

PAWS FOR EFFECT



The PolyTrak Newsletter April 2008

Volume 2 - Number 4
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Paws for Effect - The PolyTrak Newsletter

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WELCOME!

Hello everyone! It is spring (for our readers in the Northern Hemisphere)! Let's sit back and enjoy another issue of "*Paws for Effect*". We welcome several new subscribers this month and hope that you enjoy this newsletter each month. For those of you that are new to us, we would love to hear from you. Share any comments, questions or opinions. Above all if you have an experience or story related to the Maine Coon poly, we would love to feature your story in "*Paws for Effect*". The poly movement is growing by leaps and bounds each month. As always you can view any past issue of this Newsletter by clicking on the newsletter button on our main page and then selecting the archive issues link and choose which month or issue that you desire to view. All issues from our inaugural newsletter in January of 2007 are available here. The current issue is added near the middle of the month following release.

This month's issue, we feel, you will find very interesting and informative. During March of 2008, PolyTrak marked a few milestones internally. We will tell you briefly about that, but as always our focus is on the polydactyl Maine Coon. The work continues with the gang over at PolyStandard. We will bring you up to date a bit on their work.

After a long day of exploring at the Cattery



From the Witch's Litter at Vaskebjorn – Born Feb. 13th

POLYTRAK FACT

As of April 1st there are 501 kittens listed in PolyTrak born as part of a polydactyl litter. 276 of these kittens listed are polydactyl.

- 2 Kittens (0.8%) are 1WD
- 101 Kittens (38.0%) are 2FWD
- 7 Kittens (2.8%) are 2RWD
- 17 Kittens (6.4%) are 3WD
- 139 (52.3%) are 4WD
- 10 Kittens have unknown paws
- 255 litter kittens are from poly Sire
- 226 litter kittens are from poly Dam
- 13 litter kittens – both parents are poly
- 7 litter kittens have homozygous Sire
- No litter kittens with homozygous Dam

JUST IN... POLY GROUP BOWS OUT OF ACCEPTANCE MOVEMENT FOR THE POLY.

The new sole owner of a group of Maine Coon breeders and fanciers that formed in September of 2005 for the purpose of promoting the Maine Coon polydactyl has publicly come out against the acceptance of the MC poly for advancement at this time. This apparently is in conflict to the general consensus of its members. The group, Maine Coon Polydactyl International, known by its acronym, MCPI, has been undergoing structural change for sometime now according to some members.

For the past several months a consolidation of power has been taking place at MCPI, which had boasted a membership of up to 124 during the past 3 years. Originally there were 4 co-owners of the group, an acting



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President or spokesperson of the group and an 11 member Board of Directors for the group. All of these positions have been eliminated and a single person has seized ownership. According to some members this was done all behind-the-scenes without knowledge of the general membership.

On April 5th, the sole owner of the Group, L. King from Great Britain began removing those members that were actively supporting the acceptance of the Maine Coon poly to Championship Status, citing personality conflicts as the reason. Ms. King went on to state that breeders and fanciers are making a mistake by promoting acceptance at this point in time, and are providing a disservice to the poly due to a lack of cohesiveness and general lack of polydactyl knowledge amongst the members.

Although the general feeling of the majority is unknown, several members and former members, who were actively supporting “the poly acceptance movement”, expressed surprise at this turn of events. It remains to be seen if the members want to wrestle back control of this group to more accurately reflect the mainstream feelings of the group or whether the group will wither as members move on to other forums more akin to their feelings. In the meantime, Ms. King told her members: the group will continue without its former missions and is set-up only to provide a safe haven for its members and to share pictures of their cats.

CORRECTION

In the March Issue PolyTrak incorrectly listed a date in the story regarding the history of acceptance of the Maine Coon poly. The story listed the year of 1994 as the year it was estimated the Maine Coon poly population was unofficially estimated to be 1-2%. The correct year was 2005. The author apologizes for the error.



**Mad Max - Mona Lisa – Mr. Magic – Marilyn Monroe
– Mighty Joe
©MagicCraft Cattery**

START COUNTING

(By Vonne Bode)

As promised, this month more about the paws and determining them. So grab your MC poly and put him/her on your lap on his back and pick one of the front paws. 😊 Or ...maybe first just a small recap of previous issue of this article so you can refresh your memory. 😊

On a cats paw we see digits. These digits are toes and a dewclaw on a standard foot.

