Turtle Excluder Device

As a quoted source in the article entitled “Sea Turtle Excluder Device” (Int J Stud Anim Prob 2(5):231-232, 1981), I would like to offer some corrections and also clarify one of my comments in the article.

I commend the Journal for the attention paid to the sea turtle excluder device (TED). The TED may well provide a technological solution to the problem of incidental capture and drowning of sea turtles in shrimp trawl nets. This is the real new development in this area. The reluctance of the governing community in the Southeast to adopt the device was not meant to downplay the successful aspects of the TED. The Center for Environmental Education (not “Council on,” as printed in the article) acknowledges the effectiveness of the device and is actively working to promote its adoption.

There were a few factual errors in the article that should be corrected. There are four species (not three as stated) of sea turtles that are incidentally caught in shrimp trawl nets in the southeastern United States. The leatherback sea turtle (Dermochelys coriacea) was not mentioned. Yet they are occasionally caught and drowned. In the same section of the article, the green turtle is identified as “the most endangered species of sea turtle” by turtle conservationists. The Kemp’s Ridley has only one native nesting beach and is estimated to number less than 1,000 individuals.

Although documented, 2,085 sea turtle carcasses did wash ashore along the Gulf and South Atlantic coasts in 1980, they did not all appear “2-4 days after the completion of shrimp trawling operations in the area” as indicated in the article. Instead, the turtles washed ashore throughout the spring and summer months during the shrimp season.

Also, the National Marine Fisheries Service is part of the Department of Commerce, not the Department of Interior as stated in the article.

Thank you for your attention to these issues.

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Equine Behavior Problems

Thank you for Katherine Houpt’s excellent introduction to equine behavior problems (Int J Stud Anim Prob 2(6):329-337, 1981). I would like to add two observations to her commentary on cribbing and pawing.

Cribbing is also an indication of the amount of pain endured. Veterinary surgeon G.J. Baker, MRCVS, noted this in his report in Equine Behavior, Spring 1979. “Horses progress from door chewing to true cribbing...as a result of pain.”

A month prior to his death, my 28-year-old gelding began chewing wood in his box stall, as well as showing deterioration in general condition. He later succumbed to arterial myosenteric thrombosits and spontaneous twist of the ileocecal junction. A summary of the case, and the horse’s behavior near the time of death, is described in Equine Behavior, Summer 1981.

Throughout the 11 years I cared for him, the same gelding had a habit of alternately circling in midair and sometimes pawing, using alternate forelegs, while eating grain and occasionally, hay. This behavior seemed to be similar to that seen in nursing kittens—a rhythmic extension and retraction of the claws, or in human babies who drum with a spoon while being fed.

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Journal Developments

Andrew N. Rowan

A number of changes need to be announced concerning the management and production of the Journal, although I would emphasize that the editorial policy will remain unaltered.

The publisher of the Journal will no longer be the Institute for the Study of Animal Problems. In the future, our parent organization, The Humane Society of the United States, and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in England will jointly assume the role of publisher. Decisions on day-to-day editorial policy will remain in the hands of the Editors-in-Chief, as before, except that one of these Editors-in-Chief will now be David Wilkins of the RSPCA, who replaces Dr. Michael Fox. This change reflects two facts: that the RSPCA has provided a substantial contribution to the Journal, and that we need to extend our coverage of European developments and events. Dr. Michael Fox will be an Associate Editor.

We also are sorry to announce that Nancy Henes, our first editor, has decided to leave us and is currently working as a freelancer. She was an important and beneficial influence on the Journal in its formative stages and certainly made my job much easier. However, nobody (not even an Editor-in-Chief) is indispensable and we have appointed Dana Murphy, who has a Masters degree in Science and extensive experience in science writing and the editing of scientific papers, as our new editor.

On the production side, we are being hit hard by rising printing and mailing costs. We have therefore decided to economize by producing only four issues a year, rather than raising subscription prices. While this will mean fewer issues per year, we hope to maintain our annual output of approximately 350 pages. This change will allow us to accept longer papers for publication, if necessary. To aid our readers, several selected major articles in each issue will be supplemented with abstracts in German. We also plan to convert the whole Journal to a double-column format, since the single-column copy is tiring to read. The major articles will still be distinguished from the news and analysis pieces, however, by use of a slightly different layout.

For those readers who are interested, we have just passed the 1000-subscription mark and we thank you all for your support and interest. We hope to continue our excellent rate of growth.

The “Show Dog” Syndrome

M.W. Fox

I have received many letters on the problem of “show dog” syndrome from owners who send their dogs to compete at various dog shows throughout the country. Owners describe this syndrome as follows. The dog literally “goes to pieces” in the show ring and becomes a “nervous wreck.” The typical pattern is one of a healthy, outgoing dog with a seemingly stable temperament and of sound lineage having a complete breakdown.