

Courtship and Mating Behaviours in Cats

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Courtship is a lengthy process that involves two cats reading each other's body language and chemical cues. A female in heat often has the attention of more than one male thus leading to males fighting amongst one another. Feral males attempt to proclaim the female as their own by spraying the surrounding area liberally with urine. Prior to mating, the female entices the male but resists any advances until she is ready. A great deal of vocalization occurs. To determine when the female is ready to mate, the male exhibits the Flehmen response, a behaviour that draws pheromones from the female towards him. The male sniffs the female, curling his back upper lip and extending his head towards her. Once ready, the female crouches down, rubs the ground, treads and offers her rump to the male, tail upright and off to one side, indicating she is ready to be mated.

