



## **INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF ANIMAL PROFESSIONALS**

Newsletter June 2018

*Dear Members,*

*After a very long and hard winter the UK is finally rewarded by a glorious summer. May and June have been wonderful. Long may it last. When you look at fields you can see the grass turning yellow because everything is so dry, and farmers and owners of horses need to make sure that their animals have plenty of food and water available.*

*But also dog owners have to make sure that their dogs can have a refreshing drink after a walk and at all times at home. Many people take plastic bottles which they fill with water. Please be aware that this water is not good for you or your pets because the plastic reacts with the water in the heat and can be harmful. It is best to fill a thermos flask with cold water which you can leave in the car or carry with you. The water stays fresh and cold.*

*Every year I fly out to Greece for a few days to stay with my friends and ISAP's ambassador Dimosthenis Moumiadis. They run a dog trainers' academy on*



*mainland Greece and every May their students graduate. It is a great honour for me to be invited and present their*

*graduating students with ISAP certificates. Most people fortunately speak English over there because Greek is not an easy language to just pick up... It is such a nice and welcoming country to visit! Well.*

*That's my perk for the year...*

*Have a nice summer, Everyone!!!*

*Brigitte*



## **Be aware of the countryside code and keep your dog under control. By Jackie Murphy**

We all love to take our dogs for a walk in the countryside, as on a fine sunny day, there is nothing more enjoyable for dogs and their owners to have a leisurely walk.

Dogs enjoy a run off lead and owners love to see their dogs running around sniffing, chasing a ball or frisbee and just generally having fun and using up some of that physical energy.

However, are you aware of the countryside code? I was recently interviewed on BBC Radio Kent regarding the alarming number of dogs that are causing stress to farmers and the shocking results that a dog can make to a farmer's livelihood regarding his livestock.

When you take your dog for a walk in the countryside be aware of the local byelaws, local signs – there maybe a restriction at certain times of the year (for example some areas of land may have nesting birds at certain times of the year, so your dog may not be able to swim in ponds/lakes/rivers during this time).

More importantly many dogs and owners will come across grazing sheep and there is a strong instinct for your dog to chase, it is advisable to put your dog on the lead, even if you have an obedient dog.

If your dog chases a sheep or flock, they can cause serious damage through stress of worrying the sheep and this can result in the sheep dying or pregnant ewes to miscarry. A panicked sheep can try and escape and can be killed in the process, not to mention damage to fencing or boundaries. Lambs can be separated from their mothers and can either die from starvation or through hypothermia and sheep can die or have to be put down due to dog bites.

It is an offence to allow your dog to worry sheep – this means not just chasing but attacking and farmers can by law shoot a dog if the dog endangers their sheep.

There have been moves to look at DNA testing for dogs so that they can match the related dog to the incident. However, if we all just take steps to remember that when near livestock (even if there is a fence between you and sheep) clip your dog on the lead and walk calmly through the field. Keep to the paths and areas when you as a walk/dog owner have a right of access – again a dog on a lead is safer while you cross the field than a dog off lead.

Remember we can all enjoy days out with dog(s) following these simple rules.

For more information please go to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code>

## Pet rabbit in Italy: interview with Dr. Alessandro Melillo



### Article by Roberta Roscini ISAP's Ambassador for Italy

The rabbit in Italy is increasingly being chosen as a pet. Whether purchased in a store or specialized breeding, or adopted in a shelter or recovered from situations of mistreatment and abuse, more and more Italians welcome this animal as a member of the family. Not always, however, this increased interest in the rabbit as a pet goes hand in hand with an adequate knowledge of the specific needs of this species.

In this regard I contacted **Dr. Alessandro Melillo - veterinary surgeon** specializing in avian diseases, rabbit and wild animals, Exotic Medicine and Surgery specialist - to clarify some important points on the cohabitation between rabbit and human being and on the current situation in our country.

*Q: Dr. Melillo, from an ethological perspective, what are the basic needs of rabbit in nature?*

*A:* The rabbit certainly needs to have safe and secluded places, in which to hide and feel protected. It must also be considered that the rabbit is a social animal for which the company of its same species companions is of fundamental importance, and it is therefore its necessity to be able to live with its fellows. Another aspect of fundamental importance is nutrition: the rabbit feeds on hay, herbs, vegetables, so it should not eat anything that deviates from these foods.

