



## December, 2011

### Managing Backyard Habitat for Reptiles and Amphibians

For people looking to make their property more inviting to reptiles and amphibians, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission has on its website a new publication that provides tips on creating suitable habitat for frogs, toads, lizards and snakes.

[“Reptiles and Amphibians in Your Backyard,”](#) is a color, 8-page publication that was produced by biologists from N.C. State University, the Wildlife Commission, N.C. Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, and the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences.

“Many of the practices explained in the book to attract reptiles and amphibians are easy and fairly quick to do, even for folks who aren’t gardeners,” said Jeff Hall, the Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Biologist with the Commission. “It’s mainly a matter of taking these critters into consideration when managing your lawn and garden. Things such as adding a water garden, planting native vegetation, providing shelter such as rock piles and log and brush piles, and limiting the use of pesticides and chemicals are simple yet effective techniques to create a backyard habitat that will attract a wide variety of wildlife.”

Even better for wildlife enthusiasts, these same practices and techniques will also attract birds, butterflies, dragonflies and other wildlife to a backyard. Along with habitat tips, the book provides information on the life history of reptiles and amphibians as well as the ecological importance of “herps,” as reptiles and amphibians are collectively called.

“Some herps are predators that keep the numbers of their prey in check, such as toads that will eat thousands of insects in their lifetime,” Hall said. “Others are found on the opposite end of the food chain, like frogs, which make tasty meals for many fishes, birds, mammals and reptiles.”

According to Hall, herps also can be good indicators of healthy natural environments. “A habitat rich with reptiles and amphibians usually indicates that area supports a variety of other wildlife,” Hall said. “Whereas the absence of herps in an area where we would expect to find them can mean that the habitat is unsuitable for other types of wildlife as well.”

More than 160 species of reptiles and amphibians are found in North Carolina, and many of them are common to urban and suburban areas. However, some species have experienced declining populations over the last decade due to a variety of factors stemming from the state’s rapid growth. “North Carolina’s human population is growing by leaps and bounds, particularly in urban and suburban areas and with this growth comes habitat loss and fragmentation, increased traffic and roadways, and sedimentation and pollution, all of which wreak havoc on reptile and amphibian populations,” Hall said. “People can do a lot to help conserve these populations in their own backyards by thinking about wildlife when managing their lawn and gardens.”

Work on the conservation of reptiles and amphibians is funded by the Commission's Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Fund, which supports wildlife research, conservation and management for animals that are not hunted and fished. North Carolinians can support this effort by donating through the [Tax Check-off for Nongame and Endangered Wildlife](#) on their N.C. State Income tax form; registering a vehicle or trailer with a [N.C. Wildlife Conservation license plate](#); or mailing in a [contribution form](#).

For more information on reptiles and amphibian conservation in North Carolina, visit [N.C. Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation](#), or contact Hall at 252-917-1683; jeff.hall@ncwildlife.org.

## Defending Purebred Dogs

I read the NY Times article and there were no surprises. The incendiary article, "Can the Bulldog be Saved" by Benoit Denizet-Lewis, has been discussed on several chat lines and was recently addressed in a [Dog News Editorial](#). A NYT follow-up, "[Behind the Cover Story: Benoit Denizet-Lewis on Bulldogs](#)" continued the thread of "breeding extremes" exploring the possibility of defining and regulating breeding selections.

Why would a reporter who owns one middle-aged pet Labrador retriever want to write an article about remodeling bulldogs into something so different they will not be recognized as that breed any longer?

His credentials show he has no knowledge of breeding or breed structure, but he has accepted as gospel, and then published, the words of those who have more no more knowledge of breeding than the reporter.

I noted that he actually was relying on information from the brouhaha that followed the publication of that anti-purebred dog diatribe, "Pedigreed Dogs Exposed" a few years ago, quoting RSPCA, (the British equivalent of ASPCA.) To demonstrate the objectivity of the research team he quoted, I found one of the British researchers named in his article has strong ties to RSPCA.

QUOTE: Since 2003, Nicola Rooney has worked within the Animal Welfare and Behavior Group (University of Bristol). She also works as an independent consultant to the RSPCA. She's helped produce the RSPCA Codes of Practice for the care of both dogs and cats, the RSPCA Performing Animals Guidelines, has coordinated and co-authored an Independent Report entitled "Pedigree dog breeding in the UK: a major welfare concern?" and advises on racing greyhound welfare. UNQUOTE

The researchers claimed that many purebreds are bred to be unhealthy. They leaned on BBC who finally capitulated to their threats by refusing to continue to broadcast the famous dog show, Crufts, as they had for many years. With that success under their belts, they frightened the British Kennel Club into changing standards of perfection on many breeds.

