



THE SEAFORTH HOWLER

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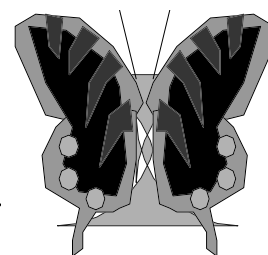
EDITORIAL

Dr. Jan Williamson

Life at Seaforth Veterinary Hospital continues to provide many opportunities and challenges for all the staff. Dr Ken Baker and Dr Terry Collins are attending courses overseas and having well earned brief holidays. Dr Kersti Seksel has passed her Australian Board Examinations in animal behaviour and is continuing her specialist behavioural work in Philadelphia, USA until the end of this year.

Staff News: Jenny and Darren Head are proud parents of Emily Rose and Anita has married Michael.

Finally remember tick season is here. Any pets showing signs of tick poisoning (free handout available) need prompt attention. Remember our after hours number is 9452 2933. Have a great spring!



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BIRDS OF A FEATHER.....

by Dr Ken Baker, Veterinarian

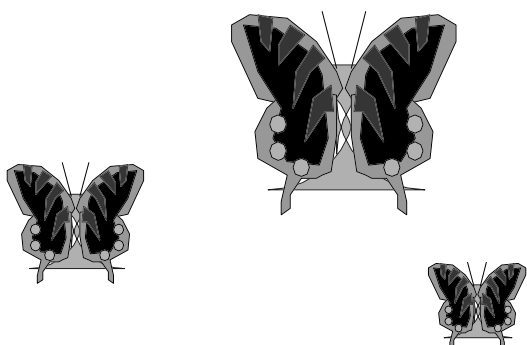
Birds come in all shapes and sizes from a two gram hummingbird to a hundred and ten kilo ostrich, and inhabit all parts of the globe with the exception of the interior of Antarctica. They have specialized to fill every ecological niche and utilize every imaginable food source, but from the first known fossil bird, Archaeopteryx, half lizard and still with teeth, they have shared one common feature which makes them instantly recognizable – all have feathers.

Feathers grow from feather follicles much as the hair of other animals does from hair follicles, but are much more complex in structure and are modified into seven basic types according to the function required. They can provide protection - thermal insulation and waterproofing, streamlining for flight, camouflage and threat, display and courtship,

nesting material, and provide sensory information when present as bristles (in the same way cat's whiskers do.)

The attractiveness of a bird depends on a healthy covering of feathers, most being apparently totally covered. Feathers actually grow in rows or tracts which are separated from each other by areas of bare skin, and the overlapping of these produces the usual smooth contours of unbroken feathering. A bird with missing or broken feathers looks unkempt, and only a mother could love a vulture with its bare and wrinkled neck.

Colour in feathers depends on pigments and feather structure. Pigments may be produced by the bird or be derived from plants, and account for browns & blacks, reds, greens and so on depending on the chemical present, and also whether it fluoresces in the ultraviolet of





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sunlight. Structural colour changes result from white light being broken into its component parts by diffraction, similarly to the rainbow effect of light on an oil slick on water. These colours may or may not be iridescent.

Feather loss, re-growth and replacement is normally an ordered process designed to keep the bird evenly covered and able to fly. Feathers wear and are replaced symmetrically – if a flight feather on one wing is shed, so is the identical feather on the other wing. If a feather is plucked out it will start to re-grow within about three weeks, but if only damaged will remain until replaced in the normal shedding process. For this reason disorders of skin and feathers in birds are frequently more longstanding and slower to respond to treatment than the average case of hair loss in our other domestic animals. There are many causes of feather loss and mutilation, which present a diagnostic and therapeutic challenge which is always interesting but not always possible to unravel.

AND THE HEDOG'S HEAD FELLOFF!

By Kath Salier, Veterinary Nurse

I hate it when that happens and when the body fell off and the tail chipped, that was the last straw! We needed a serious application of adhesive polymer (glue).

The head and body of this poor unfortunate are part of the Seaforth Veterinary Hospital logo which is stuck (most of the time) on the wall in the redesigned reception area. This is just one of the many alterations!

We felt it was time for a revamp so plans for a new reception were drawn up. We were after a design that would provide distinct areas for waiting clients (and miscellaneous animals), merchandise and reception desk and by Jove I think we got it!

