 2007 arrived with 37 dams listed in our database as participants in a poly litter. By the end of the year that number jumped to 79. Again this was over a 100% increase. To date there are 420 kittens in our litter-tracking section of the database. We started the year with 247 kittens and at the close of business on December 31st we had added 173 new kittens. This is a bit of an interesting number in that the increase was only 70%. With the large increase in the number of Maine Coon Catteries working with the polys and the more than doubling of active breeding Sires and Dams, the number of kittens did not follow the pattern. A check on average litter size shows no significant difference. So why the big difference? We can only assume that there is a sizable number of poly kittens that are going unreported. On the positive size, it was still a banner year for the Maine Coon Poly and the beginning of the re-emergence of polys.



Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

January 2008 – Vol. 2 – No.1



A YEAR IN REVIEW

By Ken Bussard

I mentioned all the things we have done at PolyTrak. But there was far more news regarding the Maine Coon poly than just here. Many of you and others have worked hard and diligently in the promotion and acceptance of the “Poly”. Each of you deserves a large pat on the back for your efforts. It has been a true “team effort” from so many. Personally I would like to thank each of you for all your efforts and time. Without each of us working individually and collectively we would not be where we are today. We have tried to feature much of your efforts in “*Paws for Effect*”. But we know that a lot more has happened than we reported. But to briefly highlight some of the great things that have happened with the “Poly” in 2007, I have gone back through the archived Newsletters from 2007 and even a little from our notes about things that we were not able to publish, due to deadlines and space. So sit back and look at some of the highlights. You can re-read the full stories on each of these highlights by visiting our website: <http://www.polytrak.net>. From the main menu on the left click on the Newsletter button. You will see a link at the top of this page for the archived issues of “*Paws for Effect*”. The entire year (Volume 1) is located there.

JANUARY 2007 (Inaugural Issue) –

WHAT IS POLYTRAK? -- In its simplest form PolyTrak is a collection service for any and all information regarding the Maine Coon Polydactyl. We collect information about cats and kittens related to MC Polydactyls. In addition we are expanding all the time to include information and articles, definitions, pictures and many other aspects of polydactylism....

Read more at:

http://www.polytrak.net/ptnews/archives/PTNews-V1_No1.pdf

February 2007 --

CALIFORNIA STUDENT RESEARCHES POLYDACTYLISM (by Traci Merrill)

...To Shannon, an 8th grade student at a local San Diego middle school and a recent first place winner in the San Diego Science Fair, this has been her passion for the past five months...

... She gathered information from many people including Dr. Leslie A. Lyons from the U.C. Davis School of Veterinary Medicine; Dr. Kim Dembinski at the Carmel Mountain Ranch Veterinary Hospital; Kitty at PolyTrak; Friends of Cats Shelter and numerous cat owners and breeders...

Read more at:

http://www.polytrak.net/ptnews/archives/PTNews-V1_No2.pdf

March 2007 --

Heritage: Past - Present – Future (by Kitty Chandler)

...I started with one cat and worked forward as far as possible. There over a 100 descendents from Grey Luv Perry, a foundation Maine Coon Poly, and those are just the ones found on the web. It is just the tip of the iceberg ...

... They are in our show lines; some even have titles as no one noticed the extra toes. It is obvious that the Polys are a big part of the Maine Coon Cat heritage.

Read more at:

http://www.polytrak.net/ptnews/archives/PTNews-V1_No3.pdf



Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

January 2008 – Vol. 2 – No.1

April 2007 --

DID YOU KNOW? - By Deb Brown

🐾 It is well known in the Maine Coon world that MCBFA recognized the Polydactyl Maine Coon as a Maine Coon.

🐾 It is well known that there are no health issues associated with the PD gene expressed as the Maine Coon Polydactyl.

🐾 It is well known in the Cat Fancy world that the Genetics Committee of TICA approved polydactyly and therefore welcomed the Pixie Bob cat as a new breed with an old trait.

🐾 It is well known that there have been Maine Coon Polydactyls, with not so predominant digits, shown in championship classes and have placed very well in the standings.

Read more at:

http://www.polytrak.net/ptnews/archives/PTNews-V1_No4.pdf

May 2007 --

TO BE POLY OR NOT TO BE POLY (By Vonne Bode)

... In TICA a MC polydactyl can't be shown in the regular MC class, this because article 216.2.2 says cats with more than five toes on each front foot and four toes on each back foot have to be disqualified. IMO they goofed by using the word "toes" and by not specifying the digits they expect to see. A standard front foot of a cat has 5 digits - 1 dewclaw and 4 toes. Since they chose to use the word "toes" and not to specify this, there's no reason why a cat with 1 thumb and 4 toes or a cat with 5 toes, couldn't be shown in the regular MC class...

