



SJDAWC NEWS

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SIR JAMES DUNN ANIMAL WELFARE CENTRE
Atlantic Veterinary College, University of Prince Edward Island



PROMOTING ANIMAL WELFARE THROUGH RESEARCH, SERVICE, AND EDUCATION



UNIVERSITY
of Prince Edward
ISLAND



ANIMAL WELFARE IN PRACTICE: REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN WELFARE FALL 2022



Each fall, the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre (SJDAWC) hosts an Animal Welfare in Practice Symposium for veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and students. For 2022, we are planning an in-person or hybrid symposium with a focus on the welfare of reptiles and amphibians. The symposium will cover a variety of topics, including aspects of behaviour, housing, veterinary care, and enrichment that impact the quality of life of reptiles and amphibians commonly kept as pets. The format of the symposium will depend on public health recommendations at the time.

For more information, visit:
awc.upei.ca/animal-welfare-in-practice.



Dr. Katy Proudfoot

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

The snow has finally melted, and it is beginning to feel like spring on Prince Edward Island. The SJDAWC has been busy this winter. We recently wrapped up our annual webinar series with this year's focus being welfare concerns with breeding dogs.

We funded four new projects this year, including our first "integrated" project that includes both research and service outcomes. I am always impressed by the variety of projects we fund. This year, topics ranged from kitten welfare to understanding empathy in veterinary students towards animals.

We have also been busy giving out student awards, including two summer research students and three new travel awards for fourth-year students to experience an animal welfare rotation. A big congratulations to the team who participated in the Animal Welfare Assessment Contest this year for bringing home two awards. Well done, team!

Dr. Katy Proudfoot

We welcome your feedback. Please contact us at animalwelfare@upe.ca to receive the newsletter (in full colour!) by email and to be added to our email list for occasional upcoming events.

To learn how you can support the Centre, please go to upe.ca/awc or write to:

The Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre
Atlantic Veterinary College
University of Prince Edward Island
550 University Avenue
Charlottetown, PEI, Canada C1A 4P3

All donations are tax deductible.

2022 WEBINAR SERIES

The SJDAWC had the pleasure of hosting a webinar series on animal welfare concerns with dog breeding in March 2022. The series covered diverse topics including responsible breeding strategies to reduce inherited diseases and extreme conformation, animal welfare assessment of dog breeders, and specific recommendations for the role of veterinarians in this complex topic.

MARCH 15 | WEBINAR ONE

INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES FOR DOG BREEDING: HOW DO VETERINARIANS NAVIGATE THE COMPLEXITIES OF HEALTH, WELFARE, AND OWNER ATTACHMENT?

Dr. Brenda Bonnett, DVM, PhD, Veterinary Science Officer, International Partnership for Dogs



Dr. Brenda Bonnett

Dr. Brenda Bonnett led off the webinar series with a discussion about how veterinarians and veterinary organizations can help improve the welfare of dogs bred around the world. She explained that there is still a demand for small dogs with extreme conformations, such as "flat-faced" bulldogs and pugs, mainly because people think they are cute and easy to care for.

However, Dr. Bonnett explained that some of these dogs suffer from a wide range of welfare problems because of their genetics, including possible long-term pain due to chronic conditions. She suggested that we should try to aim for a balance between these dog welfare problems and people's desires for certain traits in their pets.

For veterinarians, Dr. Bonnett recommended that they avoid normalizing extreme traits in dogs and instead focus on changing even one viewpoint, starting with themselves. She encouraged veterinarians to talk to their clients and their peers who own these dogs to learn about their ethical standpoints to move them ahead one step at a time.

MARCH 22 | WEBINAR TWO

SCIENTIFICALLY EVALUATING CANINE WELFARE IN COMMERCIAL BREEDING KENNELS: DOES HIGH VOLUME PRECLUDE GOOD WELFARE?

Dr. Candace Croney, MS, PhD, Director, Center of Animal Welfare Science, Purdue University



Dr. Candace Croney

In the second webinar, Dr. Candace Croney described an animal welfare assessment program created to help improve the quality of life of dogs used for breeding. The Canine Care Certified program allows consumers to distinguish between breeders and find those that have met a standard of care outlined by the program.

The topics covered in the program include physical health and nutrition, genetics, behavioural health, and veterinary care, amongst others. Dr. Croney and her team have conducted several research studies to help determine

the guidelines for breeders, ensuring that the program is evidence-based.

To date, the feedback from breeders has been positive. Many breeders made changes based on the program's guidelines and have seen improvements in the welfare of their animals. Dr. Croney ended by emphasizing that achieving an ethical, sustainable supply of dogs requires the inclusion of perspectives from scientists, the veterinary community, breeders, legislators, and the public.

MARCH 29 | WEBINAR THREE

RESPONSIBLE BREEDING TO IMPROVE CANINE WELFARE

Dr. Rowena Packer, PhD, Lecturer, Companion Animal Behaviour and Welfare Sciences, Royal Veterinary College



Dr. Rowena Packer

In the final webinar in the series, Dr. Rowena Packer focused on responsible breeding practices for dogs. Dr. Packer began by describing that there are at least 396 identified inherited disorders of the domestic dog.

