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The Pet Professionals

Tony Viganò , Michelle Harrison & Melanie Criddle. Veterinary Surgeons

SUMMER 2021

THE DINGO



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ROAD TEST: THE DINGO



Thief, vagabond, killer or intelligent, charming and an Australian icon? From the outset they have been persecuted and are always the subject of heated debate. In any event they are the top order carnivore in the Australian wild.

It is generally accepted they arrived in Australia between 3500 to 4000 years ago and first appeared in Aboriginal rock art at about the same time. This is also supported by the fact they were not found in Tasmania.

History:

Several theories abound as to their origins but most people feel they came from Asia (where there are similar breeds even today such as the Akita and the Jindo). Arriving with seafarers (fisherman etc) venturing to Australia, they were kept as pets, or as food for the long voyage (or as a diversion to distract sharks when the fishermen were diving for food!). Other theories point to origins from India, and even others to them predating the wolf and evolving 135,000 years ago as the ancestor of all breeds of the modern dog.

In any event they were highly valued by the Aborigines and are very intelligent. When the European settlers came to Australia they brought their own dogs which in turn mated with the dingo. This was encouraged by the Aborigines as the dingo does not bark so the crosses were more useful in guarding their campsites.

They have also been used in developing the Australian Kelpie and Cattle dogs from the introduced English Border Collie to produce these iconic Australian herding dogs.

Appearance:

The dominant coat colour is yellow-ginger. Cream and tan are also seen. Most purebreds have white on the tail tip and feet. In cooler areas there are more black and tan varieties and currently almost no white dogs are left. They have a relatively broad head, pointed muzzle and erect

ears (floppy ears are considered a defect). They are between 52-60cm at the shoulder and the average weight is 13-20kg. Males are typically larger than females.

Characteristics:

Extremely territorial, they communicate by yowling and yapping though can learn to bark. They seldom show aggression, being quite timid unless cornered in the wild, and this has developed given they were domesticated when they arrived. Distinguishing characteristics from other dogs are numerous. They breed once a year (as with the modern Basenji), they mate for life and they can climb trees which makes them difficult to house as pets as they need an enclosure if kept outside.

If to be domesticated they must be obtained as young puppies to be properly socialised.

In the wild state they live alone or in small family groups though they do cooperate when hunting large prey and this was a survival technique thought to be used and one the Thylacine did not possess. The Dingo is thought to have driven the Thylacine to extinction (along with man) as they competed for food, the latter only remaining in Tasmania.

Agile and lean they are well adapted to the harsh Australian outback where they are often observed lying down conserving energy and hence mistaken as lazy.



ROAD TEST: THE DINGO

Hybrids vs Purebred:

This is very contentious as they probably arrived as socialised domestic animals in boats from Asia or India and so may well not have been purebred at the outset. Then mating with early settler's dogs, it is indeed a conundrum. Purebreds, if they exist, are probably only seen in unpopulated areas of the outback and isolated areas such as Fraser Island. For accurate identification of Dingoes, originally skull measurements were necessary, then CT scans and xrays. More recently DNA testing has identified numerous markers making dingo ancestry easier to establish.

It seems safe to say that most are hybrids, and if breeding to develop a pure strain did take place it is likely that the result would be a genetically pure bred dingo that may well have domestic dog traits.

Friend or Foe:

The dingo has been demonised and marginalised over the years but they do have a definite place in the ecological system given they have been here so long. Whilst they may well have aided in the depletion of marsupial animals when they arrived, man has had a hand in that process as well, and in modern Australia they help keep other pests at bay including the rabbit. There are occasional attacks reported but in general they are timid in the wild and do not approach humans.

In my opinion we have no ethical right to exterminate them and in doing so may well upset the balance of the ecosystem encouraging wild dogs to take their place which breed far more prolifically.

Who should have one:

They became a recognised breed in 1993 and do generate interest amongst many people who can now keep them as pets either with a permit or as a registered animals, in most states of Australia.

I do not see them as a domestic pet unless you have a special interest in the breed as they are difficult to house being nomadic (they wander) and hence need to be housed in a secure enclosure at least 2 meters high with concrete footings as they will either climb over or dig under your boundary fence! I have seen many housed behind electric fences as a consequence.

In conclusion, a fascinating history which includes folklore accounts of their occult (6th sense) abilities, their origins and their place in the scheme of things. They have a number of followers who have fought long and hard for their survival and recognition on the one hand whilst others have sought to denigrate them at every opportunity.

