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## Why Male Tortie Cats Are So Rare?

\*\*\*\*\***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**\*\*\*\*\*

Voorhees— Animal Welfare Association, Inc.

The genetic odds of being born a MALE tortoiseshell cat are up there with being struck by lightning in your lifetime. Some estimate it can be as much as 1 out of 400,000! That is why AWA veterinarian, Dr. Erin Henry, was excited when she examined Burrito and discovered that the 3-week-old orange and black kitten was a boy.

The gene that controls the orange and black fur color is found on the X chromosome. Females have two X chromosomes while males have an XY combination. This means that only female cats can have orange and black fur. To be a male tortoiseshell cat, he must have three sex chromosomes: two XXs and one Y.

“When I turned little Burrito over I was so surprised,” shares Dr. Henry. “I’ve examined thousands of kittens while working at AWA and they are so rare that he may be the only male tortoiseshell I’ll ever see again.”

Cats born with an extra sex chromosome have no developmental issues, yet they tend to be sterile. That isn’t an issue at AWA as all the cats and dogs they adopt into new loving homes are spayed/neutered before adoption.

When Burrito is 8 weeks old, he will be placed for adoption. Until then he and his two littermates are gaining weight and getting lots of love in the home of an AWA volunteer.

For more information, contact Maya Richmond at 802-598-3658, [mayar@awanj.org](mailto:mayar@awanj.org) or visit [www.awanj.org](http://www.awanj.org)

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The **Animal Welfare Association** is South Jersey’s oldest private, non-profit, 501(c) 3 animal welfare organization. Through a variety of programs including adoptions, veterinary services, pet therapy, and humane education, AWA is dedicated to eliminating animal suffering, promoting the importance of the human-animal bond, and improving the role of animals in the well-being of people. In 2016, over 18,000 pets were served through AWA’s No-Kill programming. For nearly 70 years, AWA has been leading the way to progressive companion animal care in South Jersey.