

Do You Have a Pack Rat Cat?

Ever wonder why your cat hoards and hides objects or brings you treasures? We asked experts to shed some light on this stealthy behavior.

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4. Belle, a Havana Brown, is another collector with eclectic taste, says owner Mark J. Gentzel of Spring Mills, Pa. She lines her lair under the living room couch with possessions, including screwdrivers, pens, bookmarks, jewelry, letters, bills, Ping-Pong balls, personal hygiene products, food, dishcloths and socks. Size, shape, color and utility make no difference. Belle also takes money. Around the Gentzel house, everything is saved by the Belle.

5. Tessie, the Scottish Fold, might mend her ways if she had a wallet. When her family is away, she carries photos to the top floor of her tri-level home in Sacramento, Calif. Owner Madeline Crane leaves decoy photos on a shelf where Tessie can get them thus saving her real snapshots from Tessie's sharp teeth. Crane has yet to catch Tessie carrying the photos. She does this only when her people are out.

6. Joanne M. Diehl's Maggie is another sentimental kitty. Maggie was rescued from a cage on a hot day at a farmer's market in Hampstead, Md. Diehl nursed her back to health and Maggie repays her love and kindness by tucking her favorite stuffed toy mouse into her husband's shoe each morning. Sometimes the mouse is hidden in the shoe and sometimes a tell-tale tail sticks out. Maggie doesn't want her gift overlooked, so she makes sure it's always underfoot, Diehl says.

7. Fawn, Lisa Runyen's dilute calico, "the incredible Klepto-Kat," was fond of stealing her personal items and leaving them for neighbors. Runyen noticed her socks, pantyhose and underwear always the black ones missing. She feared an intruder was breaking in and taking them, but discovered it was an inside job. Off to work one morning, Runyen saw a pair of black pantyhose on the steps of the house across the street. Her initial amusement gave way to shock when, on a hunch, she checked the tag on the nylons and realized they were hers. Looking back at her house, she saw black socks and pantyhose adorning the banana tree and fence.

If your companion kitty takes your things, remember everyone needs a hobby and what's a few missing earrings or oven mitts between you and your cat? If your cat brings you treasures, remember what Cox says: "It's the thought that counts."

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