

Tid Bits

Press Paws on the Pulse - Edited by Jess Goldstein

Australia's only frog hospital to close

After almost 7 years of operation The Cairns Frog Hospital (CFH) has announced it will have to close its doors. Funded entirely on public donations it has finally come to a point where it simply cannot continue without some grander support.

As Australia's only frog-specific hospital, the CFH has been operating out of a private home and sees approximately 350 frogs per year at a cost of over \$12,000. Nearly all the frogs they receive are diseased and often these diseases are newly discovered and have not been isolated yet. The research the CFH carries out on these 'froggie patients' is critical for amphibian disease surveillance in the region and is not being done by anyone else. With nearly 80 frogs still in care the hospital will continue to look after their remaining patients however will not be accepting any new cases.

For more information or to make a donation visit: <http://www.fdrproject.org>



Philip Masterson-Bowie - From I am Not An Animal

Travelling to the UK and want to pack your pet? All you need is a Pet Passport...

For the last hundred years if you wanted to take your cat or dog into Britain it involved a 6 month quarantine period. Now, the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS), which was introduced in February 2000 allows pet owners-and their companions-to enter the UK with the equivalent of a pet passport. Good news is Australia is one of the countries allowed to utilise PETS.

While humans may just need to organise a visa before entering a country, the pet passport does involve a little more preparation prior to arrival. Pets must be microchipped and vaccinated against rabies, and before your pet enters the UK it must be treated against ticks and tapeworm. Just remember that if you want to bring your pet back to Australia it may not be quite as easy!

PETS has also recently introduced new guidelines which will allow assistance dogs to travel with their owners in the cabin on long haul flights. This is a welcome change to previous rules, which meant dogs would have to travel in the hold of the aircraft - often leaving them distressed and disorientated on arrival.

You can find more information on PETS at <http://www.defra.gov.uk> or for information on Australia's quarantine laws visit <http://www.affa.gov.au>

And it doesn't stop at passports, now your pets can earn frequent flyer points too

Two airlines in the US are now offering frequent flyer rewards for people travelling with their pets. Midwest and United introduced the new reward scheme earlier this year and are already seeing some considerable success.

Midwest rewards pets with one free round-trip ticket for every three paid round-trip flights. Members of the Midwest Miles program can also cash in 15,000 miles in exchange for a free round-trip pet fare and United offers travellers 1,200 bonus miles when their pets travel with them.

In the month following the introduction of this program Midwest has seen the number of pet passengers increase by 75%. They also treat dogs travelling with them to heated rooms before boarding and some in-flight carob-chip doggie cookies adorned with the Midwest logo!

"Like all pure creatures, cats are practical."
- William S. Burroughs



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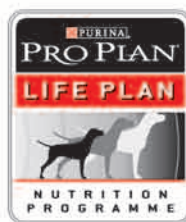


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Elephants play the parrot

Well it seems elephants are out to impress. We reported in our last issue that they showed a sixth sense when it came to predicting natural disasters and, as we all know elephants never forget, but now it appears they are not averse to a bit of mimicry as well.

Researchers in Africa have reported that two African elephants have taken to mimicking certain sounds around them. One elephant spent 18 years with two Asian elephants at a Swiss zoo and is now making the chirping sounds typical of the Asian elephants. The other, after living near a highway, is doing a mean truck impression!

Laughing at us or with us?

Anyone with a four-legged best friend would have no doubt experienced the excited grinning - and associated sound effects - that our happy hounds display for us, particularly when we get home from work or around dinner time. Research is now showing that this display is actually the animal equivalent to human laughter.

"Laughter is literally the sound of play, with the primal 'pant-pant'-the laboured breathing of physical play-becoming the human 'ha-ha,' says Robert Provine, a psychology professor at the University of Maryland in Baltimore.

Studies on rats have also found that when they "play", they often chirp-a primitive form of laughter.



KENNEL CABLE - The Animal Lovers TV Guide

ABC TV

'I Am Not An Animal' - Following along the lines of Creature Comforts, 'I Am Not An Animal' is a new six-part animation series featuring a group of animals—a horse, a cat, a bird, a monkey, a rat and a dog—who've all been given the power of speech and rational thought. They live in a luxurious Club Class wing of a secret vivisection laboratory.

Pampered and clothed unlike any lab animals in history, fed olive focaccia, wine, and mushroom and Gruyere risotto, they are blissfully unaware of the world outside. Around them, their fellow animals experience the range of tests that their human captors inflict, while the elite group—with a mixture of ignorance and pomposity—ponder movies, celebrity gossip and career aspirations.

Then, one cruel night, they are brutally liberated into their so-called natural surroundings by a gang of animal rights activists. They're ill-equipped for the real world—especially given that they don't even consider themselves to be animals—and find themselves holed-up in a remote farmhouse. Suddenly they have to fend for themselves...

'I Am Not an Animal' premieres Wed May 4 at 9pm on ABC TV and runs for six weeks.

'Our Animals' - Here's one for the kids - ABC TV is currently airing a series of 5 minute shows aimed at lower to middle primary age children. Every Wednesday and Thursday at 10.15am 'Our Animals' looks at Australian animals, their physical features, food, home and environment and social groups.

ANIMAL PLANET

'Animal Miracles' explores the powerful relationship between people and animals and features dramatic recreations of events involving animals rescuing people during natural and man-made disasters, as well as the passionate and inspiring efforts of people helping animals in need. Screening Tuesdays from May 10 at 6:30pm (AEST).

'Twisted Tales' follows the evolution of human's relationship with animals through different ages and different cultures. Each episode concentrates on a different animal whose destiny has been shaped by its collision with humankind. From Dogs, Cats, Whales, Worms, Parrots and everything in between, Twisted Tales aims to uncover the true nature of each animal featured and pinpoint what forces have actually shaped them into what they are today. Appearing weekdays at 1pm from June 1.

'Animal Precinct' - In New York City some 41,000 police officers serve in America's biggest metropolis. Within this mosaic, however, just 14 law enforcement officers from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) are responsible for the protection of the city's five million animals. Armed with guns and the power to arrest, ASPCA officers go back to the beat in all new episodes of Animal Precinct, Fridays at 7.30pm from May 6.



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