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Seminar Prepared by
TICA NF Breed Committee
for
Judges and Breeders
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Pull up a chair and make yourselves comfortable. We will spend the next 2 to 2.5 hours exploring the Norwegian Forest Cat according to the TICA 2000 standard. This seminar was developed to assist judges and judge trainees to understand and apply the revised TICA NF standard. It is the culmination of months of work by the Breed Committee. The June/July 1999 TICA Trend Article "Norway's National Treasure, The Norsk Skogkatt", interaction with key FIFe people and work on revisions to the 2000 Standard laid the groundwork for this study.

The Norwegian Forest Cat is also known as Norsk Skogkatt. The word "Skogkatt" first turned up in the Norwegian fairy tales in 1841. "Norsk" is "Norway", "Skog" means "forest" and "katt" means "cat". We will be using both terms throughout the seminar.

The current breed committee members have been working with the Norsk Skogkatt for many years, some even before the breed was recognized in TICA. Individually and collectively we have bred, helped to produce, and shown International Champions, Supreme Grand Champions, Grand Sires and Grand Dams over the past two decades:

Patti Andrews, Jedidiah Cattery, got her first Forest Cat, Torvmyra's Victory, in 1985. She served as regional director, is now, a TICA judge, and helped many TICA Clubs produce successful shows.

Linda Krall, Naturskat Cattery, got her first Forest Cat, Epona's Kari, in 1988. Linda is currently Chair of the TICA NF Breed Committee and president/founder of Hudson Valley Cats.

Linda Stebner, Epona Cattery, got her first Forest Cat, Torvmyra's Opalann, in 1983. She worked on the original TICA standard and has served as TICA NF Breed Committee Chair. Linda is treasurer and founding member of Country Cats and past member of Keystone Kats.

Louise Clair, Maineline Cattery, got her first Forest Cat, Nissekatt's Verdandi, in 1983. She has been on the committee every term since then. Louise bred and campaigned TICA's Best AllBreed Cat, 1991-92. She has helped to produce many TICA cat shows.

Ro Finn, Finlandia Cattery, got her first NF Cat, Maineline Gabriel, in 1986. Since then, Ro has worked to introduce more lines from Scandinavia and maintain helpful relationships with breeders and judges there.

Together, we have a lot of experience and a lot of love for this breed, which began...Once upon a time...

TICA Norwegian Forest Cat The Breed

Once upon a time,
there was a cat named
Pans Truls...



and another named
Pippi Skogpus...



...there was a cat named Pans Truls...It is unlikely that he was one of the Skogkatts that drew Freya's chariot, or the heavy Skogkatt that Thor could not lift.

In 1973, Truls was just a Skogkatt from somewhere outside Oslo. So ordinary, in fact, that his breed had no pedigree, even there. The first time a Skogkatt was shown was in 1938. A Forest Cat Club was started in Norway around 1935, but W.W.II interrupted any advancement of the Skogkatt as a recognized breed.

After the war, matings-at-large between Forest Cats and shorthaired hauskatts threatened the existence of this distinctive breed. Carl-Frederik Nordane, past president of the Norwegian Cat Association, took up the cause to get the Norsk Skogkatt recognized before it was too late. He organized the first NF breeding program and helped charter the Norskskogkattering; they held their first meeting in 1975.

In 1977, Nordane traveled to Paris where he made a presentation about the Skogkatt to the FIFe General Assembly. He could not take cats to the Assembly meeting because of Norway's quarantine laws. Instead, he took slides of Pans Truls and Pippi Skogpus. These cats so impressed the FIFe officials that FIFe conferred championship status upon the breed.

The next night, Nov. 26, 1977, Norwegians could watch Truls on their TV's. The Norsk Skogkatt was now an internationally recognized breed and, of course, Truls was at the airport in Oslo waiting for Nordane's return. Nordane was greeted with flags and flowers, music and 40 cars of NORAK members in joyous parade. This is a photo from that auspicious event.

Two years, to the month after its acceptance by FIFe, the Norwegian Forest Cat arrived on the shores of the United States of America. The first US.-based Skogkatt litter was born, March 21, 1981. In August, 1984, TICA became the first North American registry to grant championship status to the Norwegian Forest Cat.

Overview of NF Breed Committee Seminar

We are going to cover

- ✦ General Description
- ✦ Distribution of points
- ✦ TICA '00 Vs. TICA '92 and FIFe '00 standards
- ✦ All features, allowances and penalties
- ✦ NF Cat vs.. Maine Coon and Siberian
- ✦ An exercise with live Wegies



By the end of this seminar, we hope you will be able to

- ✦ Recognize "good- better- best" examples of Forest Cats
- ✦ Describe and apply the standard
- ✦ Judge or breed with tolerance for a range of acceptable styles

During this seminar, we need you to agree to

- ✦ Stay on topic - discussion of the new standard and seminar contents
- ✦ Feel free to ask questions as they arise

In the next few hours, we will cover all aspects of the new standard. We will give you our comparison of the Norwegian Forest Cat, or Skogkatt, vs. the Maine Coon and vs. the Siberian. The photos used are excellent examples for the particular feature being discussed.

We believe that the Norwegian Forest Cat is, well,... Norwegian. Therefore, we will go through a comparison of the two NF standards, TICA and FIFe, as well as photos showing top TICA winners over the years. We hope to add a page for top FIFe winners at a later date.

We will end with an exercise in which you will get to compare and evaluate some live Forest Cats.

If we succeed, by the end of this seminar you will have the knowledge and confidence to identify Norwegian Forest Cats that fit our standard and an appreciation for the FIFe standard in their registry of origin.

We hope that you will embrace the full range of styles allowed while administering judgments in keeping with this distribution of points and descriptions.

If you have questions, please feel free to interrupt as we go along. We will insist on only two conditions: we need your help to 1) stay on schedule and to 2) stay on topic. As tempting as it may be no other topics, please.

Overview of NF Breed Committee Seminar

Why revise the standard?

- + New TICA Format
- + Need to clarify '92 standard
- + Closer alignment with FIFe standard



How we created this seminar:

Goals

- + Fewer words, more pictures
- + Materials that can be shared and improved
- + Acceptable styles vs. unacceptable characteristics

Process

- + Months of work: '99 Trend article, standard, then seminar creation
- + Committee agreement: flow, selection of photos from US and Europe, full range, not "our cats"
- + Critiques: by TICA and FIFe breeders and judges

Conditions

- + **UNANIMOUS** Breed Committee approval: for all text and photos used
- + Anonymity of cats used to illustrate faults: they are ours or they are disguised
- + Cats' names withheld in order to focus on the standard and educational aspects of this study

Early in 2000, TICA issued a required new format for all of the breed standards. It was significantly different; as we conformed, we also made some revisions. The 1992 standard was somewhat redundant and wordy. Coincidentally, we had an opportunity to more closely align the TICA standard with that of FIFe. FIFe had just adopted clarifications to their Skogkatt standard, and we had access to the judges and breeders who had drafted the new FIFe standard and proposed it to FIFe General Assembly. They worked with us so that we could understand their meanings and intentions. After all, they deal with 13 different languages in FIFe, and a the standard written in English, French and German. Once we understood each phrase in the FIFe NFO standard, we incorporated what we could and left some for further discussions, later committees. We are pleased to be one step closer to one set of criteria for Skogkatts worldwide. It is the duty of a TICA breed committee to preside over the standard and to offer seminars about it. In fact, according to TICA, there are no other explicit duties.

In creating this material, we did not want to muddy the standard with more words. We had carefully constructed the revisions; we had gained the unanimous approval of all breed committee members, the TICA board and other committees involved. We decided to be visual and hands-on to give you the essence of the Norwegian Forest Cat in a format that can evolve as we get more input from breed section members. We view this material as a baseline for the section to augment over time.

There is a range of Skogkatt styles within the US and between Europe and US. We have tried to illustrate the range of acceptable styles as well as unacceptable characteristics. We selected the best photos we could find to illustrate each trait. About 1/3 of these photos are of European cats. The entire breed committee unanimously approved every photo as used. When the final draft was complete, we solicited critiques from some experienced Forest Cat breeders and judges in TICA and FIFe.

We hope you will be convinced that this is a credible and objective survey of the breed in its best range of styles. Let us know what you think at the end of the seminar. Make sure you give one of us a completed evaluation form before you leave.

TICA NF Breed Seminar Credits

Some interesting statistics about this presentation:

Total number of photos of NF's used: 101

Number of catteries represented: 40

Number of cats represented from European catteries: 34

Number of cats represented from US. catteries: 67

Grand Champions and top producers from CFA: 11

% of cats used that are titled: 91%*

% of cats that are TICA Grand Champion or FIFe IC: 72%*

**excluding 12 cats that were used to show faults*

Cats represented from Europe and US, from 1973 to 2001



Special Thanks to **Jörgen Frithiof**, **Dortemarie Kaplers** and **Raymond Saetre**,

*FIFe judges and breeders of NFO in Sweden, Denmark and Norway.
Their help was critical to our understanding of the FIFe 2000 standard.*

Very Special Thanks to **all those** whose photos we have used.

