

PAWS FOR EFFECT



*The PolyTrak
Newsletter
Winter 2011*

Volume 5- Number 1
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WELCOME!

Welcome to another edition of *“Paws for Effect”*. Also a welcome to our new subscribers. You can add, remove or send us your comments or story ideas at any time by just emailing ptnewsletter@polytrak.net.

“Paws for Effect” is a Newsletter from PolyTrak, a worldwide database service that tracks information on the Maine Coon polydactyl. We are now entering our 5th year of publication. Each issue we try to feature articles of interest, not only for better understanding of the Maine Coon polydactyl, but also articles that may be of interest to the Maine Coon Breeder and Fancier, as well as the General Public. As always, we look forward to your ideas, suggestions and particularly your information and stories.

We admit that it has been some time since our last regular Newsletter. We will try to make up a better excuse, but for now we will go with “The cat ate the drafts”. It has been a busy time at PolyTrak with many new Catteries, breeder Maine Coon polydactyls and lots of new poly litters, which keeps us in catch up mode a good share of the time. So...enough of the excuses lets take a look at what has/is happening in the World of the Maine Coon polydactyl. Sit back and enjoy this issue of *“Paws for Effect”*

POLYTRAK IS NOW ON FACEBOOK

Last year Polytrak expanded it reach by creating a Facebook page called “Paws for Effect – The Maine Coon polydactyl”. This of course is the namesake of this Newsletter. It was felt that this would give the MC poly Worldwide exposure to many who may not be familiar with this great cat. This was the idea of Elisabeth Morcel (Kreiz ar Mor – Reunion Island) and a member of the PolyTrak Staff. Under her capable leadership the site was created and continues to grow today with her guidance along with the contributions of over 400 fans of the newly created Facebook site.



We welcome you to stop by our page and say Hi...share pictures and take a look at some fine examples of the Maine Coon polydactyls. Just click on the graphic on the left to visit us.

Cats always know whether people like or dislike them. They do not always care enough to do anything about it.
- Winifred Carriere -



Abracoondabra PP Eldarion
Nantes, France



HoneyPaws Delloous PP Destre



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FISHINGTIGERS FROM GERMANY FEATURED CATTERY IN THIS ISSUE

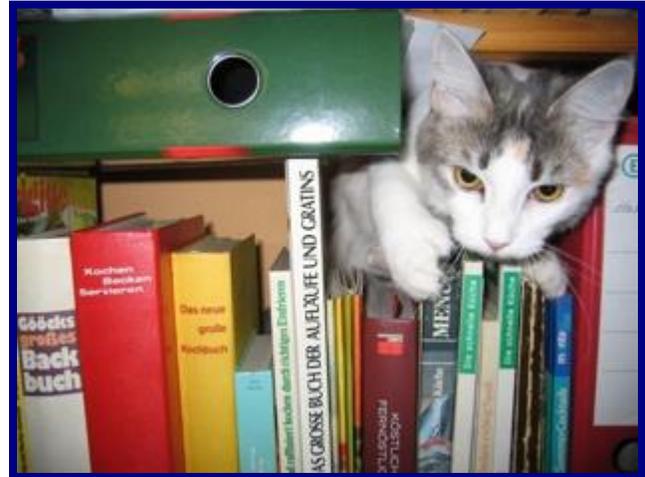
(Editors Note: *Paws for Effect* would like to feature a Cattery, Fancier or Show Person in each issue of our Newsletter. We request, in fact encourage, all to submit articles of interest and pictures to our Newsletter. You may write the story yourself or we would be glad to give you a hand, if you desire. Just email us at: ptnewsletter@polytrak.net. Following is one of those great stories.)

Why a Poly?????

By Christiane Duentzer



First of all I would like to introduce myself. My name is Christiane, born in 1971 in Germany, grown up in Hamburg, and now living in Stade. I share my life and home with my boyfriend Thorsten and our cats. In 2006 we were adopted by our first Maine Coon "CoonEmotion`s Enzo" and what shall I tell you... we got the "Coon – virus"!



In 2008, after our first girl "Hera in Blue of Chiarandy" joined our cattery, I did some kind of "link hopping". Not really looking for a new family member I was just enjoying kitten pictures when I saw a little harlequin girl. A color I never saw before and I fell in love with this little princess right from the first glance at her face!

Scrolling down the row of pictures I suddenly stopped she was a POLY !!! I heard about that trait and I saw pictures before but I thought it would be silly to breed cats which cannot be shown and which are not allowed for championship and I never wanted to have one of these strange looking cats which were absolutely useless in my eyes.

