

Featured Felines: Cats' Adventures & Travels 16

(page checked January 2025)

Cruise-ship cat **Bug Naked** (2019)

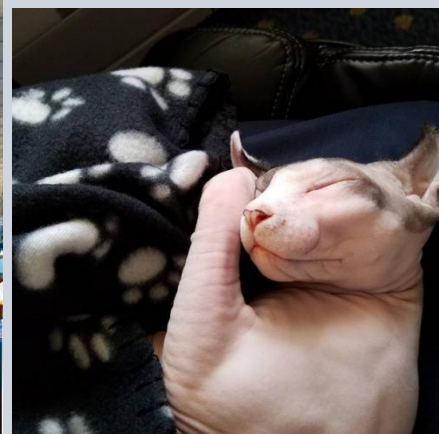


In 2015 Kate McCue became the first American woman to become captain of a giant cruise ship. She worked for Celebrity Cruises, and it seems their captains don't always stay with the same ship, but one she has been in charge of is the new (in 2018) billion-dollar *Celebrity Edge*, said to be one of the most luxurious cruise ships in the world. Kate says she knew from an early age that she wanted a life at sea, and she had at the time been in the cruise industry for well over a dozen years.

And with her went her Elf Sphynx cat **Bug Naked!** Active and mischievous, Bug had a great lifestyle, strolling around the ship and taking in the sights; she was well-looked after and had weekly baths to remove excess oils from her skin. An affectionate cat, she loved to give her 'mother' kisses. When not at sea in between cruises, Bug snuggled up at her home on land.

She had a large [Instagram](#) following, while her fan club (not Kate herself) is on [Facebook](#).





[The Morning Show](#) (June 2018, with video)

Sadly and tragically, Bug died on Boxing Day 3024. Here is what Kate posted on her Instagram page: 'Our little girl is gone. Our hearts are shattered. Bug passed away last night from complications after a routine dental cleaning and tooth extraction. She was surrounded at home by our family and enough love to fill this universe. 8 years and 6 months that we were blessed to spend together. The greatest of sidekicks, the sweetest of angels, the saltiest of seafaring cats: Bug was one in a billion. We are devastated. Our hearts have been ripped from our chests. But we will look for you in every rainbow, and never forget the joy you brought every moment of your short life.'

New beginnings

In February 2025 Kate announced that she'd be leaving Celebrity Cruises, and a month or so later Four Seasons Yachts said that she would be the inaugural captain of their luxury vessel Four Seasons I, due to enter service early in 2026 (cost of a 7-day Mediterranean cruise: US\$42,000!).

And in April 2026 Kate posted on her Instagram account (*above*) that she was going to take on a new cat, **Willie**, who was actually Bug's brother from the same parents. She didn't say whether he'd be accompanying her on her voyages, as Bug did. Below is a clever composite image comparing Willie and Bug Naked.



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(2020)

(page checked May 2026)

Two More Seafaring Cats Captain Cooper



Stephanie Mansberger, originally from West Virginia in the USA, had plenty of sailing experience, in the Florida Keys area and elsewhere, before taking on the captaincy of a charter sailing boat on America's east coast. After a couple of years of full-time sailing, and having met a Canadian couple who had Savannah cats, she looked into the idea of having a cat on board, and during her research was attracted to Bengals. 'I loved that they are smart, curious, vocal, like water, and take an interest in everything you're doing,' she said. They are also hypoallergenic, which meant that there wouldn't be a problem if any of her clients had allergies.

Stephanie looked into various breeders, found one in Pennsylvania that fitted in with her plans and schedule – and fell in love with **Cooper**. He came aboard, took to it straight away and loved the sailing life. He sailed with her for two years, from Florida up to North Carolina, covering some 7,000 nautical miles and of course earning the name **Captain Cooper**. On board he usually wore a harness and tether, and had his own lifejacket with a water-activated strobe light in case he fell overboard. When not sailing, he was always up for other adventures, such as bike riding or walks on the beach.



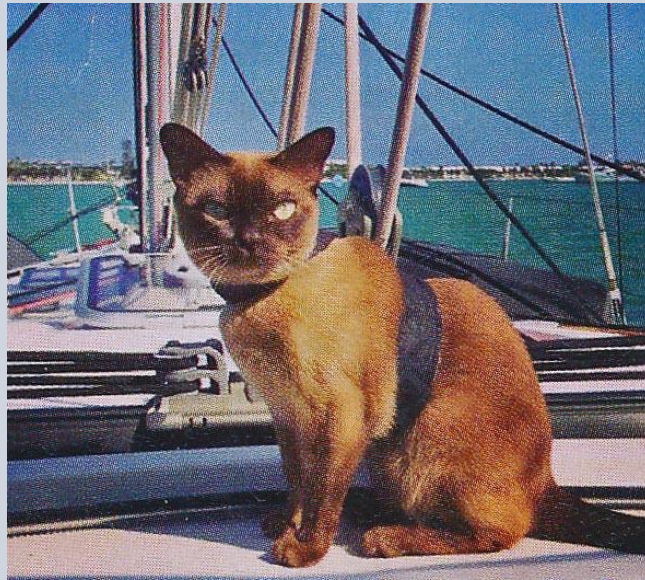
Following her charter captaincy it seems Stephanie took to dry land; she still has a small sailing boat, but Cooper became a landlubber, and seems to have a couple of feline companions too. In 2026 he was 12 years old. Stephanie has an [Instagram](#) account and a Facebook page. My account is taken from [this page](#) from February 2017, where there are many further pictures of Captain Cooper in action and a lovely video of her as well. There's another short video [here](#) (June 2016).