Tony Vigano



SWANBOURNE DASHBOARD

SWANBOURNE DASHBOARD SUMMER 2021

Finally, as I write this, the WA border has been lifted and things can get back to normal particularly for the tourist and allied industries.

Hopefully there are no glitches or it will be slammed shut again or so we have been warned.

The warmer weather has well and truly started with a promised 40 degree day today so all in all we are anticipating a new beginning for 2021 (fingers crossed).

The new shade sail in the car park has now been erected just in time although we have moved the starting time to 8am on Sundays for Puppy School with the last class concluding at 12pm so as to avoid the heat as much as possible. With better cover and a water mister it will make those Sunday mornings a bit more bearable.

The new operating theatre is in full swing with just the cabinetry still to come and is a resounding success as has been our new phone system.

Dog Obedience classes conclude on Wednesday Dec 15th but our new classes convene in February 2021 (Wednesday 7pm at David Cruickshank on Feb 3rd and at the Claremont Reserve at 9.30am on Feb 6th). Already there are only two places left in the Saturday course and five in the Wednesday class, so don't delay

Bookings can be made by ringing here at the practice or on-line at www.swanbournevet.com/dogobedience

Equally puppy class can be booked for Sundays here, or on line at www.swanbournevet.com/puppyschool and these classes will continue all through January with just a break on the Christmas weekend.

We have recently upgraded our xray processor with a DR system which means all our xrays taken are now digital and of much better quality

Along with the New Year we will be welcoming Dr Beth Thompson to the veterinary team. Beth has been a weekend receptionist for some time and many of you will know her. Beth has been a top student during her course and I feel sure she is a natural, so be sure to welcome her when she starts!

Another of our favourites, Dr Laura Giraud will be taking maternity leave at the end of January as she and Ian prepare to welcome their first child in February. A joyous occasion, we wish them all the best, and look forward to her return.

Finally, we have remained cautious and still practice distancing at the practice and have installed the Safe WA app for your convenience, although your presence has been recorded on our daily schedule. Albeit we are not considered a large gathering so it is not compulsory for veterinary clinics.

You can never be sure what will happen or what 2021 has in store for us but hopefully it will be less discombobulated than 2020 (I had to get that word in as it suits 2020 to a tee!)

With all that said I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and safe New Year in 2021

Regards,

Tony Viganò



SUMMER ISSUES (continued)

(m) Beware when walking at the local park or in the bush. Territorial magpies and butcher birds can be very aggressive during the nesting season so wear a hat or carry an umbrella. We are so lucky to have an abundant bird presence in our suburbs but beware!

(n) Equally walking in the bush can be a hazard. Make plenty of noise in case snakes are around and avoid walking in the heat of the day. Stick to the paths and ensure your recall training is to the fore or keep fido on a leash! Most bites occur in the late afternoon/early evening.

(o) When getting into the garden this spring/summer check you haven't got an abundance of toxic plants growing. Something we don't dwell on much but we have a list of common toxic plants and you will be surprised at the list!

2. CHRISTMAS INDULGENCE and OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES:

(a) Please don't feed your pets the fat from the turkey and ham as this can cause or at least exacerbate pancreatitis when they get that huge fat overload! Not to mention all manner of gastrointestinal upsets from corn cobs (obstructions), tooth picks (from finger food), and other inappropriate food such as onions (Heinz body anaemia), garlic and chilli!

(b) Beware of raids on the Christmas tree, chocolate particularly must be kept out of reach as well as other sweets and those low hanging decorations which are great for obstructing bowels!

(c) The BBQ with well-meaning guests dropping morsels to the excited pets, onions from the hamburgers are to be avoided at all costs as well as alcohol, and by the way marijuana and other recreational drugs.....not to mention the hot plate which has caught many an inquisitive moggie by surprise as they jump up to check it out!

(d) That game of backyard or beach cricket is best done using a soft ball and not a hard cricket or squash ball...I have seen broken limbs and severely damaged eyes in our pets when fielding too close to bat and ball!

(e) Check our web site or a Government web site for gazetted fireworks over the Christmas/New Year period. Left home alone they may panic and do themselves an injury or break out and get lost

(f) On the subject of getting lost, ensure they are microchipped as this is now mandatory (the revised Dog Act 2013 and new Cat Act 2013) but more importantly allows an instant passage home should they get lost

(h) When walking take some fresh water and a foldup dog bowl with you. So much better and safer than drinking communal water at the park especially when canine cough abounds

(i) Make sure walks are restricted to the early

morning or late afternoon as heat stroke and dehydration are all too common.

