



The Seaforth Howler

Editorial

Inside this issue:

<i>Editorial</i>	1
<i>The Paralysis Tick</i>	1
<i>White cats are deaf?</i>	2
<i>Importance of socialisation</i>	2
<i>Possums</i>	3
<i>Client Gallery</i>	3
<i>Pengies Part 1</i>	4
<i>Don't feed the itch!</i>	4

By Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

We hope all our clients and their pet's enjoyed a great Christmas and New Year. Summer is here but hard to notice if judging by the weather. Climatic change seems to have brought the ticks out late this year, but with a vengeance. Belinda reiterates the importance of vigilance and treatment of this potentially fatal condition.

Rachel highlights the significance of socialising your dog early as a pup. Failing to do so can mean years of difficulties down the road.

All white cats are deaf! Not so, we look at the stats.

Brooke brings you up to speed on how to deal with those pesky but cute possums that lurk in your roof.

Mrs Battaglia, our client, outlines the role of

the Manly penguin wardens in Pengies part 1.

How is diet related to itch in dogs and how can you deal with it? Hendrika has a look at dietary sensitivities in pets.

Finally we have the usual media snippets and Client Gallery to amuse.

We hope you enjoy this summer edition of the Howler. Have a great summer!



The Paralysis Tick

By Belinda Yardley (Receptionist)

The paralysis tick is a very dangerous creature responsible for the death of hundreds of dogs and cats each year. It is found along the Eastern coast of Australia and lives on native animals. The tick attaches to dogs and cats as they brush past foliage in bush land, near creeks, in your back yard or can even be carried indoors on peoples clothing. Once they attach they begin to engorge with blood and after feeding will start secreting a potent toxin. They can attach anywhere, even in the ears and on the lips. They are particularly evident on warm days when it has previously rained. The season is the beginning of September through until the end of January but they have been found nearly all year round.

What Does It Look Like?

There are a few species of tick which you may find on your pet. Their size can vary from pinhead size when larval to thumbnail size when fully engorged. Their grey body and their legs around their head can identify paralysis ticks. Unlike other adult ticks, paralysis ticks have one pair of brown legs closest to their head, then two pairs of white legs and then one pair of brown legs closest to their body.

How The Tick Causes Toxicity

When the paralysis tick attaches to your dog or cat it produces a toxin, which it injects while it is feeding. This toxin binds to nerves where they join the muscles and inhibit the action of the muscles, leading to paralysis. The muscles most commonly affected are the ones around the throat, which control swallowing, the hind limb muscles and the diaphragm. The oesophagus is also affected in this way meaning that swallowing is difficult and fluids (e.g. saliva) can pool in the oesophagus causing gagging. Eventually there is an inability to

News Column

- **Janelle is off on maternity leave for her second child! We wish her well.**
- **Sam is back safely from India, ready to grooom!**
- **A big welcome to our new receptionist Leanne**



breathe in enough oxygen as the lungs develop congestion and the chest muscles become paralysed.

Tick paralysis is progressive and potentially fatal.

Signs of Tick Paralysis

After a tick has been attached for a few days the following signs may be seen:

Change of voice, difficulty swallowing, drooling, vomiting, weakness in back legs or difficulty getting up, forced breathing with a grunt, coughing, gagging.

More subtle are those dogs with only "a sore leg" and those who look like they have kennel cough. However time will produce the other classic signs.

How to remove the tick

If you have found a tick, you should use a tick twister (available at our front desk) to remove it as quickly as possible. If you do not have a proper tick remover, you can use a pair of tweezers to grasp it at the skin level, being careful not to squeeze on the ticks body and pull it out.

Once removed there is often a wound / crater left behind which can persist for weeks.

Take Precautions

Clipping your dog's coat short, especially during the tick season, makes performing tick searches much easier. You should search them thoroughly every day.

Ticks commonly attach around the head, neck, shoulders and chest. Be sure to check in and around the ears, under lips and collar. Also pay attention to the legs, between toes and under the tail.

