

## Abstracts / Tuesday, 4 December

### IT IS NOT EASY TO FORESEE EVERYTHING WHEN YOUR TARGET IS TO SEE AGAIN

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When he arrived at Nausicaa in 1998, Algon was a bad tempered California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*) that had a tendency to bite. Through training, particularly medical training, he became progressively less aggressive towards his trainers.

In 2002, the first symptoms of a chronic superficial keratitis appeared, requiring daily administration of ophthalmic drops, as our first objective was to limit the progression of the disease. With time, a diagnosis of pannus (or chronic keratitis of immunologic origin) was established, somewhat different from what is now frequently called otariid keratopathy because of its immunity relation. Some years later, Algon developed a cataract that strongly reduced his vision and led the trainers to modify their training technique: his visual cues gradually became vocal cues. Algon accustomed himself progressively to this new life, becoming more and more confident with his trainers.

In November 2011, the 10th Marine Mammal Medical Workshop, devoted this time to ophthalmology, was organized at NAUSICAA. Hands-on ophthalmologic sessions with the sea lions took place during the workshop and it was suggested to operate on Algon's cataract as a surgical demonstration. In spite of a good training level and a long-standing desensitization to the squeeze cage, and maybe due to a certain anxiety and precipitation from the team to act, along with the presence of so many people for the workshop and the need to succeed, we experienced that nothing is ever taken for granted. During the anesthesia's induction Algon showed his strong character and bit the bars of the squeeze cage resulting in an unexpected, complete open fracture of the upper maxilla. The demonstration of ophthalmological surgery transformed itself into an orthopedic surgery demonstration in which his jawbone was fixed, and only cyclosporine implants are placed under his conjunctiva.

In the following months, Algon's recovery was monitored on a daily basis, while being desensitized to new behaviors that would limit risks at the time of his new anesthesia.

In June 2012, Algon was eventually operated of his cataract and the wires in his maxilla were removed. But once the surgery was completed, a heavy post-surgical follow-up began for the trainers.

This paper presents the events that allowed Algon, after 10 years, to recover good eyesight, his change of environmental assessment post surgically, the behaviors that have been put in place, the relation between trainers and Algon, and the relation between veterinarians and trainers.