

# ***ISAZ***

International Society for Anthrozoology

**NEWSLETTER No. 5**

**June 1993**

## **1993 ISAZ Symposium and ABS Meeting, University of California, Davis, California.**

This summer ISAZ are holding a satellite meeting to the Animal Behavior Society Meeting in California. The ISAZ meeting will be held on the 24th of July, before the main ABS meeting from the 24th to the 30th of July. Details of the ABS meeting are given on page 7.

Papers to be given at the ISAZ symposium include the following:

Asian Elephants from their Drivers' Perspectives	Lynette Hart
The Media, Mad Dogs and Mayhem	Anthony L. Podberscek
Friendliness in Cats: Implications for Cat Owners and Cat Welfare	Sandra McCune
Owner-directed Behaviour of House Cats; evidence for Incomplete Neotenisation	John Bradshaw
Rolling Behaviour in Domestic Cats	Hilary Feldman
The Ethology of the Human-Cat Relationship	Dennis Turner

There will be a small registration fee, payable in cash in U.S. dollars on the door, to cover the cost of the room and refreshments. For accommodation, see the announcement of the ABS meeting (page 7).

## **ISAZ Symposium, Utrecht, Holland, September 2nd, 1993.**

**"Medical, Social and Psychological Aspects of Human-Animal Interactions"**

Papers to be given include:

Autonomy and ageing: older people and pets	Prof. Dr. C.P.M. Knipscheer (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
Social interactions between people and animals - a new biological framework	Dr. John Bradshaw (University of Southampton)
Children and pets: a special relationship?	Dr. Elizabeth Paul (University of Edinburgh)

See enclosed registration form for more details.

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### **Editorial**

This issue of the newsletter contains an article from George Mamonov, a member of the Ukranian Society for Nature Conservation, who is keen to find out more about International Anthrozoological research if anyone is interested in setting up links with Russia. Also included is an article by John Fisher of the APBC about rage syndrome in dogs. Most of this edition, however, is devoted to the ISAZ symposia in California this summer and in Utrecht in the autumn. Details and registration information are enclosed. For anyone wishing to subscribe to The Interactions Bibliography or Society and Animals, details and order forms are enclosed.

This is my last newsletter as Editor so we'd welcome nominations for my successor (see page 8 for details). 'Bye from me!

**Sarah Brown**

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## Children and Animals in Kiev, Ukraine

Pet-keeping is becoming increasingly popular in urbanised areas. For example, a survey of 413 Kiev houses and flats registered over 266 dogs, 189 cats (including 70 Siamese cats), 4 aquaria, 32 birds (mostly budgies), whilst 30 flats contained hamsters or guinea-pigs. Pets, especially hamsters, are most frequently acquired by children. Children are also active collectors of stray and wild, usually diseased, wounded, and weak animals as well as young animals.

Such large-scale popularity of pets raises the question of correct pet-keeping and related information and education. We asked about 80 school children 10-14 years old about keeping animals. 47 children knew the correct way of keeping hamsters and budgies, and 65 children knew something about aquarium fishes. Practically all the children knew nothing about the keeping of turtles, newts and salamanders. The parents of 44 children knew nothing about animal keeping and could not therefore help their children learn about it.

A worrying problem is that occasionally children were reported as being cruel to animals, and in some cases killing animals. Annually 3-4 cases of cruelty to animals were registered by various veterinary services in Kiev. The greatest number of culprits in these cases were 14-16 year olds but sometimes (although rarely) cruelty was exhibited by 10-12 year olds. In many cases there appeared to be a strong influence of parents and adults on the children, since they often exhibited aggressive behaviour towards stray cats and dogs,

attacking them and chasing them away from the children. These reactions of adults encouraged the children to be cruel, sometimes exhibited in games with dogs and cats. The children and parents were well aware that these actions are immoral and negatively perceived in society and as a result did not admit responsibility. The parents in such cases usually attempted to acquit their children's behaviour by saying that the dog or cat attacked the child first, or that other children or adults attacked, pursued and tortured or killed the animal.

