
Domestic cat personality and predation

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Résumé

The domestic cat, *Felis catus*, ranks among the most popular and widespread domestic animals. However, their impact on wildlife can be significant due to their ability to achieve high population densities and retain a tendency to hunt. The extent of this impact varies greatly depending on factors such as the availability of prey in their environment, owners' practices regarding outdoor access, and individual cat characteristics. Recent studies have highlighted the role of cat personality as a key factor influencing hunting behavior. Cats exhibiting high levels of extraversion or low neuroticism, as reported by their owners, tend to bring back birds and small mammals more frequently. This relationship between personality and predation rates can be attributed to various factors such as owner management of outdoor access, cats' choices in outdoor activity, or hunting success. In our study, we conducted a survey involving 1011 cat owners to assess their cats' personalities using the Feline Five personality framework and to record the frequency of prey brought home by their cats. Personality traits were subjected to factor analysis and correlated with predation frequency using cumulative logit models. Our findings revealed distinct influences of different personality traits on hunting behavior: cats with high neuroticism were less likely to be allowed outdoors by their owners, while those with high agreeability preferred to stay indoors more frequently. Additionally, cats demonstrating high dominance and extraversion displayed higher rates of prey retrieval when outdoors. In conclusion, understanding the impact of cat personality on predation behavior contributes to our knowledge of how to manage domestic cats and mitigate their potential effects on local wildlife populations.

Mots-Clés: Domestic cats, predation, personality

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