(j) Check feet and ears (particularly long haired cats and dogs) regularly for grass seeds that can penetrate the skin/ear drums with painful consequences

(k) When baiting for snails ensure precautions are taken when spreading the bait...none are really safe so follow the directions for use. Placing the bait in a buried wide necked jar in the garden, or putting the bait in a piece of conduit pegged to the ground will prevent the pets from accessing the bait but it attracts the snails.

(l) Beware of blow fish on the sea shore and river bank. These can be really toxic if eaten. All that good puppy/obedience training should come to the fore so you can warn them off picking things up on their walks. Phrases like "leave it!" are very handy and ensure recall skills are well learnt so you can call them to order.

(m) Wearing a seat belt and harness in the car or even travelling in a crate protects the pets and the human occupants in the event of a sudden stop or accident. A definite cause of injury in car accidents when flying pets can be a real hazard!

(n) Wash them off in fresh water after that play at the Dog beach as the salty water leaves their coats salty and itchy. Many dog beaches have an open shower close by for this.

(o) Remember dogs and drinks and cats and cocktails don't mix. Alcohol is an absolute no no as can be very toxic so PLEASE no tricks with the pets and alcohol as it isn't funny and can have dire consequences.

(p) On that fishing holiday ensure your dog is out of the way when you cast your line as a gang of hooks caught in his or her mouth is not ideal and please don't leave fish heads lying around with hooks still attached.

(q) On the subject of scavenging make sure the sanitary bin is out of the way of your inquisitive pooch as tampons are diabolical when swallowed and form into linear foreign bodies in the gut eventually leading to obstructions and extensive intestinal damage.



(r) When exercising your dog whilst riding a bike, I would suggest don't! Dogs have a habit of crossing over behind or in front of you and worst of all getting caught in the spokes of the front wheel sending you flying over the handle bars...not to mention breaking the dog's leg.

FORWARD PLANNING:

(a) Planning for your annual holiday includes getting in quickly at your preferred boarding facility as these fill up quickly and a home sitter is an even better option. Get onto this at the same time as planning your own getaway! If you are taking your best friend with you they may not be great travellers so plan for motion sickness and the anxiety of car travel (they may think they are going to the vet!) by speaking with your local vet regarding sedatives for the journey. The crate trained dog makes it easy and a cat box a must! Also to remember to pack their medications, favourite bedding, water bowls and leads and collars. They need their home comforts to feel secure in a new environment.

(b) Vaccinations and heartworm prevention need to be up to date during the summer when dogs are off to kennels or just meeting their friends at the park more regularly

(c) Include regular deworming as well

(d) Clipping your long haired dog and cat will make them more comfortable in the Summer so plan this well ahead as groomers are also very busy in the lead up to summer. A short well kept coat is easier to manage and helps keep parasites at bay

(d) Summer brings with it the unwanted kitten season so be sure to get your new cat sterilised before the warm weather brings them into season. The local Cat Haven puts as many as 100 unwanted kittens a day to sleep during the summer months.

(e) Be sure you have the number of your closest after hours clinic near the telephone as your local vet may well be closed for the Christmas & New Year holiday periods. Things always seem worse at night when you are home alone and these excellent facilities are all set up to see you 24/7 over the holiday break no matter the problem.

(f) Finally in the Christmas rush when the calendar is full spare a thought for your pets as they become more anxious when you are in and out of the house and rushing about. Include them as much as possible and allow for those precious walks in between social engagements, when they can meet their mates at the park and exchange stories! They are creatures of habit and will get depressed if left out, or their world is tipped upside down!

(g) And...make sure at the present opening ritual on Christmas morning they have their own gift(s) to open. There are plethora of great gifts for dogs, cats and other pets available now and they can join in the fun.

(h) If you live in a bushfire zone you will no doubt have a plan in place (to evacuate or fight the fire).

Make sure you include the pets in this and have cat cages, dog boxes and leads, collars and ID tags for all of them plus food and water all packed as well. When it happens is not the time to make your plan and collect the necessities of life as it is too late then. There are great suggestions on the DFES web site to get you started.

SUMMER and our NATIVE ANIMALS plus some ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

(a) Baby birds found out of the nest are best left where they are as mum and dad probably have the situation in hand. Unless they are injured, threatened by a cat or a dog, in danger of being run over, or in any way distressed, leave them alone. In the face of danger from another animal why not suspend them in a hanging basket above the ground

(b) Summer brings out native fauna onto the roads such as stumpy tails, ringtail possums and kangaroos so please take care when driving and avoid unnecessary deaths

(c) Take the opportunity of planting local species in your garden and landscape with rocks and logs to encourage conservation of biodiversity for native animals, birds, lizards and frogs

(d) Use pesticides and herbicides sparingly as birds, frogs and reptiles suffer if they feed on insects sprayed with pesticides... seek out friendly alternatives.

