

management of pain in animals directly, and it is a useful addition to their armoury of knowledge for this purpose.

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UK Wildlife: First Aid and Care CD-ROM

WildPro Multimedia Ltd (2002). CD-ROM. Produced by the Wildlife Information Network, The Royal Veterinary College, Royal College Street, London NW1 0TU, UK. Price £31.50.

Casualties occur in those free-living animals which, through starvation, injury, disease or abandonment, fail the exacting demands of survival in the wild. The majority fall prey to predators or carrion feeders, but for those that are found and taken into captivity, their care presents many practical problems and ethical dilemmas. In attempting to rehabilitate such casualties, the major concern must be to ensure their welfare; it is only on the rare occasions when dealing with endangered species that the concerns are also those of conservation. The aim of any attempt to treat and rehabilitate a wildlife casualty must be to ensure both its welfare during captivity and its ability to survive in the wild once released. If these conditions cannot be ensured, then euthanasia might be the most humane course of action.

Education of those who handle wildlife casualties is the most certain method of safeguarding their patients' welfare, and one important aspect of education is the availability of information. In this country, much of the published work that is available on this subject is anecdotal. Very little of it attempts to combine the veterinary aspects of the subject with those of the natural history of British wild animals and their husbandry whilst held in captivity. This CD-ROM, which has been compiled by a dedicated team of veterinary surgeons, attempts to perform this much-needed task.

The CD-ROM has been produced by the Wildlife Information Network, based at the Royal Veterinary College in London, and is a module of their WILDPro programme. It has been designed to be used by "wildlife rehabilitators, veterinary surgeons and nurses, students, naturalists and field-biologists as a one-stop information source on British mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians". The present programme is not intended to cover the whole subject of handling wildlife casualties but concentrates on techniques and assessments needed for immediate, short-term and medium-term care. The information, which is of a highly practical nature, is generally presented as bullet points. It is extremely well researched and fully referenced throughout, making the programme an invaluable review of current literature.

The contents include sections on: species identification; catching, handling and transportation; rehabilitation and release; treatment; natural history; husbandry; common reasons for admission of casualties; and legislation. The information is extensively cross-referenced, which allows access to species-specific or group-specific details for each stage of the process of handling a wildlife casualty, from capture to release. The programme is designed to allow a user to obtain details of the biology and natural history of a particular species and, by using cross-referencing, to find details of handling, first aid, husbandry and release of that particular species or group of species.

The design of the programme and how it works can be illustrated by taking the case of an otter, injured in a road traffic accident, as an example of an unfamiliar animal that, nowadays, could be presented to almost any veterinary surgery or rehabilitation unit.

Selecting “mammals” from the main menu leads to mustelids in “land carnivores” and then to “otter”, which gives a page of details of the animal’s appearance, biometrics, diet, social behaviour, reproduction and habitat. Then selecting from a list of links to “catching”, “accommodation”, “feeding”, “hand-rearing” and “releasing” leads to sections giving detailed, practical, otter-specific information. Using this system, a detailed description of handling and anaesthetising an otter could be obtained in less than 60 seconds from entering the programme.

In addition to the information on the first aid and care of British wildlife casualties, the CD-ROM also contains comprehensive information on “Disease investigation and management” and “Bird husbandry and management”, which have been taken from the *WILDPro* module “Waterfowl: health and management”. The “Electronic library” contains many useful publications including the Secretary of State’s “Standards for modern zoo practice”, US Geological Survey’s “Field manual of wildlife diseases” and guidelines/codes of conduct published by many organisations including the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, the Swan Sanctuary, the Federation of Zoological Gardens and the British Wildlife Rehabilitation Council.

Throughout the programme the information is extremely comprehensive and highly relevant to the practicalities of the welfare and treatment of wildlife casualties. It has been designed to be used purely as a source of information and, for those with the necessary skills and equipment, the presentation as a CD-ROM is an ideal format for this task. For those with no formal training and little expertise in modern information technology (which, unfortunately, includes this reviewer) the use of the programme is straightforward and, after a short period of familiarisation, retrieval of information is very simple.

This project has been a massive task and information is still being added; in some parts of the text the details are incomplete and in other sections the information applies mainly to waterfowl. The avian taxonomy is based on the Munroe and Sibley “World checklist of birds”, which is not in general use in this country by amateur naturalists and could be confusing to anyone that is unaware of the new, and sometimes very different, nomenclature — for example, a willow ptarmigan is a red grouse and a mew gull is a common gull.

Any new source of information, especially one that is purely objective, as is this CD-ROM, is to be welcomed. It is an exciting and imaginative use of current technology and will, I am sure, prove to be a valuable tool in the improvement of the treatment and welfare of wildlife casualties.

J R Best

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Animal Law: A Concise Guide to the Law Relating to Animals, 3rd Edition

J Palmer (2001). Published by Shaw and Sons Ltd, Shaway House, 21 Bourne Park, Bourne Road, Crayford, Kent DA1 4BZ, UK; www.shaws.co.uk. 360 pp. Paperback (ISBN 0 7219 0802 0). Price £29.95.

In the academic world, animal lawyers number but a few and publications by them even fewer. Even though the popularity of animal law courses is growing on traditional law programmes in the UK, it is doing so only very slowly. In the United States the subject is