



**SEAFORTH  
VETERINARY  
HOSPITAL**

Summer  
Volume 23, Issue 1



## The Seaforth Howler

Welcome to the Summer Edition of the Seaforth Howler! The observant may have noticed that the Winter Edition of the Howler didn't come out. We must apologise for that, but circumstances and time conspired against it, but onwards and upwards the next instalment is here!

Tick season is underway so we'll take a look at the latest products available, present ways to keep your pet as safe as possible and tell you what to do if your pet does get a tick. Dr Veronica's Feline Focus is back. She reflects upon the whys and wherefores of Keeping your Cats Indoors. Following that, we will look at our beloved possums and what we can do to protect them. Our popular Horoscope feature returns - perhaps we should make it a regular piece?

A big welcome to Millie Slennet, another wonderful nurse to join the Seaforth Vet Family. However, we say a sad farewell to our splendid receptionist Carly Dinan who is relocating to Melbourne. She will be taking her ambassadorial skills to Lort Smith Animal Hospital - Australia's largest animal hospital. We will miss her terribly but wish her all the very best!

If there is anything that you might like to see included in the Howler, please feel free to let us know - any comments or suggestions are welcome! We wish you and your cherished ones, furry and non-furry, well for the coming months.

### CONSULTATION BY APPOINTMENT

Monday-Friday

9am-12pm & 4pm -7pm

Saturday

9am -12 pm and 2pm-4pm

Sunday & Public holidays

9am-11 am

**Open 365 days**

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Dr Veronica's Feline Focus .....	2
Possums.....	2
Ticks.....	3
Horoscopes.....	4

## **DR VERONICA'S FELINE FOCUS**

### **KEEPING CATS INDOORS**

Keeping cats exclusively indoors is becoming a more popular choice for owners concerned about the health and wellbeing of their cat. Indoor living can prevent cat fights, dog attacks and car accidents. It also greatly reduces the risk of tick paralysis and reduces the impact our cats have on native wildlife.

However, the 100% indoor cat does face some challenges. Being exclusively indoors can be boring. This may lead to inactivity and weight gain, as well as cause anxiety. Inactivity and weight gain can result in feline diabetes, whilst anxiety can develop into ongoing behavioural and urinary tract disorders.

So what do I recommend and how do I keep my own three cats?

I actually recommend a 100% indoor life for our domestic cats. When done right it provides the safest place for our cats allowing them to live a long, healthy, happy life. If the indoors can be made as interesting as the outdoors, then we get all the benefits of a safe but stimulating and fun environment. So how can we achieve this?

Start by providing your cat with all of her meals from a puzzle feeder. This provides the stimulation for her to search out and work to get her food, just as though she was catching prey outside. Also, play with your cat with chasing toys prior to meals to help him feel like he's had a hunt-

ing session. Puzzle feeders I use include the Catit Digger and Catit Maze. Good 'hunting' toys include Da Bird and other fishing rod types of toys.

Next, provide your indoor cat with cat friendly plants like cat grass, cat mint and catnip. Rotate plants regularly so that they stay fresh and interesting and are allowed to recuperate from repeated cat assault!

Cats love high perches: tall scratching posts or cat trees near windows let your cat survey the world. Cats also like hiding in boxes or cat igloos: next time you get an online delivery keep the box! Great cat hammocks can be attached to the windows to allow them to bask in the sunshine. See Cho below in his hammock!

Finally, cat appeasing pheromone Feliway, as well as calming supplements can help your cat enjoy an indoor lifestyle and may assist you in transitioning a previously outdoors access cat to a 100% indoor cat. Please feel free to call me at our clinic if you would like to discuss these products and how to use them.



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## **POSSUMS - Brushtail and Ringtail**

Australia has 23 protected possum species of which the brushtail and ringtail are common on the Northern Beaches. Consider the fragile balance of an urban ecosystem and the environment we share: the amazement and delight of encounters with our very special wildlife, rather than be irritated by possums in your roof or nibbling carefully tended veggies. I now have a family of little ringtail possums living in one of our trees! My children learnt how to build a drey and we love to watch their antics.

Possoms are nocturnal tree dwellers, although they must be resourceful critters to survive in suburbia. They will make their homes in our garages, sheds and even my BBQ! Ringtails make nests (dreys) lined with bark and grass, and the males help raise their young. Possoms are mainly herbivores which is why when they have no native flora they must eat what they find in our gardens though our sweet fruit will sicken ringtails. Brushtails will also eat a few insects, eggs and baby mice.

Sydney Wildlife and WIRES, both wildlife rescue & rehabilitation volunteer charities, urge you not to feed native animals. Their digestive systems can't cope with human food and they eventually become sick. As development and government policy rapidly reduces food and habitat for all native animals they ask that we plant food and shelter and

provide a water source in our gardens if we are to ensure that native animals survive.