Many of these disorders are related to inbreeding, or not allowing genetic diversity into a population of dogs. About 20 per cent of these disorders are related to conformation. For example, many "flat-faced" breeds like pugs and bulldogs are at risk of eye, skin, and breathing problems that may severely impact their welfare.

Many of these dogs may also experience difficult births due to disproportionate body sizes.

There are currently some health tests available for inherited disorders, so owners know what diseases their animal may be at risk for. However, Dr. Packer suggested that much more needs to be done beyond these tests. She recommended that more genetic diversity be included in breeding decisions and that breeders prioritize sound conformation that enable dogs to achieve good welfare.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SJDAWC

FOURTH YEAR STUDENT BENEFITS FROM TRAVEL AWARD

Austin Ebbott was a recipient of a SJDAWC student travel award for an external rotation related to animal welfare. Austin had the opportunity to visit the Wildlife Center of Virginia for three weeks. The Center specializes in rehabilitation of native wildlife as well as public education to improve understanding and appreciation of wildlife.

Throughout the rotation, the welfare of the animals was a primary focus. Reducing stress and creating appropriate environments to allow different species to heal and express natural behaviours is critical for their medical care. For many wild animals in rehabilitation, the stress of captivity can reduce immune function, delay healing, and potentially lead to fatal complications.

Austin also participated in the Call of the Wild Conference while in Virginia. This conference provides rehabilitators resources on best practices in medicine, husbandry, and education.

"I'm incredibly grateful that the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre helped me further my education in wildlife medicine and welfare."
- Austin Ebbott, Class of 2022



Austin performs surgery on an owl.

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW TO START NEW POSITION



Dr. Lucia Améndola

Dr. Lucia Améndola has spent the last year as a post-doctoral fellow with the SJDAWC under the supervision of Dr. Katy Proudfoot. Dr. Améndola's research focused on best practices for teaching animal welfare to veterinary students, including the creation and assessment of several case studies in food animal welfare. Her cases were featured in a workshop at the 2021 International Scientific Conference on the Assessment of Animal Welfare at the Farm and Group Level. They will soon be available online for educators around the globe to use for teaching.

Dr. Améndola has recently taken a new position as regional head of behaviour and enrichment at Charles River Laboratories Quebec, where she will oversee programs for the Charles River Canadian laboratory facilities. In her position, she will lead, develop, and improve their behavioural management and enrichment programs. Best of luck to Dr. Lucia Améndola in her new position.

Find more opportunities for students on our webpage:
awc.upei.ca/student/

SPRING 2022 PROJECTS FUNDED IN 2022

Each year the SJDAWC provides funding to support research, integrated, and service projects that aim to improve the lives of animals in Prince Edward Island (PEI) and abroad. For the 2022 cycle, we funded four projects with a diverse array of topics related to animal welfare. For more information about this funding opportunity and previously funded projects, please visit our website at awc.upei.ca/grant-competition/.



MEDICAL AND SURGICAL CARE OF HOMELESS ANIMALS

H. Gunn McQuillan, P. Foley, R. Macdonald, R. MacLean, M. MacLean

This renewed service project will see hundreds of homeless cats and dogs every year with injuries or illnesses requiring veterinary care. These animals are found wandering at large and brought in by good Samaritans, shelter staff, or volunteers. They may also be surrendered by owners who can no longer care for their pets for a variety of reasons. The animals could also be seized because of animal welfare investigations. This project is also supported by the PEI Humane Society.

THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING WITH A WILDLIFE SERVICE ON EMPATHY IN VETERINARY STUDENTS

L. Cusack, K. Proudfoot, C. VanLeeuwen

This new integrated research and service project will provide veterinary care and rehabilitation for sick, injured, displaced, and orphaned wild animals on PEI and in Atlantic Canada. As an expansion of the program, the new grant will also include an assessment of how the Wildlife Volunteer Program has impacted veterinary students' empathy towards animals.



EFFECTS OF EARLY LIFE EXPERIENCES ON LATER PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOURS IN HOMELESS RESCUE SHELTER KITTENS

K. Overall, K. Proudfoot, W. Montelpare, C. Martin

This new research project aims to provide humane societies with evidence-based recommendations for determining length of fostering for their rescue kittens. Hundreds of kittens are rescued every year by the PEI Humane Society. The project will also broaden our understanding of early-life factors, such as stress and personality, that affect behaviour problems in older cats.



THE EFFECTS OF REARING IN A SHELVED ENVIRONMENT ON BEHAVIOURAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL MARKERS OF WELFARE

P. Bernard, J. Spears

This new research project aims to investigate the nature of maternal interactions which can be modified by stress in laboratory rats. The goal is to determine the impact of rearing in shelved or standard cages on the physiology and behaviour of offspring. This project will partially support the training of one doctor of philosophy student, Logan Bigelow.



