

PAWS, CLAWS & ALL FOURS

Summer 2025

It's Summer Once Again

Peter Heslip (Veterinarian - Balclutha)

Its summer again which means holidays for some and work for others. Summer brings its own risks for pets. The article by Martha covers the hazards all pet owners should be aware of.

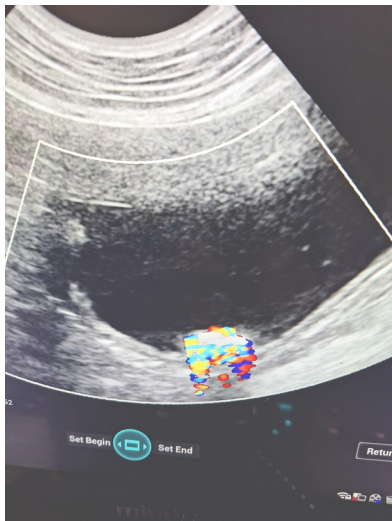
Grass seeds (especially barley grass) are a problem, particularly for long-haired dogs, once the grass dries off. They most frequently penetrate the skin between the toes or get in the ears. We also see them, up nostrils, under eyelids, in the armpits and many other sites. Keep dogs out of long dry grass. While long-haired dogs are most affected, short-haired dogs and cats can also have problems. Grass seeds are much more likely to be a problem if your dog visits Central Otago in the summer months.

Fleas are an intermittent problem in the south, in contrast to being a year round problem further north. In recent years some very effective and long-acting flea medications have been developed. If you see fleas on your pet or excessive scratching come and talk to us for informed and impartial advice.

We have been making changes to our Facebook page - in particular we have started putting up some reels, showing some of the procedures we do. Have a look – there is nothing too gory (graphic?)

Twinkle Twinkle

Catherine Copland (Veterinarian - Balclutha)



Ultrasound is great for diagnosing bladder stones. The stones show as very bright white. Ultrasound waves can't pass through the stones so big shadows are created beyond the stones. An even more dramatic effect is seen when colour doppler flow is used over the stones. As the sound waves are reflected back in all directions, the colour flow shows this as a multitude of colour fragments. This is called the twinkling effect.

In this issue

- Welcome - It's Summer Once Again
- Twinkle Twinkle
- Breaking Meows - Keeping Pets Safe This Summer
- Cat Chips
- Greyhounds As Pets
- One Very Sore Dog
- Trev's Big Op
- Jokes



Breaking Meows – Keeping Pets Safe This Summer!

Martha O'Connor, (Veterinarian - Milton)

Climate experts warn that this summer could be New Zealand's hottest on record, and while we focus on staying safe ourselves, we must also consider the health of our furry companions during these warm days.

Here are some tips to help keep your pets cool and safe:

- **Never leave pets in the car unattended**, especially during the heat. If you must leave them for short periods, park in the shade and lower a window to allow air circulation.
- **Be cautious with short-nosed breeds** like pugs, bulldogs, and French bulldogs. They are more vulnerable to heat exhaustion and can suffer much quicker than other breeds.
- **Ice in water** is a great way to cool your pet down during hot weather, helping to keep them hydrated and comfortable.
- **Protect white or paler pets from sun exposure**. Skin cancer, often starting as sunburn, is common in white and ginger cats, particularly on their ears and nose. Prevention is key, and sunscreen designed for pets is available at our clinics.
- **Be aware of toxic algae in stagnant water**. This algae can be particularly dangerous when it accumulates in warmer, stagnant water. If you see advisory notices from the local council, avoid letting your pet drink from or swim in affected water. Always contact us if you're concerned.

Cat Chips

Catherine Copland (Veterinarian - Balclutha)

If you care about your cat, please, please microchip them. It's quick, cheap and easy to do.

We have many cats believed to be strays brought into the clinic by caring members of the public. We are not obliged to take in stray cats but as there is no local SPCA we do it as a service for the local community.

The majority are feral cats, or have been dumped, but some have owners looking for them. If they are microchipped we can immediately contact their owner and get them back home. If they are not, all we can do is advertise them and hope their owner contacts us. We can't keep cats at our clinics indefinitely, especially if they are unneutered male cats. They have to be isolated from our patients for disease prevention and we quickly run out of space. After one week of being advertised we can surrender the cat to the SPCA or try and rehome it. The SPCA are often unable to take cats as they have no space. This leaves us responsible for the cat.