... As great as the response has been there is always more that each of us, as individuals can do to help educate and promote the poly. The Glacier Coons website from Kitty of our staff has a great list of things that we all can do to help promote the polys of the world. It is: <http://www.glaciercoons.com/Polydactyl.htm>

Read more at:

http://www.polytrak.net/ptnews/archives/PTNews-V1_No5.pdf

June 2007 --

JUST THE FACTS (by Vonne Bode)

... The best descriptions on polydactyly I've found so far are from *Danforth* and *Sis & Getty* (who likely used it from *Danforth*). So my preferred type of definition for polydactyly would be something like: **Polydactyly (in the MC cat breed) is a condition caused by the single variable dominant gene, Pd, whose probable main effect is to incite some changes in the pre-axial part of the limb bud causing an excess of growth in that area. From this excess tissue, enlarged or supernumerary digits are developed...**

... As you might know, some breeders against polys have voiced their concern about the amount of digits on one paw, mentioning a cat with 12 digits on a paw. It could be that they have misinterpreted the writings about polydactylism, such as *Danforth's: Heredity of Polydactyly in the Cat*. Here *Danforth* states: "Such polydactyl (or more properly hyper-dactyl) cats may sometimes have a total of as many as 8, or possible even 10, extra digits." The word "**total**" is very important here, since this means counting **all** the digits of **all** four paws and not the digits of one paw. Ten extra digits would mean an average of 7 digits per foot. But we know that the Pd gene doesn't produce symmetrical paws in standard fashion. So in theory, the 12-digit paw would fit in the total of 10 extra digits. *Danforth* mentioned, however, in his findings a paw never exceeded the 7 digits.

Read more at:

http://www.polytrak.net/ptnews/archives/PTNews-V1_No6.pdf



TLC Polycoon's Silver Ghosts Litter



Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

January 2008 – Vol. 2 – No.1

July 2007 --

So What Happens When You Show Your Maine Coon Polydactyl – Syracuse 2007 (By Deb Brown)

... Different judges will see different things in each cat. Some prefer one feature to another. This is to be expected. But they all pretty much hammered home the phrase...adhere to the Maine Coon Standard in all respects and we will judge them as Maine Coons regardless of the toes...

SHAMELESS PROMOTION (By Ken Bussard)

... A recent comment by a show judge eluded to the question of why would anyone want to perpetuate a trait that people have worked a hundred years to eliminate. I guess my answer would be: "Why would you want to spend a hundred years trying to eliminate a harmless trait?"...

Read more at:

http://www.polytrak.net/ptnews/archives/PTNews-V1_No7.pdf



Overlord Sparrow of Firedevils

August 2007 --

WHO LIKES THE POLYS? (contributed by Cathy Pettey)

Recently Polystandards co-chair, Cathy Pettey attended a TICA cat show for the Northeast Region. In addition to participating in showing Maine Coon polys in the New Traits Division, she put together an informal survey to hand out to other breeders of Maine Coons. The survey was short and anonymous.

... The two questions stated:

1.) Do you accept or oppose the Maine Coon Poly being accepted for show status.

YES NO, if NO, please briefly state why.

2.) Would you object to the Poly Maine Coon being shown in the same classes as the non poly Maine Coon, if YES please

explain why...

...The result of the first question was a resounding 11 out of 13 (85%) in favor of acceptance for show status...

Read more at:

http://www.polytrak.net/ptnews/archives/PTNews-V1_No8.pdf

September 2007 --

THE UNSTOPPABLE FORCE!

... On August 19th, nearly half of the group of 18 met in a worldwide live conference to discuss a timeframe and needed documentation to push forward for submission to TICA...

...

The group would like to solicit input from all fanciers and breeders that are working with the MC poly. The first item deals with Catteries working with the Maine Coon poly. It seeks information and experiences in poly breeding. A form is being developed for mailing that asks the following questions:

Name: _____ Cattery: _____
Country: _____ Years Breeding: _____

Permission to use this information publicly concerning advancement to show status of the Maine Coon polydactyl: _____ Yes/No

Concerns for new breeders introducing MC Polydactyl:

Caution required with kittens:

Any cautions or concerns:

Noticeable litter differences poly/non-poly (health, mortality etc.):

Experiences

Comments:

If you do not receive a form or if you would like to send in your comments sooner, you may email polystandards@polytrak.net...

Read more at:

http://www.polytrak.net/ptnews/archives/PTNews-V1_No9.pdf



Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

January 2008 – Vol. 2 – No.1

October 2007 --

POLY BREEDER SANCTIONED FOR WORKING WITH POLYS!

