



# YOUR CAT'S SCENT GLANDS:

## The Hidden Language of Connection



Cats have many important scent glands that release pheromones to communicate with others and mark territory. They use rubbing behaviors like bunting, allorubbing, rubbing, and rolling to release the pheromones. These behaviors help cats familiarize themselves with new areas, people, cats, mark territory, bond with other cats, self-soothe, signal happiness, indicate an object is safe, and reduce stress.



### DID YOU KNOW?

A cat's sense of smell is 14 times stronger than a human's. Scent is their primary way of navigating and understanding the world.

### PINNA GLANDS

located at the top of the cat's head between the ears

### TEMPORAL GLANDS

located on the sides of the cat's forehead, above the eyes, between the eye and ear

### PERIORAL GLANDS

located around the mouth

### CHEEK GLANDS

located behind the corners of the lips and extend downward, close to the lower jaw

### FLANK GLANDS

located along the sides of a cat's body, between the ribs and hind legs and not as prominent as the other glands

### SUPRACAUDAL GLAND

located on the lower back at the base of the tail; made up of odified sweat and sebaceous glands, it secretes a mixture of volatile terpenes

### CAUDAL GLAND

located all along the length of the tail

### ANAL SAC/GLAND

located at the 4 and 8 o'clock positions on either side of the cat's anus

### SUBMANDIBULAR GLANDS

located under the cat's chin

### RUBBING BEHAVIORS & WHAT THEY MEAN

- 🐾 **Bunting** (head bunting): Hello, you're mine, I trust you.
- 🐾 **Allorubbing** (body rubbing): This is familiar and safe.
- 🐾 **Rolling**: I feel happy and secure here.
- 🐾 **Scratching**: This is my territory.
- 🐾 **Kneading**: I feel content and comfortable.

### INTERDIGITAL GLANDS

located between the toes on all four paws, releases pheromones when a cat scratches or paws at something

### HOW CATS USE SCENT TO COMMUNICATE



#### MARK & CLAIM

Cats mark people, pets, objects, and spaces as "theirs" using scent to communicate ownership.



#### BOND & CONNECT

Mutual grooming and rubbing helps cats strengthen social bonds and build relationships.



#### CREATE SAFETY

Scent marks make an environment familiar, predictable, and safe – reducing stress and anxiety.



#### GATHER INFO

Cats collect scent information about other animals, people, and the environment.



#### SELF-SOOTHE

Rubbing and kneading release endorphins, helping cats relax and feel more secure.

### RESPECT YOUR CAT'S SCENT WORLD

- ✓ Let your cat rub on you and your guests.
- ✓ Avoid cleaning everything with strong chemicals.
- ✓ Don't punish rubbing, scratching, or marking.
- ✓ Provide scratching posts and cozy resting spots in key areas.
- ✓ Allow your cat to set the scent "map" of their territory.



### WHAT CAN DISRUPT SCENT MARKING?

- ✗ Strong cleaning products and air fresheners
- ✗ Frequent changes in furniture layout
- ✗ Punishment for natural behaviors
- ✗ Blocking access to favorite spaces
- ✗ Multi-cat tension or resource competition

*When scent communication is disrupted, cats may feel insecure or stressed.*

### A NOTE ABOUT ANAL GLANDS

The anal sacs are used for specific communication—often in social or territorial situations. A strong or foul odor from the anal area may indicate impaction, infection, or stress. If you notice scooting, licking, or discomfort, consult your veterinarian.

