

## The UFAW Vacation Scholarships

### Some news about past vacation scholars: where are they now?

**Dr Joseph Barber** (vs 1997, *A study of the effect that enhanced feeding has on captive voles (Microtus agrestis), with special reference to stereotypies*) Completed a PhD on 'Social influences on the behaviour of laying hens' in 2001 under the supervision of Professor Marian Dawkins. Joseph then secured a post at Disney's Animal Kingdom as a research fellow with the behavioural husbandry team. In this role he helped develop the 'S.P.I.D.E.R' model as a process for enrichment projects (Setting Goals, Planning, Implementing, Documenting, Evaluating and Readjusting). He is an advisor to the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) where he has contributed to their animal Standardized Guidelines and Taxon Advisory Groups and sits on their Animal Welfare Committee. He also assisted in the organization of the 7th International Conference on Environmental Enrichment.

**Dr Stuart Becker** (vs 1999, *Comparison of behavioural interaction in two populations of captive ring-tailed lemurs in single-species and mixed-species exhibits*). After working as a veterinary surgeon for three years, Stuart went on to undertake a PhD with Professor Jane Hurst at the University of Liverpool on 'Behavioural detection of infection status', where he is: '..... investigating the effect of semiochemical detection of infection status on behaviour in house mice. Detection of cues from infected mice causes clear behavioural and physiological changes in recipients, and the presence of infection in conspecifics can be detected with great sensitivity. The ability to communicate infection status has profound implications for population dynamics, individual health and perhaps the development of methods allowing early diagnosis of disease. I aim to understand the nature of the chemical cues involved, and the functional significance in wild and laboratory mice.'

He has so far published two papers based on his findings:

Becker, S.D., Bennett, M., Stewart, J.P. & Hurst, J.L. (2007) Serological survey of virus infection among wild house mice (*Mus domesticus*) in the UK. *Laboratory Animals* 41, 229-238.

Becker, S.D. & Hurst, J.L. (2008) Pregnancy block from a female perspective. In: *Chemical Signals in Vertebrates II* (Eds. J.L. Hurst, R.J. Beynon, S.C. Roberts & T.D. Wyatt), pp.141-150. Springer, New York

**Nick Davis** (vs 1997, *Light intensity preferences in fowl - a behavior study.*) is currently working at Chester Zoo, where he is project liaison officer. In 2001 he started a part-time PhD 'Assessing behaviour and welfare of captive spider monkeys', at University College Chester. Nick has had one paper published so far from this study (Davis, N., Schaffner, C.M. & Smith, T.E. (2005). Evidence that zoo visitors influence HPA activity in spider monkeys (*Ateles geoffroyi rufiventris*). *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 90, 131-141.) and has presented his research at several international and national conferences.

**Dr Rachael Eager** (vs 2002, *Evaluation of pain & discomfort associated with equine castration*) After completing her MSc, Rachael continued to study equine pain, working as a research assistant at the R(D)SVS at Edinburgh University; work that used the ethogram she had developed during her MSc (vacation scholar) work. Rachael was lucky enough to then be able to register for a PhD, looking into acute castration and chronic laminitis pain in the horse. Having recently passed her viva she is now in the process of writing up her work for publication.

In addition, Rachael now has a job working for The Brooke, a charity which aims to improve the welfare of working equines in developing countries, as one of the scientists on their risk assessment project, which aims to investigate causal factors of prioritised welfare issues using objective, scientific techniques. Rachael states that she is *'thoroughly enjoying my job (although it can be very tough at times) as it allows me to continue my work in equine welfare, use my scientific background, travel and also pass on my knowledge through training and teaching of the in country staff (a part of my job that I very much enjoy!).'*

**Dr Jo Grindrod** (nee Montgomery) (vs 1996, *Rehabilitation of common seal pups Phoca vitulina.*). After graduation, Jo undertook a PhD in behavioural neurobiology (with pigs) at the University of Cambridge and then went onto work as a postdoctoral research scientist investigating the reproductive neuroendocrinology of sheep. She is currently working for a CNS pharmaceutical company.

**Dr Lesley King** (vs 1997, *The impact of visitor presence on location and activity preference in contrasting primate populations.*). Lesley undertook a PhD in Cambridge with Professor Marian Dawkins. She now works for the Humane Society of the United States where she is the Director for Education and Animal Welfare. Lesley presented a paper on *'Ethics and welfare of animals used in education: an international perspective'* at the UFAW Symposium: Science in the Service of Animal Welfare in 2003.

**Dr Julia Lacey** (vs 2000/02, *The persistence of laboratory mice in gaining access to conspecifics assessed by the varying costs imposed by four natural obstacles*) went on to undertake a PhD, supervised by Professor Jane Hurst, at the University of Liverpool on *'The importance of experience and olfactory stimulation on the behaviour and welfare of inbred laboratory mice'*. Julia became a lecturer at Myerscough College (University of Central Lancashire) in 2006.

**Cara McCusker** (vs 2001, *Biologically relevant odor cues function as a novel form of enrichment in captive ring-tailed lemurs (Lemur catta)*). Cara went on to undertake a PhD at Queen's University Belfast on *'Factors affecting cortisol levels in captive ring-tailed lemurs, Lemur catta'*.

Cara continues: *'My Ph.D continued from an initial project funded by a UFAW Vacation Scholarship Award', ....which 'gave me the opportunity to carry out research over my summer vacation before the final year of my degree, to write up my results and to present them at a UFAW vacation scholarship meeting. This was a really positive, fun and educational experience for me. It introduced me to the world of research and enthused me towards doing a Ph.D. which I enjoy immensely! Thank you UFAW!'*

**Sean Wensley** (vs 2000, *The welfare implications of manipulating social groups of caged zebra finches (Poephila castanotis)*) After completing his veterinary degree, Sean went on to take the MSc in Applied Animal Behaviour and Animal Welfare at the University of Edinburgh. He then accepted a job at an exotics veterinary practice in Liverpool, as he recently informed us *'...in order that I may gain clinical experience - but my ultimate aim is to combine my veterinary work with promoting understanding, of animal welfare and wildlife conservation, particularly to lay audiences when possible. I recently, for example, wrote an article for the BVA:AWF magazine, You & Your Vet (distributed to the pet-owning public, as you probably know), entitled "What is animal welfare?"; and in April I became Animal Welfare Representative for the British Veterinary Association Overseas Group.'*

**Dr Kerry Westwood** (vs 2001, *Learning and memory: improving welfare of hatchery reared rainbow trout*). Kerry was awarded a UFAW 3Rs Liaison Group Research Scholarship in

2002 to look at the *'Effects of cage size, space allowance, environmental enrichment and their interactions on behaviour, stress, immune function and welfare of laboratory mice.'*

Other words of support for the UFAW vacation scholarships:

- [Professor Clive Phillips, University of Queensland](#) - the scholarships offer *'a great opportunity for students to focus their study on animal welfare. Keep up the good work!'*
- [Professor Ian Duncan , University of Guelph](#) *'I would like to congratulate UFAW ..... and wish you every success with this excellent scholarship scheme in the future.'*
- [Professor Sandra Edwards, University of Newcastle](#) *'I .....would like to thank UFAW for their continuing support of these vacation scholarships. I think these are an important way of introducing students to animal welfare research and often stimulate interest which progresses to a longer term career in this area.'*