

# The Norwegian Forest Cat



## Overview

The Norwegian Forest Cat is a healthy, robust breed of cat that developed naturally over hundreds of years of natural selection and a harsh Scandinavian climate. They are a slow-maturing breed that can take up to five years to reach full maturity. They require minimal grooming and are a fairly low-maintenance breed. The Norwegian Forest Cat also known as the Wegie is a very interactive, playful, and loving addition to any household.

## History

The Norwegian Forest Cat developed its strong, sturdy body and thick coat over centuries of evolution in Scandinavia; however, the exact origin of the breed is unknown. Also known as Skogcatt, which is the Norwegian word for forest cat, or Wegie for short. They have been referenced in Viking legends and myths. The Norwegian Forest Cat traveled with the Vikings to keep their ships and villages free of mice and other vermin. By the 1930s plans were made to ensure the future of the breed in its native country because they were becoming a rarity. World War II caused these plans to be put on hold. In the 1970s the people of Norway created a special breeding program to protect this breed of cat. The breed received royal recognition when the late King Olaf of Norway designated them as the official cat of Norway. The first breeding pair came to the United States in 1979 and the International Cat Association was the first North American registry to grant championship status to the breed in 1984.



## Personality

The Norwegian Forest Cat is an intelligent and resourceful cat. They are mild mannered and adapt easily to any environment. They are interactive and love to play with anyone. With a gentle and friendly disposition is a fond member of the family but does not demand attention or petting constantly. They are capable of entertaining themselves when no one is home and are happy to just be in the same room at their family. The Norwegian Forest Cat can be a little shy

around new people or visitors. They are not much of a lap cat but will seek out the occasional scratch or pet. They are not very talkative cats and will only let you know when they want something like dinner.

The Norwegian Forest Cat is large and athletic so they like to climb and will often try to reach the highest place in the house. They also easily descend trees or coming from other heights head first unlike other cats. Due to their background and water resistant coat the Norwegian Forest Cat has no problems being in the water. The Norwegian Forest Cat is a smart, independent breed that learns quickly.



## Traits

Weight: 13 to 22 pounds

Life span: 12 to 16 years

The body of the Norwegian Forest Cat is large, substantial, and muscular. They are strong and agile making them great hunters that can easily climb any surface. Their coat is some what long and has a dense undercoat. This makes the



coat more water resistant and allows the cats to survive the harsh Scandinavian climate. When it is colder out the ruff is full while the dense woolly undercoat thickens to protect the cat from the cold. During the warmer months, the coat will be shorter but will still maintain its water-resistant properties. They also have a long, full and fluffy tail and while they have longer hair they do not require daily grooming like other long haired cats. It may be necessary to do a little extra grooming in the spring when they are shedding their winter hair for their summer hair. The Norwegian Forest Cat's head is the shape of an equilateral triangle with a long and strait nose profile. Their large expressive eyes are almond-shaped and set at an oblique angle. They also have large ears that are wide at the base. The Norwegian Forest Cat can come in many different colors and patterns.

## Health

The Norwegian Forest Cat is generally a healthy long living breed of cat. However, there are diseases that they can have:

- Glycogen Storage Disease IV → This is a rare heritable disease that interferes with the metabolism of glucose. Most kittens do not live more than a few hours after birth. Occasionally a kitten will not show signs until about 5 months of age and will die within a few months. There is a DNA test available that can identify affected and carrier cats.
- Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy → This is a form of heart disease that is inherited in some breeds.
- Polycystic Kidney Disease → This is a genetic condition that will progressively destroy the kidneys. While there is no DNA testing available for this, the disease can be detected with an ultrasound exam.



- Retinal Dysplasia → While this does not affect the cat's eye sight, this is an eye defect that causes spots on the retinas.

## Grooming and Care

The Norwegian Forest Cat is a fairly easy cat to care for and groom. Brushing them once or twice a week will help maintain the cats coat and if you do come across any knots work them out gently. Giving them a bath is rarely necessary, which is a good thing because it can be difficult to get them wet enough to bathe them. Brushing their teeth will help with preventing periodontal disease. [Brushing teeth](#) is easy once your cat is used to it and they will even look at it as a treat. You may need to wipe out the corners of their eyes if there is any discharge and check their ears weekly for discharge.