This study offers a relatively broad cross-section of styles that fit the TICA standard. It is interesting to note that the look of at least of some of Europe's finest is not so different from the prevalent look that TICA has embraced, finalled and made International Winners over the past 15 years.

We have tried to use titled cats wherever possible. We have also tried to use CFA winners and hope to include more as we gain access to photos.

Note: Maine Coons and Siberians do not appear in the count.

Norwegian Forest Cat

General Description



The Norwegian Forest Cat has evolved through the centuries as a product of its environment. They had to feed, defend, and protect themselves from the elements in the forests. Only the cats that were good hunters and fast to escape from predators survived.

Norwegian Forest cats that survived their first winter had the correct, semi long, water-repellent coat and were well proportioned, strong, and intelligent.

Some interesting history...

In 1969, Mrs. Jack Bjønnes, wrote about her cat "Tufsen". Some believe it contains one of the best descriptions ever written about this breed. Here it is:

"Tufsen was what is called a "Norwegian Forest Cat". It should be written in capital letters, and the NFC should be approved all over the world, because it is a unique cat. It is unlike all other breeds and they only live in Norway.

No one really knows for how long we have had the Forest Cats in Norway. We assume that they are descendants of shorthaired cats brought in from England by the Vikings and longhaired cats brought by the Crusaders. But they do not look like poor Persians or like longhaired shorthair cats. They have become something very special. The rough Norwegian climate has been hard on the individuals, but it has been a blessing to them. The Norwegian Forest Cat has become what it is today by the fact that the weakest and the ones who had no qualifications to survive the winters, disappeared. Only the fittest remained alive.

If, in a litter, there were both kittens with shorthaired coats, longhaired coats and semi-longhaired coats, it was the semi-longhaired kittens who had the best chance to grow up and eventually to get their own kittens. The shorthaired kittens were not able to survive the cold winters, and the longhaired kittens got wet and cold and it was easy for them to get caught in the bushes and underwood.

As these cats had to feed and defend themselves from enemies in the forests, only the ones who were best at hunting, fast to escape from bigger animals, survived. The ones who lived through their first winters were the long-legged, springy, intelligent and brave ones. And these cats could then, in due time, establish their own families. As time went by, this 'mixed race' became a very special breed, without any human interference. No one said, " There is a standard, let's make a cat.". No, the Norwegian Forest Cat was created by snow, cold rain, Norwegian forests, bushes and underwood, and by hunger and fear. One can say that the Forest Cat is a piece of art which we have not learned to appreciate -yet. We don't have to make a standard and try to create a cat by this standard. We have the cat; let's make a standard that fits the cat!"

Reportedly, The Breed Committee in Norway made the standard following Mrs. Jack Bjønnes' description.

Norwegian Forest Cat

General Description



These no nonsense traits carry into the show ring. The Norwegian Forest Cat is an intelligent, alert breed that is not fond of over- handling.



Most Skogkatts are quite smart and independent. They will take just so much handling before letting you know that they are no longer amused. Usually, they display their irritations in a civil manner, but it will be unmistakable. We encourage you to respect this trait and handle with this in mind.

The following excerpt is taken from a breeder's letter from Norway, reprinted from Skogkatt Newsletter, Winter 1980-1981: *"...we who have worked with this breed from the very beginning are so very fond of the cat's natural abilities that we first of all, want a healthy, strong cat with all it's natural instincts and it is a blessing for us that a cat can stay out proposing for three weeks without being near a comb and return without a lump in his coat...., a cat that never lets a fox or hawk take it by surprise, a cat that gladly goes for a swim if there is a fish out there that he wants."*

All in all, the Norsk Skogkatt is a very kind, lovable cat, though with the genuine instincts of a cat having to cope with a rough life outdoors.

Norwegian Forest Cat General Description



A Norwegian Forest Cat is big and built strong. Their hind legs are higher than their front legs, in proportion with their body. They are muscular and heavily boned.

Their heads are triangular, with all three sides equal when measured between the outer base of each ear and from these points to the chin.

The profile is long and straight with no break or stop and displays a strong chin. Their eyes are expressive, large, wide almond-shaped, and set on an oblique tilt. Their ears are large, open and set in line with the triangular shape of the head. They may be well tufted and have lynx tips.

Their tails are long, flowing and carried high.



"Proportion" is a word that you will hear often throughout this seminar. The Forest Cat is all about balance among its parts. Balance and proportion determine their ability to survive as well as their presence as an object of beauty in the show hall.

Some quotes from articles that were written in Scandinavia in the '80's:

"Large in comparison to other breeds. Most important is that the cat gives an immediate impression of balance and proportion."

"Strong, large, wild looking cat with a sweet temper. The whole cat has to be in balance."

The Skogkatt is large, muscular and heavily boned. There is no place for a finely boned Forest Cat in breeding or showing.

Norwegian Forest Cat General Description



The Norwegian Forest Cat is known for its dense, rich fur with a woolly undercoat covered by long, coarse guard hairs. This coat is warm and water-repellent. A fully coated cat has a full ruff and britches. In the summer, the coat is short. The coat feels dense, especially on tabbies. Solid, bicolor and tricolor cats often have a softer coat.

Of course, survival in Norway's sometimes wet and cold climate depends upon having the right coat. The right coat is not massive, fluffy, soft or silky. The feel of the correct coat is somewhat hard to the hand and dense.

In the summer, the coat of most Forest Cats is decidedly short. It lacks both mutton chops and bib. Only the tail, ear and toe tufts distinguish it as a semi-longhair cat.

Altered cats tend to retain their coats throughout the year. But intact Skogkatts drop their undercoats when the light changes in the spring and grow coat as the days shorten and the light wanes in the fall.

This pair of photos of a young female Skogkatt illustrates this well. The bottom left photo was taken in August; the photo of her to the right was taken in December...A dramatic change, indeed.

Allowance must be made for Forest Cats presented in summer attire.

Norwegian Forest Cat **General Description**



The length of the Forest Cat coat is semi-long, which means that it should not be as long as a Persian coat.



In TICA, we are somewhat disadvantaged by having only two categories: short hair and long hair. We ask that judges remain mindful that this breed is neither. It is critical that you consider it a Semi-longhair cat and judge it accordingly. The coat is decidedly different from that of a Persian in length, texture and feel.

The photos show a young female at the left, an adult neuter in the middle, and a six-year-old female at the right - all in correct semi-long coats.

Norwegian Forest Cat General Description

The overall appearance is of an alert, healthy, firm, muscular and well-proportioned cat.



The males are large and imposing, often weighing 12-15 pounds or more.

The females can be considerably smaller.



A Forest Cat has good muscle tone and no evidence of obesity or emaciation. Most importantly, they appear well proportioned.

Notice that the young male in the lower right photo is considerably larger than his sister. There is a decided difference in size, and this should not be penalized.

Typically, the Skogkatt male weighs between 12 to 15 pounds. The Skogkatt female is considerably smaller, weighing 8 to 11 pounds. They often look noticeably feminine by contrast but are never more finely boned, just scaled down from the males.

Weight within the range will depend upon maturity and boning. The Forest Cat matures slowly, taking five years to reach its full musculature and mass.



Here are three examples of good Forest Cats, each as a young kitten, adolescent, and adult. Notice, in each instance, that the ears change position with age as the skull broadens; ears that appear overly large on the kitten become well proportioned on the adult.

The legs appear more massive with age; the coat develops with age. The length of profile changes as the cat matures. The eyes can become more dramatically oval or almond as the head develops.

Norwegian Forest Cat Points Distribution

HEAD 40 points	BODY 35 points	COAT & COLOR 25 points
Shape 8	Torso 7	Length 5
Eyes 8	Legs 7	Texture 20
Ears 8	Feet	Pattern
Chin 4	Tail 7	Color
Muzzle 4	Boning 7	
Nose	Musculature 7	
Profile 8		
Neck		
OTHER 0 points		
Balance		
Condition		
Temperament		



*Splitting points is worse than splitting hairs...
Who's got the ice bag?*

Coincident with an allocation of points in the new TICA format, the committee agreed:

1- not to assign points to color or markings. Our rationale: The NF naturally comes in a variety of colors and we agree with FIFe breeders that it is incorrect to favor one color or pattern over another.

2- good condition and appearance should be assumed as a requirement for all cats judged.

The twenty points previously allocated to these categories were redistributed to features that we felt had been under weighted:

- profile, ears, eyes and chin
- body
- coat texture

We had discussions with breeders and with FIFe representatives; measurements were taken of cat parts, where we thought that might help.

We revisited the points and determined not to exaggerate one element of the cat over another; they are all equally important, given that the most important aspect of the Forest cat is proportion and balance.

