

## **Cat Fight: How to handle feline aggression**

Talk to any two humans living under the same roof, and they will tell you that they occasionally squabble. Talk to any multi-cat owner, and they will tell you their cats have occasional disagreements, as well. The behavior may include hissing, spitting, swatting or chasing; and the disagreements may erupt during mealtimes, when two cats want the same comfortable chair, or even as part of play. “If cats occasionally hiss and swat and don’t cause injury, or if they take turns doing the chasing, it’s fine,” says Ellen Lindell, VMD, board certified in behavior by the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. “But if one cat is playing and the other is not, it’s not play anymore.”

### **When Play Turns Serious**

Play aggression is not a cause for alarm — but if petty tiffs escalate into major altercations, the resulting skirmishes can become serious. Cat-to-cat aggression is one of the major behavior problems experienced by cat owners. Its causes may include competing for females among sexually intact male cats, or the introduction of a newcomer, or incorrectly introducing the newcomer to the resident cat.

It can also be a case of redirected aggression caused by arousal from an external stimulus such as an unneutered cat outdoors that the indoor cat may see from a window, or competing for territory or dominance. “With cats indoors, aggression is usually related to status as opposed to territory or fear-based aggression where one cat is being defensive,” says Dr. Lindell.

Too many cats in too small of a space may also result in fur flying, but how many is too many depends on the owner and the cats. “People may have 20 cats without any fighting,” says Dr. Lindell. “There’s no magic number. It’s really a [feline] personality issue.” Some spats are okay, but head-to-head fighting should not be tolerated. Howling, yowling, flattened ears, dilated pupils, raised hackles, arched back and puffy hair are indications that a knock-down-drag-out battle is on the horizon, so you need to intervene — without using your hands — before they get to that stage. “Watch for subtle things like a retreating cat or one cat threatening the other,” says Dr. Lindell. “Staring at each other with a twitching tail is a warning sign.”

Cat-to-cat aggression may result in more than just a few clumps of hair on the carpet. If cats have unresolved issues with one another, they may injure each other, spray your house to mark territory, become lethargic, hide, refuse to eat and subsequently lose weight, experience stress and fear, and even become sick.

“Aggression can lead to litter box problems or cats not being able to get to their food,” says Dr. Lindell.

### **As Always, Prevention is Best**

When it comes to aggression, the old adage, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” certainly applies. You can create an environment that promotes harmony among the resident cats rather than one in which the cats have to compete for resources. “Give cats choices,” says Dr. Lindell. “Provide more than one litter box in more than one location, and let the cats decide for themselves which to use.”

Providing a food dish for each cat or feeding stations at multiple locations can help reduce competition for food. Multi-level cat trees or shelves make use of vertical space within the home and give cats optional places to hang out. “The more opportunity for cats to have their own spots, the better,” says Dr. Lindell. “If cats have their own stations, they can work out the time and space sharing for themselves.”

It’s impossible to know for certain whether a resident cat will like a companion. Often, a pet caregiver may project feelings onto a cat if he or she feels guilty for leaving the cat alone for blocks of time, but the cat may actually be perfectly content. In other cases, cats may enjoy the company of other cats. “More and more people believe cats are better with a buddy, but it’s very individual,” says Dr. Lindell. “I’ve seen many cats who are attached to their owner but have bonded with another cat, and cats who have bonded with one cat but not the other.”

### **Consider Your Cat When Adding Another**

If you want to add a cat to your household, do it because it’s something you want, but make it pleasant for your resident cat(s). “Choose a new cat carefully by finding out as much about him as possible, and preferably from a multi-cat situation,” says Dr. Lindell. In terms of inter-cat aggression, there is no statistical difference in gender, according to Dr. Lindell. Age may be a factor, but it depends on the cats. Kittens have a better chance of accepting adult cats, but not necessarily the reverse. “Some adult cats are not comfortable with very playful kittens,” says Dr. Lindell. Serious aggression is often not exhibited until cats mature socially at the age of two or three.

When selecting a new cat, look for signs of fear. “If a cat is fearful, it may have a hard time adjusting, and may overreact to a small threat,” says Dr. Lindell.

Adopting a sexually altered cat is more likely to ensure success than bringing home one that is still intact. If you bring home a new kitten, have it spayed or neutered as soon as possible to prevent sexually related aggression. Whenever a new cat is introduced to a resident cat, proper introductions will play a major role in how well the cats get along.

