

Formal Presentation Abstracts

DESENSITIZATION OF AN ADULT FEMALE SOUTH AFRICAN FUR SEAL TO A NEW BORN PUP

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Paquita, a ten year old female South African Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus pusillus*), gave birth to her third pup in May 1998. During the previous two births, she attacked the babies, resulting in the death of the first one and a long time treatment, following multiple fractures in the jaw, for the second one. With the onset of her third pregnancy, we decided to attempt a program of desensitization to help her adjust to caring for the pup and, hopefully, avoid another unfortunate outcome. We believed that socialization with the pup was important for Paquita since she always vocalized for a long period and quit eating after the loss of her first and retrieval of her second baby. This time we had a protocol in place to keep the risks as low as possible. During four days of desensitization and observations after the birth, we were able to help Paquita adapt to the presence of her baby and she has turned out, finally, to be an excellent mother. Our intervention was absolutely necessary, however, since she showed very serious aggression in the pup's first moments of life! Today, she lives together with her baby, Gil, who is suckling normally and growing into a healthy young sea lion.

DIGESTING HUSBANDRY : TRAINING A TWO YEAR OLD DOLPHIN TO EAT

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Indy is a male Atlantic bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus truncatus*) that presented the staff of The Dolphin Experience with many new training challenges. Unlike most dolphins that learn to eat on their own while nursing, Indy, at two years of age, had no interest in fish. A training regimen was put into motion at his second birthday as the staff set out to train Indy how to eat. The following year was full of successes and challenges. After learning to eat, Indy was readily trained for the public programs that The Dolphin Experience offers; the Close Encounter, the Swim and the beginning stages of open ocean training. Indy was also trained for a series of voluntary husbandry behaviors which proved to be extremely valuable for monitoring his health. Indy has always had a persistently high WBC count and almost one year after he learned to eat, his behavior and appetite decreased. A voluntary blood sample indicated an elevated WBC count of 31,100. At this point, medical intervention was necessary, including the use of X-rays. The tests on Indy showed no abnormalities. After 7 weeks on medication his WBC count dropped to its lowest level. Weekly voluntary blood samples indicated a steadily decreasing WBC count to a new low of 7300. From the challenge of training Indy how to eat to the importance of husbandry training, he has been unique from the start and continues to challenge us in his future training.

RESULTS OF TWO YEARS WORKING WITH A GROUP OF SIX PATAGONIAN SEA LIONS (*OTARIA BYRONIA*) IN THE NEW AQUATIC COMPLEX OF THE ZOO AND LEISURE PARK LE PAL

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Two years ago, Le Pal, a zoo and leisure park in the center of France, has opened the doors of OtariLand, its new marine mammal complex. The public gets the chance to discover and learn more about Patagonian sea lions (*Otaria byronia*) in a presentation combining display, education and humour. The technical and esthetic aspects which have presided in the conception and achievement of this complex make it one of an interesting kind. The facility was built with great care for the welfare of the animals, the rock scenery and the waterfall offering them quite a natural environment. However, the Life Support System was not forgotten and the option was given to an exclusive ozone water treatment system. Just as this complex is in constant evolution, so is the work with the animals. Their training is nicely evolving with the years, with special educational program for schools, and already nice results in medical husbandry in collaboration with our veterinarian, Géraldine Lacave.