

Viking Vets

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019



LATEST GOSSIP All the news from the Viking team

WILDLIFE What to do if you find injured animals

IN THE NEWS Alert dogs can help diabetic owners

Welcome

Welcome to the Spring issue of the Viking Vets newsletter.

Read all about the latest gossip from the team, including details of upcoming promotions. We have two miracle dogs as our star pets in this issue – read all about their stories on p6. And we have a variety of stories about cats and dogs that have been in the news (p7). This month's feature is all about wildlife – how you can help injured/ abandoned birds, hedgehogs and other wildlife (p4).

As the weather gets nicer and we make it out of the cold winter months, we all tend to spend more time outside with our pets. Make sure that they are up to date on all of their preventative healthcare – including vaccinations, and flea and tick treatment. Easter will soon be upon us and although we all like to indulge in chocolate eggs and hot cross buns remember that chocolate, raisins, sultanas and currants are toxic to your pet.

If you have any feedback or there is anything you would like to see in the newsletter please contact us:

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Keep up to date with everything happening at Viking Vets by following our Facebook page @vikingvetsbristol

Vikings raise money for charity

This year the Viking Vets team will be taking on several challenges to raise money for very worthwhile charities. Read on to see how you can support us.

Some of the team will again be running the Muddy 5k Race for Life to raise money for Cancer Research UK. The event will be held on the Downs on 29th June. If you would like to sponsor Charlotte, Lisa, Jo, Sam and Imogen there is a sponsorship form in reception or you can donate online at https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/team/viking-vets-2?fbclid=IwAR0rr-hnj5InitJKdG_4ZTE4sjyWp_-MhM22cRVk1s-sQWrUmKKabmZZE6M.

Following their success walking 100km last year, Sonia and Chloe are taking on an even harder challenge this year – walking a total of 206km (128 miles) in two charity walks. The first walk is around the whole coast of the Isle of Wight in May. They are raising money for Hounds for Heroes, which provides specially trained assistance dogs to injured and

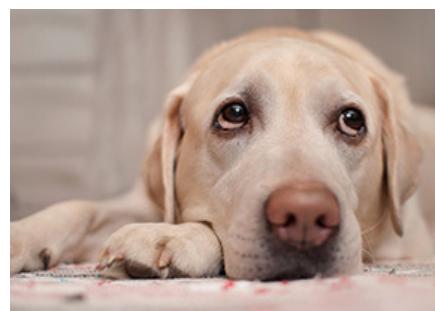


disabled men and women of both the UK Armed Forces and Emergency Services. There is a sponsorship form in reception if you would like to support them with this worthwhile cause. There are also doggy bowties and pet treats for sale to raise money.

An update on Alabama rot

There has been another report of Alabama rot in the Gloucestershire area recently. Alabama rot is a very difficult disease to diagnose and cure. It is important that owners are aware of the symptoms and call us on 0117 950 5888 if they are concerned. The first sign is usually a skin sore that was not caused by any known injury. Most commonly these sores are found below the elbow or knee and appear as a distinct swelling, a patch of red skin or are open and ulcer-like.

Within approximately two to seven days, the affected



dogs develop outward signs of sudden kidney failure, which can include vomiting, reduced hunger and an unusual tiredness. For more information visit: www.vets4pets.com/stop-alabama-rot/.

Special dogs donate blood



Pet Blood Bank UK is a charity that provides a national canine blood bank. It was set up in 2007 after a change in legislation that made it possible to collect, process and store pet blood.

Their products and services are available to all UK veterinary professionals. They collect blood from donor dogs at organised collection sessions in locations throughout the UK. The blood donated at these sessions is

taken to their state-of-the-art processing unit in Loughborough where it is processed into red blood cells and plasma products. It is then stored, ready to be supplied to veterinary practices across the UK, 24 hours a day.

There are rules regarding which dogs can donate. If you would like more information please visit www.petbloodbankuk.org/pet-owners/.

Upcoming offers and promotions



March is wildlife month at Viking Vets. Take a look at our display boards in reception to find out what to do if you come across an injured or orphaned wild animal. For more information see the feature on p4 for tips on what is the best way to help.