### **If Fights Erupt, Get Involved**

If your cats begin to fight, interrupt the melee. “Make a startling sound like shaking a jar of pennies, snapping your fingers, or clapping your hands,” says Dr. Lindell. If that doesn’t work, blast them with a stream of water. Once they stop fighting, separate them and reintroduce them gradually, even if they have lived together for some time. Never try to separate fighting felines with your hands. It could result in injury to your hands, face or other parts of your body. “Have a heavy-duty water gun or a blanket to throw over them,” says Dr. Lindell. “Make sure they are settled before putting them together again.” If you aren’t able to keep the cats or people in the household safe or free from injury, separate them permanently. “You don’t have to give up a cat,” says Dr. Lindell, “but do time sharing. One gets the bedroom at one point, while the other is in the den. There are always ways to work through the aggression.”

### **Anti-Anxiety Drugs: Can They Help?**

If behavior or environmental modification alone doesn’t work, discuss drug therapy with a veterinarian. “Anti-anxiety drugs including anti-depressants will lower arousal level,” says Dr. Lindell. “Some cats are explosive and an anti-anxiety drug will help with impulsive aggression. It’s important to work through environmental factors, though.”

By Karen Commings <http://www.catwatchnewsletter.com/sample/fights.html>

## NC Legislation Update

**SB 21** An act to clarify that the statute prohibiting dog fighting and baiting does not apply to the use of herding dogs working with domesticated livestock and **SB 1424** An act to allow earthdog trials were presented to Governor Easley for signature on June 27<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to all those who supported this effort! Both bills provide corrections to G.S. 14 362 after last year's passage of HB2098 which added "baiting of a dog with another animal" to the cruelty statutes. Owners of working, competing stock dogs and dogs testing/trialing in earthdog events will now be protected.

**SB 684** Spay/Neuter Funding introduced by Sen. Kinnaird - adds 50 cents to the cost of rabies tags purchased thru the State; money collected to be used for the State spay/neuter fund. The bill contains an exemption for the tax as follows *(b1) This subsection does not apply to tags provided to persons who own five or more dogs and has registered with the Animal Welfare Section of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as a registered dog breeder.* However, the state has no category for registered dog breeder. The language in the bill is still incorrect, despite assurances correction would be made. SB 684 has been in the Senate Finance Committee since March. We will continue to monitor and post updates as necessary.

**SB 1477 / H 1614** Inherently Dangerous Animals sponsored by Senator Ed Jones (D) is currently in Senate Judiciary II. The Animal Protection Institute (API) based in Sacramento CA is lobbying for the bill which will ban private ownership of wolves, lions, tigers, bears, apes, monkeys, and several species of reptiles.

Exemptions to the ban would include circuses, university research labs, sanctuaries without breeding programs and zoos accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association. However, the bill would ban private zoos, sanctuaries, educational outreach programs, breeders and most independent wildlife professionals, leaving only the NC Zoo and one sanctuary intact. Many private owners cannot afford AZA accreditation. There are other equally professional alternative accreditation venues such as the Zoological Society of America. Passage of SB 1477 would mean all of these small NC businesses would be destroyed, along with jobs and significant economic investments. Private conservation and conservation breeding work would be adversely affected by this ban.

"There are no hard facts or statistics supporting the case for these bans, only so-called incident reports compiled by the various animal rights groups," says Andrew Wyatt, President of NC Association of Reptile Keepers, <http://www.NCARK.org>. "These incident reports amount to scary stories about scary animals. Many are unconfirmed, manufactured and simply ridiculous."

No one reasonable wants to allow the inexperienced public to make an impulse buy of an exotic animal, or an unscrupulous seller to make such a sale. Ending all commerce in such animals is an extreme and reactionary response to this statistically small problem.

NCRAOA is opposed to SB 1477 / H 1614.

