

Animal ROUNDAABOUT



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Produced for people with an interest in the exhibition of animals in zoos, circuses, mobile farms, fauna and wildlife parks in NSW.

Taronga Zoo Elephant Birth



Newly born elephant Luk Chai

Photo Credit – Bobby-Joe Vial

At 3.08am on the 4th July 2009 Taronga Zoo's female elephant Thong Dee gave birth to Australia's first elephant calf after a 22 month gestation. In preparation for the birth dietary and fitness programs were initiated, specialist veterinary equipment was installed and assistance was sought from a world renowned expert in elephant reproduction. As a result of these procedures the birthing process went well. Taronga Zoo's elephant manager Mr Gary Miller has over 30 years experience with elephants and has assisted in many births. He is integrated into the social structure of the elephant herd and participated as an "auntie" during the birth process. The young elephant has been named as a result of a competition that received 32,000 entries, with the winning name being Luk Chai, which means "son" in Thai. Two other females are also pregnant including the matriarch Porntip (due in March 2010) and Pak Boon (due in November 2010). The male elephant Gung naturally impregnated Thong Dee and Pak Boon (which the Zoo believes is an Australian first!) while Porntip became pregnant through artificial insemination to Melbourne Zoo's bull. This was performed by a world renowned team of elephant reproduction specialists from the Berlin Institute of Zoo Biology and Wildlife Research. Artificial insemination techniques can assist with improving the genetic diversity and health of elephant herds to ensure that the calves are not closely related for future generations of breeding.

Is it time to start our act yet?

Photo Credit – John Mare



Circus Industry Update

Australia's classical circuses, which use animals in their performances, are flourishing as never before. The Australian public simply love animals and do not tire of watching them perform, race, jump, parade etc. Our circuses take animals to all the towns and communities we visit and we invite the public to come and see the animals in their enclosures at any time, free of charge. The public can then make up their own mind as to the condition and welfare of circus animals – conditions that are under constant discussion and review with Industry and Investment NSW (formally NSW DPI). In Australia the paid attendance numbers for classical circuses over a year is about the same as for opera, ballet, soccer or rugby union. The Circus Federation of Australia Inc is one of the founder members of the World Circus Federation based in Monte Carlo – Federation Mondiale du Cirque. Our partners there include En Piste (Canada), European Circus Association (Europe), Festival International du Cirque (Monte Carlo), Animal Interest Alliance (South Africa), and the Outdoor Amusement Business Association (USA). For further

information on circuses and their animals please look at the websites: www.circusfed.org.au and www.circusfederation.org.

- There is a continuing and substantial growth in ticket sales to classical circuses in Australia. This means that the Big Tops constantly have to be enlarged to accommodate larger audiences.
- In an average year 50 NSW towns are visited and entertained by a classical circus
- Currently there are 14 circuses in Australia, of which nine have animals and of these 3 have exotic species such as primates, big cats and elephants.
- For a slide show of Australian Classical Circus log onto www.circusfederation.org then click onto English, then Circus Around the World, then Circus in Australia.

John Le Mare
Circus Federation of Australia

Thefts of Reptiles from Zoos and Fauna Parks

In recent years there have been several thefts of reptiles from zoos and fauna parks in New South Wales. Though many of these thefts have occurred at night when the park or zoo was closed to the public there have been several brazen burglaries during visitor hours from both on-display and off-display enclosures. Some of these stolen animals were recovered, however most were not and add to the illegal trade of reptiles throughout Australia. The stolen animals are at increased risk of poor welfare from the thieves providing the animals with inadequate husbandry and conditions, or through exposure to other illegally acquired animals that may be diseased. The thefts also increase the likelihood of exotic species establishing in the wild. Therefore there is an important need for all exhibitors of reptiles to be vigilant in the security arrangements of their animals. Security arrangements can include: 1) restricting access to enclosures via a rear "keeper only" area, 2) ensuring that "keeper only" areas are very secure with good quality doors, door frames, locks and walls, 3) installing thicker more impact resistant glass on the front of



Common Death Adder

display enclosures, 4) installing security cameras around enclosures for exotic or rare species, 5) increasing general awareness for all staff, especially during school holidays, and 6) ensuring that volunteers and relevant staff are properly supervised.

Photo Credit – Stephen Jackson

Devil Rock

The Australian Reptile Park has established a partnership with Sydney University Faculty of Veterinary Science, the Tasmanian Government and Australian rock artists to play a series of rock concerts. These concerts are to raise money for the endangered Tasmanian devil, which has been ravaged by a contagious cancer known as the Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD) that has seen the wild population of devils decrease by about 70 per cent since it was first discovered in 1996. Devil Rock was launched by Peter Garrett, the Federal Minister for the Environment Heritage and the Arts, and will be coordinated by Jon English. The first concert will be held at Sydney University on 6 March 2010. A second concert will be held later in the year at Blue Tongue Stadium on the NSW Central Coast. A Battle of the Bands competition will also be developed for young rockers to get on board, which is being developed in partnership with the NSW Department of Education. Young bands across Australia are being encouraged to post a song online with the winning band playing live at the first concert. The funds raised from the concerts will



Photo Credit Australian Reptile Park

Jon English and Peter Garrett at the launch of Devil Rock

go towards a joint research and breeding program at the University of Sydney and the Australian Reptile Park at Gosford. The Australian Reptile Park and various other zoos around Australia are endeavouring to establish an insurance captive population on the mainland, because there is the very real threat of the wild population going extinct, while research organisations such as Sydney University are urgently researching to find a cure for DFTD. Further information can be found at: www.devilrock.com.au

