

**“Ask DAD”(a pet column) By Tori Valcic**

**‘Courtesy of Dili Alpha Dog’**

**MYTH - Cats in Timor Leste have their tails cut off!**

Many foreigners are saddened and upset by the number of cats in Dili with short, bent or crooked tails thinking that the Timorese people have cut or broken their tails on purpose.

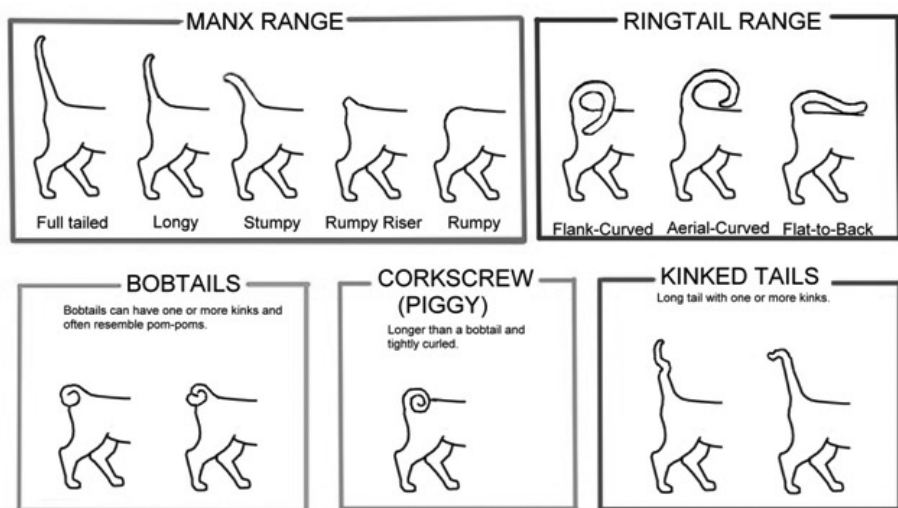
I am not saying that all cats in Dili, Timor Leste are born with this genetic abnormality, some kinked or crooked tails may have been caused by trauma however Timor Leste is believed to have a large population of cats with the dominant Manx gene. This gene is common in cats throughout Southeast Asia.

What is the Manx gene?

A gene in domestic cats that cause tail length variation. The kinks are due to malnutrition and development of cartilage between the tail vertebrae.

**TAIL TYPES**

Tail type mutations form the basis of several breeds: Manx, several Bobtails and American Ringtail. Further tail conformations encountered in random-bred cats. The normal tail is approx 12 inches long.



This Manx gene affects my own cats Lava & Ninja. Lava has a very short tail that feels like 'the end of your nose' and Ninja has 'half' a tail. They were a litter of 3 kittens with their brother having a full-length straight tail with no kinks. I personally saw these kittens at ~10 days of age and NO human intervention had made their tails that way.



Ninja – with 'stumpy' tail



Lava – with 'rumpy riser' tail

For more information please contact the friendly team at Dili Alpha-Dog Unip, Lda.  
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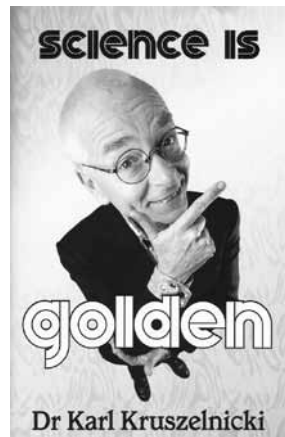
**‘Please Explain’**