We redistributed points for the head and the body across sub-categories equally in most cases. By contrast, coat texture is so very important that it has been given heavy weighting and much less than length.

Do not read too much into the fact that muzzle and chin are each weighted 4 points while other aspects of the head are given eight points each. These are important features to the overall expression of the cat and should be differentiators among the Forest Cats that you judge or breed.

The TICA Standards: A Comparison

TICA 1992

HEAD: 20 points

Shape: Triangular.

Size: In proportion to body size.

Nose / Profile: Straight from top of forehead (brow) to tip of the nose. No break.

Muzzle: Following the line of the triangular head with no evidence of pinch or snippiness.

Frontal Skull: **Flat.**

Chin: Firm.

EARS: 5 points

Shape: Wide at base; slightly rounded at tip.

Size: **Medium** to large.

Placement: The lower outer edge of the ear should follow the line of the head down to the chin; arched forward, as if listening.

Tufts: Lynx tips desirable.

Furnishings: **Extending beyond outer edge of the ear.**

EYES: 5 points

Shape: Almond.

Size: **Moderately** large.

Placement: Medium-wide set. (see penalties)

Aperture: Slightly angled, the outer corner being slightly higher than the inner corner.

Color: Green-gold or shades of green or gold. Blue and **odd-eyes** are accepted in white cats.

TICA 2000

HEAD: 40 points

Shape (8): Triangular, where all sides are equally long when measured from the outer base of the ears to the chin and between the outer base of the ears; **good height when seen in profile;** forehead is **sloped back.**

Chin (4): Firm

Muzzle (4): Following the line of the triangular head, with no evidence of pinch or snippiness.

Profile (8): **Long**, straight profile from tip of nose to brow without break in line, i.e., no stop.

Neck: Muscular; medium in length.

Ears (8): Large, wide at the base, arched forward as if listening, slightly rounded tips that appear pointed with lynx tips. Lynx tips and furnishings are desirable. The outer, lower edge of the ear should follow the line of the head down to the chin.

Eyes (8): Large, **wide** almond, set oblique. **Alert expression.** All eye colors except blue permitted regardless of coat color. Blue eye color permitted in white and **with white** only.

We were concerned that essential characteristics such as eyes, ears, chin, profile, and coat texture were not weighted enough relative to the other features of the Forest Cat.

In the text of the new TICA NF standard which goes into effect May 1, 2001, a few descriptive phrases were changed to correct or clarify:

The forehead is "sloped back", including a center flat spot over the brow and profile. This flat spot helps to create the change in plane, but the forehead itself, is not flat. We added a phrase to indicate that the head in profile should be a good height, not squat or snake like. We describe profile as "long" to discourage short heads. Profile length is still defined and limited by the equilateral triangle that shapes the head when viewed from the front.

We changed ears from "medium to large" to "large". We observed that, if the ears are WIDE at the base, AND if their positioning is correct, they will be prominent. The ears of a well developed kitten will be even larger in proportion to its head. Furnishings "extending beyond the outer edge of the ear" are desirable, not required.

The first FIFe translation from Norwegian said "tall" ears. We know of no NF standard in Scandinavia that said "medium to large". We were told that the Working Groups for the FIFe 2000 standard consisted of about 100 participants from 11 countries. Of those, reportedly, the vast majority (about 95%) preferred "large". This was the one significant change/correction in the new FIFe standard, and it is evidenced by many past and present Forest Cats in both TICA and FIFe.

"Moderate" was removed from the description of eye size. It is a word that is difficult to interpret or describe with consistency. The eyes of the Forest Cat are large. "Medium wide set" was not carried forward; rather, a penalty was added for eyes that are set too close. The word "wide" was added to describe the almond shape so that there is no confusion with a narrow, oriental look. "Alert expression" was added to encourage a balance between feral and sweet looks. And "with white" was added for blue eyed cats,. This was an omission in the 92 standard.

The TICA Standards: A Comparison

TICA 1992

BODY: 20 points

Shape: Sturdy, full chest and considerable girth, but not fat. Size: Males large and imposing, allowance should be made for females, as they can be considerably smaller than males. (see allowances)

Length: Moderate. Boning: Substantial. Musculature: Substantial and powerful.

NECK:

Length: Medium. Size: Heavy musculature.

LEGS:

Length: Medium to long, in proportion to body, hind legs longer than front. Boning: Heavy. Musculature: Heavily muscled thighs; substantial lower legs.

Legs straight when viewed from rear. (see penalties)

FEET: Shape: Round. Size: Large. Tufting: Well-tufted.

TAIL: 10 points

Shape: Wide at base, tapering to end. Length: As long as the body. Hair: Bushy.

COAT: 20 points

Length: Uneven.

Texture: Coarse. Density: Double coat with a feeling of heaviness and depth covered by water repellent guard hairs.

Miscellaneous: The type and quality of the coat is of primary importance, color and pattern of coat secondary.

COLOR & MARKINGS: 5 points

Traditional category. All divisions. All colors.

CONDITION AND APPEARANCE: 15 points

Temperamentally, they should be gentle and amenable to handling.

TICA 2000

BODY: 35 points

Torso: Medium long and substantial

Legs: In proportion to the body length, with hind legs higher than front legs

Feet: Large, round, well tufted.

Tail: Long and bushy. Should be at least as long as the body.

Boning: Substantial

Musculature: Strongly built and sturdy

COAT AND COLOR: 25 points

Length: Semi long.

Texture: The dense, woolly undercoat is covered by a smooth, water repellent upper coat which consists of long, coarse and glossy hair covering the back and the sides. A fully coated cat has a full ruff and britches.

Color: All colors of all divisions of the traditional category are recognized, including all colors with white. Any amount of white is allowed anywhere on the cat.

OTHER: 0 points

Balance: muscular and well proportioned

Condition: Not applicable/ assumed

Temperament: Intelligent and independent. Not fond of over-handling

The reference to body size differences between males and females was moved to the allowances section. Body length was changed from "moderate" to "medium long", because we did not understand what "moderate" meant. After measuring (floor to withers, withers to rump, rump to floor) more than 50 adult Forest Cats in the U.S. and Europe, we learned that there is a consistent ratio of about 3.5 to 3.7 long x 3.0 high. Based on that, we felt that "medium long" best described the correct proportion.

"At least" was added to the tail description to discourage short tails and allow for a tail that is longer than the 'to shoulder' length.

Coat length was changed from "uneven" to "semi-long". Semi-long coats are uneven.

A phrase was added to remind judges that this cat still carries the basic instincts of a natural-based breed. They are on the alert in the show hall and need to be handled with that in mind. It does not mean that they are not gentle and amenable to handling, and this phrase is covered in the text applied by TICA at the end of each standard.

The TICA Standards: A Comparison

TICA 1992

CONDITION AND APPEARANCE:

The appearance is an alert, healthy, firm, muscular, and well-proportioned cat. The males are large and imposing. Females can be considerably smaller than the males. Allowance should be made for this size difference. The boning should be substantial, with good muscle tone and no evidence of obesity or emaciation.

Overall appearance in a mature cat in full coat is square.

Temperamentally, they should be gentle and amenable to handling.

ALLOWANCES:

Buttons, spots and lockets allowed in all colors. Allow for size difference between males and females.

PENALIZE:

Short legs or long legs not in proportion to the body, cobby body, extremely long body, nose with a break, round or square head, small ears, short tail, delicate bone structure.

TICA 2000

ALLOWANCES:

- Buttons, spots and lockets allowed in all colors.
- Length of coat and density of undercoat vary with the seasons. Under no circumstances should a cat be penalized for having a semi long coat.
- Coat is evaluated primarily on texture and quality.
- Allow for size difference between males and females.
- Very slow maturing of this breed should be taken into account.
- Mature males may have broader heads than females.

PENALIZE:

- General: Too small and finely built cats
- Head: Round or square head; profile with a break (stop)
- Eyes: round
- Ears: too small or narrow at the base.
- Legs: Short, thin legs not in proportion to the body, cow-hocked
- Tail: Short
- Body: Cobby or extremely long
- Coat: Cottony or silky texture

Three penalties were added, in support of the standard text:

Eyes should not be round, ears should not be small or too narrow at the base, and the coat should not be cottony or silky. These additions do not conflict with the earlier 92 TICA standard. They help to emphasize important aspects of either standard.

The sentence about the overall appearance of the cat being square was not carried forward. As mentioned earlier, the measurements taken indicate that the shape of the Forest Cat is slightly rectangular.

Other changes involved the removal of repetitious text and conformance with the new TICA format for standards for all breeds.

The FIFe 2000 Standard: A Comparison

HEAD (20)...vs TICA (24)

- Shape - Triangular, where all sides are equally long; with good height when seen in profile; forehead slightly rounded; long, straight profile without break in line (no stop)
- Chin - Firm

EARS (10)...vs TICA (8)

- Shape - Large, with good width at the base; pointed tips; with lynx-like tufts and long hair out of the ears
- Placement - **High** and open, so that the outer lines of the ears follow the line of the head down to the chin.