*Q: How can these needs be met in the context of domestic cohabitation with humans?*

A: Providing secluded places to hide, adopting whenever possible couples or small groups of these animals, and referring to a veterinarian experienced in this species for nutrition. Furthermore, it is important to provide the rabbit with the right amount of physical and mental activity, through games of olfactory research, problem solving games, or even more physical games such as exercises on the body of the human being sitting on the ground to increase the trust and the bond between rabbit and human. The human body can be huge for a rabbit, so often the animal approaches only a part of our body, such as the feet, and could be frightened if we approached a hand, for example, or we would bend over it. The rabbit with his siblings often plays chasing each other. This activity, however, can be complicated if carried out with the human being, as the rabbit is a natural prey and the man a predator, consequently being chased by a human, as they may be trusted, can be frightening for the rabbit. If during this game the rabbit should stop running in a zig-zag, typical behavior of playing chase, and begins to run in a straight line away from the human, with wide eyes, this is clearly a sign of fear and the game isn't a game anymore and must be interrupted.



*Q: What are the most commonly committed mistakes in the domestic management of the rabbit?*

A: Malnutrition, wrong socialization with the human being, and the false expectations of those who expect from the rabbit behaviors and attitudes that are typical of other species such as the dog or the cat. The rabbit is an animal that requires patience and respect for the time needed to ensure that the animal places trust in the human being. Living with a

rabbit also becomes an opportunity to teach any children in the family the self-control, the patience in relating with each other, and respect for the spaces and times of the other.

*Q: In your opinion, how is the Italian situation in terms of protection of this animal and information on its ethological characteristics?*

A: In my opinion, the situation is still insufficient. According to Italian legislation the rabbit is considered a zootechnical animal, then used for food and industrial consumption, and considered a material good of consumer utility. There is therefore no protection against this species as a pet. This topic is much debated, and right now in this historical moment I am personally engaged in a campaign to raise awareness through a petition and various informative articles to change the status of this species and make it a pet.\*

*Q: What advice would you give to those wishing to adopt a rabbit?*

A: I would advise them to be well informed about the ethological characteristics of this animal, to be able to consciously assess whether it may or may not be compatible with the person's lifestyle. I would certainly recommend contacting a veterinarian expert in this species to help people understand the right way to interact with a rabbit and the correct daily

management in the future perspective of the entire life span of the animal, to prevent abandonment and improper management that can put the rabbit's life at serious risk.

*\*Link to the petition to recognize the rabbit as a pet: <http://www.ancheiosofarticompania.eu/>*



We have had another mentally recharging visit to the Kruger National Park and in addition to some wonderful animal sightings and interactions we were fortunate to be able to spend some time at a bird hide overlooking a small pool of water. On our last visit some six months ago this was dry with not even sufficient water for a mud-bath or wallow.



Sitting comfortably in the hide we were able to watch a wonderful example of symbiosis in nature - the central figure in this instance being the white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) which like many other large herbivores relies on the oxpeckers

(Red billed - *Buphagus erythrorhynchus* and the Yellow billed - *Buphagus africanus*) to rid it of parasites.

It was interesting to note how these large animals carefully backed themselves into the water, lay down and rolled onto their sides,



keeping the underside, especially the area around the tail, submerged. We were drawn to the sudden movements they made as though they had been pricked with a very large pin. It was some time before we realised that they were being groomed

under the water in areas that the birds could not reach by the Serrated hinged terrapins (*Pelusios sinuatus*) that inhabit this pool and that on the odd occasion they apparently nipped too hard. We see them regularly in most of the permanent dams and ponds but normally they are basking on a rock or a log doing their version of tai chi.

Wonderful to see how three such very different creatures, one a large herbivore, the second a bird and the third a reptile can form a partnership that has definite benefits for all three.





## **Good advice from our American ambassador Eric Albert**

Here are ten things you should know about dating a person who lives with a dog....

### 1. They are in things for the long run

Think about it. This person has already committed to caring for another living creature for the next 10-15 years of their life. They're not going to completely panic when you expect a certain level of faithfulness.

### 2. They know that things can get messy

Anyone who lives with a dog has experienced knocked over trashcans, torn up shoes, and a myriad of other doggy-induced messes. Dog owners know how to handle sticky situations — like literally, they just cleaned up a spilled container of peanut butter thanks to Fido. Luckily for you, this patience and ability to roll with the punches often translates into your person's relationship with you as well.

### 3. They expect you to love their dog as much as they do

When things start to get serious between you and this human companion, you can expect an exponential increase in texts, photos, and videos sent to you pertaining to their dog. If things get to the “forever” stage, they may even refer to you as their pup’s “mommy” or “daddy.” You are now a part of their pack, and they couldn’t be happier to share it with you.

### 4. Best. Snugglers. Ever.

You know who your flame was spooning before you entered the picture? Their dog. Every human companion does it. To a human companion, it is perfectly acceptable to be snuggling with both you and their dog when it comes to hanging out on the couch and going to bed. Accept the snuggle love.