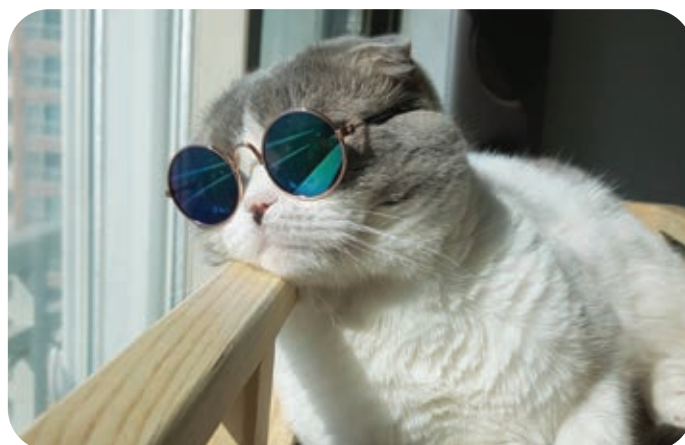
(e) Keep cats indoors at night and put bells on their collars to prevent the hunting of native birds and animals

(f) Take note of what goes down the drain...no oils, fats or harmful chemicals as they end up in lakes, rivers and the ocean, harming wildlife and the quality of the water.

(g) Reduce the use of plastic bags and recycle rubbish, compost kitchen and garden waste, recycle paper and reduce the use of your petrol guzzling, air polluting vehicle. Why not buy a Tesla!

The list is endless and I guess most of what I have mentioned is common sense, but then as they say in the classics.....sense can be all too uncommon

Tony Vigano



FESTIVE SEASON TIPS

The Festive Season and its hazards for our pets, both for ingested material and environmental factors associated with the hot weather:

Ho Ho Ho

Christmas comes but once a year but beware the opportunistic pet that sees everything and wants to indulge as well! Covered elsewhere in this newsletter but worth highlighting here separately:

1. Dehydration pets need plenty of water in shaded areas and preferably add ice blocks in excessively hot weather
2. Please don't leave dogs (and kids for that matter!) in locked cars EVER!
3. Beware the offcuts from the ham and turkey ... they love it but acute pancreatitis can often occur as way too much fat
4. Corn cobs (they often cause blockages), tooth picks from finger food, and inappropriate things like onions, garlic and chilli should be avoided at all costs
5. Christmas decorations, low hanging baubles and of course chocolate, sweets should be avoided watch carefully what Santa puts under the Christmas tree as well!
6. BBQ's are great social gatherings but stray onions, alcohol, and recreational drugs are a hazard as the ever watchful pet scans the area for food etc that is dropped, and of course the occasional moggie that jumps on the hot plate for a closer look will get a rude awakening!

7. Snail bait is a hazard and often spread in heaps instead of sparingly read the directions if all else fails! Very toxic to animals and so bury it in wide necked jars, conduit pegged to the ground or ornamental traps made for the job. Attracts snails but dogs are likewise attracted

8. Blow fish washed up on the river bank or sea shore can be very toxic if ingested. All the skills learnt at puppy school come to the fore such as "leave it" etc The list is endless but please remember the locked cars, BBQ rules and chocolate plus the fat from the Christmas turkey and ham, if nothing else! But refer to the article in this newsletter about Summer hazards.

Tony Vigano



ONLINE BOOKINGS

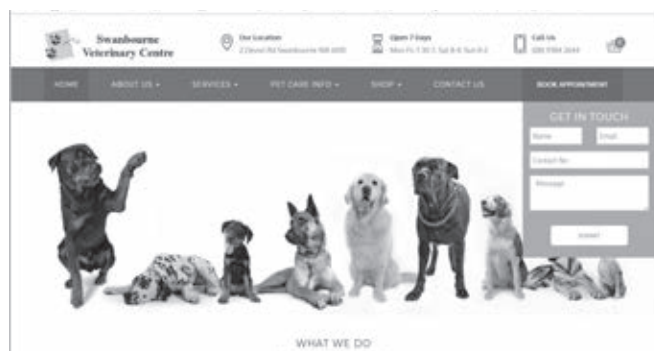
We have introduced the functionality to enable our clients to book their own appointments through a secure link on our website. Appointment times are available 7 days a week. You select the service – vaccination, general check, dental check or senior health check - then choose the day and time that suits, and book your pet in! When you complete your booking, you will receive an email with confirmation of the booking details.