EYES (5)...vs TICA (8)

- Shape - Large and **oval**, well opened, set slightly oblique
- Expression - Alert expression
- Colour - All colours permitted, regardless of coat colour

BODY (25)...vs TICA (25)

- Structure - **Long**, strongly built; solid bone structure
- Legs - Strong, high on legs; hind legs higher than the front legs
- Paws - Large, round, in proportion to the legs

TAIL (10)...vs TICA (10)

- Long and bushy, should reach at least to the shoulder blades, but preferably to the neck

COAT (25)...vs TICA (25)

- Structure - Semi long. The woolly undercoat is covered by a smooth, water repellent uppercoat which consists of long, coarse and glossy hair covering the back and the sides. A fully coated cat has a shirtfront, a full frill and knickerbockers.

COLOUR (0) and CONDITION (5) ...vs TICA (0)

- All colours are permitted, including all colours with white, except point patterns and **chocolate and lilac, cinnamon and fawn**. Any amount of white is allowed, i.e. a white blaze, white locket, white chest, white on the belly, white on the paws, etc.

FAULTS

- General - Too small and finely built cats
- Head - Round or square head; profile with a break (stop)
- Ears - Small ears; set too widely apart; set too close together
- Legs - Short legs; thin legs
- Tail - Short tail
- Coat - Dry coat; knotted with lumps, too silky

REMARKS

- Coat is evaluated only on texture and quality
- Very slow maturing of this breed should be taken into account
- Mature males may have broader heads than females
- Length of coat and density of undercoat vary with the seasons
- Kittens can take up to six months of age to develop guardhairs

Wherever we were confident that the text of the FIFe Standard carried the same meaning as text in the TICA standard, we revised closer to the FIFe text. In a world where new U.S. breeders are buying their first Skogkatts from FIFe breeders and where TICA has successfully expanded into FIFe countries, we felt it was time that we work together to gravitate towards a common standard, for the good of the breed in both registries. FIFe members are also considering some of our wording as a result of the exchange.

FIFe describes the ears as "high" on the head. TICA does not. We are concerned that this will blur the differentiation between Forest Cat and Maine Coon. FIFe stresses the same triangle; they have used the word "high" simply to avoid ears that fall too low off the head. The rest of the FIFe text on ears underscores this and we agree with it.

FIFe describes the eyes as "oval". TICA describes them as "almond". FIFe and TICA are employing the English language differently in this instance. When pressed to elaborate, "oval" and "almond" were described by knowledgeable FIFe representatives as the same shape.

FIFe describes the body as "long". TICA describes it as "medium long". We have had enough discussion and actual measurement to be convinced that a FIFe judge and a TICA judge would make the same determinations, even though the words are different today.

Lastly, FIFe does not allow the colors Cinnamon, Fawn, Chocolate or Lilac. This is a substantive difference. We would rather conform to FIFe in this instance, but we are bound by the broader scope of the Traditional Category as TICA defines it.

Regarding the phrase "equally long" for the triangle that describes the head, Jörgen Frithiof, FIFe judge and head of the FIFe 2000 standard project, explains it this way: *"It's like this, personally I would have preferred 'equilateral triangle', and I tried that initially, but I got reactions saying, 'why change anything we never have had any problems with?' ...Meaning, it was in the old standard too. The meaning of it IS equal in length, we are not chasing a giant head here...:-)"*

Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour



HEAD:

Shape: Triangular, where all sides are equally long when measured from the outer base of the ears to the chin and between the outer base of the ears; good height when seen in profile; forehead is sloped back.

Eyes: Large, wide almond, set oblique. Alert expression. All eye colors except blue permitted regardless of coat color. Blue eye color permitted in white and with white only.

Ears: Large, wide at the base, arched forward as if listening, slightly rounded tips that appear pointed with lynx tips. Lynx tips and furnishings are desirable. The outer, lower edge of the ear should follow the line of the head down to the chin.

Chin: Firm

Muzzle: Following the line of the triangular head, with no evidence of pinch or snippiness

Nose: Not applicable

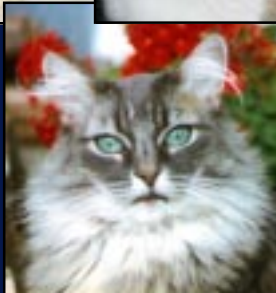
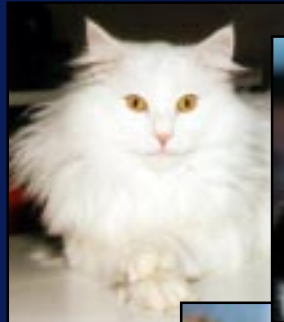
Profile: Long, straight profile from tip of nose to brow without break in line, i.e., no stop

Neck: Muscular; medium in length

In this section, we are going to cover the parts of the Forest Cat in greater detail. We begin with the head.

The young male shown in this slide dates to the '80's. It is interesting to note the size and proportion of his ears and head overall. From photos that we researched, it appears that this was a prevalent style in Scandinavia even then.

Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour



HEAD 40 points

Shape -8

Eyes -8

Ears -8

Chin -4

Muzzle -4

Nose

Profile -8

Neck

The largest number of points is given to the head, which is comprised of six categories: shape, eyes, ears, profile, and chin and muzzle.

The four cats shown on this page clearly depict a range of acceptable styles. These cats also range in age from the four-month-old black and white male kitten in profile, top right, to the sixteen-year-old female without white, lower center picture.

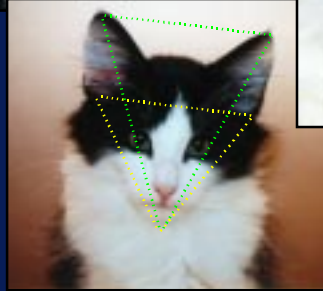
Notice the triangles, the almond eyes, the multi-plane profile and strong chin on the red tabby with white female to the right. We will go into each of these features in detail.

"Triangle equally long" should not be interpreted as anything other than an equilateral triangle.

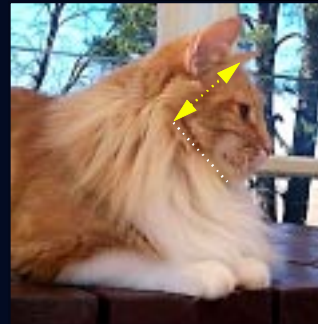
Also notice that Forest Cat come in all colors, with and without white, and in a variety of eye colors as well.

Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour

HEAD



Shape: Triangular, where all sides are equally long when measured from the outer base of the ears to the chin and between the outer base of the ears; good height when seen in profile; forehead is sloped back.



The shape of the Skogkatt head is defined by a triangle set between the outer base of the ears and the bottom of the chin. All sides of this triangle are equal in the adult Forest Cat, male and female.

The profile starts a bit behind the ears and stops at the chin. The height of the head is very important. When viewed in profile, the head is a wedge that is angled high, not flat or shallow. The head and forehead are sloped back but there is a center flat spot over the brow and profile, creating a change in plane before the slope back.

Proportion is important. Some heads are too small for the body to which they are attached or too short in proportion to their overall dimensions. Some are too squat or flat in profile. The three heads pictured here are good examples within the range of acceptable styles of the breed.

More interesting history...

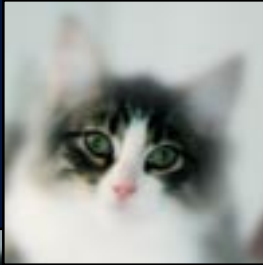
In 1986, an article written by Dortemarie Kaplers for the "Skogkatten" newsletter stated,

"Primarily, we want the NFC to be like the ones recognized by FIFe (Pans Truls). Furthermore, we have the opinion that there was a fault in the translation of the standard of the NFC in FIFe. As it first was, the NFC should have a "triangular head with a long, straight profile"; this turned out to be "Triangular head with a long nose, straight profile." How this fault turned up, we don't know. To go back to the NFC as it first was, we have therefore made the new standard more detailed. We believe that this new standard is what the NFC and all its fanciers need in order to gather around ONE type that is the correct Norwegian Forest Cat."

In the 1987 revision of the FIFe standard, adjustments were made, especially concerning the head shape and profile. The official version stated, "Head: triangular, where all sides are equal. Long, straight profile without stop. Strong chin."

Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour

HEAD



Eyes: Large, wide almond, set oblique. Alert expression. All eye colors except blue permitted regardless of coat color. Blue eye color is permitted only in white and with- white cats.



Skogkatt eyes should be medium to large, but not dominant vs. the proportion of the head. They should not be too deeply set. They are shaped as a wide open almond set at a slightly oblique tilt. "Slightly oblique" means that the angle is pointing to the outer edge of the base of the ear.