Now in Britain if you want your particular breed registered with BKC you must breed according to their new charts. BKC restrictions on breeding confirm my concerns with the influence that animal rights activists have recently gained to restrict breeding to outcrosses only.

Here we go again. First they require that there be no close inbreeding, then as often happens, the restrictions usually grow. How soon will the BKC be influenced and blackmailed enough by the RSPCA to prohibit aunt/nephew, grandsire/granddaughter, or other line breedings supposedly in the quest of good health, and then ever more stringent restrictions in line with a chart?

Now my breed in Britain has formed an organization called Dachshund Breed Council that is providing a new service called Mate Select that was established in May of this year. Breeding is now to be done on coefficients with this advice and these rules:

QUOTE: "The higher the CoI, the greater the probability (and risk) that two copies of a particular gene will be inherited from a common ancestor. The KC will no longer register puppies from mother/son, father/daughter or brother/sister combinations - these would have a CoI of at least 25%. The Breed Council will be monitoring changes in each Dachshund variety's Coefficient of Inbreeding over time and strongly encourages breeders to make use of Mate Select to help inform their breeding strategies. You can also find summaries (here) of stud dogs being used in each Dachshund variety and follow our analysis of "Popular Sires"." END QUOTE

Is this something we want to institute here in the United States? Anyone who has been breeding for a while knows that while the facts and statistics regarding genetic coefficients are valid, genes are not distributed as mathematically as these charts claim. For instance, we've learned simple recessive genes can be carried for generations before surfacing in a breeding from a sire and dam each of whom carried that one particular gene. The two dogs may have been closely related or not.

Littermates from outcrosses AND linebreedings usually have different physical and temperamental attributes from one another no matter that they are closely related siblings. The charts are not adept at predicting these differences. Currently in the United States since all coats, colors and sizes are registered under the heading of DACHSHUNDS we have been free to cross coats and breed down as we wish, with the resulting progeny telling all how adept a breeder we are, not conforming to some abstract figures on a chart. How can a chart view individual dogs and discern from life what qualities these dogs have that might be very important to us, the breeders?

I, for one, would like to keep the status quo. *Barbara Axel*

*Barbara Axel, breeder/trainer/exhibitor, Board Member of North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance (NCRAOA), has organized and participated in programs promoting responsible pet ownership since the late '60's. Positive interactions between dogs and children under the supervision of adults has been a primary goal.*

## **Livestock, Poultry Groups Publicly Oppose UEP-HSUS Agreement**

*Oklahoma Farmer Fri, 09 Dec 2011 16:14:19 CST*

Just about every national livestock and poultry producer group- and two major egg producers -along with the National Farmers Union (NFU) and the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), told the House and Senate Agriculture Committees in letters this week they oppose an agreement between the United Egg Producers (UEP) and the Humane Society of the U.S. (HSUS) to amend the Egg Products Act to create a federal standard for egg laying hen housing.

The ag groups said the so-called "enriched cage system" called for by the UEP-HSUS legislation will increase cost of production, egg costs to consumers and do little if anything to improve bird welfare. "Our organizations continue to make considerable animal care investments with an eye toward continued animal welfare improvements; (however) this proposal would stifle the industry for years to come. We ask simply Congress reject any attempt to legislate unwarranted animal rights mandates," the groups said.

## Canine Bone Marrow Transplant

Canine lymphoma is one of the most common types of cancer in dogs. While the survival rate with current treatments is extremely low (about 0 to 2 percent) the cure rate for dogs that have received a bone marrow transplant is at least 30 percent.

The relatively new procedure involves the use of leukaphoresis machines that are designed to harvest healthy stem cells from the peripheral blood. The machines are used in conjunction with drug therapy to harvest stem cells that have left the patient's bone marrow and entered the bloodstream. The harvested cancer-free cells are then reintroduced into the patient after total body radiation is used to kill residual cancer cells left in the body. This treatment is called peripheral blood stem cell transplantation. The harvesting procedure itself takes six hours and the patient remains in the hospital for two weeks following the procedure. The bone marrow transplant process is completely painless for dogs, although the dogs do experience some GI distress, manifested mainly as diarrhea, from the total body radiation.