Due to the German animal protection law which says that polydactyly is a semi lethal defect in cats and therefore they should not be bred, it was shocking to see "my perfect little lady" having such big feet. But it was too late ... I already fell for her!

There were rumors about polys, many cat clubs forbade breeding them (and still do) and some breeders called me nuts adding a poly to our cattery right from the beginning. They told me that we could never build up a good reputation and it would be difficult to get rid of poly kittens because nobody wanted them.



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Christiane Duentzer
Germany
www.fishingtigers.de

THE SEMI-LETHAL DEFECT!

By Ken Bussard

I had only little knowledge of polys and so I started my research. But the hardest thing was to get Thorsten's permission to ask the breeder for that girl. We discussed the pro and contra and it took me three days of getting on his nerves by showing him articles and any kind of information I gathered until he suddenly said :“ why do you ask me, you are always doing what you want...”

That was all I needed ...In may 2008, after dozens of e-mails and sleepless nights, our first poly “Lykken's Power Girl PP” came to live with us. She is an adorable sweet little girl and it's always fun to watch our little miss mischief. Two years and one poly litter later we are both addicted to polys and when time's come to add a new family member, it must be a poly! In that theme we have just added our newest poly member to the family. A Brown Mackerel Tabby 4WD guy all the way from the State of Maine in the USA.



Dirigo P'eter P'an of Fishingtigers
AKA : Petey , Schätzchen (little treasure)

The “semi-lethal” defect is a term used from time-to-time to describe a Non-Existent malady exhibited in the Maine Coon polydactyl cat. Regardless of the fact that there is no such thing as a “semi-lethal defect” related to a poly Maine Coon, it was slipped in, uncontested, into modern day German law to use as a basis for the prevention of breeding of this cat in their Country.

With the creation and expansion of the European Union, it was hoped by some that a more universal law and regulations with regard to animals protection would be standardized throughout the member Countries. Some feared this would carry the polydactyl Maine Coon that was under the inclusion of the German Law as a “Pain” Breed across the European Continent. Fortunately this movement has not taken place, since the semi-lethal defect has no scientific basis or validity...although an erroneous attempt was made to base this law on findings from studies in the past. These studies have never made, or suggested, the existence of the semi-lethal defect or the suggestion that a polydactyl cat, Maine Coon or otherwise, would suffer any malady different from their non-poly counterparts.

What is the “semi-lethal” defect. Part of the problem lies, most likely with translation. The term actually refers to a statement that half of the poly kittens born in a litter will die prior to 6 months of age. A story later in this



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Newsletter talks of a new study underway in Germany to once again provide more data to debunk the “semi-lethal” claim and hopefully breeders and fanciers will be able to have the German Law modified to remove polydactylism from the “Pain Breed” classification. Personally speaking, once again, breeders are faced with proving a negative. This has been the case for sometime now, as those that do not like polydactyl cats, make a wild unsubstantiated claims without any Scientific or Observational backing...and if the tale is said enough times, some people take the claim as “Gospel” without checking the facts. You may have heard of a children’s story about Chicken Little. The moral of that story, to children, was you should not make things up if they are not true. Chicken Little hollered repeatedly that “The Sky is falling!” If said enough times people began to believe Chicken Little without checking to see if the sky had ever fallen before or if there was some kind of Scientific data that would support the fact that the sky might fall. It is time to stop the prejudice that has been going in the registered Maine Coon Breed for nearly 50 years and get back to the fact that polydactylism is not a harmful trait in the past, in the present day, and has about the same chance as the sky falling in the future.



Ashley P of Cooncreek – The Netherlands

POLYTRAK RECEIVES WEBSITE AWARD

All Pet Directory has notified PolyTrak that we have received the “Great Pet Site Award”. PolyTrak was chosen based on the criteria:

- Excellent content
- Design and presentation
- Attention to Details
- Prestige and visibility
- Encouraging compassion and caring for animals.



Thank you to all the Breeders and Fanciers that have submitted their cats and Catteries to PolyTrak. It is you, the participants, that have made PolyTrak what it is today. Next month we will be celebrating our 5th Anniversary on the Web. Although current statistics are no longer available; by September of 2009 we had surpassed 25 million successful request and tens of thousands visitors have viewed two and a half million pages.

Prowling his own quiet backyard or asleep by the fire, he is still only a whisker away from the wilds.

- Jean Burden -



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SAMPLES NEEDED! NEW POLY STUDY IN GERMANY

Contributed by **Christiane Düntzer & Martina Roth**

Genetic Clarification of Polydactyly with Respect to the Semi-Lethal Factor₁

The University of Bern – Institute of Genetics – has declared itself ready, under the lead of Dr. Bianca Haase, to carry out a research project into the "Genetic Clarification of Polydactyly With Respect to the Semi-Lethal Factor ". Research funds for this have been already granted. To achieve a representative result, the research project needs the help of as large number as possible of breeders and cat lovers who are in possession of parents and offspring of polydactyl cats.