If you wish to book an appointment with a specific vet or cannot find a suitable appointment time, please don't hesitate to give us a call.

Always remember that if you have immediate concerns about your pet, please call us! As always, our friendly team are here to help by calling 9384 2644.

Booking is easy – simply visit

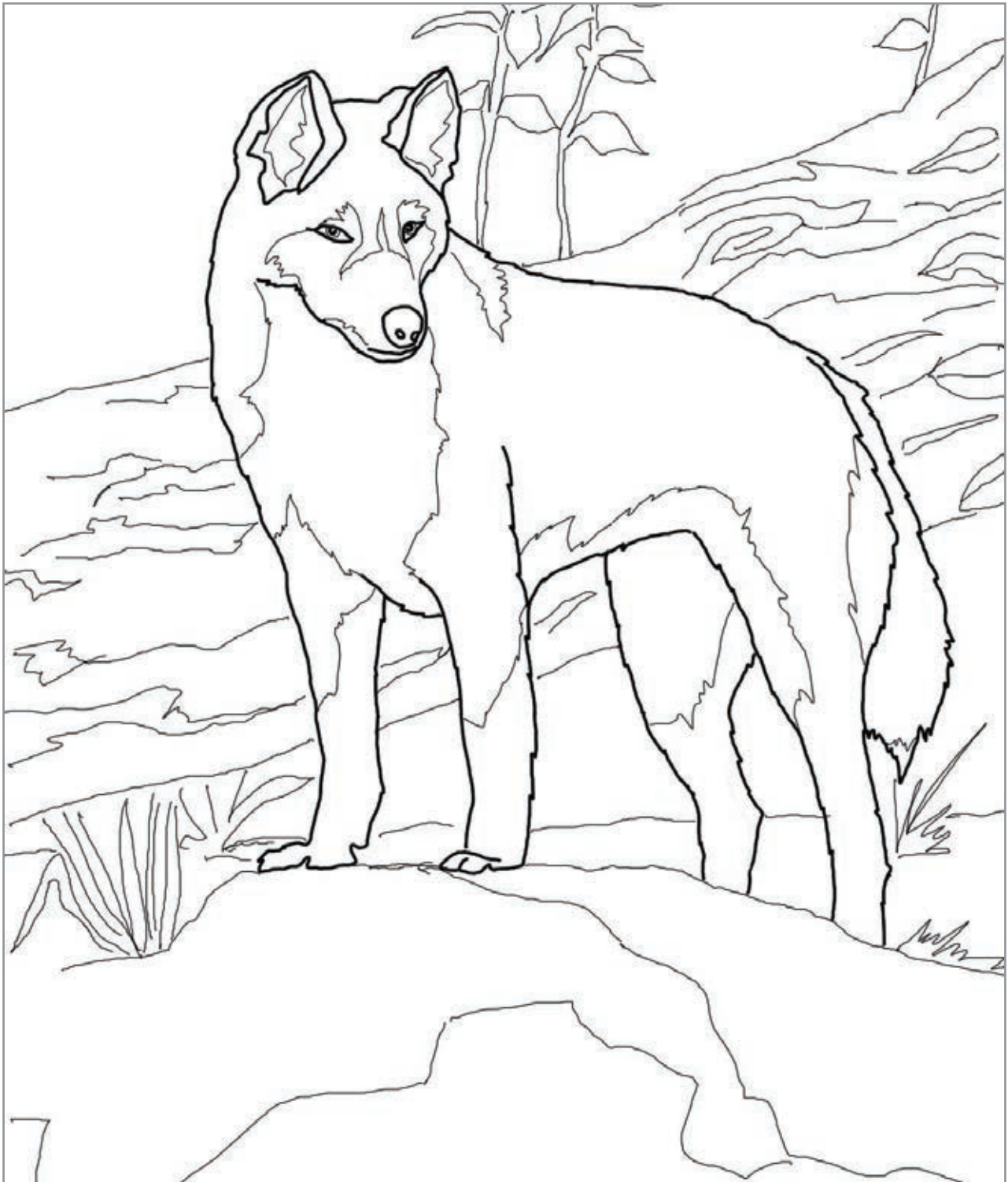
www.swanbournevet.com/BookOnline



Kids★ Corner

Children up to 12 years old are invited to enter our colouring-in competition.

Please post or return your entry to Swanbourne Veterinary Centre by **March 31st 2021** for your chance to WIN a year's supply of Flea Control products for your pet, plus a pet toy for your best friend.



Name:

Age:

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Contact No.:



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