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Mr. Mike Sutton, President
California Fish and Game Commission
1416 Ninth St., Suite 1320
Sacramento, CA 95814

Via: Email and USPS

Dear Sir,

I have been asked to give my professional opinion of hybrid cats (domestic X wild species) ie: chausie, bengal, safari and savannah, as it relates to their general health and ability to be appropriate pets. I am a graduate of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine. I currently am an associate veterinarian practicing on small domestic animals and exotics in Georgia and North Carolina.

I have handled Servals, the wild parent cat to hybrid called Savannah, and Geoffroy's Cats, the wild parent cat to the hybrid called Safaris, personally. I have also had the pleasure of owning both. Neither of these wild species poses any significant threat to the general public and in the appropriate home can be very good pets. That said, the hybrid offspring of both these species as well as the hybrid offspring of African Wildcats, called Chausie, and Asian Leopard Cats, called Bengal, can make excellent pets in the appropriate home and pose no real threat to the general public in these homes. Bengal and savannah are some of the most registered domestic cat breeds in this country and compete for championships in TICA cat shows against Persians, Siamese, and other fully domestic breeds nationwide. These hybrids are no more or less fractious than any domestic breed. Their owners generally have a significant economic investment in them so generally they receive better than average care and are rarely allowed to roam free or are surrendered to shelters. Early generation hybrids, F-1, F-2 and F-3 tend to be slightly larger than the average domestic cat by about 25%, though some are no bigger at all. Their size however has no impact on their ability to make good pets or the ability of the owner to handle them. Like any other domestic feline their dispositions vary from cat to cat, with some more easily handled than others. None of these cats have ever been more difficult to handle in my practice than many ordinary domestic cats. These cats are very intelligent and high energy, similar traits are found in other domestic cat breeds and in some small dog breeds as well.

As to their general health, hybrids suffer from no more maladies than their fully domestic parents, or any other pure bred domestic cat or dog. As with any pure bred animal selective breeding can help further reduce illness within the breed. Since these hybrids tend to be more costly it has been my experience that the breeders are more selective in their breeding programs, careful to produce healthy animals.

If I can be of additional assistance please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Dr. Amanda Markum, DVM
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