- On a poly cat we can also see extra toes, extra dewclaws, thumbs and sometimes nubs.
- Every digit has a terminal/digital pad. A nub can be an exception to that.
- Toes and thumbs touch the ground. A dewclaw doesn't.
- On a standard paw we only see the big standard plantar/palmar pad associated with the 4 standard toes. This pad consists of 3 lumps or lobes connected/fused together.
- An extra toe on a poly foot, will give an extra pad too. This pad will be connected to standard big palmar/plantar pad. Every other extra toe will have its extra pad connected to the one of the previous.



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A thumb has an extra pad too, only this is a separate (mouse) pad, comparable as for placement, to the mouse of our hand in connection to our thumb.

A thumb is opposable and grows from a different angle.

(Thumbs on the back paws do not grow from a different angle because structure wise this is not possible. But a back thumb does have a separate pad and touches the ground.



Not always do the paws show their configuration and type of digits from just looking on top of them. Nature often fools us. So to be 100% sure, it is recommended to look at the backside of the paws, so you see the pads, too.

TO START THE DETERMINATION

Note: Making the fur on the back of the cat's paw wet will make it easier to determine the digits and to find hidden pads. With very young kittens (0-3wks) this often is not necessary. Sometimes a separate pad can be as tiny as a pinhead.



This is the backside of the right front paw of a very young MC poly kitten. Can you determine these digits? 😊

The front paws: Describe the digits from the inside to the outside of the paw

Count the total digits on a paw (count the terminal/digital pads (fingertips)) that go with each nail. Watch for nubs, that don't have a fully developed nail and don't need a terminal pad.



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Now start with the innermost digit.

- A.) Is it a nub?
- B.) If not, do you see an extra pad associated with this digit? Or has it only the terminal/digital pad (fingertip)? If it has only the terminal/digital pad, it's a dewclaw.
- C.) If you see another (extra) pad, is this pad attached to the standard palmar/plantar pad? Or is it attached to an extra pad of a previous digit (which could be attached to the standard plantar/palmar pad)? Or is this is a separate pad far away from the standard plantar/palmar pad?
- D.) If this pad is attached to a (or the standard) plantar/palmar pad the digit is likely a toe (and the pad a plantar/palmar pad;-)). The digit should be parallel with the last 4 digits when the cat is standing on all 4 paws and also should touch the ground.
- E.) If the extra pad is not near the standard plantar/palmar pad it's likely a separate (mouse) pad, which is associated with a thumb. A thumb is opposable like our thumb, so check if this is the case. And of course it should touch the ground when the cat stands on all 4 paws.
- F.) If you've determined this digit, go to the next and follow the steps again.
- G. The last 4 digits are the standard toes.

An example of the description of the 2 front paws could be:

Front Left = 1 Dewclaw, 1 Long thumb, 4 Toes. Front Right = 5 Toes



Here an example of the determination of a MC poly paw. How many digits do you see?

The Back Paws: The back paws are easier, in that they in general have no thumb (although we've found a few cases recently). Also here we ask you to describe the digits from the inside to the outside. You can basically follow the steps used for the front paws.

Most of the time you only have to look for a dewclaw or extra toe. If the digit touches the ground when the cat stands, it's a toe (or very rare, a thumb, but this should be proven by a separate (mouse) pad). If it doesn't, it's a dewclaw. And, a toe has a plantar/palmar pad while a dewclaw hasn't.



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An example of the description: Back Left = 4 toes. Back Right = 1 dewclaw, 4 toes



Here is the backside of a back paw from a MC poly kitten. Can you determine these digits too?

The above steps should be enough to give a good digit description of your MC poly cat's feet to submit to our Database. If you find you need to add extra info to explain what you see, please ask. Don't hesitate to contact us with questions by email at info@polytrak.net We will be glad to assist you. If possible, it can be helpful to provide a clear photo of the underside of the paw with as much fur brushed out of the way so ALL of the pads will be visible on the picture. Try not to cover any of the pads, as this will make it harder to determine the digits.

Hopefully after reading the whole article (so also previous part 1), determining a poly paw is now a piece of cake for you;-). Looking forward to see your poly submissions for PolyTrak.



