

FREQUENTLY ASKED:

The sensitivity of cat hearing and eyesight

As guided by Amy

FOUNDER, NOOSA COUNTRY CAT HOTEL

Exceptional Hearing

Cats have incredibly sensitive hearing, able to detect sounds at much higher frequencies than humans. They can hear ultrasonic sounds up to 64–85 kHz, compared to our range of up to 20 kHz. This helps them detect prey movements and stay safe.

References

Heffner, R. S., & Heffner, H. E. (2001). Hearing range of the domestic cat. *Hearing Research*, 157(1–2), 78–85.

Acute Directional Hearing

Cats can move their ears independently and pinpoint the direction of a sound with great accuracy. Their ear muscles allow them to detect small and distant sounds, even when we cannot hear anything.

References

Heffner, R. S., & Heffner, H. E. (2008). The evolution of sound localization in cats. *Journal of Comparative Physiology A*, 194(7), 691–697.

Sensitive to Loud Sounds

While cats can hear more, they are also more sensitive to loud or sudden noises. Sounds that seem normal to us can be overstimulating or even painful for them. This can cause stress and anxiety, especially if they cannot escape.

References

Overall, K. L. (2013). Sound sensitivity in cats: Impact on welfare. *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, 15(5), 394–403.

Low-Light Vision Experts

Cats have larger pupils and more light-sensitive cells in their eyes (rods) than humans, allowing them to see well in low light. This crepuscular adaptation helps them be most active at dawn and dusk when their natural prey is also active.

References

Walls, G. L. (1942). The vertebrate eye and its adaptive radiation. *Cranbrook Institute of Science Bulletin*, 22, 1–214.

Wider Field of View

Cats have a wider field of vision than people, approximately 200 degrees compared to our 180 degrees. This helps them detect movement around them without needing to turn their head.

References

Pettigrew, J. D., & Martin, P. R. (1987). Visual field properties and the behaviour of cats (*Felis catus*). *Journal of Comparative Psychology*, 101(1), 31–36.

Less Focus on Fine Detail

While cats excel at detecting movement and seeing in dim light, their vision for fine detail and close-up focus is not as sharp as ours. They rely more on motion, contrast and scent to explore and understand their world.

References

Miller, P. E., & Murphy, C. J. (2004). Vision in the cat. *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice*, 34(6), 1497–1516.



Cats experience the world through incredibly sensitive hearing and highly adapted vision. Loud or sudden noises, bright lights and chaotic environments can be overwhelming. Understanding these sensitivities helps us create calmer, safer spaces where cats can feel secure and thrive.

EVIDENCE-BASED
FELINE CARE

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Cat HOTEL

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WELLBEING
TRUSTED BY FAMILIES