



The Seaforth Howler

Editorial

By Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

Another tick season is almost over. What happened at Seaforth vets? Read all about it in our tick review below.

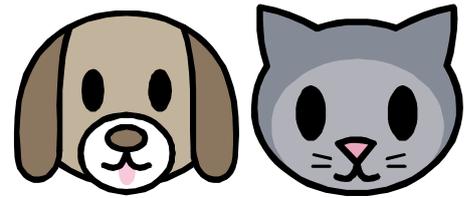
Congratulations are in order for Sam and Mohit on having a healthy baby boy.

As you know from the last newsletter Brooke is off to Guatemala in Jan 2010. She has decided not to return to SVH as she is likely moving to QLD. We wish her luck in her move and congratulate her on passing her certificate 4 with excellent results.

Libby looks at Anal Glands (yuk) and encourages you to learn how to empty them when necessary.

Virginia has written a very useful article on how best to find housing accommodation that accepts your pets. A difficult issue for renters these days.

Jenny advises on how to reduced the risks of losing your dog during the storm and firework season.



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All you (don't?) want to know about Anal Sacs



By Dr Libby Thompson (Veterinarian)

Anal glands, or ANAL SACS, to use the correct term, are two balloon shaped sacs set on either side of the anus at about the 4 to 5 o'clock and 7 to 8 o'clock positions. They are located between the inner and outer muscle layers of the anal sphincter and the neck of the sac opens just near the inner margin of the anus. Both dogs and cats, amongst other animals, have anal sacs, but the skunk has the most developed.

In our domestic pets, however, they have little function.

The anal sacs are lined by apocrine and sebaceous glands, which secrete and fill the sac with a foul smelling watery-pasty fluid. The sacs are normally expressed when the dog or cat passes a motion or when the animal is highly stressed, anxious or frightened. This may be after they have been in a fight, hit by a car or just because they are picked up and put on the examination table in the veterinary clinic.

Problems arise when the sac is not expressed.

If the anal sac becomes too full the animal becomes very irritated and may start 'scooting', ie dragging its bottom along the ground. This might relieve the problem, (leaving a foul fishy smell on your carpet perhaps) but if it doesn't, the anal area may become quite painful. This can cause constipation and behaviour changes such as the tail being kept down between the legs, biting and chewing the fur around the tail or tail chasing. If the sac continues to fill, the skin next to the anus starts to die off and the now abscessed sac bursts out through the skin. Often the abscess is not noticed until a weeping, bloody and painful sore is seen under the tail.

News Column

- **Congratulations to Sam and Mohit on the the birth of their baby boy, Jayden.**
- **Nurse Brooke has left but not before we could offer her our Congrats on her great exam results!**

If you see your dog or cat scooting or paying undue attention to the tail area, it might have worms or some form of dermatitis around the anus, but it is highly likely to have full anal glands that need emptying.

This can be done by either milking out the individual sac between the thumb and finger, with one gloved finger inside the anus or by squeezing both glands at the same time between thumb and fingers outside the anus. For both methods use gloves, lots of cotton wool or tissues covering the anus and DON'T STAND BEHIND THE DOG OR CAT when you do it. (A face full of anal gland secretion will ensure you never do it again.) Only the dedicated few will express anal sacs for their own dog or cat, so if you think your pet has this problem, come to the vets and we'll do it for you.

Small dogs are usually more prone to this problem than larger dogs, though we still see larger dogs with the problem especially if they have an allergic dermatitis and German Shepherds are particularly prone to a problem known as 'Perianal Fistula' where so many draining tracts open out to the skin it gains a lacy appearance. Cats rarely have a problem though overfull sacs and impactions can and do occur.

Usually expression of the sacs at regular intervals can control scooting and perianal irritation, but occasionally surgery is required to remove the sacs for a permanent solution.

Anal sac removal is not done routinely because the anal sac walls are quite fragile and the sacs themselves are located in muscle and near nerves innervating the anus thus making surgery quite delicate and time consuming and, if not done properly, potentially leading to post-operative complications such as permanently draining sinuses and faecal incontinence.

I'm happy to teach anyone, who wants to learn, how to empty the anal sacs! BYO pet!

Month	Cases	As a %	Died
July	0	0	0
Aug	2	2	1
Sept	9	9	1
Oct	28	29	2
Nov	38	40	1
Dec	14	15	0
Jan	6	6	1
Total	97	100	6

Table 1: Tick cases 09-10

Most dangerous month, October

late January. As you can see this year we had tick cases in August, one of which died. The danger season for deaths is August to November, but this does not mean tick cases will not die in Dec or Jan and indeed we lost one in late January, which is unusual, just less likely to. This is our clinical experience, the more severe cases occur before December.

There were 97 cases in all, that is 2.2% of all our active patients, or 1 in 45 presenting with tick poisoning.

The peak activity was in November while October and December being the next worst months.