Regular searches and products to help prevent tick attachment are vital.

Seaforth Vets recommends the following as a minimum:

Dogs:

Frontline applied every 2 weeks and a Kiltix collar

Or Advantix applied every 2 weeks

Daily tick search

Cats:

Frontline applied every 2 weeks

Daily tick search

If you remove a tick and your dog has started showing some signs of tick paralysis or even if you are just unsure, call us immediately to arrange for a definite diagnosis. Do not feed or give water prior to visiting the vet and try to keep your pet cool and calm.

If you have witnessed what tick paralysis can do to your animal you will know how distressing and traumatising this can be. Please do not take a 'wait and see' approach, this could cost your pet it's life.



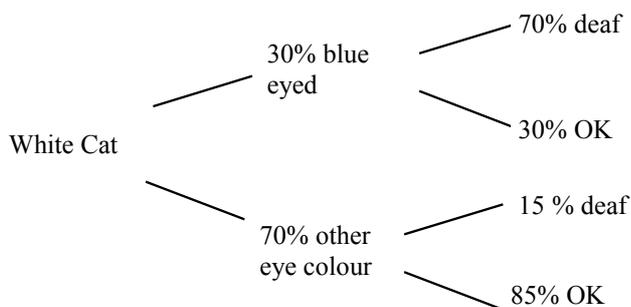
White cats are deaf?

Not all. Terry pointed out the recent article by Karl Kruzelnicki which goes as follows.

Blue eyes are melanin deficient. Just as a white coat in a cat reflects lack of melanin.

The ectoderm in embryonic development develops into the nervous system and also pigment cells, so one can potentially see how defective ectoderm development could relate to pigment abnormalities and deafness. Obviously a lot more technical, but eye colour can predict deafness in white cats.

Did you know that white cats with one blue and one green eye are deaf on the blue eyed side?



This means any white cat has 31.5% chance of being deaf, i.e. 1 in 3 white cats you see are deaf, most are not!

Importance Of Socialising

by Rachel Jackson (Senior Veterinary Nurse)

A little more than half the dogs that are surrendered to pounds and shelters are euthanased for temperament issues. The Centre for Companion Animal Health, in working to decrease the simply horrendous numbers of dogs euthanased each year (more than 60,000 in NSW alone), has been conducting research into the socialisation of young animals. They believe that a 'critical socialisation' period exists for puppies, and that during the ages of 5 to 14 weeks it is essential that the dogs are exposed to a wide range of experiences if they are to form normal relationships with other dogs and with people. Thus your puppy's early history plays an important part in its education and well being.

Amazingly enough we have clients who have been told by their dog's breeders that no animal should receive any form of training before nine months of age. Just as astonishingly, we meet owners who have been led to believe that by simply sending their dog off to a training camp for ten days they will instantly correct their dog's mischievous or bad behaviour, entrenched habits learnt over the dog's lifetime. We however, strongly recommend that clients bring their young dogs to puppy pre-school to socialise with other dogs, all safely vaccinated, of between the ages of 8 and 16 weeks. Advice is given on how to consistently produce good behaviour in your dog. And, to add to this, we often suggest that further training is a helpful and extremely enjoyable activity that deepens the

bond between animal and owner, and continues to make all social interactions easier and more pleasurable.

Arguments exist for and against the registration of breeders, for instance, research conducted in Queensland shows that registered breeders are more likely to better socialise their puppies during the critical period. However registration is no guarantee that the dogs will be socialised or that they have not come from a mass breeding program. And there are also other concerns about breeder registration. In England, for instance, breeders have been castigated by the RSPCA for over-breeding, merely to ensure the maintenance of breed characteristics.

Many shelters now employ behaviourists to help to ensure that the dogs are suited to their new families, giving them the best possible chance at a new life. If, instead, you acquire your dog as a young puppy, pre-school is most important. And always remember that purchasing a new dog is a commitment for 10 to 20 years, so the better socialised and trained your dog is, the more rewarding will be your lives together.