The negative results of family education are shown in hunting games of children. The ideas of 'harmful dangerous snakes' encourages children to hunt some types of wild animal and results in numerous cases of killing of grass-snakes, vipers, turtles, frogs and toads. This activity occurs in both younger and older schoolchildren. This problem highlights the need for attention in prevention of such cruelty cases through more education in society.

Another problem associated with children-animal interactions is animal bites. The number of animal bites has been relatively stable over many years, depending on the population of people and animals in the city. From 3.5 - 4 thousand bites are registered in Kiev annually by veterinary services and 1 - 1.5 thousand by medical services. Only a few bites are from wild animals, over 10-12% are from cats and more than 50% are dog bites, including 11% of bites from stray dogs. Over 30% of those bitten are 6-15 year-old children, and particularly often children are bitten in

groups. The greatest number of bites occur in the spring/summer season (April/May/June/July). More than 1/3 of the cases of dogs bites were due to breaking of orders or incorrect dog-keeping conditions by the owners. More than 17% were due to incorrect human behaviour causing the dog to bite, e.g., aggression shown towards the dog or through playing, petting or feeding strange animals in front of the dog.

These adults and children display little knowledge of behaviour and psychology of animals. Improvements could be made via special teaching texts included in lessons for small

children. These texts are specially prepared and distributed in schools by veterinary services staff. In future pets and urban animals will hopefully come to play a more important role in children's life in Kiev as in other big towns. Research, in the form of monitoring children-animal communication, may be interesting especially for comparison with observations from other countries and cultures.

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The following abstract is taken from *Animal Welfare* (Vol 2, No 1, 1993). The paper is by P.H. Hemsworth, J.L. Barnett and G.J. Coleman from Victoria, Australia.

**The human-animal relationship in agriculture  
and its consequences for the animal.**

Although human factors are recognised as influential factors affecting the welfare and productivity of farm animals, only limited research has been conducted to identify these important human characteristics and to quantify their effects. During the last 13 years we have studied two apparently important human factors: the attitude and the behaviour of stockpersons towards farm animals.

We have proposed that in intensive animal production systems there are some important sequential relationships between the attitude and behaviour of the stockperson towards farm animals and the behaviour, performance and welfare of farm animals. Basically we have suggested that because a stockperson's behaviour towards animals is largely under volitional control, it is strongly influenced by the attitudes and beliefs that the stockperson

holds about the animals. Furthermore, the stockperson's behaviour towards animals affects the animals' fear of humans which, in turn, affects the animals' productivity and welfare. It is the occurrence of a stress response by animals which are highly fearful of humans which places their productivity and welfare at risk. We have published data which strongly support these interrelationships between human attitude and behaviour and animal behaviour, productivity and welfare. This paper reviews this and other research on this subject. The results of research in the pig industry and, to a lesser extent, the poultry industries indicate the excellent opportunity which exists to improve animal productivity and welfare by training and selecting stockpersons to have desirable attitudinal and behavioural profiles towards farm animals.

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## Rage Syndrome - possessive aggression or normal behaviour?

For some time we have been at a loss to find a common denominator for the condition which has been given the popular, but often too readily used, name of "Rage Syndrome". As I understand it, "Rage" is where a dog suddenly and for no apparent reason attacks a person who, for example, has shuffled their feet or scratched their head. Cases have been reported of dogs raging towards themselves whilst they are being held in veterinary holding kennels, with no human present at the time. Whereas I accept that in some cases evidence of epileptic type seizure activity might be present in the more unpredictable dogs, I question whether the seizure brings on the rage, or vice versa.

In the past, we have looked for some genetic influence, first of all in the Cocker Spaniel and more recently in the Golden Retriever, but as far as I am aware, nothing has been proven although some particular lines have been suspected. Diet regimes have been examined, as well as environmental situations and the dominant/submissive relationship between owner and dog. In my opinion, we have been looking at the problem with a tunnel vision attitude and we need to take a wider look at the issue. I suspect that there is indeed a genetic link, but it is far wider than merely looking at pedigrees - the majority of dogs which are presented with this problem are all from the gun dog group.

