

The Cornish Rex



Overview

The Cornish Rex is easily identified by its curly coat which was a natural mutation and was named after the country of its birth, Cornwall, and a coat type that resembles a rex rabbit. This breed is a very active and outgoing cat that loves being in an active household with children, other pets or many visitors. While this breed of cat looks like they would be delicate and fine boned they are well muscled and heavier than they appear. The Cornish Rex can be referred to as the Greyhound of the cat world because of their long-legged body and tuck-up. While there are no true Hypo-allergenic cats, the Cornish Rex can be a good choice for people with allergies because they do not seem to aggravate them as much as other breeds. While the Cornish Rex typically has the same body temperature as other cats, they can seem warmer due to their light coats.

History

The first Cornish Rex was born in Cornwall in 1950. The kitten, named Kalliunker, was the only kitten in the litter of five to have a curly coat and stood out from the rest. He was then bred back to his mother to try to get more kittens with the curly coat. That litter produced an additional curly coated male named Poldhu. Due to the fact that there were so few Cornish Rex cats in the 50's and 60's the cat was considered an endangered breed. To try to produce more cats and to add variety to the gene pool the two male cats were bred with female Siamese, Russian Blues, American Shorthairs, and Havana Browns. In 1956 Life magazine published an article on the Cornish Rex that helped to make



the breed known worldwide. The next year Frances Blancheri had a female Cornish Rex named Lamorna Cove imported to California. She was pregnant at the time and went on to have a litter of four kittens. This was how the breed started in North America. In 1960 it was discovered that the red type coat was caused by a recessive gene, meaning that both parents need to have the gene to pass on the trait. The American Cat Fanciers Association and the Canadian Cat Association recognized the Cornish Rex in 1963. The following year the Cat Fanciers Association recognized the breed.

Personality

The Cornish Rex is a very active and outgoing cat. They tend to be very energetic and will get into a fair amount of mischief. They are very entertaining and can entertain themselves if no one is around to play with them. They can easily play fetch and will even throw the toy themselves at times. The Cornish Rex is very social and loves to be the center of attention. They do not like to be left on their own for long periods of time and having play mates for them will keep them happy if the family is away for lengthy periods of time. They get along well with other animals and are great with children. The Cornish Rex is very intelligent, acrobatic and clownish. They tend to keep their kittenish personality throughout their adult lives. The Cornish Rex is definitely a lap cat and will find any lap to curl up on. They are normally quiet but will share their opinions with you and will also express themselves through other means such as kisses, pats on the cheek and tail flicks. The Cornish Rex travels well and makes great therapy cats due to the fact that they enjoy being handled and petted.



Traits

Life Expectancy: 11 to 15 years

Size: Females = 5 to 7 pounds, Males = 8 to 10 pounds

The Cornish Rex has a slender body and long legs. While they appear to be fine boned and dainty they are actually very well-muscled. They have a naturally arched back and a tucked-up waist. They have dainty oval looking feet and will normally walk up on their toes. Their head is about 1/3 longer than it is wide resembling an egg on its side. They also have high cheekbones that will add to the egg shaped effect. The Cornish Rex has tall ears that will sit high on their heads and oval expressive eyes that are slanted slightly upwards as well as a patrician roman nose. Their most identifiable feature is their coat which lays in marcel waves which can be either tight or loose. Their coat is often said to have a washboard look to it and is very soft and silky in texture. Their curls even extend into the whiskers which are also shorter than normal. Cornish Rex kittens are born with wavy hair and some kittens can go through a period where their coat is flat and suede like but the coat will become wavy again as they mature. Also the Cornish Rex does not have guard hairs in their coats. The Cornish Rex can come in all colors and patterns ranging from pointed to tabbies with or without white. Eye color can be gold, green or hazel.



Health

Overall the Cornish Rex is a healthy breed of cat but they can have some health concerns. Due to their fine hair coat they are more exposed to the sun's rays and keeping them indoors can help with this. They can experience patellar luxation which is one or both kneecaps can slide out of place. Another health issue that can be seen in the Cornish Rex is congenital hypotrichosis, also known as hereditary baldness. This condition may be linked to the recessive gene but the cause is not completely known. Due to the fact that the Cornish Rex already has a very fine hair coat any member of the breed with less hair than normal for the breed is considered to have this condition. The most common form of heart disease in cats is Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, which is a thickening of the heart muscle, can affect any breed including the Cornish Rex.

Grooming and Care

Grooming the Cornish Rex is actually rather easy because less is more with them. Their hair is very delicate and brushing or combing it can damage the hairs. Bathing them is rarely needed however their ears and feet can develop a greasy feel and can be cleaned often. Nail trims and checking the ears should be done weekly. If you suspect a problem with the ears, contact your veterinarian. Brushing their teeth daily with a pet safe toothpaste will help prevent dental disease. Wipe the corners of their eyes as needed to remove any discharge and keep their litterbox clean. The Cornish Rex is always seeking out warm places to sleep so if you are cold they are also more than likely cold. They are best suited as indoor cats.

