

# Books

## Hooked on fish

### Fish Vetting Essentials

Richmond Loh and Matt Landos

215 pages, paperback, AUD99. Richmond Loh Publishing. 2011. ISBN 978 0 9871571 02

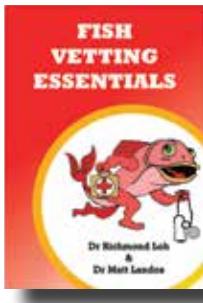
HOW do you feel about seeing fish? Apprehension? Mystification? Terror? Or do you simply keep the telephone number of the nearest exotics' vet somewhere handy? There are plenty of fish keepers (from intricate and highly expensive koi set-ups to a child's pet goldfish) who need help and will be pleasantly surprised to find a vet who can provide it. Even the aquarists (to whom most keepers turn for help) are happy to find a vet willing and able to give some input into fish disease problems.

So, here is a book that may help you break into (or just cope with) this rather alien territory. How? Well, it really is one of the most practical fish books I have come across and it is absolutely fascinating.

It covers freshwater and saltwater set-ups and species (the species identification and monograph section is extremely useful) and has a suitably large section on aquarium and pond set-ups along with water quality and testing. I really liked the recommendations for water quality on a species-by-species basis.

There are then sections on nutrition, clinical investigation and pathology, and individual diseases. The book finishes with anaesthesia and surgery followed by various miscellaneous procedures (euthanasia, microchipping, diagnostic imaging) and, finally, various legal issues. The latter is probably the least useful section for the UK reader as it is (not unexpectedly given the nationality of the authors) based on Australian law.

The rest is simply excellent – it is in simple note form and ideal for dipping into for another tasty bite. It is a little hard to read as a conventional book and the layout is a little eclectic (though the index is comprehensive and accurate), but there is a lot of very useful information included, and the disease investigation section is well written for the beginner, though it would have been nice to have more on differential diagnosis by clinical signs.



It is a self-published book, which explains its individual approach and also the variability in illustration quality – there are some very good colour illustrations, but also some poorer ones. The line drawings are generally well done and useful – Richmond Loh's drawing of ultimate pond design being a case in point. I will also be keeping this book near me when I do microscopy, as the parasite and fungus identifications are of great value.

The main problem with this book is its availability. At present it is only available from the author's website [www.thefishvet.com.au](http://www.thefishvet.com.au) and postage costs an extra AUD35 (approx £23). This does make it a little expensive and in line with more easily obtained fish texts (for example, the 'BSAVA Manual of Ornamental Fish'). However, given the unique qualities of this book, and its comprehensive yet practical coverage of fish medicine, I would still strongly recommend it to anyone keen on seeing fish, whether experienced or just dabbling. And if you're still not keen on taking the plunge, just find the number of the nearest aquarist and recommend they get a copy.

John R. Chitty

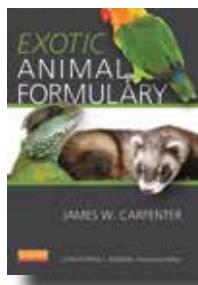
doi: 10.1136/vr.e4884

## Drug doses for exotic species

### Exotic Animal Formulary, 4th edn

James W. Carpenter

744 pages, paperback, £33.14. Elsevier. 2012. ISBN 978 1 43772 264 2



THIS is a very handy book, and this revised edition includes a fantastic spread of drug doses and a mass of new references. It is compiled and edited by world-leading authorities on exotic animal medicine and gives the user a great insight into what they can do if presented with a clinical situation in an exotic species. It is very favourably priced and several (but not all) sections have seen considerable revision in drugs and dosages. Without any doubt, there are plenty of new and interesting data included.

The visual format of this edition is more pleasing on the eye and easier to use than the previous edition. However, the back cover says that a Pageburst e-Book version is available, but I have struggled to access edition 4 as an e-Book in the UK.

The handbook has evolved to have a unique and somewhat random format, which is not especially intuitive. The format is great once you are familiar with it, but you can't pick it up and, for example, quickly find a drug that is appropriate for a specific condition in a hamster – you have to learn how to do this.

Not everything about the book is helpful to the busy UK clinician. Some drugs and international work seem to have slipped through the net; for example, there is a paucity of real data concerning the use of alfaxalone in a range of animals (especially marsupials, lagomorphs and some reptiles).

Unlike the current generation of UK books and articles that are available, no indication is given if a medicine is either authorised or unauthorised for the animal in question (either in the USA or the UK). In reality, the UK user is left unaware of whether they are 'cascading' or not.

In most cases, no medicine disposal, storage or handling data are routinely given. No interaction or toxicology data are provided or overdose antidote data offered. Therefore, there remains a need for every UK clinician to cross-reference this text with a variety of other data sources each time it is used. The prudent use of antimicrobials, and antibiotic protocols promoting safe stewardship (especially of third-generation cephalosporins and fluoroquinolone antibiotics) is not mentioned. I had hoped such a key safety item would be entered in the 'special chapter on selected topics'.

The editors also appear to have become distracted by the inclusion of copious non-pharmacology data and a mass of tables, to the extent that this is quite possibly no longer a formulary.

Despite these negative comments, this is a fantastic asset for a practice to have and it is great value. I really like this book. However, I am also disappointed that its approach ignores safe and prudent dispensing practices and is hard to navigate.

