



Pet Tips 'n' Tales

by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

Easter Bunny Im-PAWS-ter

I am purr-fectly egg-tastic to help Hoof find a home. The thesaurus describes the verb "hoof" as to "use one's feet to advance" and we are hop-ping this article does just that for this deserving cat.

When Hoof arrived into the shelter, the staff never felt de-feet-ed about him finding a fur-ever home.

"Hoof is 2-3 years old, laid back, loving, calm and affectionate," said Sarah. "He is a gentleman who doesn't start fights, but at the same time he won't take back talk from the younger males, gently smacking them on the head with one of his massive paws."

Oh! Yes! Those paws! Hoof has super paws! Front and back! He is a polydactyl with purr-actically two paws on each of his front legs, giving him an unusual appearance! His extra toes do not interfere with his walking stride. Regular cats have five toes on their front feet and four on their back. You can count cats' toes by the number of their paw pads and it should be 18. One infamous cat had 28 toes!

"Each morning, Hoof runs to greet me," said Sarah. "He is a love bug, who purr-furs giving us cuddly bunny hugs. He was a stray and it's hard to believe that such a loving animal was abandoned, but animals are so forgiving. We've noticed that pets who have been badly treated, often have the most love to give. They don't take love or being adopted for granted."

This may explain why Hoof sat so cutely in the Easter Basket photo.

"We had zero issues with the Easter photo shoot," said Sarah, "Hoof was a complete model! He's easy going and the type of cat that would allow a three year old to dress him up in a tutu, sit at a tiny table and have a tea party. He is extremely deserving of a home. He loves everyone, is very affectionate and chatty at times."

Lets get all the fluffy facts! Polydactyl cats inherit the extra toe gene in their DNA. If one of a kitten's two parents are polydactyl, then the kitten has a 40-50 percent chance of being polydactyl.

The first scientific record of these cats was in 1868, when they were noticed in north-western United States and Nova Scotia, Canada - paws-ibly the first mitten-kittens

arrived in the 1600's with English Puritans. Maybe even Hoof's relatives!

Polydactyl is Greek for "poly" meaning "many" and "daktylos" means "digits or toes." Which explains why multi toed kitties are nicknamed "mitten cats," "big-foot cats", "six-toed cats", and "cats with thumbs."

Ernest Hemingway is know for two things: being an American writer and his polydactyl cat, Snow White.

She was probably named for her white color and after his short story, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro".

Snow White was a six-toed cat gifted to him by a ship's captain. Today, 50 of Snow White's descendants lounge and pose for tourist cameras at Hemingway's home and museum in Key West, Florida, proving that the genetic trait passes from generation to generation. It also explains why Polydactyl cats are often re-fur-ed to as, "Hemingway cats".

Why would a ship's captain have a many-toed kitty? Apparently, sailors believed that the cats were good luck, and they proved invaluable on the ships, catching mice that were consuming the sailors' stored food. The sailors noticed that the cats' extra toes gave them better balance on ship's decks in rough seas. My guess is that sailors of old are like men today. They love their kitties and had no one to cat-sit while at sea. Paws-ibly, because of the length of a journey, this is when inbreeding of the cats resulted in cementing the multi-toe mutation!

Another famous polydactyl cat was Slippers who, after much thought, "let" President Theodore Roosevelt run the White House.

"Hoof's massive mitts would make him a great outfielder!" laughs Sarah.

This cat's huge mitts make his hugs the best! He'll purr-obably give you one right after you adopt him!

TIPS

Hoof is neutered, so he can't breed like a rabbit and his multi-toed, fuzzy-little offspring won't end up in pet shelters. Hoof wants others to learn from his homeless experience.



Courtesy Photo by Sarah MacLeod

Hoof is a homeless double-pawed cat HOP-ping to be adopted before the Easter Bunny CAT-ches him as his im-PAWS-ter! "In the time, I've volunteered at the shelter," said Sarah, "I've never seen a cat with such massive paws! This photo does not do them justice!"

Do not buy bunnies or chicks for Easter. It is guaranteed that they will grow in record time into chickens and rabbits. Rabbits live for 10 years or longer. It is cruel to keep these free roving pets in small cages. If you have a pet rabbit, neuter or spay them.

"Thank you for doing this article," said Sarah, "Hopefully it spreads like Easter candy in stores and Hoof is adopted quick as a bunny! Our small SPCA is in Grand Falls Windsor, Newfoundland, Canada and we've been protecting abused, neglected and stray animals since 1971. We are run 'souly' by fund-raising! Like most shelters, our available pets' photos are posted on line. Every 'share', 'comment' and 'like' helps animals get adopted, and when Hoof finds a great home, I will see if his new family wants to give you a follow up article." <https://m.facebook.com/EvspeaAdoptables/>

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