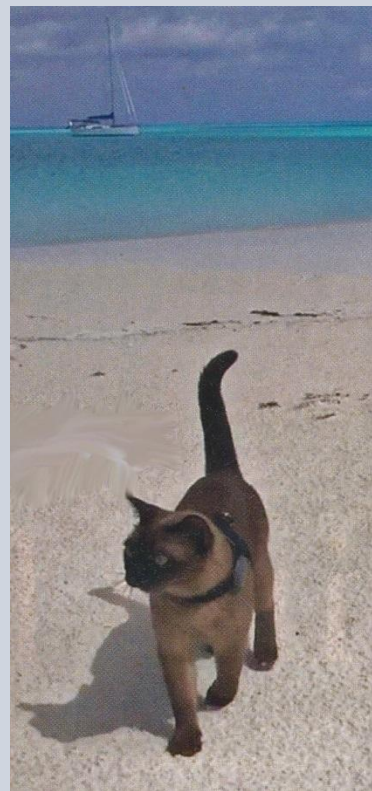
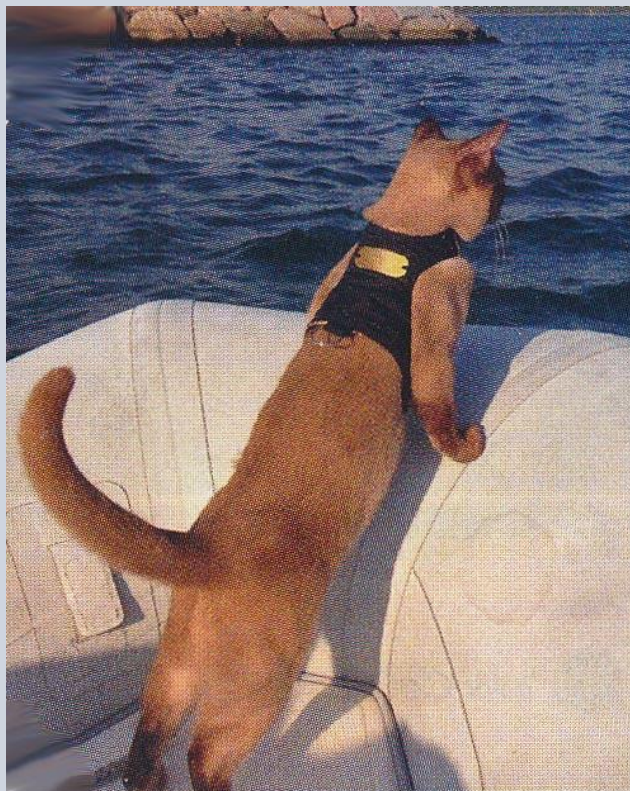
[Facebook](#) (last used July 2017)

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Miss Rigby



Five years old in late 2020, the adventurous Burmese cat **Miss Rigby** has led a seafaring life since she was adopted at eleven months old by Australians Maryanne and Shane La Peyre to keep them company on their 50-foot boat 'Gem'. She's cruised the east coast of the USA, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean islands, and plans were in hand for an ambitious round-the-world voyage. 'She basically owns the boat and we take her everywhere,' said Maryanne. 'She's inquisitive, smart, adventurous, loving and hilarious. We're always laughing at her antics; she's simply the best cat anyone could ask for.'



Miss Rigby's safety at sea is taken very seriously; she's not allowed on deck or in the cockpit when the weather's rough, and when safety procedures are practised, as they are regularly, that includes looking after her. Most days they try to take her ashore for a while, which involves a trip in the dinghy to the nearest beach or park – if

possible in the early morning or late afternoon, when it's not too hot. She loves riding on someone's shoulder, but also wears a tracker in case she strays too far. Curiously, she likes to greet dogs, but not other cats, having been attacked by one when she was younger.

One of the most important tasks before the big voyage is to ensure Miss Rigby's paperwork is all in order. For many countries up-to-date vaccinations and a health check by a vet on arrival are sufficient, but Australia and New Zealand in particular are more difficult, with very strict regulations.

'Having Miss Rigby on board has made every day more of an adventure,' says Maryanne. 'She's an absolute treasure.' She has an [Instagram](#) account, and here's a [YouTube](#) clip about her (2018).,

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