



Spring 2017 - Issue 67

The Rehabilitator

B W R C N E W S L E T T E R



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Front cover: Undergraduate students at Writtle University College practice gavage tubing a swan cadaver (photo by Terri Amory, printed by kind permission of Writtle University College)



A word from the Chair

Welcome to the Spring 2017 edition of The Rehabilitator! After the success of our recent workshop at Writtle University College (see page 14) we are pleased to announce that **BWRC Symposium 2017** will be held at the **University of Edinburgh** on 21st/22nd October - further details will be released soon via our website and Facebook. If your organisation is interested in sponsoring one of our events, details of sponsorship packages can also be found in this edition and on our website. We also have details of this year's UFAW, and new BVZS conference (see pages 5 and 15).

In March the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) reported the sad passing of their founder Major Adrian Coles MBE aged 86. "Major Hedgehog" as he was affectionately known held a series of civic posts from parish to county level, and his work was recognised with several honours. BWRC trustees would like to offer their condolences to Major Coles' family and friends.



Major Adrian Coles MBE (photo by Dr Pat Morris, reproduced by kind permission from the BHPS.)

Last winter seems to have seen centres particularly inundated with hedgehogs. BWRC was pleased to cooperate with BHPS in the production of a new BHPS leaflet entitled "Hedgehog hibernation weight – a collaborative view", available to download from <http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/pdf/Hibernation-Weight.pdf>. As we know UK hedgehog numbers are dropping and so the more information we can gather the better – see



pages 9 -10 for details of a survey project running at Hartpury College asking for rehabilitators' input.

Some of you may remember that BWRC used to run a paper based national recording scheme – a service that we still consider would be extremely valuable (digitally now of course!) but not straightforward to fund. We would like to hear your thoughts – see Adam Grogan's article on pages 11-13 (working rehabilitators who contribute automatically receive free associate membership of BWRC for 2018!).

Congratulations are due to BWRC trustee Adam Grogan who was awarded the Mammal Society's award for services to mammalian research at their 63rd Spring Conference at the beginning of April.



Adam Grogan (centre) receives the Mammal Society's award for services to mammalian research from Dr Paul Chanin, President of the Mammal Society.
(Photo: Chris Percival)

As always – if you have comments or would like to contribute articles or advertise events please contact editor@bwrc.org.uk. If you are a working rehabilitator, make sure that your up-to-date details are on our Directory of Rehabilitators – you can download a 'Rehabilitation Unit Contact Form' from the 'Find a Rehabilitator' page of our website (www.bwrc.org.uk).

*Terri Amory
BWRC Chair*

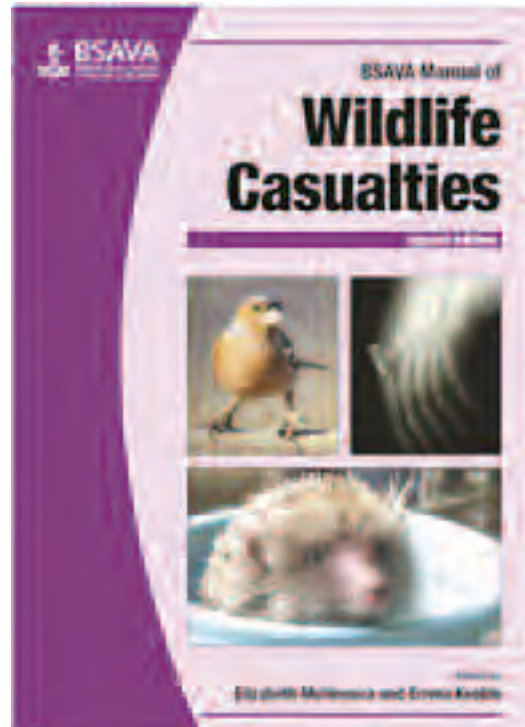


UFAW 2017 Symposium



Universities Federation of Animal Welfare have announced the theme of their next international symposium (“Measuring animal welfare and applying scientific advances - Why is it still so difficult?") which may be of interest to BWRC members. The symposium will take place between the 27th-29th June 2017 and will be held in the Windsor Building Conference Centre, part of the campus at Royal Holloway, University of London. The theme will cover many fundamental questions regarding the measurement of welfare and aims to develop new ideas and promoting higher quality and better-focused animal welfare science. The symposium features talks by leading experts from many fields including animal sentience and behaviour and welfare assessment and policy. The symposium will feature both talks and poster presentations. Further information and booking details can be found at: <https://www.ufaw.org.uk/ufaw-events/ufaw-events>

The 2nd edition of the BSAVA Manual of Wildlife Casualties has recently been published by Wiley (available online from <http://eu.wiley.com/> and other retailers. We have added a books page to the BWRC website under the RESOURCES tab – if you have suggestions for books that you find useful in rehabilitation practice please let us know!