April will be bunny month. We are offering 10% off the VHD2 vaccine for rabbits and will have discounted nurse health checks available. Please contact us

if you would like to book your rabbit in, or if you would like more information. We will also be raising awareness of Easter poisons so take a look at our noticeboards.

May is veterinary nurse month so we will be highlighting and celebrating all of the wonderful work that our nurses do. It is also the ever-popular dental month. Book now for 50% off dental scale and polishes.

Staff news



We said a sad goodbye to vet nurse Sam Jones just before Christmas. He has taken up a position as head nurse at another practice and will be missed by the team and the clients.

One of our student veterinary nurses Emily recently passed all of her exams to become a qualified veterinary nurse. Well done to Emily. She has had a lot to celebrate recently as she also got engaged! Her partner George proposed just before Christmas.



Congratulations to the happy couple and good luck with the wedding planning!

We are currently in the process of recruiting a new veterinary nurse trainee. We have had a lot of great applicants and a decision will be made soon. Look out for our new trainee around the practice soon!

How to help injured wildlife

At this time of year it is common to come across wild animals that may be injured or appear orphaned. In these situations it is difficult to know what is the right thing to do, so we have come up with some simple guidelines to help.

As the weather gets milder, the days get longer and spring arrives, UK wildlife begins to emerge. Bats, hedgehogs and toads surface from hibernation, birds build their nests and start to breed, and deer and hares give birth to their young. This is a time when everything is growing and new life is emerging. This means that you are more likely to come across injured wildlife, or babies that appear to be orphaned. Read on for our guide on what to do if you find some of the most common wildlife, how to capture and transport them if necessary, who to contact and when to intervene or when to leave well alone.

Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs come out from hibernation at this time of year. They're all very hungry and looking for places to shelter during the day. If the animal is in immediate threat from a cat or any other danger then it needs help.

If you find a nest of babies with no mother present this can be perfectly normal as the parents can spend several hours away at a time. Monitor the nest and if no parents are seen within two hours call a wildlife rescue for help.

A hedgehog that is out during the day is likely to be in trouble so a wildlife rescue should be contacted. If you can see any wounds or maggots please contact a wildlife rescue or a vet as this animal needs to be seen as soon as possible.

If you have found a hedgehog that has fallen in a pond or been



caught in netting it will need to be taken to a vet.

If you find a young hedgehog with its eyes open offer it some wet dog or cat food (not fish flavoured), if it eats it should be able to survive. It is also a good idea to make it a shelter.

If you find a baby hedgehog with its eyes closed or if it won't eat please contact a wildlife rescue centre for advice.

Birds

It's the time of year when birds are getting ready to breed and are looking for safe places to build their nests.

A baby pigeon out of its nest will most likely need rescuing as the parents will only feed the baby if it is in the nest.

If a baby bird is out of its nest and is only partially feathered, leave it alone or try to return it to

its nest and watch to see if the parents return. If they haven't returned within an hour then the fledgling will need rescuing.

If a baby bird is out of its nest and fully feathered it is probably taking its first flight. Observe it to make sure the bird remains safe.

An adult bird should fly away from you. If it can easily be approached then it is in trouble. You should contact a wildlife rescue or veterinary practice.

If the bird has been hit by a car, flown into a window, been attacked by another animal, or has any obvious injuries seek veterinary attention.



Fawns

If you find a young deer (fawn) please leave it where it is. Female deer will leave their young in long grass or woods while they forage for food. This provides their young with protection from predators. They will only come back a couple of times a day to feed their young, so most young deer that are taken to rescue centres aren't actually orphaned.

Please don't approach or touch a baby deer as it causes them a lot of stress. Instead if you see one alone check on it every six hours. If it starts to look underweight, is shivering, its ears are "curled" or you can see blood on it please keep a close eye on it from afar and call a wildlife rescue centre.

Hares

Some hares give birth to their young in nests above ground. These nests look like patches of dead grass that dot gardens and fields over the summer. It is important to check these patches before cutting grass or burning bonfires. Don't touch baby hares that are in a nest. They stay like this for the first three weeks of their life and it is normal for their mum to only come back to the nest twice a day.