Help our possums and other nocturnal wildlife by keeping your cats in at night. If you do find injured wildlife please bring it to us for free treatment, but remember that if scared they can bite and claw. Call WIRES or SW. Use a towel to scoop them up safely and then quietly contain them. They are made ill by stress and noise.

**Sydney Wildlife:** [www.sydneywildlife.org.au](http://www.sydneywildlife.org.au) &  
**WIRES:** [www.wires.org.au](http://www.wires.org.au) (both run by donation)

has great information on dreys, gardens and generally living amongst our wildlife

<https://www.wires.org.au/wildlife-info/wildlife-factsheets>

[http://www.sydneywildlife.org.au/Wildlife\\_Flora.htm](http://www.sydneywildlife.org.au/Wildlife_Flora.htm)



## Tick Season is here!

Summer is looming and we are back in the perilous waters of tick season. The lines are now blurred and there is little definite break between being “in” and “out” of tick season. The main difference is that in summer the rate of tick attachment is much higher. Every winter we are seeing more cases and we now recommend that you continue your tick and flea treatment all year round.

This used to be a costly exercise, but with products on the market offering longer protection, it really is now a case of “can you afford not to do it?” A fabulous range of dog products exists: Simparica, Nexgard, Bravecto chews, Seresto collars and Bravecto topspot. Excitingly, we have two new products for cats: a Bravecto topspot lasts for three months and the Seresto collar (off label), for four months. Wonderful news for those of us that were having to topspot our cats, at the height of tick season, every two weeks! Always check your pets daily for ticks. as nothing is 100% but registered products are 97-98% effective and so treatment is safe, effective, inexpensive and gives year round peace of mind.

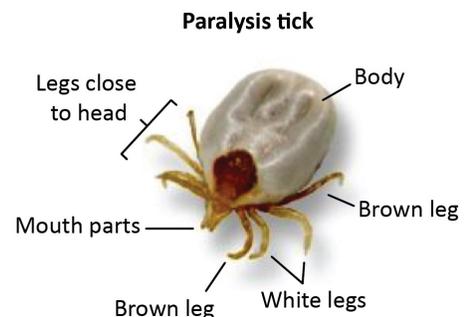
The female paralysis tick lays up to 3,000 eggs!! After hatching, the larvae climb onto nearby vegetation and look for their first hosts - usually a bandicoot or possum. Once they have gorged themselves, the larvae drop to the ground, moult and turn into nymph ticks. Each nymph will then attach itself to a second host, re-engage, moult to become an adult tick and find yet another host. After getting her fill of blood (often more than 100 times her own weight) the female paralysis tick is ready to abandon her final host and lay her eggs, thus starting the whole cycle again.....

The Northern Beaches is a tick prone area and so we, as pet owners, must be aware of the signs and symptoms of tick toxicity and take proactive steps towards keeping our pets safe. A few good tips to remember are:

- Make sure that your pet is on tick prevention. This is very important and especially so if your pet has ever been treated for tick poisoning before. Each time an animal receives anti-venom the likelihood of a fatal anaphylactic reaction to treatment increases.
- Check your pets daily for ticks. A “Tick Tickle” using your finger tips and working against the grain of the fur makes it easier to feel a tick. Ensure you check everywhere: under the collar, between the paw pads, any folds of skin, around the mouth and in the ears. Ticks get literally everywhere!
- Keep your pets out of bushy and long grassy areas. Try to keep them away from the undergrowth at the

park. This also helps guard against awful dietary indiscretions that happen when you're not looking!

- Clip your pet short! Shorter coats help you feel ticks and, in the summer, keeps your pet nice and cool.
- Buy a tick twister and pop it in with your poop bags so you can quickly remove a tick if you find one. Once removed, make sure to kill it as it will reattach to another host as soon as it can!
- Think about pet insurance. Treatment can be extremely expensive so insurance can mean life or death for your pet. Make sure that your policy covers tick toxicity. Many companies have complicated provisions regarding tick toxicity treatment., while there are companies, e.g. Pet Plan, that are not limited to a set amount or number of incidents per year.
- Symptoms to look out for include vocal changes, vomiting or retching, inappetence, lethargy, general weakness.
- If you think you have found a tick or that your pet may be affected, please either bring your pet in or phone us as soon as possible. The window for treatment is important, the sooner we can render assistance, the better chance all round, for your pet's health and for you financially. Our nurses are happy to remove a tick or to save your pet from having that wart or skin tag so expertly pulled off by you! The nurses can also do a quick full body check on your pet, as sometimes there can be more than one tick lurking about. There is no charge for this, so for peace of mind it is most definitely worth doing. The only time you will be charged, if you need to see a vet.