The research team will develop a form (see form at end of story) which will contain all information that is important for pet owners: which samples are needed, where to send these ...and other necessary information about the animal. This link will be open to the public and inserted here as soon as we have it available. This form should then be sent to the Institute together with a sample. It would be important to receive not only blood samples from polydactyl cats, but also "normal" Maine Coons for this investigation. The ideal situation would be if the genetic material of whole cat family, in which there are both "normal" as well as "polydactyl" cats, could be sent. Research may begin once a sufficient amount of samples have been received.

We respectfully ask all owners of these cats to support us in the fight for the recognition of the polys. If the genetic evidence provided shows that the Semi-Lethal Factor has been wrongly applied to polydactyl cats, then the next step would be the removal of polydactyl Maine Coons from the appropriate paragraphs of the animal protection laws. Thus breeding and

exhibition of these beautiful cats would at last be legal / legally possible.

1 Reprinted from FishingTigers Cattery website: http://www.fishingtigers.de/html/poly_studie.html

Undine Klein from the Cattery Clevercoons in Germany worked with Dr. Haase to secure the University of Bern Study. Martina Roth of Wakpala Luta Maine Coon Cattery, also in Germany, stated In November: "Today I am happy to tell you that the study about the polydactyl genes in the Maine Coon starts right now. **If anybody is willing to help us please send blood samples from your polys to the clinic in Bern /Switzerland.**" She went on to add: "We know that there are studies about the polydactyl mutation in the cats . But this one will continue that work. This study shall demonstrate that the Polys don't have the semi-lethal defect. This defect is the reason why, we in Germany, are not allowed to breed with them. It is truly a German problem , but we need help from outside. Dr. Haase was asked from a member of the German Poly List for a study about proving if a poly is homozygous or not. But Dr. Haase knew that this study is already underway in France, so she asked the member for another theme. Since the semi-lethal defect is our biggest concern, the member choose this study.

One concern about submitting to the study was the shipment of feline blood samples to the University of Bern. Some countries restrict or deny the shipment of blood Internationally. Ms Roth stated that she had asked about the use of cheek swabs for DNA sampling, but to date, has not received a response. Hopefully cheek swabs or brushes will be allowed, since this would open up the study to breeders from any Country without the restrictions placed on blood products.

The University of Bern website has placed the submission form for the samples on their website both in English and in German. In addition there is a short explanation of the study



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and contact information. You can visit these links at:

http://www.genetics.unibe.ch/content/rubrik/polydaktylie_katze/index_eng.html

http://www.genetics.unibe.ch/content/forschung/katze_polydaktylie/index_ger.html

In addition Polytrak's database contains a large portion of the information needed for the submission forms. For those of you that participate in the litter tracking program and poly breeder listing, we can provide this information to you, as a submitter to the study. This may save time in researching information for completion of the forms. If you need assistance in this area, just email PolyTrak at: info@polytrak.net and we would be happy to provide that information for the form.

POLYTRAK FACT

In February there are 987 kittens listed in PolyTrak born as part of a polydactyl litter. 436 of these kittens listed are polydactyl.

- 7 Kittens (1.3%) are 1WD
- 208 Kittens (39.1%) are 2FWD
- 8 Kittens (1.5%) are 2RWD
- 34 Kittens (6.4%) are 3WD
- 275 (51.7%) are 4WD
- 15 Kittens have unknown paws
- 502 litter kittens are from poly Sire
- 427 litter kittens are from poly Dam
- 39 litter kittens – both parents are poly
- 7 litter kittens have homozygous Sire
- 6 litter kittens have Heterozygous Sire and Homozygous Dam



Balla Coi Lupi Brunello P of Lynx Lynx Cattery - Fara Vicentino, Italy



OldyGoody Ocean Breath – Moscow Russia, Fed.



Simbasa Kalimero PP of Salexcoon- Sverdlovskaya oblast, Russian Federation



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STUDENT VETERINARY NURSE WORKS WITH DK*KRAMMEDYRET

Contributed by: Dorthe Fuglsang & Karina

Once upon a time...that is how all good stories start. Isn't it? So....

Once upon a time a “happy go lucky” young fella named DK Kammedyret Unbeaten Cover Boy PP was relaxing around the Cattery in Denmark without a care.



Cover Boy said, “*This place is “kewl” all I have to do is nap and eat and of course nap and play. And surely I can stick out my tongue at all my brothers and sisters when they go by; that is kind of fun too.*”

Then on a beautiful summer day in August my staff leader said, “*C'mon Cover Boy we are going to the Vet.*” I was startled by that thought!



