The 'Bristol Cats' study is a pioneering study of cat health, welfare and behaviour run by vets, behaviourists and epidemiologists at the University of Bristol. The aim is to improve knowledge of common diseases and behaviour problems of cats, for example (but not exclusively), unwanted elimination, obesity and hyperthyroidism. Findings from the study may be used by veterinary practitioners, cat breeders, owners and the cat community to improve the health and welfare of cats in the future.

Thanks to the ongoing help from our owners, the Bristol Cats Study was described as a study...

"that could be the most important foundational epidemiological study ever conducted in cats"

by Professor Tony Buffington from The Ohio State University.

We have recently welcomed Professor Buffington to the University of Bristol as an honorary staff member and look forward to working together on feline studies.

Grant success!
Funding by the Langford Trust for Animal Health and Welfare is supporting Louise Longstaff and Jane Murray on a study of feline lower urinary tract disease.

Another grant application for work with the Bristol Cats data is currently in its final stages of approval. We anticipate that an MSc student will start this project in September 2015.

Further to the letter / email sent earlier this year, we are also pleased to announce our collaboration with Waltham.

The Bristol Cats Study team would like to reassure all our owners that it remains extremely important to us that our research is unbiased, despite receiving some funding from a commercial company. We aim to publish results from our studies in peer-reviewed scientific journals where reviewers and editors will quite rightly reject work that is deemed to report biased results. As scientists with an interest in furthering research that can be used to improve cat health and welfare, we are committed to maintaining the integrity of our study which encompasses a wide range of heath and behaviour outcomes.

Study numbers boosted!
Now that Lizzie Rowe’s data collection on her CLAWS study has come to an end, we are very pleased to welcome 241 more cats into the study, bringing the total number of Bristol Cats to 2430!
Elodie Tinland is working with Bristol Cats Study data during her six-month internship (Feb-August 2015) as part of her Master's Degree in Natural Environment Engineering and Wildlife Management & Conservation at Reims University, France. Elodie is investigating early life risk factors on signs of aggression (to people and cats) in cats at age 18 months.

Lizzie Rowe is making final changes to a paper being submitted to the Preventive Veterinary Medicine journal. The title of the paper is “Risk factors for owner-reported feline obesity at around one year of age: dry diet, feeding frequency of wet food and an indoor lifestyle”.

Sezan Ozgunay Sezan has now completed her ‘social behaviour’ MSc study, thank you again to all of those who took part! She found that social behaviours between cats in two-cat households were highly reciprocal - if one cat showed a certain behaviour, it was also likely to receive the same behaviour from the other cat. Different groupings of behaviours may reflect whether cats see one another as part of the same ‘social group’, and if not what strategies they might be using in response to cats seen as a threat. A more detailed summary of the results will be sent to owners of participating cats. If you would like more details about this study or Sezan’s other study on judgement bias and stress please contact her via sezan.ozgunay@bristol.ac.uk.

The second Bristol Cats ‘Open Day Conference’ will be held on Saturday the 11th of June 2016 at the University of Bristol School of Veterinary Sciences at Langford. It will include short talks from members of the Bristol Cats study team, covering areas of research such as feline behaviour, infectious diseases and study results, and is a great opportunity to learn more about the study.

Don’t forget you can stay up to date with us on twitter (@UniofBristolCats), facebook (www.facebook.com/bristolcats.study) or by logging on to our website, (www.bristol.ac.uk/vetscience/cats).

Louise Longstaff (funded by Zoetis) and Jane Murray (funded by Cats Protection) received a grant from the Langford Trust for Animal Health and Welfare. “Investigating the incidence of, and risk factors for, owner-reported signs of Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD) in a cohort of young pet cats”. Louise and Jane are collaborating with Professor Tim Gruffydd-Jones, and Professor Tony Buffington (The Ohio State University) on this project. The analysis is due to be completed by July 2015.
It’s all about you! In March this year the following poster was presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine in Ghent, Belgium, describing the characteristics of our study population from the 1st Questionnaire data.

**The Bristol Cats Study:**

Recruitment and characteristics of the cohort

Murray, J.K.¹, Casey, R.A. ¹, Gale, E. ¹, Buffington C.A.T.² and Gruffydd-Jones, T.J.²

¹ School of Veterinary Science, University of Bristol, Langford House, Langford, Bristol, UK
² The Ohio State University, Columbus, USA

**Bristol Cats** The aim of the study is to collect data prospectively to study risk factors for a range of outcomes including health, specific diseases, unwanted behaviours and obesity. **Recruitment:**

- Pet kittens aged approximately 8-16 weeks were recruited to the study between 01/06/10 and 31/12/13.
- Study advertised using a variety of methods (e.g. vet practices, pet forums, rescue centres) to reduce selection bias.