Possums

By Brooke Canning (Veterinary Nurse)

Two types of possums are found around the Northern Beaches in Sydney. The Ringtail possum is the smaller of the two types and is often seen running along the electricity wires. Ringtail possums usually live in a family group in a nest built of sticks and leaves called a Drey. They often have twins.

The Brushtail possum is a solitary animal and usually sleeps in tree hollows or the fork of a tree. Because of the shortage of suitable tree hollows in the suburbs it is the Brushtail possum that often ends up in our roofs. Possums are nocturnal animals, which means they sleep all day and come out at night to feed. They feed on most native plants and flowers however the suburban possum has learnt to adapt to the lack of native food supplies and will eat roses and other flowers as well as fruit. They have even been known to tuck into pizza if there was a lack of suitable food.

Most people are happy to have possums living in their backyard and as long as you let them be we can usually live in harmony with these wonderful native animals. They can become very friendly especially if people are encouraging them by leaving out fruit on a regular basis. However it must be emphasized that they are wild animals and should never be handled unless you are an experienced wildlife carer. They do bite and they have very sharp claws. Possums are a protected species and both Sydney Wildlife and Wires, our two main rescue and rehabilitation groups, encourage us **NOT to feed any native animals**. Their digestive systems are not designed to handle human food and they can become very sick and debilitated over time if they are not getting enough of their natural food.

What to do if you have a possum living in your roof

Some people are very happy to let the possum come and go and are not bothered by it. Others have problems sleeping with the noise they make when coming and going or they might be urinating in the roof and become smelly. One important fact that you should know is that **it is illegal to trap and remove possums from where they have been living**. There are a few things you can do;

. If you are or have a handyman in the family you could build a possum box.

. You must put the possum box up in a suitable tree in your yard no more than 50 metres away from where it was found. Otherwise territorial fighting may occur.

. Try leaving a light on in the roof for three days to see if this drives the possum out.

. You must obtain a license from National Parks and Wildlife if you want to hire a trap to catch the possum and have a wildlife carer look after it while you get your roof fixed.

. If you do not possum proof your roof the same possum or other possums will take up residence back in the same location. You will need to trim back all branches that



Ringy

overhang your roof as well as fix any loose tiles or holes that the possum has been using to come and go.



Brushy

After the roof has been fixed you need to encourage the possum to live in the box by leaving out some apple or banana nearby and in the box.

If you are not able to carry out all of the above we recommend that you contact the wildlife rescue and rehabilitation groups whose numbers are listed below. They have telephone numbers for licensed possum removalists who can arrange to do the whole thing for you with minimal harm to the animal. There is a cost involved as the rescue groups are run by Volunteers and they are not trained in roof repairs etc. If you are unable to make your own possum box they can be obtained from the wildlife rescue groups for a nominal fee.

Useful numbers:

SYDNEY WILDLIFE	94134300
WIRES	1800 641 188

Client's Gallery

Thank you to Mrs Sue Barber for supplying the beautifully relaxing photo of her 11.5 year old Jack Russell Terrier, Ali Barber! What a cozy place.



Our Web Page

www.svh55.com.au

Phone: 02-9949 1288

Fax: 02-9949 6364

e-mail: rob@svh55.com

Pengies Part 1

By Mrs Eira Battaglia (Client and Warden!)

Each evening during the penguin breeding season, which runs from mid June to February in our region, (varies from colony to colony) a brave group of volunteers prepare themselves to watch over Manly's Little Penguins, which nest at the Manly Wharf and in caves beside the Federation Point steps. Come wind, rain, cold or heat. the volunteers - the Manly Volunteer Penguin Wardens under the auspices of National Parks and Wildlife Services NSW - help protect these wonderful birds.

