



FORMAL PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS TUESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2008



INTUBATION TRAINING OF CALIFORNIA SEA LIONS

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Intubation or endoscopy is a minimally invasive diagnostic medical procedure. Among others, gastric intubation (the passage of a tube through the mouth to the stomach) can be used to re-hydrate an animal (e.g. during molting, because of kidney problems, or post-surgically), to carry out stomach sampling (control the quality of the gastric fluid and digestion ability), and gastric endoscopy which can be used to identify the presence and help in the removal of foreign objects.

With animals kept in a zoological environment, whatever the precautions and information available, the ingestion of foreign bodies is a more frequent eventuality. When anesthesia becomes necessary for intubation to control this, it can become a more delicate intervention.

To help in this, the goal at Nausicaa has been to train their five male California sea lions to accept the introduction of a gastric tube, accept rehydration, and move on to the introduction and manipulation of the flexible tube of an endoscope to be able, in case of necessity, to verify the presence or not of a foreign object, without the necessity of anesthesia.

This presentation reviews the different steps of this training, the difficulties that were met, and the current results.

LUCY, YOU GOT SOME 'SPLAININ' TO DO!

Laura Lynch*, Stacey Lonski
Indianapolis Zoo

Lucy, a 20-year-old Atlantic harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina*), has lived at the Indianapolis Zoo for 20 years. Lucy is not an ordinary harbor seal. From 1993-2007, with the exception of 1994 when she had a pup, Lucy would stop eating and participating in sessions from late spring to early summer months, sometimes not eating for over a month at a time. During these episodes she would lose a great deal of weight to the point of malnutrition and illness. For years, the Indianapolis Zoo has tried to figure out why these episodes occur. With the help of Lucy's fellow seals and sea lions, along with a trainer named Laura, they conduct their own investigation to see just why Lucy does this year after year. Now in 2008, they think they have found a possible solution to this mystery.