**Data collection:**

- **Owner-completed questionnaires.** Issued at registration (Q1), 6 months (Q2), 12 months (Q3), 18 months (Q4), 2.5 years (Q5) and 4 years (Q6), and annually thereafter.
- **Questionnaire completion rates:** Q2 = 1899 (86.8%), Q3 1725 (78.8%)
- **Data from vets.** (Additional data, and data to validate owner-reported information)
  - Body condition scores
  - Oral health scores
  - Veterinary records
- **Buccal swabs** (for DNA)
- **Faecal samples** (Age 6m, 2.5yrs)

**Characteristics of the cohort:** (Q1 data for 2189 cats, some missing data)

- **SEX:** 52.1% (1138) Male
- **MULTICAT HOUSEHOLDS:** 61.6% (1338) lived in multi-cat households (at Q1)
- **BREED:** 77.4% mixed breed/moggy, 22.6% pedigree (118 British Shorthair, 71 Maine Coon, 42 Ragdoll, 40 Siamese, 36 Bengal, 26 Burmese, 16 Birman, 15 Norwegian Forest Cat, 12 Persian, 13 Oriental shorthair, 98 other breeds each with <10 cats)
- **SOURCE:** 45.1% (988) friends/relatives/neighbours, local adverts
  - 18.5% (404) rescue centres
  - 18.6% (406) pedigree breeders
  - 7.7% (168) bred by owner (63 accidentally)
  - 7.3% (159) stray/feral/abandoned
  - 2.9% (64) pet shop / other
- **OWNER CHARACTERISTICS:**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** We thank owners of cohort cats for their participation in the study. Emma Gale and Jane Murray are funded by Waltham® and Cats Protection, respectively.

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Jane.Murray@bristol.ac.uk
+44 (0)117 331 9206

The Bristol Cats Study: Recruitment and characteristics of the cohort

Murray, J.K.¹, Casey, R.A. ¹, Gale, E. ¹, Buffington C.A.T.² and Gruffydd-Jones, T.J.²

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- **OWNER CHARACTERISTICS:**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** We thank owners of cohort cats for their participation in the study. Emma Gale and Jane Murray are funded by Waltham® and Cats Protection, respectively.
Please do remember!
If you have not done so already, please remember to complete our 2 minute survey relating to permission to access your cat’s veterinary records (and confirming we hold the correct veterinary practice details for you), and permission to share your anonymised data. The survey can be found at: https://smvsfa.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/consent. Alternatively, please get in touch using the phone or email details above.

Thank you for your help - the Bristol cat owners and cats are helping to make a difference to our knowledge of factors affecting feline welfare.

Moving house / changed your email address / need to contact us?
If you have changed email address, moved house or have a new contact number it is easy to update these online by visiting the website: https://smvsfa.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/update and following the instructions. Alternatively you can get in touch using our contact details below:
Tel/text: 07827 981412
Email: cat-study@bristol.ac.uk
Freepost RSHR-AGRJ-UABZ
Bristol Cats, Dr Jane Murray
University of Bristol
Langford House, BRISTOL, BS40 5DU

Prize draws
The results of our prize draw for owners who completed questionnaire 4 (for 1.5 year old cats) during 2014, and who had also completed questionnaires 1-3, are as follows:
1st prize (£100 gift voucher) =Soelene (Pipoca) BC ID 1702
2nd prize (£50 gift voucher) = Naomi (Angel) BC ID 1064
3rd prize (£30 gift voucher) = Elaine (Ruby) BC ID 1586

The results of our prize draw for owners who completed questionnaire 5 (for 2.5 year old cats) during 2014 are as follows:
1st prize (£100 gift voucher) =Danii (Lexi) BC ID 2288
2nd prize (£50 gift voucher) = Lee (Chris) BC ID 1241
3rd prize (£30 gift voucher) = Mrs Denny (Nelson) BC ID 1051

The results of our prize draw for owners who completed questionnaire 6 (for 4 year old cats) during 2014 are as follows:
1st prize (£100 gift voucher) =Alex (Bella) BC ID 144
2nd prize (£50 gift voucher) = Jacqueline (Socks) BC ID 28
3rd prize (£30 gift voucher) = Claire (Bella) BC ID 114