Watch the nest for signs that

WHEN TO HELP

- If the animal has been hit by a car.
- If a young animal has been alone for more than two hours.
- If it has been attacked by another animal.
- If it shows obvious signs of injury.
- If the animal is trapped in a wire fence.

WHEN NOT TO HELP

- If a young animal is alone - this is normal for most young animals and its parents are probably nearby.
- If the animal is confined to a small area such as a garden and otherwise seems healthy. It will probably find its own way out.
- If the animal is showing signs of aggression.

the hare has come back to feed her young. If you are unsure you can leave string in a criss-cross pattern on top of the nest so that when the mother returns she will kick the grass and string off the nest. Please remove the string once you know the mother has returned. If there is no movement of the string in 24 hours please call a wildlife rescue centre.

Capture and containment

Unless the animal is in immediate danger we recommend you contact a wildlife rescue before touching it. Avoid direct handling as this will leave your scent on the baby reducing the chances of later reuniting it with its parents. Hold the bird's wings closed against its body to avoid flapping and try

to support the feet to make it feel secure. Use a towel or gardening gloves to handle wildlife. If neither of these are available then you can wipe your hands on the ground first to try and remove your scent.

A cardboard box with air holes and a secure lid is sufficient to transport the animal. Place the box somewhere warm and quiet if you cannot get the animal to a vet or rescue centre straight away. Small mammals should be transported in a box with a fleece or towel to hide in.

Never offer cow's milk to wildlife as it is too high in lactose and will cause diarrhoea, which can be fatal to very young animals.

- The nearest wildlife rescue centre is Secret World. Contact them on 01278 783250.

Two doggy miracles

In this newsletter we bring you the stories of Willow and Lucy - two dogs that made miraculous recoveries and are now back to full health.

Our Christmas miracle of 2018 was little Willow. Willow was attacked by a dog on 22nd November. She sustained multiple severe puncture wounds to the entire length of her right forelimb. She was completely unable to weight-bear on her front right leg and we were worried that she may have needed an amputation.

The pictures on the right show the severe wounds to the leg when it first happened, and then the progression as it healed.

Willow's leg has now completely healed, she is able to use it just as well as before and is back to her normal crazy self. It has been a long road to recovery, with multiple visits for bandage changes so that we could check, clean and assess her wounds but she has defeated the odds.

We know that Willow had a fantastic Christmas now that she is fully healed and she is back to her cheeky self!



Lucy's speedy recovery

Lucy was brought in as her owner was very concerned about her left eye. Although it looked like conjunctivitis at first glance, Lucy was actually showing signs of eye pain (squinting, increased tear production and sensitivity to light). She had an ulcer (scratch) on her cornea and her eyeball itself had gone into spasm causing further pain. This gave her an odd appearance as her left eye had a small pupil and her right eye had a normal-sized pupil. Lucy needed a thorough

eye examination and despite being both worried and in pain, she was as good as gold, held safely in her Dad's arms. Her Dad did a fantastic job with all her medications and at her check up 24 hours later she was vastly improved.

So, if your instinct is that something's not right, trust that instinct and book a check up. If your pet is squinting, blinking more, crying (making more tears) or avoiding the light, they need an appointment as soon as possible, as these are signs of eye pain and can indicate a serious problem that needs urgent attention.



Can we curb cats' hunting instinct?

Most cat owners don't like their pets' compulsion to catch wildlife, but they feel unable to control it. A study carried out at the University of Exeter has found that most perceive their cats' hunting of mice and birds to be an unavoidable instinct.

In the research 48 cat owners from urban, suburban and rural areas in Cornwall and Oxfordshire were interviewed about their pets' hunting and roaming behaviour, what worried them about it and what aspects they felt responsible for.

Overall the hunting was seen as natural behaviour that is out of the owner's control.

Participants that did want to limit their cat's hunting felt that it was very difficult to achieve without locking them inside, which no-one wanted to do.

"We found a spectrum of views on hunting, from owners who see it as positive for pest control to those who were deeply concerned about its consequences for wild animal populations," said lead author Dr Sarah Crowley, of the Environment and Sustainability Institute on the University of Exeter's Penryn Campus in Cornwall.