Contact information for Senate Judiciary II:

Chairman Sen. Fletcher Hartsell, Jr. [Fletcherh@ncleg.net](mailto:Fletcherh@ncleg.net) (919) 733-7223  
Vice Chairman Sen. Austin M. Allran [Austina@ncleg.net](mailto:Austina@ncleg.net) (919) 733-5876  
Vice Chairman Sen. Doug Berger [Dougb@ncleg.net](mailto:Dougb@ncleg.net) (919) 715-8363  
Vice Chairman Sen. Ed Jones [Edwardj@ncleg.net](mailto:Edwardj@ncleg.net) (919) 715-3032

## **In Their Own Words:** From leaders in the animal rights movement.

**Do you know the difference between animal rights and animal welfare?**

“In law school, I had the opportunity to write for law review. I had recently read Peter Singer's "Animal Liberation," and was quite moved by it. The law review article I wrote was about animals' legal rights and suggested that we could remove animals from the property status, elevating them to the level of human incompetents who require guardianships.” **Joyce Tischler, Director – Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF), August 2005 interview in Voiceless**

“I argue that if we took animal interests seriously, we would accord them the one right that we accord to all sentient humans irrespective of level of intelligence or other cognitive characteristics - the right not to be treated as the property of others. We would stop bringing domestic animals into existence altogether, and the only remaining conflicts that would exist between humans and nonhumans would involve wild animals. For me, the interesting question is not whether a cow should have standing to sue a farmer for cruelty but rather why do we have the cow here in the first place.” **Professor Gary L. Francione, Rutgers School of Law, September 2005 Interview in Voiceless.**

“The law classifies nonhuman animals as property because society wishes to exploit them to the fullest possible extent. Nonhuman animals cannot be protected to any significant degree so long as they are classified as property, since property exists.” “Legal rights for nonhuman animals will occur most quickly by breaking through the legal wall that separates humans from every other animal and obtaining basic legal rights for any nonhuman animal, for that will decisively alter the debate for all. .... Legal rights for nonhuman animals will be accomplished by presenting arguments that are the most consistent with our legal system's most fundamental values and principles. Our legal system will therefore be most receptive to legal rights for those nonhuman animal who most closely resemble us, who are the most intelligent and autonomous, and for whom we feel the most empathy and respect. Apes, dolphins, elephants, parrots, and perhaps dogs and cats are the best initial candidates.” **Steven Wise May 2005 Interview in Voiceless**

“No matter what the pet shop owner or dog trainer says, a crate is just a box that you can see through, and putting dogs in crates is just a way to ignore and warehouse them until you get around to taking care of them properly.” **PETA, Animal Rights Uncompromised: Crating Dogs.** <http://www.peta.org/campaigns/ar-cratingdogs.asp>

"The bottom line is that people don't have the right to manipulate or to breed dogs and cats ... If people want toys they should buy inanimate objects. If they want companionship they should seek it with their own kind." **Ingrid Newkirk, President, PETA, "Animals," May/June 1993**

"Our goal: to convince people to rescue and adopt instead of buying or selling animals, to disavow the language and concept of animal ownership." **Eliot Katz, President In Defense of Animals, In Defense of Animals website, 2001**

“I don’t have a hands-on fondness for animals...To this day I don’t feel bonded to any non-human animal. I like them and I pet them and I’m kind to them, but there’s no special bond between me and other animals.” **Wayne Pacelle (current CEO of Humane Society of the United States) quoted in Bloodties: Nature, Culture and the Hunt by Ted Kerasote, 1993, p. 251.**

## Coexisting with Wildlife



### Orphaned Wildlife

What many people perceive as young animals left alone by adults to fend for themselves may in reality not be a case of orphaned wildlife. Many animals and birds do not stay with their young and return only to feed them. Before picking up or removing an animal to another location, first determine if the animal is actually orphaned. If a young bird has fallen from a nest, it can be gently replaced. Remove any threat to the animal by relocating pets and children indoors. Move to a location which will allow you to observe the animal while not

posing a threat to it or to adults returning to feed or relocate their young. If after observing the animal for an appropriate period and determining that an animal or bird is actually orphaned, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in your area can be contacted to possibly take the animal. Licensed wildlife rehabilitators provide care for an animal to a point in which it can be released back into its natural environment. Bats, foxes, raccoons and skunks cannot be rehabilitated due to the possibility of rabies and should be left to survive on their own. Even orphaned suckling animals of these species have been known to transmit rabies.

[Locate a Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator](#) in your area if you require assistance. You may also contact your local veterinarian for the name of a rehabilitator in the area, or to ask if they would be willing to help. You can also call the Nongame Wildlife Office at (919) 707-0060 or Wildlife Enforcement Communications (919) 707-0040 to obtain the name and telephone number of a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in your area. The Wildlife Enforcement Division should be called in the case of orphaned deer or black bear at 1-800-662-7137, or (919) 707-0040 for Wake County. If the orphaned animal can be identified as an endangered or threatened species, contact the Wildlife Enforcement Division or the US Fish and Wildlife Service at (919) 856-4786.