The genetic selection process which has resulted in the creation of dogs which fit into this group requires breeding from dogs which exhibit a strong hunt/retrieve instinct. In training terms, a good retriever requires a strong possessive instinct and a strong submissive instinct, so that it will want to go forward and pick up a fallen or thrown object, but will readily obey a recall command. The majority of the (so called) rage type dogs are generally described as being perfectly biddable and easily controlled, except where possessions are concerned.

At just a few weeks of age, we recognise and accept the breed-specific herding behaviour

of a Border Collie and if it gets out of hand in the pet dog, we generally include in our treatment programme, advice about more stimulative, off territory exercise and suggest activities which are designed to channel rather than inhibit something over which they have no control - they are "pre-wired" to behave in that manner.

If, at just a few weeks of age, a retriever type growls when approached by its owner when it is possessing an article or food, how many pet owners see it as a direct challenge to their authority and deal with it accordingly? I suspect the answer is most of them!

Following this line of thought raises the following questions:-

1. Assuming their possessiveness is part of their strong retrieve instinct and not exhibited as a points scoring dominance exercise, what effect would the aggressive human reaction have on the submissive instinct within them? Could it be conflict between two instincts and overall confusion about their relationship with their owners, even a fear of them when they are in possession of something?
2. Because possessive guarding is generally regarded as a dominant trait, does the increased "off hand" approach of a dominance reduction programme increase the confusion in the dog about its relationship within the family group?
3. If this conflict/confusion situation happens on a regular basis, indeed often purposely engineered by the owners in an attempt to overcome the problem, will it eventually have a psychological, or even a physiological effect on the dog?
4. If this situation is allowed to escalate over a period of months or years, will it eventually result in the dog losing all bite inhibition, or reacting (out of suspicion) in a defensively aggressive manner to the owners' slightest movement, especially when coming out of a

deep sleep?

5. Could it be that the mere possession of an article - a pebble, a piece of straw or the vet bed that they are lying on, creates such a conflict of instincts that aggression becomes a learned, or automatic coping behaviour, even if the aggression is directed towards themselves.

6. Can long term conflict bring on seizures?

Since the gun dog common denominator occurred to me, I have been asking my clients the following questions:-

*Was the first incidence of aggression at an early age and was it over a possession or food?*

*Were the first few incidents met with equal or more aggression from the owner and did they engineer a programme which was designed to eradicate the problem, i.e., did they insist that they could take away the food, bone, toy etc.?*

*Is the family member who is most at risk the one who is more insistent about the dogs' compliance to given commands? (This is a variable question which depends on the family's overall attitude.)*

*Was the site of the first incident now the place where the dog chooses to trophy its possessions, or is it more aggressive in this particular place than in any other?*

If the answer to all of these questions is YES, then it is quite possible that the key to avoiding adult rages is to understand and channel the possessive instinct at an early age - after all, it is a behaviour trait which man found desirable in the working gun dog.

If we teach them to retrieve properly, so that when the dog possesses the Rolex watch, or a used tissue, instead of saying "BAD DOG - LEAVE IT", we can say "GOOD DOG - FETCH IT" we should get a happy confident response, instead of the glazed eye, lips back snarling, which is becoming all too common in some breeds.

Training programmes for this kind of response are an entirely separate issue, but clearly we should avoid the more traditional "push/pull" methods which might escalate the problem. There will also be a problem in persuading some owners that they are not rewarding what they see as unwanted behaviour. In fact the whole hypothesis is riddled with "but what ifs", but at this stage I am concerned only with the conflict

principles involved and whether this line of thinking is worth further investigation.

