

Cats expected to top dogs as most popular pet in Japan



①Cats are poised to end the long reign of dogs as Japan's favorite pet this year, as man's best friend has become somewhat of a burden in the nation's aging society.

②The number of pet dogs stood at 10.35 million in 2014, compared with 9.96 million felines, according to a Japan Pet Food Association survey of 50,000 people.

③But the association, which has conducted the nationwide annual surveys since 1994, noted that pet dogs have decreased by 12.8 percent over the past five years, while the number of cats has clawed up by 3.6 percent over the same period.

④If the trend continues, pet cats will outnumber dogs in 2015, according to the association.

⑤"It is easy even for single people to keep cats because it is not necessary to take them for a walk," said Yoshio Koshimura, 67, honorary chairman of the association. "In this year's survey, the number of cats will be bigger than that of dogs."

⑥Sixty percent of all dog and cat owners are in their 50s or older, according to the survey for 2014.

⑦Many older people are finding it troublesome to walk or train their dogs. In addition, pets that were bought during the late 1990s small-dog craze in Japan are reaching the end of their life spans.

⑧"As pet owners age, they feel a bigger burden in taking care of their dogs, which has led to a continual decrease in the number of dogs," said Koji Hashimoto, a senior researcher of market research company Fuji Keizai Co.

⑨The rising popularity of cats is also evident in media.

⑩According to Shonan Animal Production Inc., a company based in Narita, Chiba Prefecture, that provides animals for television dramas and commercials, 80 percent of requests used to be for dogs, but cats now occupy 60 percent of the requests.【October 26, 2015／Asahi Shimbun／By MISUZU TSUKUE】

be poised to: ～する用意をしている reign: 君臨 man's best friend: 人間の最良の友(犬) feline: ネコ科の動物 claw: つめでひっかく outnumber: ～より数でまさる troublesome: やっかいな craze: (一時的)流行 life spans: 寿命 evident: (証拠があつて) 明白な occupy: 占める

☆Ice breaker for active discussion☆

1. Do you have a pet? If you don't, what do you want to keep as a pet? Why?

2. Do you consider yourself as a cat person or a dog person?

If you were to choose just one of them, which one do you prefer?

3. What do senior citizens have to take into consideration when it comes to keeping pets?

4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having pets?

5. Other than dogs and cats, what kinds of pets are you interested in?

6. Make sentences using the following words: reign, outnumber, troublesome, craze, life span, burden, evident and occupy.

NEWS de TALK by PHILOS

1994年から犬と猫の推計飼育数などの全国調査を実施、結果を発表している一般社団法人ペットフード協会は、「犬を新しく飼う動きは低調だが、猫は2匹目を家庭に迎える人も増えている。散歩の必要もない猫は単身者でも飼いやすく、今回の調査では犬と猫の飼育数が逆転するのではないかと述べている。