### Injured Wildlife

Animals will often be more aggressive if they are injured or diseased. Be extremely cautious when approaching any injured animal or animal which appears to be sick or is acting in an abnormal manner. Relocate children and pets indoors. Bats, foxes, raccoons and skunks cannot be rehabilitated due to the possibility of rabies and should not be handled.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission <http://www.ncwildlife.org/>

# Finding a Lost Dog

By Susan Bulanda

Losing a dog can be devastating. A person's first reaction is usually with a good plan in place, looking for a lost dog can be less stressful. Here are some simple points to consider when looking for a lost dog.



1) If you organize a group of people to look for the dog, use all safety precautions so that the searchers do not become lost. Stay in touch using cell phones or hand held radios. The radios can be purchased for a nominal fee at any store that sells outdoor equipment. Radios will work in areas that cell phones may not. However, they have a limited range so be sure that a chain of people can relay messages over distance. Also establish radio protocol so that one person does not tie up the frequency preventing communication with others. Communication is essential to let the other searchers know what is going on, if the search is being suspended, or the dog has been found. Because people feel safer and calmer if they know what is going on this will allow the searchers to do a better job.

Be sure that searchers wear the appropriate clothing, (long pants and long sleeves), hats, and substantial foot wear. They should have a snack, water and a flashlight. Flashlights are necessary during the day to check dark places. Each searcher should have a small bowl and water for the dog as well as canned cat food with the strongest aroma, (or similar treat) to lure the dog. Small cans of cat food work well because they can be carried easily and kept fresh. Searchers should always work in pairs for their own safety and in the event two people are needed when the dog is found. A meeting area and time should be established in the event that communications break down. No one leaves until all are accounted for.

2) A dog who is frightened will bolt in any direction, but usually to the least noisy, darkest area. So given the choice of an open field or woods, the dog will go for the woods. If the dog is lost in the city or suburbs, the dog will look for a dark, quiet spot to hide after it has run to exhaustion. Therefore estimate how far the dog will run (this varies with the dog's size and condition) and add a mile to that. On a map of the area mark where you last saw the dog as the center of a circle and draw a perimeter around the circle based on the furthest point where the dog could be. The circle will be the area to start looking for the dog. If you saw the dog run, you can focus in that direction. Be sure to check small dark areas, such as under porches, stairs, garages, sheds, etc. If you have a number of people to help look, have some start at the perimeter of the circle and some from the center. Be sure to *look* for the dog, never assume that the dog will come when called.

3) If the dog simply runs away, they usually run **into** the wind. That means that the wind will be blowing toward the dog, into the dog's face. Check with a local airport to see what the wind direction was when the dog ran away. Then start looking into the wind from the point where the dog was last seen. Dogs who wander away will usually meander along unless they find something to chase or that interests them. This means that the search area will be smaller. If searching in the woods or a park, look for a game trail and look for fresh dog tracks to see if the dog went that way. If you do find tracks, you will not be able to tell for certain if they are from your dog, so do not give up searching the rest of the area. If you are searching in an urban or suburban area, listen carefully if neighborhood dogs are barking. Often they will bark at a stray dog. If you hear a lot of barking in one direction, check that area first.

4) When searching for a dog, travel slowly and make frequent five minute stops. Many people will drive around in a vehicle, calling to the dog. Unless the dog is within a few seconds of your location, he will not be able to find you if you move too quickly. Keep in mind that a dog can hear you calling from quite a distance away. They need time to determine the direction of the sound and then get to it. Wind and other environmental elements can distort the direction of sound (tall buildings, large hills, etc.) making it difficult for the dog to find the source of the sound. By stopping and continuing to call, the dog will have time to find you.

5) When you sight the dog, do not act excited and/or run toward the dog. Sit down or stand still and let the dog approach you, *even if it is your dog*. Sometimes a dog can become so frightened, hurt or weary that they may not think straight. Their survival instincts may take over, making them more cautious than they would be at home. Depending upon the direction of the wind, you could be downwind and the dog may not recognize you right away. Give the dog time to feel safe. Running to the dog may make him run away from you and lose what little trust in human's that he has left. If you feel it will work, you can, at a distance, slowly move so that you are upwind of the dog, and then open the can of cat food. But still let the dog come to you. When the dog comes to you do not try to grab the dog. Let the dog stay there and relax. Slowly pet the dog until you can attach a leash without frightening the dog. If the dog does not want to be caught, you will most likely not be able to grab the dog fast enough to catch him, even if he is next to you. Dogs are about 500 times faster than humans.