**Everest Not Tallest Mountain**

Most Australian school students are taught that the highest point on Earth is the tip of Mt Everest and that Mt Kosciusko is the highest mountain in Australia. But most school students have been misled. So what is the story on Mt Kosciusko? It is indeed the highest mountain (at 2228m) on the Australian mainland. But the highest recognized Australian mountains are in the Australian Antarctic Territory – Mt McClintock (eastern sector – 3490 m) and Mt Menzies (western sector – 3355m). However, the highest mountain on Australian Sovereign Territory is Mt Mawson (2745m) in the Big Ben mountain complex on Heard Island in the Southern Indian Ocean, about 4000km southwest of Perth. So while Kosciusko does have the distinction of being the highest mountain on Australian territory. And we do have volcanoes. Australia doesn't have the technology to monitor the volcanic activity of weather-bound and remote Heard Island, but there were some very spectacular eruptions on Big Ben in February 2001. What about Mt Everest? Is it the highest mountain in the world? It all depends on what you mean by 'highest'. Does it mean the 'highest above sea level', or does it mean that it 'pokes out most into space and is furthest from the centre of the Earth'? Back in the 17th and 18th centuries, it was thought that a certain Mt Chimborazo, and extinct snow-capped volcano in Ecuador, was the highest point on Earth, at 6310m above sea level. In 1852, the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India noted that a certain mountain named Peak XV was the highest at 8840m. The British named it Everest in 1865, after Sir George Everest, who was the British Surveyor General from 1830-1843. It did not seem to matter that the local Tibetans and Nepalese had already given the mountain some perfectly good names – Chomolungma or 'Mother Goddess of the Land' by the Tibetans, and Sagarmatha by the Nepalese. Indeed, Everest himself thought that mountain should keep its local name- but he obviously didn't protest too loudly. The highest of Mt Everest was adjusted to 8848m in 1955, and then to 8850m in 1999, after a team of climbers used state-of the art satellite measuring devices on the summit. All of these heights are measured above sea level. The reason that Mt Everest is not the highest point on Earth is that the Earth spins – and this spin makes the whole planet bulge outwards at the equator. The diameter of the Earth through the equator is about 21km more than the diameter of the Earth measured through the North and South Poles. Let's look again at Mt Chimborazo, which was once thought to be the highest mountain on Earth, it was first climbed by Edward Whymper in 1880. Mt Chimborazo is about 1.5° south of the equator, while Mt Everest is much further around the curve of the Earth at 28° north. So although Mt Chimborazo is about 2540, closer to sea level than Mt Everest, it is about 2202m further away from the centre of the Earth. It pokes further into space than Mt Everest. If this were better known, perhaps the achievements of the Conqueror of Chimborazo, Edward Whymper, would have made more of a bang. (In fact, three others peaks – Huascarán, Cotopaxi and Kilimanjaro – are also 'higher' than Mt Everest.) However, Mt Everest is still the highest mountain above sea level. By the end of 2001, some 1314 people had reached its summit, and 167 people had died trying. If you have US\$465 000, and are physically fit, you can try to reach the peak. But if you don't have that kind of money to spend, you can console yourself with the knowledge that they are all climbing the wrong mountain anyway. On the other hand, Mt Everest is growing about 5-10mm each year as the Indian land mass rams into Asia, pushing Tibet higher. So all that wealthy people have to do is wait another half million years for Everest to be the highest mountain on Earth, under all definitions...

**High History**

After Mt Chimborazo, the title of 'highest mountain in the world' was handed to the Himalayan peak Dhaulagiri (8172m) in 1809, and then to Mt Kanchenjunga (8598m) in 1840. Mt Everest was first climbed on 29 May 1953, by Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and the local Sherpa mountaineer Tenzing Norgay. Neither has ever admitted who was technically the first to reach the peak. Heard Island (which has the highest mountain on Australian Sovereign Territory) was discovered by a British sealing vessel in 1833. It was later named for Captain John J. Heard, and American mariner. In 1947, control of Heard Island was transferred from the British to the Australian government.