The final product is the result of many months of hard work organizing tradesmen, planning, measuring, organizing tradesmen, choosing finishes, getting quotes, organizing tradesmen..... We were most pleased with the reception desk

that was purpose built with two computer terminals! This allows two staff to work at the front desk simultaneously which should reduce delays when we're busy.

Speaking of avoiding delays – if you need a repeat prescription or need some pet food, ring first and we'll put it aside for you and if we don't have it, we can order it in for you. This is particularly important for food because there are sooooo many varieties we can't carry them all.

Thanks to everyone who was so patient during the construction phase – we won't have to do that again for a while! However the Car park resurfacing is going to happen soon, that should be fun!

MUGSWITHPUGS

*By Leanne Hogan, Head Nurse, in association with
Wendy and Rick Harper (Clients)*

ThePug

The Pug, which is one of my personal favourite breeds, is the first of many breeds we will be writing about in our Newsletters.

Have you ever wondered where the Pug originally got its name? Well the word Pug is Latin for clenched fist. Cheerful and mischievous, the Pug is known as the clown of the toy group. Pugs are very much people dogs, very affectionate... curling up on your feet or sitting on your lap.

The pug makes a grunting nasal noise, similar to that of a pig, and their bark (if you can call it a bark) is more of a whimpering yowl, and they also tend to snore in their sleep.



Maddison Harper

This dog is always sociable and plays joyfully with its human companions. Though quick to learn, it is a somewhat self-reliant dog who reacts to its masters command when it chooses to.



This breed sheds a fair amount of hair and needs regular grooming. The muzzle should be kept clean and dry and the eyes cleaned regularly. The pug can also have a tendency to be a little



Rebel and Maddison in a resting phase!

podgy, therefore should have daily exercise.

Average life-span – 9 to 11 years

Average height – 27 ½ cm

Average weight – 6 to 8 kg

In this issue we introduce Rick and Wendy Harper, owners of Rebel and Maddison. Let's hear what they have to say about the breed.

Rick.:

"Pugs are like little people.....and are *very* much people dogs.

- They always want to be *with* you.
- They are very affectionate and often mischievous at the same time.
- They love playing games and chasings with you....and curling up on your feet or lap.
- Pugs do not have a mean bone in their body.
- They are good "guard dogs"(meaning "looking and listening out" for unusual things or people.... which is what they were bred for as Chinese temple guard dogs). They let you know whenever someone is coming or if something is not as it should be.

They can tell time too ! Quite often, if I'm working in the garage out the backyard, Rebel (our black hermaphrodite) , who is asleep most of the time during the day, will come up to me and stand up on his back legs, stretching and putting his front legs up on me as if to say "It's time".....and it *is* time ...to visit Wendy my wife for lunch or to pick her up at 5 p.m. from work ! All within minutes of when I have to do it !

Rebel and Maddison Harper love playing chasings and are a scream, standing up on their back legs with their paws around each others neck trying to get on top of one other... looking like two kangaroos boxing.

They know when they are naughty and will usually come crawling for forgiveness,licking your legs, hands, face or which ever body appendage is closest. All this to say "I'm sorry".

Anyway...there are LOTS of stories we could tell about Pugs and all of them happy.

THE CREATURES IN MY LIFE - THIS WEEK

By Jenny Edwards, Receptionist

This week was a "holiday" week.

Noosa National Park on a rainy day produced an encounter with a Koala watching the view from his vantage point in the upper branches-a peaceful place not totally dominated by holiday glitz. The surfbreak at Noosa produced a wizened old surfer with dreadlocks that probably weighed more then he did when wet. The weirdest local creature by far.....

Then further north via Eumundi revealed an old, faded but beautiful Beagle at Rainbow Beach strategically located outside the bakery. He may have been faded but his priorities were not jaded.

Dolphins frolicking in the channel accompanied the barge from Inskip Point to Fraser Island on a beautiful clear morning. Only an over enthusiastic driver who had to disembark his 4WD at high speed (the only true feral encounter of the week) marred this transit.

Fraser Island is truly a magical place, ruled only by the ebb and



Lactating Dingo Mum



flow of the tide. Nature is everywhere. The dingoes follow the fishermen and clean up the beaches after them. Our rustic beach cottage at Yidney Rocks was the scene of nocturnal disturbance, as bandicoots discovered the vegies.