#### 5. They like to go exploring

Most human companions get tired of walking around the same block, so they find new and exciting places to exercise their pup. Naturally, you will go on these adventuresome walks with them, during which they will take a photo of you and their pup and plaster it on every social media platform. Embrace it.

#### 6. They can pick up on subtleties

Before they met you, your person was already caring for another living creature. They became attuned to what each little whimper, yelp, and body movement meant their dog needed. Don't be surprised when your person seems to instinctively know when you are upset or frustrated; they've been communicating with someone who doesn't talk. Body language is kind of their thing.

#### 7. There will be times when their dog comes first

Those times are almost all of the time. This dog has been in their life long before you were, and has probably seen them with other romantic partners. Date nights may be cancelled because their pup is sick. They may ask you to stay at their house more often because that is where their dog is comfortable. This may be trying at points, and if you find yourself spiraling into a weird jealous rage, remember that this is a dog. Even if your person puts their pup first, you are still the first human in their lives.

#### 8. They plan in advance

Human companions plan in advance because they have to. Spur of the moment weekend trips or spontaneous sleepovers may be out of the question due to their pup. This isn't a negative trait, though. Human companions know how to take responsibility, and this is something that will benefit your relationship as well.

## 9. But they still know how to have fun

Studies have shown that human companions tend to be more social and outgoing than cat owners. Just because your person has a dog doesn't mean they are tethered to them 24/7. They'll show you they can be an animal too with their outrageous dance moves and creative date nights.

## 10. They love unconditionally

Human companions love their slobbery, mess making, food snatching, yelping dogs more than anything else in the world. No matter what trouble their dog gets into, they still love them unconditionally. In a not-so-strange coincidence, this ability to love unconditionally will make its way into your relationship as well. There is nothing better in the world than being completely loved and accepted by someone. Just ask your person's dog.



~ Save The Turtle ~

Turtles are magnificent creatures  
With beautiful graceful endearing features  
Keeping oceans in environmental harmony  
Swimming in bliss happy forever free  
But no more  
As man's waste floats to the ocean floor  
Throwaway living makes human life easy and so fantastic  
As thousands of dollars of shopping is placed in bags made of plastic  
But as we eat our food we buy  
Turtles die  
For their favourite food of jellyfish  
It is not what it seems, it is not their dietary dish  
But death disguised as a discarded plastic bag from a boat  
Turtles know not the danger, but turtles feel, they suffer, suffer, gasping from bloat  
Next time you go for a shop  
Just stop  
Think of what you may be killing as you fill your plastic bag for ease  
A seventy-year-old turtle swimming silently searching for food in shifting seas  
If you are asked at check-out, "do you want a plastic bag before you go?"  
Simply say... "No,"

*Written by: Celia A Richards GradD ABM, ADip FBM, ADip CBM, MISAP (beh)*

Ambassador for Australia

## Essential oils and aroma diffusers are dangerous for your cats

Ellen Scott Thursday 11 Jan 2018 5:23 pm

Submitted by David Oehler (Canadian Ambassador)

Sorry to ruin your very hygge home, but we have some worrying news about that fantasy you've cooked up about Muji interiors with an elderly cat walking around.

In case you weren't aware of this, using essential oils in an aroma diffuser can be seriously dangerous for your cat.

After a Facebook post went viral in which a woman shared the story of her cat, Ernie, being poisoned by a diffuser spreading eucalyptus oil throughout the bedroom, we asked the RSPCA just how risky keeping an aroma diffuser in a house you share with a cat really is.

Turns out it's **really** not a good idea.

'Essential oils are hazardous to cats and can cause a number of adverse reactions,' the RSPCA tells Metro.co.uk.

The animal charity notes that while some essential oils cause more of an adverse reaction than others (tea tree oil, for example, can cause a range of health issues from just a few drops applied topically), it's best to avoid them entirely when you have a cat – and that includes in the form of diffusers, which work to spread oils through the air your little kitty breathes.

The toxicity of tea tree oil can lead to depression, tremors, vomiting, and hypersalivation, and in more severe cases cats can experience paralysis of their back legs, collapse, or even a coma. Occasionally cats will die from exposure to tea tree oil thanks to organ failure.

Other oils, even when taken in small amounts, can cause serious health issues in cats.

Cats exposed to essential oils can show signs of poisoning, including difficulty breathing, vomiting, diarrhea, and seizures.