Big Cats in Zoos

The development of a new big cat facility, especially when it is the first for a park or zoo, is a big step both financially (due to the complexity of construction of the exhibit and ongoing costs) and from an occupational health and safety point of view. The initial outlay of capital to develop a big cat facility is very expensive so a cost benefit analysis should be completed to determine whether the financial outlay and ongoing costs will be recouped by increased visitation to ensure the investment is worthwhile and does not place a financial burden on the park. When this has been established considerable effort must be undertaken to ensure that the facility and associated husbandry meets all the requirements of the General Standards for Exhibiting Animals in NSW and the Standards for Exhibiting Carnivores in NSW. Importantly the zoo or fauna park must ensure that they have employed an adequate number of appropriately trained staff and that well developed standard operating procedures have been recorded and adhered to. These procedures are critical to firstly ensure the risk of escape or other incident is minimised and secondly to allow an appropriate response in the event that an emergency occurs to ensure the safety of staff and visitors. An important aspect to consider in the development of standard operating procedures is whether an escaped big cat should be shot or whether it can potentially be recaptured through the use of darting with a tranquilizer to sedate the animal safely. All applications to Industry and Investment NSW for big cats will be assessed to ensure that all of these procedures are in place and that the perimeter fence is secure enough to minimise the likelihood of an escaped big cat leaving the premises.



Photo Credit Stephen Jackson

Male lion

NSW Fauna and Marine Parks Association Update



Echida puggle

Photo Credit – Stephen Jackson

The Annual General Meeting of the NSW Fauna & Marine Parks Association was held on the 18th August 2009 at Mogo Zoo. The meeting was very well attended and all attendees enjoyed an extensive tour of the facilities. Members were able to get an up close look at the new Chimpanzee Exhibit that has recently been opened to the public. Our congratulations go to Sally Padey and her team for their dedication and hard work, which has resulted in a great attraction.

The newly elected members of the 2009 – 2010 Executive Committee as voted in at the AGM are:
President - Rick Webb, Featherdale Wildlife Park
Vice President - Paige Sinclair, Pet Porpoise Pool
Treasurer - Mark Stone, Billabong Koala & Wildlife Park
Secretary - Lisa Christie, Featherdale Wildlife Park
Executive Committee Members - Tim Faulkner, Australian Reptile Park; Rodd Stapley, Sydney Wildlife World.

I would like to thank both the outgoing and incoming committee members for their dedication to the NSW Fauna & Marine Parks Association. Graeme Phipps (Western Sydney Institute of TAFE) attended the AGM and General Meeting to meet with those NSW FMPA members who have signed up to complete the Certificate 3 in Captive Animal Management Recognition of Prior Learning and Gap Learning Course. This course was specifically designed after consultation between Graeme and the NSW FMPA executive committee. The course is designed for owners and operators of fauna parks and zoos in New South Wales and recognises experience and knowledge gained over years of experience in the industry and also assists with training newcomers into the industry. Studies are conducted on-line, with regular face-to-face meetings held in conjunction with the NSW FMPA meetings.

Lisa Christie
Secretary - NSW FMPA

Scabby Mouth in petting zoos

Scabby mouth is a zoonosis that is transferred from lambs to humans. It is caused by a pox virus that is normally present in scabs on affected lambs. Infection is most common around the corner of the mouth extending along the lips, and often will include the mouth and around the nose. It can also occur around the hoof-hair junction and lower legs. Two to four days after infection the skin becomes reddened and may show some swelling. The next stage is the development of blisters that quickly develop into pustules. These pustules then rupture, excreting the virus and forming scabs, giving the disease its typical appearance. The lesions usually disappear within four to six weeks of the initial infection. Severely affected lambs may be unable to feed for several days, resulting in a loss of condition and an increased susceptibility to other diseases or death by starvation.

The disease is best diagnosed by a clinical examination of affected animals by a veterinarian. In some animals, both dermatophilosis and scabby mouth may occur together. Conditions that can be confused with scabby mouth include dermatophilosis, bacterial skin infections and photosensitisation. Scabby mouth lesions are easily recognisable in moderate to severe cases. In milder cases attentive animal carers should notice changes around the mouth.

In humans lesions develop as red swollen nodules on the skin four to six days after infection and usually take a long time to heal. Any animal that exhibits a change in appetite, appearance, behaviour or that is obviously unwell should receive prompt veterinary attention. Petting zoo operators need to be aware of the increased risk of zoonoses as they bring together young animals (that are more prone to stress-related diseases) with young humans who have a less developed immune system and who usually pay less attention to personal hygiene.

Julie Bolam Johnson
Regional Veterinary Officer
(Southwest)
Industry and Investment NSW



Lamb showing scabby mouth

For contributions, mailing list, amendments or change of address contact:

EDITOR

Stephen Jackson
Emergencies and
Animal Welfare Branch
Industry and Investment NSW
Locked Bag 21
Orange NSW 2800
stephen.jackson@industry.nsw.gov.au

For information about the Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986

Matthew Crane,
Leader, Exhibited Animals
Ph: 02 6391 3716
Fax: 02 6391 3570
matthew.crane@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Animal Roundabout is complimentary

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (January 2010). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up-to-date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Industry and Investment NSW or the user's independent adviser.



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