Let's look what the cat dragged in: a perspective from a US Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre

By Dr Dan Forman *CBiol. MRSB. EurProBiol. Swansea Ecology Research Team (SERT)*

Domesticated cats are remarkably adaptable and proficient predators capable of catching a wide range of prey. In the UK the most recent estimates from the Mammal Society indicate that cats catch up to 275 million prey items a year. Of course, this is likely to be an underestimate of the actual number of animals caught each year as many predation events are likely to have taken place away from human observation.

While the numbers of animals caught by cats appears to be very high (in the UK at least), there is limited scientific evidence to suggest that cats are causing significant impacts on populations of native wildlife in many regions and countries. From a wildlife rehabilitation perspective, however, cats are likely to be a major cause of admittance to centres for treatment and therefore a major drain on resources.



A recent paper published in the Journal of Wildlife Management discusses an interesting data set of cat caught animals from a single US wildlife rehabilitation based in Virginia between 2000 and 2010. Over this period, 11,144 mammals and 9,700 birds caught by cats were admitted to the centre. Cats were the 2nd most frequent cause of small mammal admittance, and 2nd greatest cause of mortality in birds. A remarkable 83 different species were admitted (including skunks!) with chipmunks, cottontails, doves and American robins being the most frequently caught species. As would be expected, there was a strong seasonal trend in admittance data with main bulk of cat caught animals being recorded between February and August each year, with a clear peak in May. The majority of both mammals and birds caught by cats died or were euthanized, often within a few days of admittance, and there was a greater overall incidence of mortality in birds than mammals. Given the trauma often associated with cat predation attempts, the outcome for individuals caught by cats was much worse than that for all “other” reasons for admittance combined over the study period.



Cat photo:-

<http://www.torontograndprixtourist.com/2011/08/cat-hunting-chipmunk.html>

Whilst the data analysed in the paper is not biologically or ecologically meaningful (i.e. it is not possible to infer how this data relate to the population demography



and mortality in free living animals in the area), the authors highlight that data and the severity of injuries caused by cats support the banning of free roaming cats, particularly between April and August, in designated areas. I would be interested in your views on this (d.w.forman@swansea.ac.uk) and whether you feel that cats are a major cause of admittance to your centres, and which species are admitted (are many bat species admitted for example).

The full citation of this paper is: MCRUER, D., GRAY, L., HORNE, L. & CLARK, E. 2017. Free-Roaming Cat Interactions With Wildlife Admitted to a Wildlife Hospital. *The Journal of Wildlife Management* 81(1):163–173.



Hedgehog Rehabilitation Survey

By *Lucy Bearman-Brown* MRes, PGCE, BSc (Hons), SFHEA
University Centre, Hartpury, Gloucester.

As you're probably aware, hedgehogs are declining at an alarming rate, with populations between a third and a half of what they were in 2000. Whilst there is extensive ecological research investigating the cause of this decline, there has been little focus on the collaborative approach required to help save this charismatic species. We'd like to address this by exploring the role wildlife hospitals and rehabilitators play in this complex situation.



Photo taken by Janet Peto

This study will be the largest survey to date of hedgehogs in rehabilitation, and aims to understand a range of factors influencing their admission, treatment and survival. We have kept this survey



as short as possible, whilst also trying to gain as much benefit from this unique opportunity. It will ask for some data regarding previous admissions, and it should take 15-30 minutes. We intend to publish the results in a leading scientific journal in order to share the findings and support more collaboration amongst all who are working so hard to save one of Britain's most loved animals.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. We believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however, as with any online activity the risk of a breach may be possible. To the best of our ability your answers in this study will remain confidential and no individual or facility will be named in any publication. All data is stored on a password protected computer, all personalised data will be deleted when the study is complete and only the researchers will have access. Where data must be stored for publication requirements, all individual responses will be anonymised.

If you'd like to know any more about this, please do contact me at Lucy.Bearman-Brown@hartpury.ac.uk. I am a doctoral researcher and lecturer at Hartpury University Centre in Gloucestershire, working in partnership with University of Reading, People's Trust for Endangered Species and British Hedgehog Preservation Society.

If you are able to contribute the Lucy's study, please visit

<http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/HedgehogRehab/>



BWRC Recording Scheme - vision for a new database?

By Adam Grogan BSc, MCIEEM. BWRC Trustee

The BWRC used to run a voluntary recording scheme for rehabilitators to submit data to so that some estimates could be made of the numbers of wild animals coming into wildlife centres and hospitals. This scheme fell into disuse as the number of submissions declined and as advances in technology meant that the old database software became redundant.

The BWRC is now looking at ways to reinvigorate this scheme. We feel that, with modern software, it would be much easier to have an online system that rehabbers can sign up to and access from their own computer. This would allow them to record data on their admissions, complete reports, such as the numbers of animals in care, number of species admitted, admissions compared with results and so on. We have been exploring possible options with the RSPCA and universities, and we are now at a point where we want to ask you if this is something you would be interested in.