### **Signs your cat may be poisoned:**

- Depression
- Lack of appetite
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea



- Breathing difficulties and bad breath
- Twitching
- Seizures

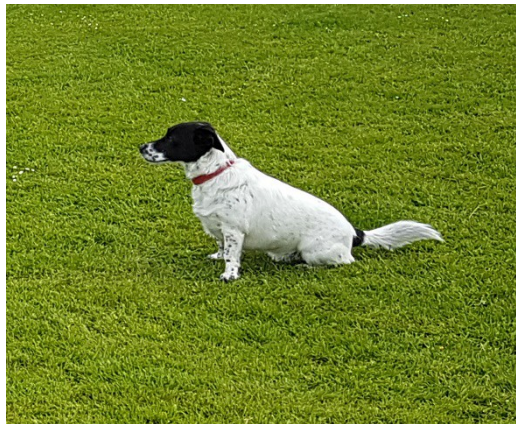
Of course, different substances can affect pets in different ways, so it may not always be clear when a substance is damaging to your cat. Plus, some symptoms can take a while to appear, so owners may not immediately be aware that something's wrong.

Our advice? If you've got a cat, skip the essential oil massages and aroma diffusers. If you've been using either smelly option recently, take your cat to the vet to get them checked over.

Having a home that smells of lavender is lovely, but it's far better to have a cat around the place. Put their health and comfort above your desire for a flat that smells like a yoga studio.

Article by our Ambassador for Ireland, Elizabeth Alderton

### **BITTEN!**



Well, here he is – the culprit

And here's what he did to me.



So, what happened and why?

Sally contacted me regarding training. Bernie lived with another small terrier, Phil. They got on well, playing together, but barked ferociously at visitors and Bernie would become very aggressive to people.

The owner, Sally, brought Bernie to training. Bernie was very friendly, loved playing ball and proved an apt pupil. He learned early stay commands and improved recall and lead walking. These were to form the basis for retraining his behaviour with visitors.

During this time, however, Sally reported that Bernie had bitten her daughter and still became extremely aggressive at the gate when people visited. I suggested that tennis balls be made available at the gate so that visitors could throw these for Bernie before they entered, and this was working well. However, Bernie was still experiencing periods of aggression when people entered the house.

A home visit was arranged.

#### The gate

On arrival I phoned Sally and she placed the dogs in the garden together while I approached the gate. Sure enough, extreme excitement was evidenced by the dogs, Phil was barking and Bernie was barking and jumping up at the gate. I took one of the available tennis balls and threw it for the dogs. Bernie chased it and Phil took it from him, with Bernie then reengaged at me, the visitor. Additional tennis balls were thrown and Bernie redirected well onto playing ball. Then I came inside into the garden and play continued happily.

The problem at the gateway was simple over-excitement, which could be handled by the use of several tennis balls to engage both dogs in play. Bernie settled well and was a friendly, fun little dog.

### Overconfidence

My fault. At this point I became overconfident and subconsciously sure that there was really no problem beyond some overexcitement.

### Small porch

The external door of the house led into a small porch with an internal door. The internal door was open and the external door had a bell. Sally took the dogs inside and I rang the bell. Sally said 'Come in' (her normal reaction to visitors). The dogs came rushing at the door, barking and Bernie jumped up several times, grabbing at my clothes and twice engaging sharply with me (very painful). A nasty deep wound on my arm occurred and a long deep scratch made by his canine tooth on my body (private, no picture!) However, note that it is only one wound (no sign of closing to bite). Bernie was completely out of control with excitement and we went outside into the garden and settled him down with the ball as before.

### Serves me right

Well, I would say that it was a sharp lesson for me. Sally had said that Bernie got ferocious, and I had assumed that the behaviour at the gate was the same as that in the house. However, the smaller space in the house made the problem far worse and Bernie's excitement led to injury.

### Well done Bernie – and Sally

Sally was advised to keep Bernie completely away from children in case of incident and to make sure that visitors played with him with supervision in the garden if they wished. He was not to greet visitors inside the house but would remain in his bed to avoid overexcitement. He continued his lessons and learned to stay quietly and Sally applied the stay every time a visitor came, with Bernie learning to sit in his bed quietly instead of engaging in overexcitement at the door.

### Happy ending

Bernie is not an aggressive dog, but his excitement led him to grab at clothes and to loss of bite control so that he would at times cause damage. It was possible to retrain Bernie so that he could be a member of a happy family.

Look how well he's doing here at the end of his training course.

Here he is on week 6, having learned to stay despite distractions (in fact, more of a distraction occurred than we expected, and he rose to the occasion very well!)

And me? I learned to believe the owner!



I'm still in contact with Sally, who buys dog food from me and I'm pleased to say that Bernie has continued to do well.