A British Cat Club, The Maine Coon Cat Club (or MCCC) recently placed sanctions on a long-time Maine Coon breeder in Cornwall England for importing and breeding Maine Coon polydactyls....

... It seems, that although this is perfectly acceptable and allowable thing to do under United Kingdom regulations and also from the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy (GCCF), TICA and other Cat Associations operating in the United Kingdom, the MCCC has determined that importing and breeding poly Maine Coons is a problem and is cause for sanctions. Since all of these breeders importing and breeding with the polys do not fall under the control of the MCCC, the Committee determined nothing could be done except for one breeder that was a member in good standing for 6 years of the MCCC....

Read more at:

http://www.polytrak.net/ptnews/archives/PTNews-V1_No10.pdf

November 2007 --

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT POLYSTANDARD?

... Following last months problems a UK Maine Coon breeder, who works with and imported a poly MC, was having with the MCCC Cat Club, several members of the group started a letter writing campaign to the governing body of the club pointing out facts about polydactylism and how it is not considered a hereditary defect in the modern world of research and scientific study...and why a breeder should not be sanctioned for this...

... Cathy Pettey, the group's co-chairperson has been working with others in the group and scheduling and arranging for the PolyStandard people to get together in their regions for the showing poly Maine Coons in TICA New Trait shows in their area. You will be seeing an increased visibility of the polys everywhere. So

look for them and support them wherever you see them.

If you would like to join this gang, they welcome all help and assistance and fresh ideas for acceptance of the Maine Coon polydactyl. But be prepared to work...

Read more at:

http://www.polytrak.net/ptnews/archives/PTNews-V1_No11.pdf

December 2007 --

POLY RESULTS FROM HELLEVOETSHUIS BY DEB BROWN

...What a wonderful full-filled week for myself in Holland! As you probably know, I, along with two other PolyTrak Staff members were in attendance at the Cats and Tulips Show last month in The Netherlands. Thank you ALL for your hospitality, friendship and one great week and show. My visit was culminated by a great show sponsored by the TICA Cats and Tulips show with 15 polys entered in the New Traits section of the two-day show. We saw some great poly MC's and met many new people and above all we learned a lot...

OPINIONS By Vonne Bode

... we were there to promote champion status for the MC poly, but we were also there to get some insight in what the MC breeders at the show thought about the Maine Coon poly as future competition in the Maine Coon classes of TICA. 😊...

... We already had the questionnaire that was used earlier this year at a show in the US (English version). So we re-used it...

...19 voters were ok with the Maine Coon poly being accepted for show status (90%). 2 voters (9,5%) were against them being shown at all. 3 voters (14%) wanted to see them being shown in a separate class. So not bad results at all!

Read more at:

http://www.polytrak.net/ptnews/archives/PTNews-V1_No12.pdf



Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

January 2008 – Vol. 2 – No.1



CH Blueblaze Svart Rok of UpperValley

"Of all domestic animals the cat is the most expressive. His face is capable of showing a wide range of expressions. His tail is a mirror of his mind. His gracefulness is surpassed only by his agility. And, along with all these, he has a sense of humor." - Walter Chandoha

THE TOP "POLY" STORY OF 2007!

As you can see from the above excerpts of news stories from 2007, a lot happened in the year. The Maine Coon polydactyl has emerged from its former place on the "back-shelf" to "front-and-center".

The difference this time, in our opinion, is the movement for acceptance and preservation of the Maine Coon Polydactyl has gained enough momentum and backing that it is here to stay. After 30 plus years, 2007 appears to be the year that laid the groundwork for the first proposal to a major Cat Association for acceptance and Championship Status for the Maine Coon Polydactyl. Hopefully our re-cap of stories from 2008 next January, the number one story will be "POLYS ACCEPTED IN

TICA!". But it is all the work done by so many in 2007 that makes this a possibility in 2008 that captured our attention. The get-together of several Maine Coon Breeders and Fanciers into an area where all could work with a common goal of acceptance was probably the primary reason these things are happening. Therefore in our minds, we feel the story about PolyStandards group forming (August issue of "*Paws for Effect*") was the number one story of the poly movement in 2007. Although there were many articles dealing with PolyStandards throughout the year, it is the forming of this group that had the most impact for the year.

The runner-up for story of the year was the draconian sanctions of the MCCC placed on a breeder who dared to breed a poly litter in England. It illustrates how far in the dark-ages and uninformed a few people remain. Hopefully there will be a successful resolution to this problem in 2008.



UpperValley Silverfoot P (owned by Vonne Bode)

That's a "wrap" for another month. We hope you enjoyed looking back at a very successful year for the "poly" and that you will join us again next month and throughout 2008 for more of the latest news from PolyTrak. Let us know your thoughts. We would love to hear from you. Until next month:

Bye for Now!