6) If the dog does not approach you, do not give up. Stay in that area and/or return to that area. You can leave food etc. but do not try to catch the dog.

7) If you leave food for the dog, do not assume that because the food was eaten that it was the dog. Other critters may eat the food, so continue to search the area. If you can, spread sand around any food that you leave so that you can check for footprints to determine if a dog ate the food. If sand is not available, loose soil will work as well.

8) If you have to search for the dog over a period of time, keep a log of the weather and the location of water sources. The dog will generally head into the wind and seek water.

9) Never forget to advertise. Use every means possible to let the people in the area know that there is a lost dog. Always have an up-to-date photo of your dog. If the dog is a breed that looks like others in the breed, a similar picture will do. Remember, the average pet lover will not notice the fine differences between your dog and others of the same breed. So do not panic if you do not have a recent photo. Be sure to expand the area that you advertise to at least five miles from the point where you last saw your dog.

10) Lastly, never give up. Dogs have been found months after they disappear.

Susan Bulanda is an animal behaviorist specializing in dogs and cats, certified by The International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants. She has piloted a program at Kutztown University for students who wish to become dog trainers and is currently developing a program for students who wish to become dog behaviorists. Susan is an award winning author.

She and her husband served for over twenty years as search and rescue Incident Commanders with Phoenixville Fire Department Land Search K-9 Unit, (PFDK-9SAR Unit). Susan is available for lectures and seminars on canine behavior, training, search and rescue, and writing. For more information visit her web site at [www.sbulanda.com](http://www.sbulanda.com)

*Disclaimer: This article is printed for informational purposes and does not represent an endorsement.*

## Pets and Sunburn

Before stepping out to enjoy the summer weather, you should protect your pet as well as yourself from the harmful effects of too much sun. Sunlight is healthy for pets as it is for people; sunlight helps the skin produce vitamin D, which protects the skin and helps balance the body's calcium levels and metabolism. However, too much of anything can be harmful, and too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation can cause sunburn, or solar dermatitis, in cats and dogs.

Sunburn starts as redness and hair loss on the ear tips, bridge of the nose, or abdomen and can lead to skin ulceration, infection, and carcinoma. Excessive sun exposure can also exacerbate existing skin problems.

Certain breeds of cats and dogs may be predisposed to sunburn. White cats most commonly get sunburn, usually on the tips of the ears. Cats don't need to be outdoors to get sunburn; the UV radiation can pass through windows. Sunburn is also common in pale and short-haired dogs, usually on the bridge of the nose, the abdomen, groin, and insides of the legs.

Sunburn and repeated, excessive exposure to UV radiation can lead to skin cancer, particularly squamous cell carcinoma, in dogs and cats as it does in humans. Sunburn can also cause skin ulceration, leaving the skin susceptible to opportunistic bacterial, fungal, and parasitic infections. Sun exposure may also exacerbate autoimmune skin diseases in which the immune system attacks skin cells, such as pemphigus and lupus. As the sun damages the skin, skin cells die and can release proteins that inappropriately trigger the immune system.

To protect pets from sunburn and its consequences apply sunscreen on the small susceptible areas of skin, such as the bridge of the nose and the ear tips. Always use sunscreen that has been approved for pets.

## Tips for Renting with Pets

A recent renter survey by Apartments.com found that more than 84 percent of respondents own a pet, and that more than one-third of survey respondents found it very difficult to find an apartment that allowed pets. However, there are ways to convince landlords to rent to you.

- 🐾 Experts say behavior counts for a lot. Your best way to move with animals is to make sure that the animals are well behaved.
- 🐾 Owners of cats and small dogs - 20 pounds or less as defined by the American Kennel Club - will have an easier time finding a rental.
- 🐾 Pet owners can get a recommendation letter from their vet.
- 🐾 If you've lived somewhere with this pet before ask your previous landlord for a recommendation letter.

<http://www.theledger.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070428/NEWS/704280309/1001/BUSINESS>

North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance, Inc. (NCRAOA) is a statewide organization of animal owners and professionals dedicated to animal welfare, responsible animal ownership, and maintaining the rights of responsible citizens to breed and own animals. NCRAOA, a 501(c)3 organization, provides education and information to the public and supports reasonable and humane animal welfare laws.

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