

**VALIDATION OF A BIRTH PREDICTION PROGRAM IN  
*TURSIOPS TRUNCATUS* BASED ON ULTRASOUND MEASUREMENTS**

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At the 2002 IMATA conference in Orlando, a presentation was given on a birth prediction software program based on fetus head and thorax ultrasound measurements in bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus* and *T. aduncus*). The software contains an easy to fill Excel file which, based on the measurement dates, gives an estimation of the delivery date with a standard deviation expressed in days.

The program had been developed using data from 13 gestations in *Tursiops truncatus* from Brugge, Belgium, and Zoomarine, Portugal, and nine gestations in *Tursiops aduncus* from Ocean Park, Hong Kong (Lacave, Eggermont, Verslycke, Brook, Salbany, Roque, & Kinoshita, in press). The purpose of this program was to be able to know the birth date of a calf in advance and be able to predict the date after performing one or very few measurements. Although ultrasound has become a part of routine check-ups for some facilities, it is not yet available in every park. During 2003, several parks with pregnant animals had been contacted to validate the program. One or several measurements of their fetuses were collected, the data were entered into the prediction program, and an expected delivery date was advanced. The results up to the time of this abstract are very promising and hopefully the program will be available for all at the time of the conference.

**REFERENCES:**

Lacave, G., Eggermont, M., Verslycke, T., Brook, F., Salbany, A., Roque, L. & Kinoshita, R. (in press). Delivery prediction in *Tursiops truncatus* and *Tursiops aduncus* based on sonographic measurements. *Veterinary Record*.