They are alert and not hooded or narrow. They are decidedly not round, nor should they be oriental in shape, size or angle. Neither should they be set too wide apart; this gives the look of a sheep with broad expanse of forehead between them.

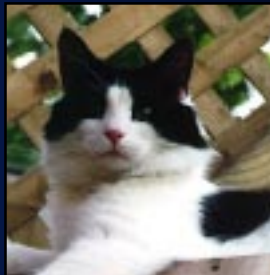
There is no requirement that the Skogkatt expression be "sweet". On the contrary, this is a no-nonsense breed and can present a "Make my day!" look, as you can see from some of these examples.

An interesting note: these are the words used by the Working Groups of the FIFe 2000 standard team in their 1999 deliberations: "*dangerous*", "*wild and alert*", "*controlling*", "*independent*", "*curious*".

All colors are permitted. Blue eyes do appear on Skogkatts that are white or with white from time to time. More often than not, the eye color is green-gold, gold or hazel. Occasionally, there is a Skogkatt with eyes a lovely shade of green to aqua-green.

Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour

HEAD



Ears: Large, wide at the base, arched forward as if listening, slightly rounded tips that appear pointed with lynx tips. Lynx tips and furnishings are desirable. The outer, lower edge of the ear should follow the line of the head down to the chin.



The ears of the Norwegian Forest Cat are historically not small. We can argue whether they are large or medium large, and that will remain a difference among styles.

The FIFe standard calls for large ears. From many photos of early Forest Cats, we have seen that kitten ears were large and adult ears were prominent in proportion to the head. From photos of our own TICA Top Winners over the years, we have seen large ears.

It is important that the ears be wide at the base. Ears that are too narrow create a different line for the shape of the head. The triangle is compromised.

Notice that the ears of the cat in the bottom right photo are arched forward and nicely cupped. They are set correctly, as are those of the cat below it. Ears will appear pointed if there are lynx tips. We expect them to have tufts.

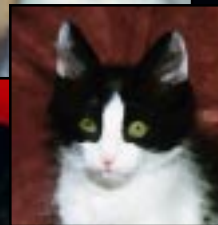
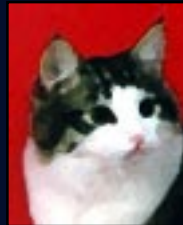
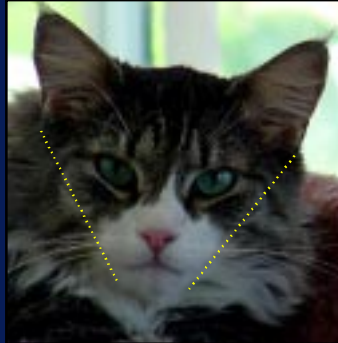
The outer lines of the ears should continue the straight lines of a triangle and not curve inwards to the points. If these lines are bent, then the ears are set too high on the head or they are shaped incorrectly.

Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour



HEAD

Muzzle: Following the line of the triangular head, with no evidence of pinch or snippiness.



While the muzzle accounts for only four points, it can influence the expression of the cat if it is pinched in at the sides or if it is pointed and foxy or snippy.

There should be an unbroken line following the triangle at the side of the head, from ear base to chin.

The cats at the lower right illustrate muzzles that are incorrect. In particular, the kitten at the rightmost corner shows a pinched muzzle. A pinch is a definite indentation that can be felt, if not seen, below the cheekbones and before the muzzle. It should not be confused with plump whisker pads.

The cat in the center of these three has whisker pads that are a bit too full, giving the illusion of a pinched muzzle. The cat to the left in this group has an overshot and/or weak chin, along with a pinch.

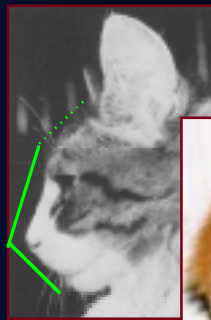
Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour



HEAD

Chin: Firm

Profile: Long, straight profile from tip of nose to brow without break in line, i.e., no stop



Finally, we come to chin and profile, together worth twelve points.

The Skogkatt chin should be firm. You can see good examples of this on the pair of cats at the right and on three of the four cats to the left. The cat in the upper right corner of the left group has a weak chin. Notice how the correct chin creates a plane that angles square and firm from the tip of the nose downward. By contrast, there is no clean line to the weak chin in profile.

The profile can exhibit several types of faults: counterclockwise, from the top left in the group of four photos, you see a break, a curve or dip, doming on the forehead, a dent in the middle of the profile line. These are the most common deficiencies. Also notice the different eye sets: the cat on the lower right of this group has eyes that are too deeply set back from the profile edge. By contrast, the cats to either side of him show the eye shape and set in correct position.

As an aside, the ear size of the cat with the weak chin (top right of four) is too small for the overall size of its head.

The red tabby and white female at the extreme lower right shows a beautiful profile and chin. She has the entire package, including the perfect slope of her forehead and beautifully shaped and positioned ears.

Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour



BODY:

Torso: *Medium long and substantial*

Legs: *In proportion to the body length, with hind legs higher than front legs*

Feet: *Large, round, well tufted*

Tail: *Long and bushy; Should be at least as long as the body*

Boning: *Substantial*

Musculature: *Strongly built and sturdy*

The next category of discussion is the body.

Incidentally, the black and white cat shown here is the legendary Pans Polaris. These photos were taken in 1988. Polaris was a young stud at that time. He appears in many pedigrees in the US and Europe.

Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour



BODY 35 points

Torso - 7

Legs - 7

Feet

Tail - 7

Boning - 7

Musculature - 7



Thirty-five points are allocated to the body of the Norwegian Forest Cat. They are evenly distributed, seven points each, across five categories: Torso, Legs, Tail, Boning and Musculature.

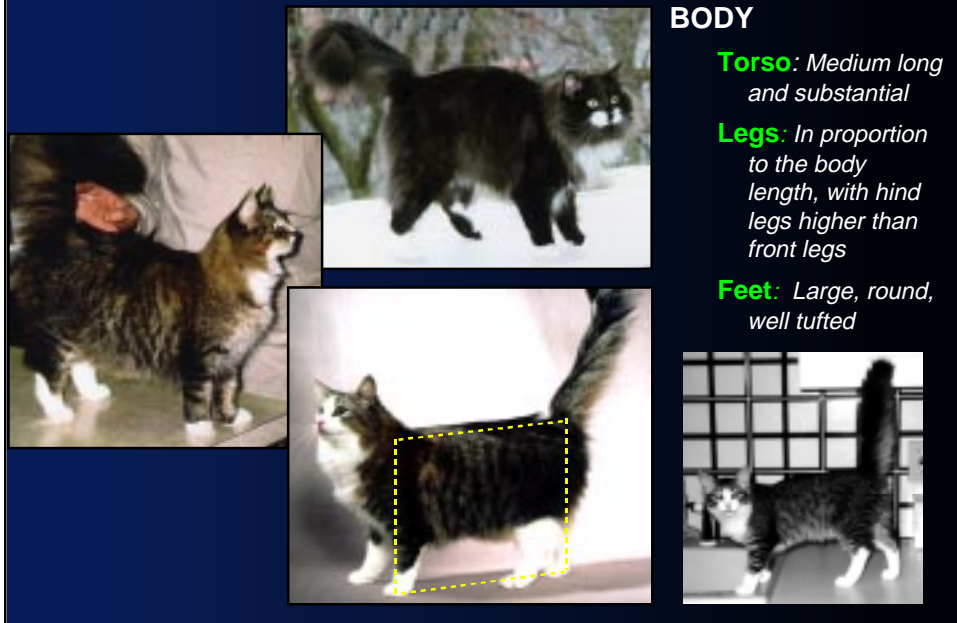
You will hear that "proportion" word used a lot in this segment. Notice that the three cats shown are all well balanced, well proportioned.

The adult male at the top has an overall shape that illustrates a moderately proportioned rectangle from floor to withers, withers to rump, rump to floor.

The adult female below him, to the right, is well proportioned with good height to her legs versus the length of her torso. She is well proportioned and within the standard which calls for a medium long torso, with legs that are neither too squat nor too lanky.

The tabby and white male to the left shows good musculature and overall proportion, including the height of his legs.

Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour



The Torso of a Skogkatt is defined in proportion to the height of the cat's legs...or vice versa. Overall, the legs are high. The hind legs are always slightly higher than the front legs. This is well illustrated by the mature female cat at the left of this slide. You can often get a Skogkatt to demonstrate this stance if you tickle her back just in front of the base of the tail. Notice the female kitten at the extreme right also demonstrating this feature.

The black and white male at the top has very good balance between height and torso length, good boning and substance. This breed is full chested with considerable girth but not fat.