At the time of writing, I have an 11 month old female Golden Retriever and a two year old male black Cocker Spaniel (which was destined for euthanasia) undergoing a reward based retrieve training programme which is centred around a more relaxed family regime - and no other treatment. The initial feedback is very good, but it is too soon to tell and the study group is far too small to reach a conclusion. I will obviously monitor their progress and at a later date write up the results. What I am looking forward to is the Cocker or Goldie which is presented at just a few weeks of age with the initial symptoms of possessive aggression, because as we all know, prevention is better than cure.

**John Fisher**  
**Chairman**  
**Association of Pet Behaviour**  
**Counsellors**

## **Meetings of Other Societies**

### **30th Annual ABS Meeting, 24-30th July, 1993**

Arrival and registration for this will commence on Saturday July 24th, papers will begin on Sunday and end on Thursday.

The Keynote speaker is to be Anders Pape Moller from Uppsala University, Sweden, talking on "The Role of Parasites in Sexual Selection".

Other speakers will include Mark Konishi from the California Institute of Technology talking on "Neuroethology of Sound Localization in Owls", and Arthur A. Myrberg, Jr, from the University of Miami talking on "Underwater Sounds: Fish Ears and Fish Tales".

Other events and excursions are being organised - details of these plus registration and accommodation information may be obtained from Jeni Trevitt, Assistant to B. Hart, Animal Behavior Program, University of California, Davis, CA 95616-8734. Tel: 916-752-4863, Fax: 916-752-8391.

### **First Conference on Environmental Enrichment, 16-20th July, 1993,**

The Metro Washington Park Zoo in Portland, Oregon will host a conference on environmental enrichment for zoo and aquarium animals. Topics will include husbandry, research, exhibit design, and psychological well-being. Those interested in attending this conference should direct enquiries to Drs. David Sheperdson or Jill Mellen. Tel: (503) 226-1561 x260, Fax: (503) 226-0074, or write to : First Conference on Environmental Enrichment, Metro Washington Park Zoo, 4001 S.W. Canyon Rd., Portland, Oregon, 97221. Registration fee is \$225.

### **ASAB Winter Meeting, 1993**

The 1993 winter meeting of the Association, to be held at London Zoo in December, will be on the subject of **Genetics and Behaviour**. Offers of papers (with a half-page abstract) should be sent to: Dr. Terry Burke, Department of Zoology, University of Leicester, Leicester, LE1 7RH.

## **Meetings of Other Societies (contd.)**

### **ASAB Summer Meeting, 1994**

To be held in Bern, Switzerland from July 20th to 22nd, this meeting is about the **Evolution of Signalling** and is organised by Manfred Milinski and Heinz Richner.

### **12th Annual Delta Society Conference, October 7th-9th, 1993**

Learn how to improve your physical and mental health through quality time with your pet, and how to share your pet to improve other people's well-being. The conference is to be held in St. Louis. For details write to Delta Society, P.O. Box 1080, Renton, WA 98057-1080; or call (206) 226-7357.

#### **INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR ANTHROZOOLOGY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The 1993 AGM will be held at the University of California at Davis on Friday 23rd July at 1600. Items for the Agenda should be sent to the Secretary by 1st July 1993.

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS**

The biennial election of Officers and Council, for 1993-5, will be held at the 1993 AGM. Erika Friedmann (President), Elizabeth Paul (Treasurer), James Serpell, Ben Hart, Lynette Hart, Dennis Turner and Luigi Boitani are nominated by Council to stand for re-election. Ian Robinson, who was co-opted to the Council during 1992, is also nominated by Council. Sam Ahmedzai is nominated to represent IAHAIO on the ISAZ Council.

There are vacancies for the posts of Secretary and Newsletter Editor. Nominations for these posts should be signed by two ordinary members and must be accompanied by the candidate's signed statement of his/her willingness to serve. They should be sent to John Bradshaw, Anthrozoology Institute, Department of Biology, University of Southampton, Southampton SO9 3TU, UK, to arrive no later than July 1st 1993.