

## Hemingway Home and Museum Can Keep Cats

**The Key West City Commission rules that the home is exempt from a law prohibiting more than four domestic animals per household.**

Posted: Sept. 30, 2008, 3 a.m. EDT

Charlie Chaplin is a popular attraction at the Ernest Hemingway Home and Museum.

The polydactyl cats famous for living at the Ernest Hemingway Home and Museum in Key West, Fla., attract visitors from all over the world. Noting their "tourism significance," the Key West City Commission approved an ordinance allowing the museum to keep the cats without obtaining a special license, the Associated Press reported.

"The cats reside on the property just as the cats did in the time of Hemingway himself," the ordinance says. "The City Commission finds that family of polydactyl Hemingway cats are indeed animals of historic, social and tourism significance."

The ordinance is welcome news to operators of the museum, who had been ordered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to comply with a city law prohibiting more than four domestic animals per household. The USDA claimed the museum was an "exhibitor" of cats, requiring a special license.

About 50 cats live at the museum, descended from a six-toed cat given to Ernest Hemingway in 1935. Many of the cats living at the museum today display the same polydactyl trait.