Perhaps the book needs to be rethought so that it is clear exactly what it is trying to do. Safety really must be the key word next time around. Until revision, and the inclusion of information on storage, disposal, handling, contraindications, adverse effects, etc, readers may still find

this a handy exotic guide to include in their practice pharmacy.

My verdict? Four stars for being a handy exotic guide for any practice library. However, only one star if you want to treat exotics in the UK safely, using modern drugs, within the limits imposed upon us by Veterinary Medicines Regulations and the Waste Framework Directive.

Stuart McArthur

doi: 10.1136/vr.e4885

## Surgery for students and new graduates

### Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery

Donald A. Yool

394 pages, paperback, £49.95. Cabi. 2012. ISBN 978 1 84593 821 5



AS a new graduate the aim of becoming a competent, efficient surgeon is indeed exciting. However, in reality, being a vet with limited experience can be daunting and a time when we still spend many hours with our heads in books, despite no longer being students.

This book aims to support veterinary undergraduates in their clinical years of study and new graduates completing the RCVS's professional development phase (PDP) in their first year of practice. While not being an extensive or in-depth surgical treatise in comparison to the well-known texts, such as 'Fossum', it is a more accessible version that provides valuable guidance and support for new vets starting out in practice. However, I would also warrant it to be a valuable text for all general practitioners as a quick and easy-to-use reference.

The author starts by covering the basics of surgery from Halsted principles – gowning and draping and suture materials – and then moves on to provide a comprehensive overview of the common procedures and conditions encountered in general practice, including the surgical techniques required for day 1 and year 1 competencies.

While being simple to read and understand, the text still provides sufficient information on how to investigate, diagnose and treat common surgical conditions. It is not only a how-to book of surgery, but also a guide to the management of any case that may become surgical; for example, in the chapter on

'ovarian and uterine surgery' the authors include essential information on normal parturition, indications for caesarean section in cases of dystocia, neonatal resuscitation, postoperative management and complications, as well as the basic surgical technique for the procedure.

The book is well laid out. The author has written it in a style that is easy to read and understand, and the text is accessible to dip in-and-out of as needed. The illustrations are clear and suited for their target audience, although it is a shame that they are not in colour.

Divided into anatomical regions where the relevant surgical conditions are covered, each chapter has a set of learning objectives aimed at supporting veterinary undergraduate students. At the end of the text there is also a self-assessment section, covering each chapter to consolidate learning. It is certainly a book for budding surgeons.

Charlotte E. Gale

doi: 10.1136/vr.e4924

## Feline orthopaedics

### Feline Orthopedic Surgery and Musculoskeletal Disease

P. M. Montavon, K. Voss and S. J. Langley-Hobbs

582 pages, hardback, £67.14. Elsevier Saunders. 2009. ISBN 978 0 7020 2986 8

WITH the expansion of knowledge in this field and the rise in prominence of the cat, not just as a pet, but as a valued member of the household, any comprehensive work on feline orthopaedics has to be a welcome addition to the practice bookshelf. Split into seven sections, covering clinical examination, musculoskeletal disease, trauma, general surgical considerations and implants and instruments, the bulk of the work deals with the treatment of specific conditions, many of which, given the species, are the result of trauma.

This is certainly a thorough and very handsome work, and in the preface the authors hope that the book will provide 'a good grounding in orthopaedics for veterinary students'. For me, though, this book's completeness is its weakness. My assumption would be that a vet searching for a text specifically aimed at feline orthopaedics would already have background knowledge of basic surgical and

orthopaedic principles and would be looking for the key differences in applying this to the cat. In striving for their aim of providing 'a good grounding in orthopaedics', the authors are in danger of diluting the key points that form the book's *raison d'être*. Consequently, reading the book gives the impression that there is a succinct practical guide a third of its size lurking between its covers.

The practical nature is possibly also hindered by the layout, with technique boxes dispersed in and around the text, so that flow is interrupted and it can be difficult to view a clinical problem as a whole and compare the various treatment options. In this respect, it certainly suffers in comparison with the accessibility of (for example) the BSAVA manuals where techniques are clearly separated from the discussion, and where common conditions and simpler techniques are more readily perceived.

Despite my seemingly negative comments, my colleague in a 100 per cent feline practice found the text useful and perhaps that is its niche. Alternatively, if the cat continues to outstrip the dog as the nation's primary choice of pet, perhaps more books will view life from the cat's perspective and dogs will become the add-on.

If you are new to the world of orthopaedics and cats form your primary caseload, this is probably the book for you. If you already have a reasonable grounding and want those key nuggets of information on why cats aren't dogs, there is probably another book waiting for you.

Tim Hutchinson

doi: 10.1136/vr.e4925

## Books received

### Life Skills for Puppies

Helen Zulch and Daniel Mills

96 pages, paperback, £12.99. Hubble and Hattie. 2012. ISBN 978 1 845844 46 2

### Dog-friendly Gardening

Karen Bush

128 pages, paperback, £12.99. Veloce. 2012. ISBN 978 1 84584 410 3

### Growth of Farm Animals

T. L. J. Lawrence, V. R. Fowler and J. E. Novakofski

384 pages, paperback, £49.95. Cabi Publishing. 2012. ISBN 978 1 84593 558 0

### External Parasites of Small Ruminants

P. Bates

256 pages, hardback, £65. Cabi Publishing. 2012. ISBN 978 1 84593 664 8

### Keeping Geese. Breeds and Management

Chris Ashton

192 pages, paperback, £18.99. The Crowood Press. 2012. ISBN 978 1 84797 336 8