1 in 17 chance of dying

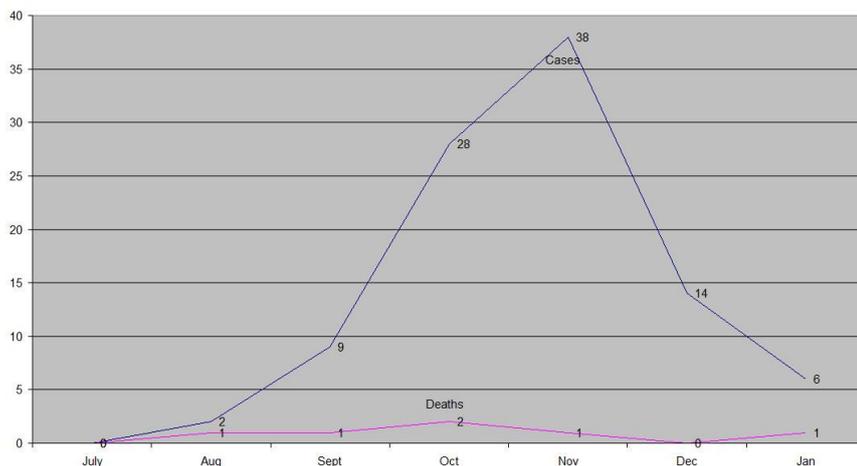
The greatest risk of death was in October. These figures represent the severely affected cases. Many clients will remove ticks at home and not report or be aware of mild poisoning. Deaths were at 6%, ie there was a **1 in 17 chance of dying** even pulling out all the stops to reverse the effects of tick poisoning. The national average is 6%. One cannot understate the nastiness of tick poisoning!

Tick season, the results

By Dr Rob Miller (Veterinarian)

We are always warning clients about the perils of tick season but what is the aftermath of a tick season? How many pets were affected? How many died despite our best efforts? We often tell clients that tick season runs from September to

Tick Poisoning at SVH 09: Deaths 6% (1 in 17 die)



Runaway Season

By Jenny Short (Senior Nurse)

New Year is a time we all enjoy watching fireworks on the harbour over a glass of wine whilst our furry friends at home are scared stiff and hiding under the kitchen table!

It is quite rare for cats to be bothered by fireworks or storms but for some dogs it's a different story. Some dogs are just scared by the noise and huddle into a corner until it's over. Others will tear up your house in terror and/or try to escape – and most escapes are successful.

Some animals are so terrified by storms and fireworks they need medication to either sedate them or calm them down. Others are not fazed at all!

Every week we get a number of stray pets brought in to us. This can be for a many reasons, particularly a fear of loud noises like

storms or fireworks or the desire to mate. Non-desexed males will smell females on heat over great distances and make any attempt to reach them. Other animals come in when owners don't secure their backyards appropriately and other wayfarers just slip out an open door.

However, they get out and it is a major issue. One that some owners just don't take seriously enough. Animals are often brought in to us with broken legs or tails, fractured ribs, or worst of all, are dead on arrival after being hit by a car.

Most of the time we can ensure a happy reunion between pets and their owners as kind Samaritans bring the animals in off the streets before they are injured. Sometimes however, we cannot reunite animals with owners and we must send them to the pound. This happens when they have no identifying tag, no microchip, or despite the fact that they have a microchip the pet has not been registered and the microchip number is not on a database with the owner's details.

Our procedure for reuniting lost pets and their owners is as follows:

1. First we scan the animal to see if they have a microchip. A microchip is a small (2mm) rice shaped implant that is inserted between the shoulder blades. When scanned it gives a unique number that can be used by authorised bodies to search confidential databases for the owners. By law all animals should have a microchip before you buy them, so don't let pet shops or breeders tell you otherwise!
2. If they do have a chip, we check our own database to see if we have seen the animal before. If not, we use two websites that we are authorized to access on the internet.

One website is called the Companion Animal Register. This is NSW based and it allows your animal to be found within NSW. When you get a new pet you should check with your vet that there is a microchip. If not, we will implant one for \$33. Once your pet has reached 6 months of age the chip details must be registered for a fee paid to your local council. This is cheaper if he or she has been desexed, and as this operation is normally performed at 6 months often owners wait for this before they register with the council. Once registered changing your details is free and for the system to work owners must remember to keep their contact details up to date with the council.

The other website is the Australian Animal Registry, relevant Australia-wide. If your animal manages to make it interstate, is found and scanned, and your details are correct, you can be reunited! As well as this, if you are waiting until your animal is desexed before registering with your local council by joining the AAR you do not run any risks of losing your pet before it is 6 months old. The cost is only \$19.80, or if you have acquired a pet that is already on the AAR then you can change the ownership details for \$5. Merely changing your contact details is a free service.

3. If the animals have no identification then unfortunately we have to call the local pound. We try to keep them as long as possible but sometimes we are so full with hospital and boarding patients that we lack the room. Either way, in our cages or in the pound cages this is all very distressing for the pets themselves.

Obviously the best way to track down owners is via these

Free Information Session

For Seaforth Veterinary Hospital Clients

Ailments in Elderly Cats

Time 6.00pm

Date: Wedn 10th Feb.