“I have heard of those Vet places. They have needles and cold metal exam tables. I am not so sure I want to go there” But alas I had to go. When I arrived they put me on a table with the strangest looking camera I had ever seen. I was not real happy about that as you can tell.



“I met a nice lady whose name was Karina. I will let her tell you the rest of the story.”

Karina:



Since I am a student veterinary nurse, there are several objectives to be achieved before final exams. One of those objectives: recording, printing and quality evaluation of radiographic images.

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When there was little time pressure before an upcoming school course, it became quite convenient that Dorthe from Maine Coon Cattery DK Krammedyret was curious on how a poly toe looked like without the "overcoat"on. I offered to take a free X-ray, if I be allowed to use it for an assignment at school. When we had talked about skull images earlier in the day, it became a picture of the whole shebang, even though the radiation hygienic is not by the book to take as much with a picture. (practice makes perfect as they say) The assignment was approved at the school and veterinarians (and teachers) were very fascinated with the Poly toes and so were my colleagues at Give and Ejstrupholm Animal Clinic in central Jutland, Denmark. Thanks to Dorthe from DK Krammedyret in Denmark, for allowing me to use her Poly mainecoon kitten (DK Krammedyret Unbeaten Cover Boy PP) for my school project.



Editors Note: We would like to thank Dorthe Fuglsang of Krammedyret Cattery in Denmark and Karina at the Give and Ejstrupholm Animal Clinic for sharing their story and X-ray. And of course thank you to DK Kammedyret Unbeaten Cover Boy PP and his patience in lending his paws to help in the understanding of polydactyly in the Maine Coon.



The Abracoondabra F'automne Litter – Nantes, France
(Pictured from left to right)
Abracoondabra Firenze, Abracoondabra Fumseck,
Abracoondabra Flamel, Abracoondabra Fangorn,
Abracoondabra Fondcombe and Abracoondabra
Fornost

"Poets generally love cats--because poets have no delusions about their own superiority."

- Marion Garretty-



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MAINE COON POLYDACTYL SHOWING IN GERMANY

Calling all MC Poly show people!!! German MC Breeders and Fanciers who work with the poly are planning for a big poly turnout at the Cats 4 Us show in Frankfurt next month (March 26th and 27th, 2011).



March, 26 & 27, 2011 – Frankfurt/Germany
12 Ring TICA Show & 3 Congresses

- Richter / Judges
- Kurt Vlach – Austria
 - Tomoko Vlach – Japan
 - Jean Marc Lagarde – France
 - Francesca Gagern – Austria
 - Katharina Krenn – Austria
 - Phillipa Homes – UK

Already commitments for polys are in the double digits and they encourage anyway able to make it to the show to enter your poly. It will

be a fun weekend of poly showing and education. The German gang would like to make this the biggest poly showing ever. So please consider attending this great show.

Entry Clerk:

Marion Schweinsberg, + 49 69 5400562 Mail:
mac.conner@t-online.de

For more information you can see the show flyer at:

<http://www.cats-4-us.com/PDF/Maerz2011.pdf>

Remember this is a non-vetted TICA Show where you can show your MC polydactyl. A ribbon is awarded for the best cat in New Traits. Under a new change in TICA Show Rules (203.1.1.1) you must now have your cat TICA registered prior to the Show in order to show in New Traits. Also pending registrations will not be accepted at Show time. Hope to see you there!!!!

Cats do not have to be shown how to have a good time, for they are unfailing ingenious in that respect.
- James Mason -

SOME PROBLEMS AT POLYTRAK RECENTLY

WE have been having a few problems with our website and email recently. However all seems to be back to normal. During the latter part of December and January some of the email accounts at polytrak were not receiving emails. We were able to retrieve some of them from our web hosting service, but we do not have any idea if others were missed. If you emailed polytrak during this period and received a return message “Unable to Deliver” or “Account does Exist” please resubmit.



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Also for a couple of days during the second week of February our web hosting service moved our website to a new server. In the process, although our website was working, visitors were not able to view any cat information from the database for approximately 2-1/2 days. We apologize for any inconvenience, but it was beyond our control.

The good news: Everything appears to be working well now and hopefully no more glitches.

That's a wrap for another Issue. We hope that you will join us again for more of the latest news from PolyTrak. Visit PolyTrak at <http://www.polytrak.net> to see archived issues of "*Paws For Effect*" dating back to January of 2007. And we would love to see you on Facebook's "*Paws for Effect – The Maine Coon polydactyl*".

Poly Power!

Bye for Now