**SCIENCE**

**Lions face same extinct threats as Ice Age cats** – studyTwo big cats - the African lion and the Sunda clouded leopard - are most at risk from extinction caused by loss of prey, according to a new analysis. Lack of food was a factor in why seven big cats, including sabre-toothed tigers, went extinct at the end of the last Ice Age, say scientists. The trend is continuing, threatening a range of modern big cats, they warn. If the prey of big cats continues to decline it will add to other pressures such as habitat loss, a study found. Dr Chris Sandom from the University of Sussex said: "I think it adds an extra pressure for these animals. They are already suffering quite heavily from other conflicts with humans." He said the lesson from the past was that even if Ice Age big cats had survived conflicts with humans and the changing climate, they would not have had much left to eat. "We're in a continued decline of big, exciting animals," he added. "These charismatic predators are facing this consistent threat that started in the Ice Age and continues to this day and we need to turn that trend around." The research, led by scientists at Sussex and Oxford universities, looked at the causes of extinction in seven big cats - four different types of sabre-toothed cats, the cave and American lions, and the American cheetah. They found that if the animals had survived until modern times they would have lost the majority of their prey, partly due to human influences. The researchers then turned their attention to modern big cats, and the status of their prey. If all the prey species currently considered at risk were to go extinct, then the lions of East Africa and the clouded leopards of Indo-Malaya would be in a similar position to their Ice Age relatives, say the scientists. The same would apply to some populations of tiger, leopard and cheetah. Prof David Macdonald, Director of the University of Oxford's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, said: "The Churchillian aphorism that those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it was painfully in mind when we saw how many of the prey of lions and East Africa and of clouded leopards in Indo-Malaya look set to go down the same drain down which their counterparts in other regions have already been flushed." The Sunda clouded leopard is a medium-sized wild cat found in forests of the Indonesian islands of Borneo and Sumatra. BBC



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**From Wit's Dictionary**

**Perfectionist** A person, who, on getting to heaven, finds he doesn't like God.

Orig

**TIDES**

Jun 1 Th	2 Fr	3 Sa	4 Su	5 Mo	6 Tu	7 We
Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time
0622 1.9	0042 0.6	0133 0.8	0225 0.9	0323 1.0	0420 1.0	0013 1.6
1226 1.1	0721 1.9	0816 1.9	0908 2.0	0957 2.0	1043 2.0	0510 1.1
1737 1.8	1338 1.1	1447 1.0	1557 0.9	1655 0.7	1739 0.6	1124 2.1
	1904 1.6	2029 1.6	2152 1.5	2312 1.6		1815 0.5
Jun 8 Th	9 Fr	10 Sa	11 Su	12 Mo	13 Tu	14 We
Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time
0058 1.7	0134 1.8	0203 1.8	0229 1.9	0254 1.9	0322 1.9	0355 1.9
0553 1.1	0629 1.1	0702 1.1	0733 1.1	0804 1.1	0838 1.1	0917 1.1
1201 2.1	1235 2.1	1307 2.2	1338 2.2	1410 2.2	1444 2.2	1520 2.1
1848 0.4	1920 0.4	1951 0.3	2022 0.3	2054 0.4	2130 0.4	2213 0.4
Jun 15 Th	16 Fr	17 Sa	18 Su	19 Mo	20 Tu	21 We
Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time
0435 1.9	0527 1.9	0000 0.6	0056 0.7	0151 0.8	0248 0.9	0346 1.0
1005 1.1	1116 1.1	0632 1.9	0737 1.9	0833 2.0	0926 2.1	1017 2.2
1600 2.0	1649 1.9	1246 1.1	1400 1.0	1509 0.8	1614 0.6	1708 0.4
2304 0.5		1758 1.8	1938 1.7	2110 1.7	2232 1.7	2341 1.8
Jun 22 Th	23 Fr	24 Sa	25 Su	26 Mo	27 Tu	28 We
Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time
0441 1.0	0037 1.9	0124 2.0	0208 2.0	0249 2.1	0329 2.1	0411 2.1
1107 2.3	0529 1.0	0614 1.0	0658 1.0	0742 1.0	0829 1.0	0923 1.0
1754 0.3	1157 2.4	1244 2.5	1329 2.5	1412 2.5	1455 2.3	1537 2.2
	1837 0.1	1917 0.1	1959 0.1	2042 0.2	2128 0.3	2218 0.4
Jun 29 Th	30 Fr	Jul 1 Sa	2 Su	3 Mo	4 Tu	5 We
Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time
0455 2.1	0542 2.0	0633 2.0	0039 0.8	0127 1.0	0224 1.1	0332 1.2
1038 1.0	1205 1.0	1308 1.0	0723 2.0	0812 2.0	0901 2.0	0951 2.0
1622 2.0	1716 1.8	1829 1.6	1410 0.9	1517 0.9	1624 0.8	1716 0.7
2307 0.5	2354 0.7		1952 1.5	2116 1.4	2249 1.5	2359 1.6

**From Wit's Dictionary** **Emetic** A substance that causes the stomach to take a sudden and enthusiastic interest in outside affairs.

Ambrose Bierce