The use of a database for collecting information on the animals you admit has many advantages, in that you can learn much more about the animals in your care and how your treatment of them may affect results. The use of centralised, web-based system has advantages to the BWRC in that we will not have to ask you to submit data once a year and we can compile reports that can help us when we are



working with Government, or other organisations, that provide some details with regards the numbers of animals taken into rehabilitation.

Below are some questions that we would like you to answer for us. We have set up a questionnaire on Google Forms to collate your answers and we will report back in a future issue of the Rehabilitator.

1. Would you like to use a centrally held database if it was available to you?
2. Do you currently use a computer to collect records of admissions?
3. If no to Q2 would you be willing to start?
4. Would you be willing to pay for such a database?
 - It is likely that the software we may use will require licences that will need to be paid for, but we will investigate options as to how this can be done;
5. What data would you like to collect?
 - Personal data - We would not require any personal data (e.g. names and addresses of members of the public) to be held in the central database but you may wish to record them for your own reasons. If so you must comply with the Data Protection Act.
 - Animal data – this could include species, age, gender, date of admission, reason for admission, outcome, date of outcome, reason for outcome. This is not exhaustive and you may wish to suggest others.
6. Would you be happy to share your data with others?
 - This could include BWRC, RSPCA or other organisations and would be agreed using a data sharing agreement.



We feel that having a shared database would be a great step forward in allowing us all to learn more about the animals we treat. We hope that you feel that you can contribute to this.

Practicing rehabilitators in the UK please follow the web link below, and give your name and e-mail address at the end of the questionnaire to claim your

FREE ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP FOR 2018

<https://goo.gl/forms/v7BlizidOsgOUf6l3>



BWRC Spring Workshop 2017



“Casualties to Cadavers”

On Saturday 6 May Writtle University College kindly hosted our Casualties to Cadavers workshop.

In the morning delegates from the RSPCA's Wildlife Department and South Essex Wildlife Hospital (SEWH) joined Writtle students and staff to hear respected wildlife veterinarian and BWRC trustee Molly Varga's views on the decision making process (or triage) for wildlife casualties.



Dr Debra Bourne was a new guest lecturer for this workshop describing lessons learned from the rescue of nearly 40,000 Jackass (a.k.a African or Black-footed) penguins (*Spheniscus demersus*) after the Treasure Oil Spill off the coast of South Africa in 2000.



In the afternoon the delegation took advantage of Writtle's laboratory facilities to practice external examination, first aid and post-mortem techniques on wildlife cadavers kindly supplied by SEWH. This workshop was first run at our Symposium in Dumfries in 2014, and then at Reaseheath College in Cheshire last June. Elements may be included in the upcoming Symposium this Autumn.



Call for papers and poster presentations



The British Veterinary Zoological Society (BVZS) will be holding its first annual 3-day conference **13th-15th October 2017 at ZSL London Zoo** including a full-day stream on Wildlife Health.

This will include:

- A keynote presentation on UK wildlife health programmes by Liz Chadwick (WILDCOMS/ Cardiff University Otter Project) and Paul Duff (GB Wildlife Disease Surveillance Partnership/ APHA)
- Keynote presentation on *Brexit, wildlife conservation and the veterinary profession* by Alick Simmons (Chair, BVA Brexit Working Group)
- Clinical/ research open session
- Discussion session on wildlife rehabilitation medicine, research and surveillance.

Please submit your talk or poster title via email to stephanie.jayson@zsl.org by 2nd June 2017. Speakers and poster presenters will be informed if their talk/poster has been selected for the programme by 19th June prior to registration opening for the conference. Abstracts and biographies for accepted talks and posters will be due by 25th August and guidelines and templates for these can be found on the BVZS website (www.bvzs.org) under "Instructions for speakers and poster presenters" via the Autumn Meeting bouncing box.





BWRC Event Sponsorship Packages

Package	Workshop (up to 50 delegates depending on venue)	Symposium (up to 150 delegates depending on venue)
Full sponsor	£150	£200
Trade Stand	£100	£125
Flier	£35	£50

Flier package

- fliers/ labelled products in delegate packs
- Sponsorship acknowledgement in opening & closing presentations

Trade Stand package

- Trade stand (presence throughout the event)
- fliers/ labelled products in delegate packs
- Sponsorship acknowledgement in opening & closing presentations



Full Sponsor package

- Name and/ or logo on all advertising and conference materials/ media
- Short 'feature' article published in editions of The Rehabilitator alongside symposium details (copy and images to be provided by the sponsor, BWRC retains editorial control)
- Trade stand
- fliers/ labelled products in delegate packs
- Sponsorship acknowledgement in opening & closing presentations

If your organisation is interested in sponsoring a workshop or symposium please contact bwrcouncil@gmail.com.



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