

Celebrate CATober the First

The North Shore Animal League invites cat owners to give their adopted cats an official birthday on Oct. 1.

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North Shore Animal League is declaring Oct. 1 as CATober the First. A common question heard by shelter workers across the country is, "How old is that cat?" Many experienced animal professionals can determine a cat's approximate age in years, but most cats' actual birthdays remain a mystery. The North Shore Animal League America of Port Washington, N.Y., wants to give adopted cats a reason to celebrate by declaring Oct. 1 the universal birthday for shelter and rescue cats everywhere. The group's name for the day is CATober the First.

To kick off the first year of the CATober the First celebration, the North Shore Animal League will offer Happy CATober the First e-card greetings at its website. Cat lovers can choose from three different designs to send to their friends.

The Animal League also will mark the day by hosting the grand reopening of its Cat Habitat, built to house cats that have been at the shelter for more than 30 days. The new habitat allows the cats to safely roam, play, eat and relax in each other's company. Built in 2002, the Cat Habitat gives potential adopters a chance to see the cats' personalities in a relaxed, homelike environment. Cat lovers are invited to visit the shelter 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Oct. 1 to visit the adoptable cats and take part in the birthday celebration. Adoption fees will be waived for all cats on that day.

With 82 million cats living in households throughout the United States, felines outrank dogs, birds and rabbits as the most popular pet.