A nearby cabin hosted an exhausted Petrel which was regaining its strength. It followed it's carers around and appeared to consume more pilchards then the local tailer schools. "Pedro", the petrel as we named him was definitely on the mend - a majestic bird. Petrels like Albatross have an acute sense of smell that is uncommon in birds.

A trip to the north of the Island on a quiet stretch of beach between Waddy Point and Indian Head, provided a fleeting encounter with the Fraser Island Dingo, the purest strand of Dingo remaining in Eastern Australia.



Pedro

The same stretch of land produced evidence of the Fraser Island "Brumbee" to that permanent creature in my life, my husband. The Brumbee is a horse, introduced to Fraser Island years ago. According to the "permanent creature", he found Brumbee droppings. I challenged his qualification to discern Brumbee droppings of any description. His conclusion is that although Brumbees do exist there is a conspiracy to hide their existence from the rest of the world, since they were not indigenous to the Island. (The 'creature' is prone to conspiracy theories generally.) A park ranger subsequently confirmed that indeed there are 5 remaining Brumbees on Fraser Island. They are generally found lurking in the flora behind Waddy Point.

There are also 240 species of birds to be found on Fraser Island. Apparently there are also sharks which I did not see nor had the courage to look for.

This week has been a very special one because of an unexpected encounter. This was not in a Queensland National Park or on Fraser Island but in one of Australia's busiest cities! The morning I left Sydney to fly to Maroochydore I rose early to walk two other special creatures in my life, my Beagle "Boz" and my Border Collie "Jessica". Whilst walking the North Harbour foreshores Jess gave a low growl. I looked round to

see her bristling at a whale only 50 metres off Forty Baskets beach. What a delight. What a week!

IN PROFILE: DR ROB MILLER

I was born near Oldham, in the North of the UK. (Yes, I support Manchester United!)

We emigrated to Australia in 1969 as "\$10 imports" as the Aussies referred to us then. Life initially was a struggle, but hard work by my parents brought the rewards of a good education and healthy life style to all their four children.

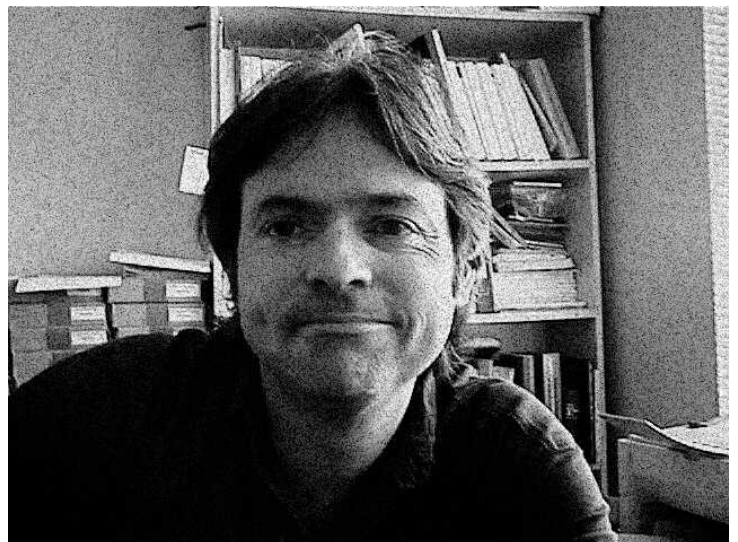
My first passion was for astronomy. This led to interests in mathematics and physics, which I pursued as an honours degree at the Univ. of NSW. From there I went to Melbourne U. where I completed a Ph.D. in high energy physics under Prof. B H J McKellar.

I then wandered off to CERN, in Geneva Switzerland for a year for my first post doc. Followed by a 2 year stint at DAMTP, Cambridge Univ. UK. It was at this time I decided to radically change my career and become a veterinary surgeon.

I had to go back and complete the last year of high school biology before commencing studies at the Royal Veterinary College in Edinburgh, Scotland. I qualified as a mature student in 1990.

For 5 years I worked in Surrey, UK as a small animal clinician, before I decided to return to Australia, in 1995.

These days I work half my week at Seaforth Veterinary Hospital and the other half I develop and market my own veterinary clinical software range, trying to get the veterinary community to use computers for diagnostic and other purposes. Hobbies include, running, soccer, movies, and MGF's (the sports car), and writing the occasional daft book.



Muggins