"However, because hunting is a natural cat behaviour, few owners believed they could effectively control this without negatively affecting their cats' welfare."

There is wide variation in the amount that cats hunt though. Some catch many birds and mice every week, while others live indoors or very rarely catch anything.

However, some conservationists are worried about the effect that even a small hunting proportion of the 11 million cats in the UK might have on wildlife.

Currently there are several



methods to prevent cats catching wildlife – collars with bells and bright colours, and keeping them inside at night.

"Cat owners understandably make their pets' health and wellbeing a priority, and many feel that cats need free access to the outdoors," said Professor Robbie McDonald, head of Exeter's Wildlife Science group, who is leading the research.

"At the same time, having such independent pets creates extra anxieties for owners about both their cats' safety while ranging free, and their impacts on wildlife.

"We are working closely with cat owners and cat welfare organisations. Our aim is to find practical ways of reducing hunting, while enhancing cat health and welfare."

Sponsorship for the study comes from the independent bird conservation charity SongBird Survival and is overseen by an advisory group comprising veterinarians, cat behaviour and welfare experts, and representatives from SongBird Survival, International Cat Care and the RSPCA.

"We are very concerned about

the significant adverse impacts that free-ranging domestic cats can have on our songbirds and other wildlife," said Robert Middleditch, SongBird Survival's Chairman.

"We are therefore delighted to have commissioned this important project, and believe that working with cat owners to find practical solutions, while promoting responsible pet ownership, can benefit both vulnerable wildlife and cats."

Sam Watson, RSPCA cat welfare expert, said: "This is valuable work which helps us to understand pet owners' sense of responsibility towards their cats and any potential impact they could have on wildlife.

"While there is still lots of debate as to whether cats have detrimental effects on wild bird populations, on an individual level predation attempts by cats are likely to cause considerable suffering, so we would welcome any practical solutions which would help to avoid this.

"We hope further study can help find ways to reduce the impact that cats may have on wildlife whilst also maintaining and boosting the welfare of our cats."

Dogs help manage Type-1 diabetes

Research by the University of Bristol, in collaboration with Medical Detection Dogs, has found that the best trained alert dogs have the potential to vastly improve the quality of life of people living with Type-1 diabetes.

The study was reported in *PLOS One* and showed that on average trained dogs alerted their owners to 83% of hypoglycaemic episodes in over 4000 episodes that were examined. A hypoglycaemic diabetic episode is where blood sugar drops dangerously low and if left untreated, can lead to unconsciousness or even death.

These findings confirm that alert dogs can help diabetic patients to regulate their blood sugars and avoid the risks of hypoglycaemic episodes and hyperglycaemia.

Lead author Dr Nicola Rooney from the Bristol Veterinary School, said: "We already know from previous studies that patients' quality of life is vastly improved by having a medical detection dog. However, to date, evidence has come from small scale studies. Our study provides the first large-scale evaluation of using medical detection dogs to detect hypoglycaemia."

The researchers assessed the reliability of 27 trained glycaemia alert dogs, whose owners provided six to 12 weeks of blood records detailing every time the dog was alerted.

Medical Detection Dogs trains pet dogs to respond to the odour of human disease and help owners live with life-threatening diseases. Familiar with their owners, dogs are conditioned to respond with alerting behaviours when their owners' blood sugar levels fall outside of a target range.

Prompted by the alerting



behaviour of their dog the patient can take appropriate action if these episodes occur, usually by administering insulin or eating to retain the right glucose levels.

Dr Rooney, Teaching Fellow in Animal Welfare and Behaviour, added: "Our research shows a dog's effectiveness is affected

by the individual dog and its connection with its human partner. Since the usage of such dogs is growing, it's important that any dogs used for these purposes are professionally trained, matched and monitored by professional organisations like Medical Detection Dogs. It's also vital that research continues both to assess true efficacy and determine ways to optimise their performance."

Dr Claire Guest, Chief Executive and co-founder of Medical Detection Dogs, said: "The findings are fantastic news for all those who are living with Type-1 diabetes and other conditions. Medical detection dogs primarily serve patients looking for more effective and independent ways of managing their condition.

"Our dogs also serve the wider medical community by offering proactive solutions that are natural, non-invasive and have been shown to provide countless psychological benefits.

