

Formal Presentation Abstracts

TEFLON IMPLANTATION PROCEDURE BY CYSTOSCOPY IN A DOLPHIN BLADDER UNDER MEDICAL TRAINING

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Those of you who attended the IMATA Conference in Las Vegas two years ago may remember a dolphin named Colby from Zoomarine in southern Portugal. In 1995, this animal was trained for a voluntary cystoscopy to control a bladder problem that had been going on for some time. This was the procedure presented at the Las Vegas conference. During this investigation, we discovered that Colby was born with a misplaced ureter. Later, we were informed that, through a Teflon implant procedure, this problem, called an ectopic ureter, could be corrected. Although we wanted to proceed immediately, the implantation procedure had to be delayed because Colby was pregnant with her first calf. In May 1997 her calf, Lua, had reached the age of seven months and was able to survive on her own. The decision was made to perform the teflon implantation procedure under behavioral control and the effort was successful. Our presentation will show, in some detail, how the procedure was performed.

FROM HUSBANDRY TRAINING TO THE MICROSCOPE : THE NEW ROLE OF TRAINERS

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Over the years, many important roles have been added to the marine mammal trainer's profession. Two of these, health technician and laboratory assistant, have become vital aspects of a dolphin trainer's daily routine. At Dolphin Quest, outstanding teamwork and instruction have inter-linked the work of both trainers and veterinarians into the best possible care for the animals. Under the guidance of the two owners, both marine mammal vets, DQ trainers have expanded their position into the daily monitoring of every animal's health. Not only are the trainers the eyes and ears of early diagnosis, they also collect samples and analyze in the laboratory. This paper will present an overview of the standard medical procedure from the trainer's prospective.

RESULTS OF AN INTERNATIONAL SURVEY ABOUT MEDICAL TRAINING

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Noticing how slim the existing literature related to medical training is and how big is the empirical knowledge numerous marine mammal care professionals have acquired in the field, it seemed interesting to find a way to collect and summarize medical training techniques and experiences in order to provide to new or unexperienced animal care professionals a kind of reference work. To manage this goal, an international survey had been sent to 250 facilities around the world to estimate how the medical training is perceived among marine mammal care professionals. The respondent's close collaboration permitted to :

1. Evaluate the percentage of facilities practicing medical training : 78.75 % of the facilities answering the survey practice medical training.
2. Underline the main motivations to decide whether or not to begin medical training : reduction of stress for the animals and orientation towards a preventive animal health care.
3. Estimate the usefulness of standard medical behaviors like blood sampling, body check-up, body weight or ultrasound, or less standard behaviors like sperm sample, milk sample or eye mucus swab.
4. Determine the factors influencing the fact whether or not an animal is medically trained.

The success of such a survey shows once more the global wish of animal care professionals to share fundamental information.