Dogs suffering from lymphoma are now able to receive the same medical treatment as their human counterparts through a new bone marrow transplant procedure offered by the Veterinary Health Complex at North Carolina State University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

NC State's CVM is the first veterinary program in the nation to offer canine bone marrow transplants in a clinical setting. *Source:* <http://www.cvm.ncsu.edu/news/>

## A New Feline Medicine Textbook

Posted: 12 Dec 2011 03:00 AM PST. "The Cat: Clinical Medicine and Management" is a new, comprehensive feline medicine textbook just published by Elsevier Saunders. Edited and co-authored by Winn board member Dr. Susan Little and containing a chapter by Winn board member Steve Dale, "The Cat" is an essential resource for anyone who provides complete, state-of-the-art care to cats. In one convenient volume, you'll find authoritative, clinically-focused information enhanced by full-color illustrations, tables, boxes, algorithms, key points, and much more - all in a format designed for quick access. Dr. Little and more than 60 expert contributors address the unique concerns and challenges facing the feline practitioner, including the latest advances in feline medical diagnosis and management and their clinical applications to everyday practice. User-friendly and complete, "The Cat" is also available as an e-book, giving you easy access to the complete, fully-searchable contents online. *Source:* [Winn Feline Foundation](#)

## Special Kits Help Protect Police K-9s

To help keep police canines safe while on duty, the Police & Working K-9 Foundation has teamed up with private and public companies to hold "Cover Your K-9," an innovative series of technology and training seminars. Police canines are routinely subjected to potentially dangerous situations from suspects with a weapon to explosive devices, but often have little protection. As part of the Cover Your K-9 project, the Police & working K-9 Foundation has developed special safety equipment like bullet-proof vests, heat sensors for patrol cars, and a trauma unit aimed at keeping canines safe while in the line of duty.

Earlier this month, more than thirty California law enforcement agencies headed over to the Alameda County Office of Emergency Services to attend an intensive day-long Cover Your K-9 seminar. A team of fourteen veterinarians led by Dr. Robert Lukas, of the Sage Centers for Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Care, taught handlers how to conduct CPR and bandage a wounded dog.

In addition, each participant was given a specially-designed trauma kit which included a custom K-9 oxygen mask and other items not found in normal commercial kits.

The seminar was made possible thanks to Pet Food Express which helped host the annual “Cover Your K-9” fundraiser to ensure that local K-9 units can continue to operate safely even with budget cuts. Pet Food Express has helped to raise more than \$250,000 over the past three years and the proceeds have gone towards providing more than 100 police dogs with bullet-proof vests, special heat sensors for sixteen patrol cars, and provided retired dogs with emergency veterinary care.

*Source: Homeland Security News Wire*

## **USDA Statement Confirms Change in Horse Slaughter Policy**

The USDA issued a statement on November 29 saying there are no slaughterhouses in the U.S. that butcher horses for human consumption now, but if one were to open, it would conduct inspections to make sure federal laws were being followed. NACo reported that a provision allowing for the restoration of USDA-sponsored inspections of horse processing facilities was included in H.R. 2112, the Agriculture Appropriations bill conference report that was signed by the President on November 18. The bill did not specifically allocate funding to resume horse meat inspections, but the USDA statement should pave the way for investors to reopen a facility.

Since 2005, no federal money could be used to inspect horse slaughter facilities in the U.S., as stipulated in past Agriculture Appropriations bills. Without USDA inspections, horse slaughterhouses for human consumption cannot effectively operate, because the meat may not ship across state lines and a majority of the market for horse meat is overseas. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report on June 22, which found that since Congress took action to end horse processing in the U.S., there has been a rise in equine neglect and abuse incidents. In addition, horses are still being sold for slaughter and shipped to Mexico and Canada, and in many cases endure inhumane conditions in transport and processing. The report also noted that counties, including sheriffs, generally have been the entities most affected by the increase in abandoned and neglected horses, as they generally are left with investigating potential cases affecting horse welfare and collecting unwanted horses.

NACo and its partners successfully lobbied Congress to order GAO to study this issue in 2010. The report findings have helped NACo and its partners overturn the ban. NACo policy calls for the humane treatment of horses in the ownership, raising, transporting, and processing that should be carried out under the supervision of USDA. NACo also supports the property rights of horse owners and opposes the ban on domestic horse slaughter, which leads to equine neglect and increasing costs for local governments. Opponents of this policy change will likely fight any reopening through lawsuits and are attempting to ban horse slaughter through legislation. NACo opposes S. 1176, the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act of 2011 and its companion bill in the House, H.R. 2966, which would prohibit the sale or transport of horses or equine parts in interstate or foreign commerce with the intent of processing them for human consumption.

*Source: NACo Legislative Bulletin December 2, 2011. Contact: Erik Johnston • 202/942-4230*

*Protecting your right to responsibly own  
and breed animals. Join NCRAOA*

North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance, Inc. (NCRAOA) is a statewide organization of animal owners and professionals dedicated to animal welfare, responsible animal ownership, and maintaining the rights of responsible citizens to breed and own animals. NCRAOA, a 501(c)3 organization, provides education and information to the public and supports reasonable and humane animal welfare laws. Permission granted to copy and distribute NCRAOA News and Views in its entirety as is.