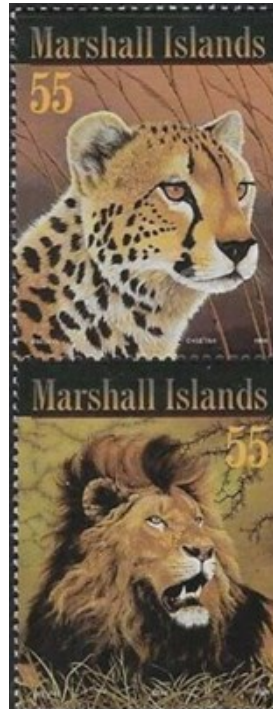


Wild, Mild, Heraldic: Cats of the World



The world of felines comprises 41 beautiful and diverse species. Only one species is domestic. The others are wild. The *Felidae* family incorporates them both but is separated into two branches. The *Pantherinae* subfamily incorporates the 7 big cats, and *Felinae* represents 33 small cats. The Amur Leopard, pictured at left (Guernsey 2009 souvenir sheet), is one of the rarest cats with no more than 90 known to survive in the Russian Far East.



Our Favorite Good Ol' Cat

Most of us have owned or played with a domestic cat (scientific name: *Felis catus*), and we marvel at the multitude of colors, shapes and sizes in the species. Curiosity, cunning and courage characterize this animal, whether it is a house cat, farm cat or feral. Cats vocalize their needs through meowing, purring, trilling, hissing, growling and more. Any cat owner can identify their cat's unique sounds and tell you exactly what the cat is communicating. Cats make endearing family pets.

Just a smattering of the many wild cats are depicted on issues from United States (Florida Panther), United Nations (Tiger), Marshall Islands (Cheetah & Lion), and Belarus (Lynx).



Domestic cats can be purebreds like the British Shorthair, Maine Coon and Siamese (above). Cats with less certain pedigree, but with every bit of intelligence and playfulness, are easily obtained at the local shelter, perhaps like the cats shown at left in these Faroe Islands 2011 issues.

Heraldic Cats Foretell History, Purpose

Heraldic lions derive from 7th century BC and represent deathless courage and valor, thus symbols of royalty. Animals' attitudes (positions) on the crest include: *Rampant* (standing erect), *Pas-sant* (walking, right forepaw raised), *Statant* (standing, forepaws on ground), *Salient* (leaping with both hind legs together on ground, forelegs in air) and *Couchant* (lying down, head raised).

Visit the Cats on Stamps Study Unit (COSSU) website and request your complementary copy of *Cat Mews*, our quarterly journal. <http://www.catstamps.info/>
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(Above l-r) Lombardy-Venetia, 1850, the first heraldic lion and first cat on a stamp (center of shield); Alderney, lion rampant; Jersey, 3 lions passant guardant (on hologram); Austria, lion rampant.