## HOROSCOPES FOR PETS

By Maria Scott



### ARIES (March 21 - 19 April)

**Cat:** So busy, adventurous and rushing through life. You need to take time to rest though - this season you will be prone to headaches! **Dog:** Full of energy you are thinking of enrolling in those agility classes, but for now the frisbee games will do. Keep working on training your person, they don't know it yet, but resistance is futile - would they really expect anything less from the leader of the Zodiac signs? #MeFirst!

### AQUARIUS (January 20 - 18 February)

**Cat:** Eccentric and unconventional, you often prefer chocolate to fish. Prone to poor circulation spend as much time under the blankets as possible, especially if your owners are having friends over for dinner...ugh! **Dog:** A great house dog, calm and steady but equally at ease in the entertainment department. With summer coming, BBQ's and friends will be visiting.....now is your time to shine!

### CANCER (June 21 - 22 July)

**Cat:** Tenacious, unpredictable & at times moody, your diva side will rule this month. Try to be more forgiving and less judgemental. **Dog:** The combination of extremes of emotions and the love of the sea, should persuade your owner to take you to the beach where you can spend time contemplating that most important questions on all dogs' minds....am I a good dog?

### CAPRICORN (December 22 - 19 January)

**Cat:** Serious & shy, work calmly and deliberately towards your goal of improving your personal standards. If things don't work out at home consider moving out to a more affluent household. **Dog:** Reserved and diplomatic, but still practical and unafraid of hardwork, you are a wonder to behold. Keep working on getting the best out of your person, nudge them to get out of their robe and slippers and soon you'll be driving through the country side wind in your hair and bugs on your tongue - bliss!

### GEMINI (May 21 - 20 June)

**Cat:** Playful & distracted you will spend most of your time confuddled. Try and channel your more serious side - if you try hard enough you will learn how to push the door shut on the dog! **Dog:** Exuberant, good at communication and willing to learn, you are such an asset to your owners! However, your enquiring mind can get you into trouble. Take care to think adventures through before embarking on them. Remember the great toilet roll debacle of 2015...

### LEO (July 23 - 22 August)

**Cat:** Gregarious and extrovert, a friend to many. Take time for yourself - chase your tail and bite those little toes of yours. **Dog:** Try not to be over confident - this can sometimes come off as pompous. A wonderful entertainer, you should probably hold off inviting all the neighbourhood dogs over - at least wait until that annoying cat is out of the way...you know he's going to tell on you.

### LIBRA (September 23 - 22 October)

**Cat:** Work on your indecisiveness - asking to be let in, so that you can be let out will only annoy your human and make the dog laugh at you. **Dog:** Watch your weight this month, breaking out into a trot on your walks with your human will help and for goodness sake, stay away from any Halloween lolly collections! Your owner will think they're being kind offering goodies...poor silly creatures!

### PISCES (February 19 - 20 March)

**Cat:** You would prefer life at sea and your love of water often sees you running when you hear a tap turned on or a toilet flushed. It's especially satisfying when the humans yell at the dog for drinking out of the toilet. **Dog:** Unpredictable and contrary, life can be chaotic. Try to keep focused, swimming will help, but do try to keep out of the toilet!

### SAGITTARIUS (November 22 - 21 December)

**Cat:** You abound with positivity and cheerfulness, life is good for you and adventures abound. Try not to let your love of chewing get you into trouble. **Dog:** Try to keep your enthusiasm under control - you are prone to sprains and bruises and if you're not careful your Owner will have to take you to the VET! Yikes!

### SCORPIO (October 23 - 22 November)

**Cat:** You love organizing things & people. Try to be patient and not too critical, life can at times be boring and mundane. Humans will find you puzzling, but it's just that greatness dazzles them. **Dog:** Being a perfectionist is a double-edged sword, try to relax a little - does it really matter if you don't get the full 8hrs of sleep? Think about taking up Yoga or perhaps annoying the cat might prove a good stress release?

### TAURUS (March 21 - 19 April)

**Cat:** Unflappable & dependable, but food is your downfall. Try to get more exercise, annoying the dog should work - it hates moving, unless absolutely necessary! **Dog:** Strong, loyal and determined - you love and totally deserve to be pampered. Relaxation is needed this month before the build up towards Christmas, however if that pesky cat tries to get the smooches meant for you, a burst of energy may be in order to shoo it away....or you could always sit in front of the catflap....

### VIRGO (August 23 - 22 September)

**Cat:** Thorough and conscientious, you are a loving pet. You hate laziness, try not to be too hard on your sleeping in owner, the are only human after all. **Dog:** You love helping your human, picking up socks and putting them under the table, bringing in the newspaper and shredding it and helping unpack the groceries. Sometimes they can appear ungrateful though - don't despair, humans are funny animals....