

The Seventeenth Symposium of the European Association for Aquatic Mammals—Loro Parque, Tenerife—3rd to 6th March 1989

The 17th symposium of the Association was held in Tenerife from the 3rd to the 6th March, and, as is now becoming the norm, was attended by representatives from outside Europe, including several familiar 'faces' from North America. Unfortunately, your editor was prevented from attending by a personal problem and he therefore was unable to obtain summaries of all the papers. However, he would like to thank Dr Jan van Haaften for collecting those that follow, together with a list of speakers and their addresses so readers interested in that particular subject may make direct contact.

After the welcome to delegates by the President—**Mr R. C. Bennett**—the first session was devoted, not entirely surprisingly, to the 'Seal Plague', under the chairmanship of **Mr A. G. Greenwood**.

Dr van der Kamp described the clinical and pathological findings in some of the 16,000 Harbour seals estimated to have died since April, 1988. He pointed out the similarity of both findings to those found in dogs with canine Distemper.

Dr J. S. van der Kamp,
Seal Rehabilitation and Research Center, Hoofdstraat 94a, 9968 AG Pieterburen, The Netherlands.

Dr J. R. Baker described the epidemiology in detail, relating the plague to a morbillivirus infection and identified the pathological lesions, both macro- and micro-scopic. In general, he said, those seals which had survived had high levels of immunoglobulins to the disease, whereas those which died failed to produce an immune response. It was not possible to relate lymph node atrophy to either the disease or to a previous immunosuppressive condition.

Dr J. R. Baker,
Department of Veterinary Pathology, University of Liverpool, Leahurst, Neston, The Wirral L64 7TE, UK

Mr John Barker spoke on the clinical aspects of the seal plague, with which, as a veterinary surgeon, he had had much experience.

J. Barker,
Eastfield Veterinary Clinic, Station Road, North Thoresby, Grimsby, South Humberside DN36 5QU, UK

I van der Heijden-Visser described the isolation of a virus from seals affected by the seal plague and its identification as a morbillivirus. The disease was reproduced in animals inoculated with material from animals that had died from the disease but seals vaccinated with experimental canine distemper vaccines, proved protected against this challenge.

A. D. M. E. Osterhaus,
National Institute of Public Health and Environmental Protection, Bilthoven, The Netherlands and
I. K. G. van der Heijden-Visser,
Seal Rehabilitation and Research Center, Hoofdstraat 94a, Pieterburen, The Netherlands

Under the Chairman's direction and with all the speakers taking part, a panel discussion then took place.

The second session on the first morning was under the Chairmanship of **Dr John Baker** and covered biology and behaviour. The first paper was given by **Dr Ron Kastelein** on Behavioural provisions for captive walrus. (Dr Kastelein has contributed a number of papers on this subject to Volume 15, No. 1 of *Aquatic Mammals*—Editor.)

Dr Ron Kastelein,
Harderwijk Marine Mammal Park, Strandboulevard-Oost 1, 3841 AB Harderwijk, The Netherlands

The second paper was given by **Peter Bloom** on the behaviour of a wild solitary bottlenose dolphin off the Northumberland coast of the UK.

P. Bloom,
Flamingoland, Kirby Misperton, Malton, North Yorkshire, YP17 0UX, UK

During the afternoon representatives were taken off the coast on board a ship to enjoy a Dolphin Watch Cruise.

The chairman of the first session on the second day was **Dr Claus Hagenbeck** and this was a second session to cover Medicine and Pathology.

Dr Laurie Gage gave a fascinating account of Convulsing Sealions at the California Marine Mammal Center. These animals showed normal blood parameters and although pathology on dead specimens

revealed nothing conclusive, some continued to convulse for several days or weeks. Most returned to a clinically normal condition and were released into the wild with no definitive diagnosis.

Dr L. J. Gage,
California Marine Mammal Center and Marine World Africa, USA, Marine World Parkway, Vallejo, California 94589, USA

Dr van der Kamp described two cases of congenital aortic aneurysm in seals brought into the seal nursery from the wild.

Dr J. S. van der Kamp,
Seal Rehabilitation and Research Center, Hoofdstraat 94a, Pieterburen, The Netherlands.

Professor R. L. Turner, in his own inimitable way, reviewed a detailed histopathological study of cetacean deaths in 1988.

Professor R. L. Turner,
Moorhouse Farm, Oxenhope, Keighley, West Yorkshire, UK.

Dr Ron Kastelein discussed in detail the rehabilitation of three stranded Harbour Porpoises.