Venue: Seaforth Veterinary Hospital

To Register your interest please e-mail

Jane on:

Jane@svh55.com

confidential databases. So please make sure your details are up to date, especially phone numbers! Also, supplying a secondary person to contact is a great idea, allowing us to contact someone your pet is familiar with if there is a problem contacting you. Please don't rely solely on pet tags. Terrified runaways or simple escape artists often lose their collars and/or tags when they jump fences or dig their way to 'freedom'! If you are unsure where you stand with your details or they need to be changed please ask our receptionists for the relevant forms. It only takes five minutes and could save a stressful or even lethal situation in the future if your furry friend does escape.

Finding rental accommodation that accepts pets

By Virginia Pennefather (Receptionist, Delta Accredited Canine Behavioural Trainer Cert IV)

You've probably heard heartbreaking stories – or have experienced them yourself: you need to move and can't find suitable rental housing that will accept your pets. Far too many pet caregivers have felt forced to give up their pets because they thought pet friendly housing wasn't available.

But if you are a responsible pet owner looking to rent and are overwhelmed by the challenges of finding pet friendly housing, don't despair. With planning and a few compromises



Our Web Page

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you can find pet friendly housing in virtually any area of the country. After all, isn't your pet worth it? The following steps might assist:

1. **Give yourself enough time.** Sounds obvious, but start checking ads and contact real estate agents as quickly as you can.
2. **Understand why many housing places reject pets:** Put yourself in the shoes of landlords. They may have had bad experiences with irresponsible pet owners who left ruined carpets when they moved out. They may be worried about neighbors' complaints about barking dogs and wonder how they are going to deal effectively with pet owners if problems arise.
That's why people looking for pet friendly accommodation must be able to sell themselves as responsible tenants who are committed to providing responsible pet care and being responsible neighbours.
3. **Make use of available resources:** Speak to the local pet store about real estate agents who may be pet owners themselves. Go to Council and find out the location of the local dog training club. Make contact with people who run boarding kennels or grooming parlours. Visit your veterinary hospital. There is no substitute for making a professional connection with someone who understands how important your pet is to you.
4. **Gather proof that you are responsible:** The more documentation that you can provide attesting to your conscientiousness as a pet owner the more convincing your appeal will be to your future landlord. Compile the following documents:
 - Letter of reference from your current landlord.
 - Written proof of any training classes that your dog has completed.
 - A letter from your Veterinarian confirming you have been diligent in your pets medical care; that your pet has been desexed and vaccinated.
5. **Make your request to the individual with the ultimate authority to grant your request:** Usually this will be the owner, however you may need to submit a written request to the Strata Committee.
6. **Let the Landlord or Strata Committee know that you share any concerns about cleanliness:** Point out that your pet is housetrained or litter-box trained. Emphasis that you always clean up after your dog outdoors and that you always properly dispose of your pets waste.
7. **Promote Yourself:** Responsible pet owners make excellent residents because they search harder for a

place to live and are more likely to stay put. Let Landlords know that you understand living with a companion animal is a privilege, not a right.

8. **Promote your Pet:** Offer to bring your pet to meet the owner or property manager. A freshly groomed, well behaved pet will speak volumes. Emphasise that the same pride you take in caring for your pet extends to taking care of your home. Many landlords are concerned about fleas. Let them know that you maintain an active flea control program for your pet and home. If you can't arrange a meeting, then provide a small photo album displaying photos of your pampered pet in your current home. Create a "Resume" for your pet.
9. **Be willing to pay a little extra:** Tell your prospective Landlord or Property Manager that you will pay a higher bond to cover any damages that might be incurred.

Get it in writing: Sign a pet addendum to your rental agreement. Request a copy of any house rules pertaining to pets. Let the Landlord know that you will abide by the rules set for the broader community and that you will respect the concerns of residents who do not own pets.

Media Snippets

Daytripper dies....

Funny what gets into cats heads at times! Casper a cat of Plymouth UK, would queue each morning for his daily bus ride and has been doing this for the past 4 years. It is estimated he traveled some 32,000km on his jaunts, which is almost equivalent to the distance around the world! Unfortunately he was recently run over while crossing the road to catch the bus. Bus drivers would stop each afternoon to drop Casper off at his front door after a leisurely ride'n snooze.

(Back in the 1980's a friend of my brother had a dog who would regularly take a train to the city from Rooty Hill station. That was back in the old red rattlers days when getting aboard was easier for dogs. Amazingly he never got lost. I am happy to say he never got run over by a train either, Ed)

In commemoration of Robbie Burns born 25th Jan 1759

In Nov 1785 Burn's wrote his poem "Ode to a mouse" which is worth reading again. A translation from the difficult to read lowland Scots language of the day can be found at www.worldburnsclub.com

(for copyright reasons I cannot reproduce it here).

Having accidentally unearthed the mouse's nest whilst ploughing over a field, he understands its fears, but tries in the poem to convince it he means no harm, and sees its existence as no less than his own.

They were hard times and it's nice to have this glimpse back in time and see that people were still at times compassionate to their fellow beasts.

Mice are lovely little critters with delicate features, if you ever have a chance to examine one up closely (which my cat has allowed me to do on a number of occasions!). They are quite gentle and have had a rough deal by us humans for thousands of years. So on that note we extend our best wishes to all our mousie friends for the year 2010, some 225 years on from Burns!