AVC TEAM BRINGS HOME AWARDS IN WELFARE ASSESSMENT CONTEST

The Atlantic Veterinary College congratulates a team of five first-year Doctor of Veterinary Medicine students who participated in the American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA) virtual Animal Welfare Assessment Contest. The team of Brianna Forbes, Devyn Enwright, Alyssa McGee, Lily Mitchell, and Amy Stoyles placed first in the veterinary division interactive assessment and placed fourth overall in the veterinary division.

The contest is open to DVM students, undergraduates, and graduate students, and provides a unique educational experience. It uses hypothetical, realistic computer-viewed scenarios that students assess and evaluate using science-based methods and reasoning. This year, the AVMA selected one topic for an interactive scenario—boar studs—and two topics for individual presentations—research cats and psittacines (e.g., parrots or parakeets) as pets.

For the group interactive scenario, the students had 20 minutes to view an interactive boar stud facility as a team. They had to identify what the facility was doing well and what they could improve to enhance the welfare of the boars. They then presented their findings to a panel of expert judges.

“It was so rewarding to work on a scenario as a group and present our findings,” explains Forbes. “We were all excited about the topic, and our individual passion and interests in animal welfare really contributed to our overall findings. When it was done, we were amazed by how fast it all happened. I’m really proud of how we worked together as a team.”

The individual component of the contest saw team members working independently to review two welfare scenarios for each species—two research cat scenarios and two psittacine scenarios—without conferring with other team members. For each species, they had to select which scenario was better in terms of animal welfare and then develop a three-minute presentation defending their selection. They then made a presentation individually to a panel of judges.

The team was coached by Dr. Michael Cockram and Dr. Katy Proudfoot, with assistance from Karen Yetman, AVC Class of 2023. It was held virtually from November 19–21, 2021, and included 269 participants representing 28 universities and eight countries. Funding for the team was provided by SJDAWC and the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare.

“This was a really valuable experience for many reasons. I was able to take what I’ve learned in my courses and apply it to real-life scenarios. I was able to learn new skills, meet new friends, and network, and it pushed me outside my comfort zone. I’ll carry this experience for the rest of my life.”

- Brianna Forbes, Class of 2025

Team members from left to right: Alyssa McGee, Lily Mitchell, Devyn Enwright, Brianna Forbes, and Amy Stoyles



2022 SJDAWC VETERINARY SUMMER RESEARCH AWARDS

Congratulations to Brianna Forbes and Carey Ousley, AVC Class of 2025, for receiving the 2022 SJDAWC Veterinary Summer Research Awards.

Brianna will work on a project focused on understanding the behaviour and stress responses of newborn dairy calves. It is her hope that this research will provide



Fleur and Brianna Forbes

veterinarians and dairy producers with recommendations for dairy calf housing. She is very excited to start working on this project with Dr. Katy Proudfoot and Hannah Spitzer, Master of Science student.



Dionysus and Carey Ousley

Carey will work under the supervision of Dr. Paul Bernard on a study to improve the welfare of laboratory rats by understanding auditory cues signifying stress levels through environment modification. She is thrilled to have received this award

as it will allow her to learn more about various research topics in veterinary medicine.

2022-23 ANIMAL WELFARE EXTERNAL ROTATION AWARDS

Three students have been awarded \$500 each to assist them with travel for an external rotation related to animal welfare during their fourth year.

Rachel Moore will participate in an external rotation at the Oregon National Primate Research Center (ONPRC) at the Oregon Health and Science University campus. The rotation focuses on medicine, pathology, surgery, and animal welfare for laboratory animals in a university setting.

*"I believe using laboratory animals is a privilege, and we need to consistently strive to uphold the highest standard of animal welfare."
- Rachel Moore, Class of 2023*

*"On this rotation, I cannot wait to learn how to better my practice from board-certified avian and exotics clinicians and my hopeful future employers."
- Joey Buzzell, Class of 2023*

Joey Buzzell will travel to Angell Boston Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) where he will participate in their avian and exotics department. He will learn about exotics general practice with an emphasis on the husbandry and enrichment changes that can be made to help remedy common clinical presentations.

Nima Morady is excited to secure a two-week rotation at the Montreal SPCA. This rotation will largely focus on shelter animal welfare and management, while the other portion will involve sterilization and vaccinations of surrendered animals and pets of low-income households.

*"My long-term goals involve working as a shelter veterinarian. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to learn from one of the oldest animal protection societies in Canada."
- Nima Morady, Class of 2023*



**THANK-YOU TO THE
CHRISTOFOR AND THE SIR
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We also thank the Pegasus Family Foundation through the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, and the many generous organizations, individuals, veterinary hospitals, and other businesses—too numerous to mention—that have made donations in memory of a beloved pet. You can find a list of our donors on our webpage: awc.upei.ca/supporting-the-centre/

To learn how you can support the Centre, please check out our website.

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