When considering how to define torso, we decided to measure many champion Forest Cats to determine if most of them were square, slightly rectangular or decidedly rectangular in shape. The same exercise was conducted informally in Scandinavia. All in all, over 50 cats were measured. These sometimes comical measuring events resulted in a very consistent and narrow range: the typical ratio for an adult Forest Cat was 3.5 to 3.7 long x 3.0 high.

The appearance is to be "slightly longer than high, but still high on the legs"...according to us and to the Working Groups of the FIFe 2000 standard. If you can eyeball this ratio, you have a properly shaped Skogkatt.

Just a word of advice from a longtime breeder in Norway, "Just - again, coat length can 'mask' the length of the legs. What looks like short legs could easily be normal legs hidden by a long outer coat ." Apply a penalty if they are too short or cobby.

Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour



BODY

Tail: Long and bushy. Should be at least as long as the body



The Forest Cat's tail is bushy and long regardless of the season. To determine if it is long enough, you can gently hold it to the **SIDE** of the cat (not over the back) to see if it reaches to the shoulder.... or hold the front of the cat up with the feet on the judging table and the tail outstretched creating a "V" shape between the torso and the tail lines.

Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour



BODY

Boning:

Substantial

Musculature:

*Strongly built
and sturdy*



The boning of a Skogkatt, male or female, is substantial, not fine. Thighs are heavily muscled and the legs are large boned. It develops over time. Therefore, young Skogkatts may appear more light boned. Their musculature should be study, strong, imposing. This, too, develops with age. A Skogkatt is not fully mature until it is five years old.

All three cats, two males and the female to the right, are well boned and strongly built. They are all mature adults.

Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour



COAT AND COLOR:

Length: Semi long

Texture: The dense, woolly undercoat is covered by a smooth, water repellent upper coat which consists of long, coarse and glossy hair covering the back and the sides. A fully coated cat has a full ruff and britches.

Pattern: Not applicable/ irrelevant

Color: Traditional Category--All Divisions are recognized, all colors are recognized, including all colors with white. Any amount of white is allowed anywhere on the cat.

"These cats are especially credited for their long, rich fur, with a woolly underfur with long, hanging guard hairs. It is warm and waterproof but does not entangle, lump or mat."

Norsk Skogkatt- the Norwegian Forest Cat, Tom B. Jensen, 1980

From the notes of the Working Groups that developed the FIFe 2000 standard in 1999:

"Since the NFC has no points for coat or eye color, the importance of an overall balance and harmony is even more important for the NFC than for many other breeds that have those points."

And this from the same source:

"Coat fully developed after the first year with the first winter coat. Coat quality: summer coat is shorter/ winter coat is longer. Should always have a long overcoat, ie, guard hairs are always there, on the whole cat - tail also. Double coat should be in all colors."

The cat shown is legendary Pans Truls. By the way, he was not confined to the indoors.

Norwegian Forest Cat Guided Tour

COAT & COLOR 25 points

Length - 5

Texture - 20

Pattern

Color



The coat of the Norwegian Forest cat is neither short nor long. It is a semi-longhair cat judged in the long hair category in TICA. The semi-longhair coat is uneven: shorter on shoulders and progressively longer over the length of the body. The ruff consists of three separate sections: a short 'back of the neck' ruff, side mutton chops, and full frontal bib.

The texture of this coat receives more points, by far, than any other single feature in the standard. By contrast, the length receives 25% of the points compared to the texture. We are trying to stress the importance of one feature over the other. Furthermore, length will vary depending upon the season. Please consider this. No penalty should be applied to Skogkatts that happen to be in their summer coats.

Pattern and Color receive NO points in this revision. The breed is based on a natural cat that occurs in all colors and patterns. The aspect of beauty contest is not singularly important in our minds. The aspect of a natural breed surviving in harsh elements must be considered. We urge that you do not grant extra points for pattern or color. Please mention these lovely features in your finals rings, but resist the temptation to deviate from the standard in this regard. Breeders of Skogkatts must use all colors in order to preserve the correct texture of this coat. To favor some over others is to jeopardize the most critical characteristic of this breed.



Just for fun, we have amassed several pictures of excellent Forest Cats with "attitude" and presence...and a lot in common. Can you tell which are from the US and which are not?

Excellent Forest Cats come in many colors, with and without white. They come in a range of styles, but, as you look across them, you can see the common thread of quality according to the elements of the TICA NF 2000 standard. Seven of these cats are European. Some are young; some are older. Some are male; some are female. All have done well and made contributions in their respective organizations.

Taken from a letter that was printed in Skogkatt Newsletter, 1980-81. It is written by one of the founding breeders of the breed in Norway, but keep the early date in mind. FIFe judging of the Norwegian Forest Cat has changed greatly and for the better since then:

"We still are depressed by judges coming from other countries who have never seen a Norwegian Forest Cat in their lives, ... being perplexed and choosing the cutest or the cat with the longest coat. Shows are for us just gambling and a depressing matter."

Things have improved; look at these photos. "Cute" will not be the first word to come to your mind. And the coat length on these champions is decidedly semi-long.



This second collage of Skogkatts is all about kittens. Notice the disproportionately big ears, the developmental stages of the eyes, the head lengths and profiles, and the variety of color and pattern.

Many of them have gone on to become and produce champions.



Here, you can see a comparison of Winners from TICA during the period from 1985 through 1995.

The TICA committee's criteria for inclusion on this and the next slide are as follows:

International TICA winners, ranking in the top 20 as either AllBreed or Longhair Cats, Kittens or Alters.



Continuing with a comparison of more recent winners across TICA... one thing is worth pondering...for a breed that comes in all colors, with and without white, there is an odd trend among the Top TICA winners in terms of their colors and patterns. Could it be that, subliminally, judges are favoring a symmetric, with white, tabby coat? We would prefer that high quality cats without white, solids and with asymmetric markings be given equal treatment in the future.

As you look across these winners over 15 years of TICA NFs at show, you can see examples of some of the key clarifications that were made to the NF standard.

Norwegian Forest Cat Considerations



ALLOWANCES:

- Buttons, spots and lockets allowed in all colors.
- Length of coat and density of undercoat vary with the seasons. Under no circumstances should a cat be penalized for having a semi long coat.
- Coat is evaluated primarily on texture and quality.
- Allow for size difference between males and females.
- Very slow maturing of this breed should be taken into account.
- Mature males may have broader heads than females.

The next section is on Allowances and Penalties, in keeping with the features already discussed.

This picture is from the 70's and taken outside Oslo in the summer.

Norwegian Forest Cat Considerations



ALLOWANCES

Buttons, spots and lockets allowed in all colors.

Length of coat and density of undercoat vary with the seasons. Under no circumstances should a cat be penalized for having a semi long coat.

Coat is evaluated primarily on texture and quality.

The young female, middle left of this slide, has a totally acceptable pattern: white with spots of her brown classic tabby pattern. All variations of buttons, lockets and spots are allowed and accepted equally.

The difference between summer and winter coats is again illustrated between the male at the top vs. the kitten at the bottom. Note that the tail remains full and bushy in all seasons, but everything else is subject to seasonal change.

Norwegian Forest Cat Considerations



ALLOWANCES

Allow for size difference between males and females.

Very slow maturing of this breed should be taken into account.

Mature males may have broader heads than females.



As mentioned earlier, males and females vary in size in this breed and according to this standard. The breed, whether male or female, matures slowly, often taking four or five years to reach full mass, full adult shape and coat. You can see this in the progression of photos on the left.

Between the ages of 6 months and 1 year, the Norwegian Forest cat goes through a stage where the eyes appear round. Young males in particular, have a longer head as kittens. Their head shape broadens by the time they are a year old.

In young cats under 1 year of age, the body goes through stages when it is a longer rectangle than when they are adults. With a full coat, the adult body appears square or slightly rectangular.

Notice, in particular, the massiveness developing in his legs, his wider head as an adult and the changes in ear set.

Also note that the adult female at the top left has a head that is more feminine and not as broad as the male below. His head has broadened with age and is considerably more massive than the adult female on the top left.

Norwegian Forest Cat Considerations



PENALIZE:

- *General: Too small and finely built cats*
- *Head: Round or square head; profile with a break (stop)*
- *Eyes: Round*
- *Ears: Too small or set too close together*
- *Legs: Short, thin legs not in proportion to the body, cow-hocked*
- *Tail: Short*
- *Body: Cobby or extremely long*
- *Coat: Cottony or silky texture*

In particular, we would like you to take notice of these faults and penalize for them accordingly.

Another 70's picture in Norway, in the autumn...and with perfectly shaped and angled legs, i.e., straight when viewed from the rear. Compare this to the cow-hocked stance on the next slide.

Norwegian Forest Cat **Considerations**



PENALIZE

General: Too small and finely built cats

Head: Round or square head; profile with a break (stop)

Eyes: Round

Ears: Too small or set too close together

Legs: Short or thin legs that are not in proportion to the body; cow-hocked legs

Tail: Short

Body: Cobby or extremely long

Coat: Cottony or silky texture

It is difficult to show certain traits in photos, and finely built Skogkatts could not be shown with the photos available to us. Notice that the standard says "Too small AND finely built cats"; it is also possible to have a Skogkatt that is large enough but finely built. Finely boned Skogkatts, no matter how large in frame, are not correct.