In Australia microchipping and registration of cats is mandatory and this may happen here in the future. Get ahead of the game this year and book your cat in for a microchip.



Greyhounds As Pets

Catherine Copland (Veterinarian - Balclutha)

The unexpected announcement to phase out Greyhound Racing over the next 20 months means there will be around 2000 Greyhounds looking for a new home.

Contrary to what many people assume, Greyhounds make fantastic pets, and as a Greyhounds owner myself, I can assure you this is true! They do not need lots of exercise and are more at the “couch potato” end of the energy spectrum. They love nothing more than snoozing all day on a comfortable bed with a brief opportunity for “zoomies”. They are very affectionate, often goofy and have a love for oversized soft toys. If you love accessorising with your pet, Greyhounds are perfect for you. Due to their thin skin and short hair, they feel the cold more, so appreciate an extensive wardrobe of coats, sweaters, onesies and T-shirts.

There is an enthusiastic online community for Greyhound owners keen to tell you how great their dogs are, with all their loveable, quirky attributes. They are regular walks in Dunedin for Greyhounds and their owners to socialise. Greyhounds As Pets NZ and Nightrave Greyhounds South Island-Group on Facebook are a good place to start, if you think there could be space for a Greyhound on your couch.



One Very Sore Dog

Peter Heslip, (Veterinarian - Balclutha)

Lameness in young dogs can be due to developmental abnormalities, such as hip dysplasia or elbow dysplasia. These conditions sometimes need surgery and often cause lifelong problems with arthritis and lameness. An exception to this is panosteitis. Affected dogs are mostly young, male and large breed. They typically have episodes of sudden pain in one or more legs, sometimes with fever, that may recur until two years of age. The pain can be so severe that fracture of the bones is suspected.

Pearl was an eight month old Huntaway with pain in her left front leg, which had flared up several times. She had pain on manipulating her elbow, her shoulder and the bone between. X-rays show the changes typical of panosteitis. The attached x-ray shows a white shadow in the middle of the bone (which looks a little like a face) surrounded by a darker area. Because panosteitis is rare we sent the X-ray to a specialist radiologist, who confirmed the diagnosis.

The cause of panosteitis is unknown and treatment consists of painkillers and rest. A month later Pearl is making a good recovery and should have no long-term complications. Having a confirmed diagnosis meant the owners were assured the outlook was excellent, and they knew they only had to manage a temporary painful episode.



Trev's Big Op

Peter Heslip, (Veterinarian - Balclutha)

One of the more challenging surgeries we do is fusion of the carpal joint. The carpus is the joint between the toes and the elbow and is equivalent to the human wrist. Injuries usually happen when falling from a height, then landing on a front foot and overstretching and tearing the carpal ligaments. There is no way to repair the ligaments and without fusion the joint collapses when weight is put on it.

Fusing the joint requires scraping all cartilage off the joint surfaces, putting a bone graft into the joint space and a bone plate spanning the joint. Complications and failures used to be common as it was very difficult to get adequate stability. The development of a new generation of bone plates, designed thicker at high stress areas and thinner at the ends with four different types and sizes of screws, has dramatically reduced complication rates.

We have used this system recently. Our latest case was Trev, a heading dog who hurt his leg running through boulders, presumably getting his foot caught. He ruptured the carpal ligaments and fractured one of the small carpal bones. Surgery went well and so far Trev is doing well.

Fusion of the bone will take approximately eight weeks, and another six to eight weeks to reach full strength. This is a long rehabilitation for both Trev and his owners. Loss of motion in the carpal joint results in a stiff legged gate and some extra strain on the joints above and below the carpus. The alternative was amputation of the leg, which the owners preferred not to do as Trev is a valued team member.



Trev coming in for surgery

Jokes

A man in a bar sees a friend at a table drinking by himself.

Approaching the friend he comments "You look terrible. What's the problem?"

"My mother died in August," he said, "and left me \$25,000."

"Gee, that's tough," he replied. "Then in September," the friend continued,

"My father died, leaving me \$90,000."

"Wow. Two parents gone in two months. No wonder you're de-pressed."

"And last month my aunt died, and left me \$15,000."

"Three close family members lost in three months? How sad."

"And this month," continued, the friend sadly, "Nothing."

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