Cameron Coons Harry Potter P



Dwilik Timber P. Gray



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THE MISSION OF POLYTRAK PART 1

(By Deb Brown, Vonne Bode, Miriam Muller, Kitty Chandler & Ken Bussard)

1. MISSION

PolyTrak was formed in March of 2006 with 3 volunteers to track litters of polydactyl Maine Coons. It was designed to gather and report information as a service to Maine Coon Breeders, Fanciers, the General Public as well as a service to the Scientific community. That original mission has expanded today with the addition of two more volunteers staff members to include MC polydactyl Heritage line tracing to the Foundations, Fancier Cat listings, a free Monthly Newsletters and many other facets of the of The Maine Coon polydactyl community. The main focus today still is the tracking of polydactyl MC Kittens and their parents. Although there have been a few smaller studies made over the years, the most often study of polydactylism in cats are the two Danforth studies of 1947. This is sometimes quoted on various websites and articles, but is not generally available to the public or the Maine Coon breeding community. This study, while accurate and often used, is over 60 years old. This was well before the Maine Coon was accepted as a Breed and the study was conducted with mixed or unknown breeds. It also was conducted from a male and female living quite close together so inbreeding may have been a factor. Also this was a clinical study in a controlled environment from a small gene pool.

Polydactylism in the Maine Coon was very prominent at the time of the Breed's establishment and since MC Polys are all over the World now, we felt it was time to see what, if any, factors were different today, in a specific pedigree breed in the larger laboratory ...The World. What about the rumors and stories over the years about polydactylism being a bad thing and causing problems for The Maine Coon?

Were these stories true? Was it personal opinions, misstated facts or incorrect conclusions? This is the mission of PolyTrak:

1. To confirm or dispel these stories with documented facts.
2. Raise the awareness and understanding of the Maine Coon polydactyl.
3. To collect and freely share experiences and information on the Maine Coon poly with Breeders, Fanciers or anyone interested around the world.
4. Provide a repository of breeder certified polydactyl data for geneticists, scientists and the academic communities.
5. And to provide the General Public with a resource, written in everyday language to learn more about the Maine Coon polydactyl.

I believe cats to be spirits come to earth. A cat, I am sure, could walk on a cloud without coming through.

- Jules Verne -

POLYSTANDARD SEEKING HELP AND DONATIONS

The deadline for the submission to TICA of the Application for Advancement to Champion Status has arrived. The paperwork was sent to the various committees and officials at TICA on April 14th, 2008.

Once all the various committees and Cat Association personnel have reviewed, approved and forwarded the submission, a ballot will be mailed to every member of the Maine Coon breed section worldwide. It is the responsibility of the submitters to bear the cost of these mailed ballots. The group has been unable to get an



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estimate of the costs for this mailing, however they have been led to understand that this figure could be well into 4 digits (American Dollars). To help defray expenses for the mailing and presentation to the TICA Board of Directors at the Annual meeting late this summer in Texas, USA, the group is seeking donations from all poly supporters around the world. PolyStandard has set up a web page and a PayPal account to receive donations from anyone that would like to help. The web page can be found at:

[Donate](#)



Here you can learn more about the history of the acceptance movement, ask a question, volunteer to help and if able donate to this worthy cause.

PolyTrak

730 cats listed.
Is yours?

POLYTRAK IS GROWING!

(By Ken Bussard)

PolyTrak reached a few milestones this past month. The biggest news is: On March 27th the PolyTrak website broke the Ten **Million** mark for successful requests on our website from over 16,000 different visitors. Just 4 days prior we celebrated our Second Anniversary of being online to the World. Also in March the PolyTrak domain name and website was renewed through a gracious donation for a period of 3 years. So folks we are here until at least 2011. 😊

And we would like to introduce you to a special kitten. Her name is "Chloé ". She was born on November 25th, 2007 at Patricia's Cattery, Polychinelle, in France. What makes her special to us, besides being cute 😊, is the fact that she is the 500th kittens to be entered in our litter-tracking section of PolyTrak.



offspring will be number 1000. 😊

The significance of being number 500 is the fact that the PolyTrak kitten database is now over twice the size of the 1947 Danforth study and offers a large insight into the genetics of a polydactyl Maine Coon and the study of Pd Gene. Chloé has since moved in with Nancy at Abesh Cattery in Belgium. Chloé is now known as Polychinelle Pawnee P of Abesh. In the future she will be a Mom with poly litters of her own. Maybe one of her

Sometime back a young kitten, UpperValley Silverfoot P. said:



When I grow up I want to be a TICA champion too! SUPPORT ACCEPTANCE OF THE POLY FOR CHAMPION STATUS.

That's a "wrap" for another month. We hope that you will join us again next month for more of the latest news from PolyTrak. Visit PolyTrak at <http://www.polytrak.net>

Bye for Now!