The cat at the upper right shows a good example of a rounded head with ears too high, further accentuating the round shape. The right-hand graphic clearly shows the roundness of his head.

Eyes should not be round, as on the kitten in the middle left. The ears of the cat in the lower left are too close and too narrow to create the proper triangle.

The overall appearance of the cats in the lower right and upper middle is cobby, with short legs. Both should be considered as faults and penalized accordingly.

The lower middle photo shows cow hocked rear legs. When viewed from the rear, the hind legs of the NF should appear straight, not angled out to the sides like a cow.

With time, you will learn to differentiate between the all-weather, water-repellent Skogkatt coat versus one that feels like silk or cotton in texture. This is a most serious fault for this breed.

Norwegian Forest Cat vs. Maine Coon



IN APPEARANCE, the Maine Coon is a long cat with a long, rectangular body and a feral look, while the Norwegian Forest Cat is medium long in length, more square in shape and with a less feral expression.

These excerpts are taken from an article on the Maine Coon Breeders and Fanciers Association Web site:
The Maine Coon, America's Native Longhair, By Mike and Trish Simpson

"Maine Coons were well established more than a century ago as a hardy, handsome breed of domestic cat, well equipped to survive the hostile New England winters. Nature is not soft-hearted. It selects the biggest, the brightest, the best fighters, and the best hunters to breed successive generations. Since planned breedings of Maine Coons are relatively recent and carefully monitored, these cats still have their strong, natural qualities. Maine Coons are healthy, disease-resistant, rugged cats. Interestingly, the breed closest to the Maine Coon is the Norwegian Forest Cat which, although geographically distant, evolved in much the same climate, and lends credence to the theory that some of the cats responsible for developing the Maine Coon were brought over by the Vikings.

Everything about the Maine Coon points to its adaptation to a harsh climate. Its glossy coat, heavy and water-resistant, is like that of no other breed, and must be felt to be truly appreciated. The coat is longer on the ruff, stomach, and britches to protect against wet and snow, and shorter on the back and neck to guard against tangling in underbrush. The coat falls smoothly, and requires little maintenance—a weekly combing is all that is usually required to keep it in top condition. The long, bushy tail which the cat wraps around himself when he curls up to sleep can protect him from cold winters. His ears are more heavily furred (both inside and on the tips) than most breeds for protection from the cold, and have a large range of movement. Big, round, tufted feet help them negotiate uneven terrain and serve as "snow shoes." Their large eyes and ears are also survival traits, serving as they do to increase sight and hearing. The relatively long, square muzzle facilitates grasping prey and lapping water from streams and puddles."

Norwegian Forest Cat vs. Maine Coon



NF

Norwegian Forest Cat

HEAD - Triangular

PROFILE - Straight

EYES - Almond Shape

EARS - Large. Outer edge of the ear follows the line of the head down to the chin, completing the triangle

BODY - Medium long in length, square in appearance

LEGS - Hind legs higher than front legs

TAIL - Long and bushy, as long as the body

COAT - Semi-long. Distinctive double coat, long guard hairs covering a woolly undercoat

RUFF - When mature, a profuse ruff develops around the neck

Maine Coon

HEAD - Wedge shaped with a square muzzle

PROFILE - Gentle curved

EYES - Oval, Large, wide open

EARS - Set high on top of the head, not more than an ear's-width apart

BODY - Long, rectangular

LEGS - Medium in length

TAIL - Long and flowing, as long as the body

COAT - Silky, shaggy, uneven coat with a slight undercoat

RUFF - Moderate frontal ruff develops around the neck



"Although the Yankee myth of 30-pound cats is just that, a myth, the Maine Coon is one of the largest domestic breeds. They are tall, muscular, and big-boned; males commonly reach 13 to 18 pounds, and females normally weigh about 9 to 12 pounds. Maine Coons develop slowly, and don't achieve their full size until they are three or four years old.

The important features of the Maine Coon are the head and body shape, and the texture and "shag" of the coat. The head is slightly longer than it is wide, presenting a gently concave profile with high cheekbones and ears that are large, wide at the base, moderately pointed, and well tufted inside. They are set well up on the head, approximately an ear's width apart. Lynx-like tufting on the top of the ears is desirable. The neck should be medium-long, the torso long, and the chest broad. The tail should be at least as long as the torso. One of their most distinctive features is their eyes, which are large, round, expressive, and set at a slightly oblique angle. Overall, the Maine Coon should present the appearance of a well-balanced, strongly-built, rectangular cat.

Throughout their history there has been no restriction on the patterns and colors acceptable, with the exception of the pointed Siamese pattern. As a result, a wide range of colors and patterns are bred. Eye colors for all coat colors range through green, gold, and hazel (green-gold). Blue eyes and odd eyes (one blue eye and one gold, green, or hazel eye) are also permissible in white cats. There is no requirement in the Maine Coon Standard of Perfection for particular combinations of coat color and eye color. The only color-related restrictions in Maine Coons intended for breeding are buttons, lockets, or spots on any solid color (tabbies or non-tabbies without white), and deafness in white cats."

Norwegian Forest Cat vs. **Siberian**



NF



THE OVERALL APPEARANCE of the Siberian should be one of great strength, force and size. The general impression is one of roundness and circles rather than the rectangles and triangles of similar breeds.



The Siberian Forest Cat is sometimes referred to simply as the "Siberian Cat" or the "Siberia". Siberians were common cats roaming the Russian markets and the countryside of their homeland of Siberia.

The breed has been in the United States since 1990.

Norwegian Forest Cat vs. Siberian

Norwegian Forest Cat

HEAD - Triangular

PROFILE - Straight

EYES - Almond Shape

EARS - Large. Outer edge of the ear follows the line of the head down to the chin, completing the triangle

BODY - Medium long in length, square in appearance

LEGS - Hind legs higher than front legs

TAIL - Long and bushy, as long as the body

COAT - Semi-long. Distinctive double coat, long guard hairs covering a woolly undercoat

RUFF - When mature, a profuse ruff develops around the neck



Siberian

HEAD - modified wedge of medium size with rounded contours

PROFILE - gentle slope from forehead to nose; slightly concave

EYES - large, almost round eyes set wide

EARS - medium-large, wide and set as much on the sides of the head as on the top; 1 to 1-1/2 ear widths apart; rounded tips.

BODY - Moderately long

LEGS - Moderately long. Hind legs slightly longer

TAIL - medium in length, wide at base, blunt at tip

COAT - moderately long to longhaired cat; thick, shorter hair on the shoulder blades and lower part of the chest; tight undercoat. Hair may thicken to curls on the belly and britches.

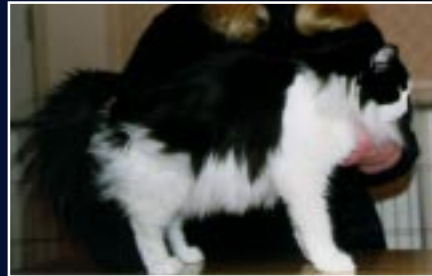
RUFF - Full

Russians have had the color points as a part of their breeding program since records were kept by the various cat fancy clubs in Russia..

The TICA 2000 Standard: How To Handle



rump carry



four on the floor



check tail



finger tip examination

NF breeder and judge, Patti Andrews, offers some sage advice when judging the Norwegian Forest Cat:

"The most important aspect of judging cats, is to remember that "it is all about the cats". As judge trainees, we learn that each breed has its own unique features in looks, in temperament and handling style. As trainees, we learn to handle a Persian so it can be viewed as cobby or square, an Oriental as a long sensual feline, a Korat as a shy and tenderhearted soul. As a judge, we quickly learn that it is wise to observe the divisions among breeds. Yet, I seldom see these divisions observed with the NF.

Almost always, the NF follows the Maine Coon in judging and is often judged as if it were a MC. It is as if the transition stage between the MC and NF does not exist. However, the two breeds are distinctively different, not only in appearance but also in temperament. The differences may seem inconsequential, but they are vital. Remember, "it is all about the cat." It is our job to show the cat to the audience to the cat's advantage.

When judging a Maine Coon and showing it to the audience, it is apparent that the striking qualities of the cat are its size and feral appearance. These qualities are so striking that a judge is seldom put off by a MC that growls or hisses. We ignore it and go on with the judging.

When it comes to a Norwegian Forest Cat, we have been led to believe that they have a sweeter expression and, therefore, that the temper is also sweet and accepting. We have done them a disservice by not recognizing their feral appearance and nature. They are hunters with the heart of a survivor. The NF does not take kindly to over-handling. Many of them look like cuddly guys; at home, they are big pushovers. At home, I can play rough with my cats. In a show hall the NF is on the alert. The show hall is full of smells and sounds that bring out the survivor in every one of them.