The volunteers spend between 3 – 5 hours each evening keeping watch over the penguins as they come in from a hard days fishing to go to their nests to recuperate. There are around 20 active volunteers and a roster ensures that there are 3 -4 wardens each evening. Unfortunately, the nests being in such public places has lead to incidents which threaten the safety of the penguins, mainly from unleashed dogs, over-enthusiastic on-lookers and inebriated people taking short cuts or sleeping on the sand.

The penguin warden scheme has been in place since 2005, following vandalism of nests and a dog attack on a chick. NPWS called for interested community members and wildlife carers who lived in the Manly area to attend a training workshop in November 2005 and each season a refresher workshop has been held plus de-briefing at the close of the season.

Media Snippets...

By DR Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

Crufts lose face and 40 years of sponsorship...

The pet food manufacturer Pedigree has ended more than 40 years of Crufts sponsorship following claims the dog show promotes unhealthy breeding methods.

In a brief statement, the Mars food group, which owns Pedigree, said: "After careful consideration, Pedigree has decided to withdraw its sponsorship of Crufts."

It is the latest and most financially damaging blow to the world's biggest dog show and its organiser, the Kennel Club. In August, a BBC documentary alleged that unhealthy and sometimes inbred dogs were winning best in breed competitions at the show.

The BBC documentary, Pedigree Dogs Exposed, showed a prize-winning Cavalier King Charles spaniel with syringomyelia, a condition that occurs when a dog's skull is too small for its brain.

It featured boxer dogs suffering from epilepsy, pugs with breathing problems and bulldogs that could not mate or give

birth unassisted.

Last month, the RSPCA said it would boycott Crufts, claiming the competition's judging criteria encouraged the breeding of "deformed and disabled" dogs.

The BBC for the first time ever did not televise Crufts. The Kennel Club this month announced a review of breeding standards aimed at rearing healthier dogs.

The mystery of the disappearing cats....

RESIDENTS of an English town are considering hiring a pet detective to investigate the disappearance of nearly 50 cats in one neighbourhood.

Over the past five years, 45 cats have been reported missing from an area around Meriden Avenue in Stourbridge, in the West Midlands.

In some cases, their collars have been found, but with no other trace of the pets.

Meriden Avenue resident Julie Wootton lost her 15-year-old tabby, Norman, last year.

"We have ended up with a Bermuda Triangle for cats," she said, "It's terrible, the area is just bereft of cats now."

"Cat lovers have stopped replacing pets because they can't face the heartache."

The latest to go missing was a tabby called Gizmo a few weeks ago.

Owner Kerry Davis told the newspaper: "We moved into this residential area so the cats would be safe. This is just devastating."

Gizmo's sister Lily vanished last year.

An un-named RSPCA volunteer told the paper the organisation suspected the cats were being stolen.

"We have grave concerns about the number of cats going missing around Meriden Avenue," she said.

"We are not re-homing any cats in that area until we can be assured of their safety."

Ed: When I was young and living in the UK, everyone believed that if your cat went missing it was likely to have been seconded to a laboratory for purpose of experimentation! Urban myths have always been with us.

Don't feed the itch!...

Summer time brings out all the itchy dogs.

Skin irritations from fleas, biting insects, grasses and heat and humidity all play a role. Many of these skin conditions require medication but often just a good diet will help shift the balance and improve coat quality and lessen inflammation.

We all know the value of omega-3 fatty acids in reducing inflammation in the body but omega 6 fatty acids are also important to maintain a healthy immune system. Eukanuba's **Response Formula FP** diet is based upon fish and potato and they have combined the omega 3 and 6 fatty acids into the ideal ratio to maximise the anti-inflammatory effect without compromising general health. This food is safe to be fed all year round so need not be saved just for summer.

Their **Custom Care** range also has omega 3 and 6 fatty acids but levels slightly lower for those dogs less affected. All diets have **Dental Defense System** built in and are balanced complete diets.

Eukanuba are now donating Healthy Joint diet food to Skipper, the Bear Cottage dog, one of Seaforth Vets very special dogs.