"As our natural companions, and with a highly refined sense of smell, why shouldn't they be able to detect changes in our personal health?"

"Alert dogs can help diabetic patients to regulate their blood sugars and avoid the risks of hypoglycaemic episodes and hyperglycaemia."

Education could reduce dog bites

A study at the University of Lincoln has concluded that a better understanding of the way dogs communicate distress could be the first step in reducing the risk of dog bites for both children and adults.

The psychology researchers investigated how children and their parents interpret a dog's body language and found that both groups significantly underestimate and misinterpret the way that dogs display signs of anxiety or distress. This includes behaviours such as snarling or growling, which pose a significant risk to children.

The project was carried out in three phases involving children aged three to five and one group of parents. Initially, each group was shown a series of short video clips of dogs displaying a full range of behavioural signals ranging from happy to high-risk conflict-escalating behaviours such as growling, snarling or biting. Participants were then asked to rate their perception of the behaviours on a simple scale from "very happy" to "very unhappy/very angry".

The second part of the study was a training phase, in which the videos were repeated accompanied by simple information explaining the type of behaviour displayed by the dog e.g. "the dog is licking its nose", how to interpret the behaviour i.e. "the dog is worried" and a safety message, such as "you should leave the dog alone".

Once the training phase was completed, participants were immediately tested to establish their judgements of the dogs' behaviours. They were then tested again after six months and after one year to measure whether the training had a lasting effect.

The results showed that



young children found it harder to interpret the dog distress signals correctly (53% of three year olds misinterpreted high risk signals such as growling or snarling; of these children 65% thought that these dogs were happy). 17% of the parents also incorrectly interpreted these behaviours.

After the training phase, both children and adults showed better understanding, with most improvement on the conflict-escalating signals such as staring, growling or

snarling. Pre-training, only 55% of four year olds were able to correctly interpret high-risk dog behaviours, with this rising to 72% post training. The training was also shown to have a lasting effect with the figure rising to 76% 12 months after training.

Lead researcher Professor Kerstin Meints from the University of Lincoln's School of Psychology said: "We observed that children often try to apply an explanation for the dog's signals that would be appropriate to explain human behaviour. For example, children often wrongly interpreted a dog snarling and showing its teeth to mean that the dog was happy, which could put them at significant risk if they were to approach a dog displaying these signals."

"This project is the first to offer an intervention to significantly enhance children's and adults' abilities to correctly interpret dog signalling and has shown that with simple training we can improve their awareness, knowledge, recognition and interpretation skills."

"After the training phase, both children and adults showed better understanding of dog behaviour."

Can you spot the spring words?

M	G	H	L	M	P	R	P	S	H	P	R	M	P	S	K
B	E	D	W	G	E	Y	Y	I	X	N	B	F	I	G	T
R	U	A	O	T	H	D	T	A	S	E	D	Y	L	N	P
A	G	T	S	F	N	T	W	R	P	Q	R	Q	U	I	U
P	C	A	T	I	Q	Z	Z	G	R	D	I	Y	T	V	D
R	E	C	W	E	H	A	M	F	I	S	B	S	D	A	D
I	V	R	G	S	R	J	B	C	N	X	B	P	A	S	L
L	U	A	A	H	O	F	K	C	G	R	L	R	F	T	E
V	F	A	C	I	J	Z	L	F	X	P	J	B	F	H	S
J	J	L	X	Y	N	N	R	Y	W	U	F	K	O	G	O
M	C	L	E	W	A	F	L	O	W	E	R	S	D	I	Q
E	L	E	T	H	B	K	K	O	Z	V	D	W	I	L	D
O	K	R	I	T	Y	M	L	D	Q	V	P	F	L	Y	W
X	D	B	K	M	A	S	K	O	Z	D	R	J	Y	A	F
P	U	M	I	Y	M	R	Z	Z	B	O	Z	L	G	D	H
C	B	U	A	P	R	I	L	F	O	O	L	S	D	A	Y

spring	May	Easter
bud	April	butterfly
rain	windy	April Fools Day
umbrella	bird	kite
tulip	flowers	puddles
Daylight savings	daffodil	