As breeders of Forest Cats, we walk a fine line maintaining the unique aspects of our breed. We risk breeding out the survivor in our cats in order to get nonchalant show cats. We do not want to show a cat that hates the show hall but neither do we want to reproduce cats that have lost their basic ancestral instincts. So what is our option?...to have seminars, where we can educate our judges and trainees.

After judging the MC, I prefer to take a mental break. some time to remember my breed and its unique temperament requirements. When I'm ready to begin judging the NF, I take a deep breath and relax mentally and physically. I wash my brain and body of all emotions.

The TICA 2000 Standard: **How To Handle**



Gently pull profile back



check for triangular head



check angles of profile



use teaser

A cat is empathetic. The NF can sense your emotions; he will either be very uncertain of the whole show or demand respect. I approach the holding cage with confident love, bring the cat out and place him gracefully on the table.

A Forest Cat wants all of its feet quickly on the table. Pick up and carry a Forest Cat by placing one hand behind the fore legs and the other hand under the rump. This will give you an excellent "hands on" idea of the body and boning. Do not cuddle them; they are very loyal and you have not earned that right. When you place them on the table, stack them if they will let you. The no nonsense ones will want to be stacked and left alone. They will stand and show off. The unsure ones will heap on the table into a lump. Handling both types is about the same with a little variance. Remember, do not over handle.

You can lightly scratch or tickle the back on the unsure guys to see if they will stand or relax. Do not force them to stand. Try stacking them once; if they refuse, let them alone. You should have a good idea of the body shape with the handling from cage to table. Try the teaser; see if you can play them into relaxing. Usually, this will not work, but you may get a view of the eyes and ears placement.


Then, much as you do with the Sphynx, do some finger tip judging. I am admittedly a headhunter, so I start with the tail and work my way forward. I gently check the tail and hocks. I then run my hand down the spine, petting to feel the shoulders, coat, rib spring and hips. Try not to rake the coat to determine texture. Train your hands to become sensitive, to feel the texture and density with a simple loving pet. Most NF's hate raking.

Remember, I have already checked the boning from cage to table. Next, gently pull the profile to see if it is straight. Then, also check to see if the ears are cocked forward. To check the head shape and ear set, I do not form my hands into a triangle and superimpose it onto the cat's head; most cats will have a triangular look. Instead, I "eye ball it" or form a "V" with my thumb and forefinger under and along the muzzle. Lastly, again, I try the teaser and, again, it usually does not work on the mature NF. Use the teaser when they are back in the security of the cage.

If a Forest Cat growls or hisses, ignore it! Unless the cat gets stiff or turns and gives you a stare that is more evil than normal, you may assume that he is just making editorial comments. Do not let them fake you out. If he intimidates you to pull away, you will set the cat up for a horrible and short show career. If all he does is stand or lay and hiss once or twice, ignore it. I usually just laugh at them. Never have I been bit by a NF exhibiting at show."

Norwegian Forest Cat

Exercise




Now for some fun!

Form teams of 2-3 people. Some will handle the 2 pairs of Wegies while others observe. All will complete judging forms comparing the Wegies within each pair.


Judging:

Team 1



Pair of Adults

Team 2



Pair of Kittens

Queued:

Team 3

Team 4

Each team will have 5 minutes with each pair of Wegies.

#1

Then, record your team's comparison of the Wegies in each pair - feature by feature.

#2

Observer teams, record your comparisons, too. Hand the form to one of us in right away.

#4

Once everyone has completed the exercise, we will discuss all of the judgments.

#3

Evaluation Form:

While you wait, please complete the Seminar Evaluation Form.

Now comes the fun part of the seminar. We have two pairs of Forest Cats here and we will use them to give you a chance to test your opinions about their 'good-better-best' qualities.

First, who are the judges and judge trainees in the audience? Please, all of you form teams of 2-3 per team. Two per team is better unless we exceed four teams. (Time constraint)
Everyone else, form the same number of **Observing Teams** as there are **Judging Teams**.

Teams ONE for Judging and Observing, take your positions with **TABLE ONE** cats.
Teams TWO for Judging and Observing, take your positions with **TABLE TWO** cats.
Everyone, make sure you have a **JUDGING FORM**. **EVERYONE WILL FILL IN ONE OF THESE**.

Teams THREE AND FOUR (if there are such), please use this time to fill out an **EVALUATION FORM** for this seminar. We need your feedback to improve it, especially since it is the first time for us.

Teams ONE and TWO, you have **5 minutes to handle, critique, judge the pair of Forest Cats in front of you**. Compare them to the standard and to each other. Then complete your judging forms and hand them in. Optionally, we will enter your data into the computer and discuss the consolidated set of views at the end of the judging...or we will do this straight from the forms.

Next, (5 minutes later), Teams THREE and FOUR.....

Next, (5 minutes later), Teams One and Two, **REVERSING TABLES**

Finally, (5 minutes later), Teams THREE and FOUR, **REVERSING TABLES**

Facilitator: Collect all remaining **JUDGING FORMS** and all **EVALUATION FORMS**.

Then, lead a discussion of the range of judgments and comparisons vs. what was presented about the new standard. This should go on for about 10 minutes per pair of cats.

Norwegian Forest Cat Reference Materials

See TICA TREND article:

"Norway's National Treasure: The Norsk Skogkatt"

June/ July 1999 issue

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Here is a selection of fascinating articles about the Skogkatt. These will gradually be posted on the TICANFsection list for your access if you are a section member.

Norwegian Forest Cats In Summary



*Independent
Beautiful
....Balanced*



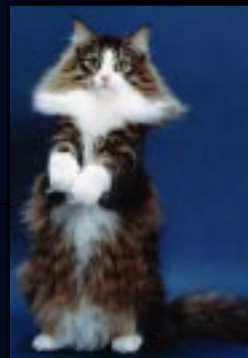
Here's what a breeder in Holland wrote about their Forest Cats: *"The cats ... spend most of their time outside in the garden, catching birds, mice, frogs, spiders and bugs. They seem not to be bothered by rain and wind; the studs even sleep outside in the snow right now! Last time there was snow, we found one of the males early in the morning, sleeping outside, fully covered with snow...."*

The essence of Norsk Skogkatt: We see a cat that still acts with the instincts and vigor of its ancestors - to the degree that that is allowed. But this cat is also beautiful and can stand up against other breeds to win top awards in All Breed contests in all the major registries around the world. We need your help, as judges, to keep this balance.

The cat to the right is a Top Winner in CFA. The cat above him is a three-time Scandinavian Winner with many other titles to her credit.

The TICA 2000 Standard: What's Next?

We have a consistent, healthy, and good-natured breed,
an adequate gene pool, and
an international community of breeders
Our goal is to keep it this way



Conformity of standards to the greatest degree possible...

- + Next, discussions with CFA and other registries

Continued education available to judges, new breeders, ...

- + Adaptable, maintainable materials
- + Use of technology that brings information to anyone's PC
- + Forums for input and exchange of issues and ideas

Robust breed committee with strong membership, shared goals and active participation ...

- + Get new breeders involved as breed committee helpers

Breed sections that are made up of breeders who are actively breeding and showing ...

- + Increase the number of active breeders in the NF Section by doing worthwhile things

In the June/July 1999 TICA Trend Article, we set forth four goals for the Norwegian Forest Cat. We believe we have made progress on three of them:

1- Conformity of standards to the greatest degree possible...in the hope that all the major associations can continue to work together to bring their standards as close to one definition as possible. There are over 600 breeders of Norwegian Forest Cats, worldwide, across several registries. It is interesting to note that nearly half of these catteries are in Scandinavia. At this time, approximately 70 are in the US; these 70 or so make up the memberships of TICA, CFA, and ACFA.

2- Continued education of judges...new breeders.... and anyone who is interested in the welfare of this breed. It is important to offer information and education "your way". We have leveraged the technologies at hand so that we might bring seminars into your home via telephone and Internet. We would like to offer an accredited self-study option if you have a PC. We already offer an Internet-based forum to get Section input and share information.

3- Robust breed committees with strong membership, shared goals and active participation to achieve them.... There is more to do and we want to hear from section members. We especially would like to get new breeders involved as breed committee helpers.

4- Breed sections that are made up of breeders who are actively breeding and showing...We would like to see more TICA NF breeders join the section and become active. This committee will work to increase the size and participation of the NF Section, by now focusing on how to make it a more interactive and useful experience for its members.

From the **TICA NF Breed Committee**

Thank You!

. . . and Good Night



Members of the breed section , please join the TICA NF Breed Committee at

TICANFsection

www.egroups.com

Not a Section Member? Contact TICA or one of us to learn how to join.

www.TICA.org

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We hope you have enjoyed and benefited from this seminar. It has been our pleasure to create it and present it to you.

Thank you and Good Night.