Dr Ron Kastelein,
Harderwijk Marine Mammal Park, Strandboulevard-Oost 1, 3841 AB Harderwijk, The Netherlands.

Dr Laurie Gage described the cases of 229 California sea lions with clinical signs suggestive of Leptospirosis. The organism was never successfully cultured although many animals were diagnosed serologically. Mortality was around 50%, many had Blood Urea Nitrogen levels over 300 mgms/dl and treatment with tetracyclines (20 mgms/kg per os tid) with both oral and parenteral fluids appeared most efficacious.

Dr L. J. Gage,
California Marine Mammal Center and Marine World Africa, USA, Marine World Parkway, Vallejo, California 94589, USA

After a break for coffee, **Dr Kamminga** took the chair for the second session on Anatomy and Physiology.

During this, **Frans Engelsma** compared recordings of echolocation signals taken in both the wild and in captivity from *Inia geoffrensis* and *Sotalia fluviatilis*. The comparison showed many similarities in each species between the respective wild and captive recordings.

F. J. Engelsma,
Ouwehand Zoo, P.O. Box 9, 3910 AA Rhenen, The Netherlands.

A student (**M. E. L. Brouwers**) from The Netherlands, gave an interesting report on X-ray tomography of a dolphin's head—in this case *Lagenorhynchus albirostris*.

Dr Paul Nachtigall reported on the sounds emitted by a stranded pygmy sperm whale.

Dr P. E. Nachtigall,
Naval Ocean Systems Center, Hawaii Laboratory, P.O. Box 997, Kailua, H.I. 96734-0997, USA

After lunch, delegates were taken on a tour of Loro Parque.

The first session on the last day was also on Anatomy and Physiology and the chair was taken by **Dr Paul Nachtigall**.

The first paper was given by **Dr Cees Kamminga** on some remarks on dominant sonar frequencies from *Tursiops truncatus*. From a large collection of sounds from both wild and captive animals, dominant frequencies ranged from 40 kHz to 90 kHz. Although separate clusters of sounds were noted up to a certain level, there was a remarkable consistency when the variations of animals and sites was considered.

Dr C. Kamminga,
Delft University of Technology, Electrical Engineering Department, Mekelweg 4, 2628 CD Delft, The Netherlands

A second student from The Netherlands (**J. W. Limpers**) gave a review of the classification of incomplete craniometric data in dolphins.

Dr John Baker described the composition of milk samples taken from 57 grey seals and its variation through a lactation. He measured the volume of milk transferred from mother to pup, by isotope injection, and found this to average 2.5 litres per day. Since the average gastric volume of 19 seal pups was 361 ml ($\pm 66\%$), this suggested that the average pup suckled at least 7 times a day.

Dr J. R. Baker,
Department of Veterinary Pathology, University of Liverpool, Leahurst, Neston, The Wirral L64 5QU, UK

After a coffee break, the second session on Biology and Behaviour took place. **Joan Stone** gave an enlightening paper on the relevance of statistics to the EAAM, entitled 'Adventures of an innocent abroad in Atlantis'.

Joan Stone,
Statistics Department, University of Leeds, Leeds, West Yorkshire, UK.

Mr R. Vonk presented his history of Cetacean strandings in the Canary Islands—delegates found this an interesting and topical paper having previously cruised off the island. It was well illustrated.

Robert Vonk,
c/o Loro Parque, Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain.

Ron Kastelein discussed Tidal Influenced Haul-out Behaviour in Stellar Sealions in Alaska.

Dr Ron Kastelein,
Harderwijk Marine Mammal Park, Strandboulevard-Oost 1, 3841 AB Harderwijk, The Netherlands.

The final paper was given by **Denise Viale** on The Problems of the Annual Migration of *Balaenoptera physalus* in the Mediterranean, which she illustrated with a video.

Denise Viale,
University of Corsica (France), BP 24, Faculte des Sciences, 20250 Corte, France.

Marineland, Costa Brava, showed a fascinating video of the surgical removal of a cataract in a sealions eye and two poster presentation were on display. The first, by the Riccione Dolphinarium, showed the results of two months assays of the blood biochemistry on a young bottlenose dolphin taken into captivity, the therapy consequently applied and the eventual outcome. The authors were P. Bruni, A. L. Stanzani and G. Caniglia, Dolphinarium Riccione, 'Adriatic Sea World', via Lungomare della Repubblica, 47036, Riccione (Fo), Italy. The second, by Pauline Johann, was on 'Cetaceans in the Canary Islands'. Her address is c/o Loro Parque Delfinario, Punta Brava, Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife.