UFAW supports study to investigate whether flight is important to captive birds

We are pleased to announce a grant of £45,761 to Professor Innes Cuthill of the University of Bristol and colleagues at the Universities of Guelph, Canada and Utrecht, The Netherlands. This is for a study which will test the theory that restricting flight leads to welfare problems in caged birds and the prediction that welfare will be poorest in the species which are most flight-dependent in the wild.

Investigating the importance of flight to captive birds by experimentally restricting or preventing flight in itself is a welfare concern. Professor Cuthill and his colleagues will therefore use data on welfare from an online survey of pet parrot owners worldwide and from zoos that have agreed to help the study. This will be combined with a statistical analysis that takes into account the evolutionary history of parrot species and existing information on flight dependency to examine whether highly flight-dependent species are more likely to develop welfare problems.

Parrots have been chosen as a focal group as they are well represented in captivity, are commonly kept in restrictive cages or enclosures and may also be physically prevented from flying by wing clipping or pinioning (removing a wing joint to prevent flight). In addition, there are many species of parrots (psittacines) from budgerigars to cockatoos to macaws and from ground-dwelling and flightless birds to swift and migratory ones.

Together, the information will improve understanding of normal parrot behaviour in captivity and highlight factors that may play a role in the development of common behaviour problems. With this knowledge, parrot owners and keepers can make informed predictions about how to best optimise their parrots’ living environments – or about which solutions might best reduce, or even prevent, problem behaviours from occurring. This data will also guide potential owners towards the species least likely to develop welfare problems in captivity.

UFAW’s Chief Executive Officer and Scientific Director Dr Huw Golledge said: “It is important to understand which species might be most likely to experience poor welfare if their flight is restricted. This work has the potential to improve the well-being of millions of birds by testing our assumptions about the effects of captivity on different species.”

It is expected that the extraction, analysis and interrogation of the data will take 18 months. The results will be shared with zoos and pet parrot owners, as well as disseminated via relevant media, an appropriate scientific journal and at national and international conferences. For further information on recent grants awarded, see page 6.

CHAIRMAN’S COMMENT

As we start a new decade we enter an exciting time in the charity’s history. UFAW has a new Chief Executive (see page 2) and we are investigating what matters to animals and how this can be used to improve their welfare. These are big challenges. Science doesn’t always give us an answer, or the answer we had hoped for, but what is important is that we keep looking for answers and science is invaluable in helping us with that.

UFAW’s recently-awarded grant is an excellent example: we seek to determine how restricting flight impacts on the welfare of captive birds, and to what degree.

We have continued to grow the LINKS scheme and now have over 115 universities across 40 countries around the world, all sharing a common aim of advancing animal welfare. You can read about some of the activities of the LINKS on page 5.

Following the success of the 2018 Hong Kong meeting and our meeting in Bruges last year we continue into 2020 with an active programme of meetings. This includes our conference to be held in Birmingham and sessions at the ISAE meeting in Bangalore, the Animal Science and Technology Meeting in Edinburgh and a meeting jointly funded with the Animal Welfare Research Network to look at the use of neuroscience to understand and improve animal welfare.

As ever, none of this important work would be possible without your support and desire to help us continue to advance the boundaries of knowledge to benefit animal welfare, for which we are indebted. Thank you.

Alick Simmons BVMS MSc MRCVS
Chair
A message from our new CEO, Dr Huw Golledge

I am delighted to be writing this introduction as the newly-appointed Chief Executive Officer and Scientific Director of UFAW (and of our sister charity the Humane Slaughter Association). I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Dr Robert Hubrecht OBE, who brought immense scientific expertise and a calm, rational approach to our work over the past five years. Before becoming CEO, Robert worked for UFAW for some 18 years as its Deputy Scientific Director where he made major contributions to animal welfare science during his research on dog welfare and through his book *The welfare of animals used in research* amongst many other achievements. We all wish Robert a very happy and well-deserved retirement.

I first came to work for UFAW five years ago because I strongly believe in our approach to animal welfare. Put simply, we believe that you can’t improve animals’ welfare without understanding their needs and the challenges to their welfare. That is why we focus strongly on a scientific approach and work to generate the information which can be used to improve it - much like medical research charities generate information to improve human health and welfare. In the field of animal welfare, where many others prefer to campaign, sometimes without strong evidence to underpin their arguments, this is an almost unique approach. UFAW has been responsible for many scientific advances which have greatly improved our understanding of animal welfare over its long history. It continues to support ground-breaking animal welfare research, some of which you can read about in this newsletter. We also help to enthuse and support the next generation of animal welfare scientists through schemes like our Animal Welfare Student Scholarships which enable students to gain their first experience of animal welfare research. Before joining UFAW I was hugely grateful for such a scholarship which enabled a student to do valuable animal welfare research in my lab.

As well as supporting research I want to ensure that the information our work generates benefits as many animals as possible as soon as possible. We all have such an important part to play in improving animal welfare, whether we keep pets, look after animals, work in regulation or government or are consumers of animal products. A major focus of my initial work, therefore, will be to re-examine how we get relevant information generated by animal welfare science to those people who can ensure that it directly benefits animals, and in a way which is useful to them.

As UFAW begins a new decade and approaches its centenary, we look forward to working with all of our stakeholders to ensure that UFAW continues to be a champion of Science in the Service of Animal Welfare.

Our work is funded by donations and legacies. To those of you who have supported us I would like to say thank you, and to those of you who have yet to support UFAW I would ask you to consider helping us continue our valuable work in future.

Garden Wildlife Health Project update

Over the last 6 years UFAW has supported this important project by providing grants to the value of £30,000. As we enter the third year of the latest tranche of support (2017-2020) the project has gone from strength to strength. It aims to understand more about the diseases that threaten the health, welfare and conservation of British wildlife species and to use this information to mitigate these threats by informing changes to human activities such as urban habitat management practices.

The project team has continued to conduct scanning disease surveillance of wild amphibians, reptiles, garden birds and hedgehogs across Great Britain. Highlights have included giving various presentations, including at the World Veterinary Association Congress in Costa Rica, the publication of new and updated disease factsheets on the GWH project website, and increasing the efficiency and scale of their disease surveillance. The team have also distributed best practice guidance for garden habitat management to safeguard wildlife and human health and welfare to members of the public and wildlife rehabilitation communities and conferences through presentations and popular science articles.
21st UFAW Animal Welfare Student Scholars meeting, University of Edinburgh

Current UFAW scholars presented the results of the research they had carried out as part of the 2019 scholarship scheme. The standard of talks was high and addressed issues as diverse as dental health in cattle (Jillian Gordon, University of Edinburgh, UK), broiler chicks’ preferences for different litter management practices (Valerie Monckton, University of Guelph, Canada) and how puppy purchasers choose a dog (Veronique de Caestecker, University of Reading, UK).

For many of the scholars the meeting was the first opportunity that they had to present their results – and for scholars Pia Niewind (University of Bonn, Germany) and Johanna Piibor (Estonian University of Life Sciences, Estonia) they had the additional challenge of presenting in English, their second language. Both spoke confidently and gave excellent presentations, as did the other scholars.

This year’s Farm Animal Care Trust scholarship, given in memory of Ruth Harrison, was awarded to Isabel Izquierdo-Hall (Royal Veterinary College, UK) for her project Evaluation of housing for laying hens: An on-farm comparison of comfort behaviour expression between colony-cages and indoor barns.

These meetings are important in encouraging students to become interested and engaged in animal welfare science and giving them valuable experience of discussing their work in front of an interested and knowledgeable audience. Equally important is communicating the results of scientific research to others to improve the way we keep and care for animals.

We would like to congratulate all the scholars on their presentations and thank Dr Tamsin Coombs and her colleagues at the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Edinburgh for kindly hosting this meeting and for their warm welcome.

“I was initially very nervous to present at the Student Scholar meeting as this was the first time that I had presented in this way. This opportunity was truly invaluable! It was a fantastic experience to learn about the other projects that UFAW has funded but also network with fellow students in the area. The opportunity to present at this conference gave me confidence in my ability in presenting. This also inspired me to take part in future conferences… I would strongly encourage anyone who is partaking in a project to apply for the UFAW Student Scholarship Scheme.”

2019 Student Scholar

Books to Eastern Europe

One of the ways in which UFAW works is by promoting and supporting education in animal welfare to encourage tomorrow’s animal welfare advocates. To this end, and having ascertained interest and demand, we expanded our initiative which involves gifting books from the UFAW Wiley-Blackwell animal welfare series to Eastern Europe. These books would be gifted to the libraries of selected veterinary schools, for use by their staff and students and address a range of issues including environmental enrichment, farm animal welfare, equine welfare and the welfare of animals used in research. David Arney, Professor of Animal Welfare at the Institute of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Estonian University of Life Sciences, responded: “Thanks very much for sending these. Our librarian, Raili Zuba, has made a display of these and made an announcement on the library webpage and Facebook. But I would like to add my thanks too. I have just been to the library and caught a student browsing at the display, so do please be assured that they will be used… it might help to know that animal welfare science is taken seriously and is of increasing interest here.”

In return, we were delighted to receive a copy of the first book in Estonian about animal welfare for our own library, for which we are extremely grateful.
The UFAW/LASA (Laboratory Animal Science Association) 3Rs meeting 2019

A UFAW/LASA meeting held on 25th September on the topic of pain assessment and control for animals raised some surprising issues. Many may not think that research on the behaviour and ecology of wildlife requires consideration of pain, but working with wild animals brings with it a very specific set of problems. Capture and anaesthesia, for example, can be stressful; and behavioural indicators of pain, distress and disease are often more difficult to interpret in wild than in captive animals. Many wild animals have parasites and some may have diseases or injuries. The conclusion was that researchers need to know the species that they are working with and should prepare a plan to deal with welfare-related eventualities.

Speakers also discussed how the effectiveness of analgesics could be established. The meeting concluded that while progress had been made in controlling pain experienced by animals, researchers still needed evidence so they could choose effective analgesics compatible with their research programmes.

The RSPCA/UFAW Rodent and Rabbit Welfare Meeting

The RSPCA/UFAW Rodent Welfare Group has held a one-day meeting every autumn for the last 26 years to provide updates on some of the latest developments in the care and welfare of rodents and rabbits used in scientific research. The 2019 meeting was held at the University of Birmingham and was attended by over 60 delegates. The themes were sentience, positive welfare and psychological well-being. Dr Huw Golledge from UFAW spoke on the issue of sentience (the capacity of animals to have feelings that matter to them). There has been a lot of discussion around animal sentience as sentience is ‘enshrined’ in EU law but not explicitly mentioned in domestic UK legislation. Huw argued that we shouldn’t wait for hard scientific proof of sentience (or even its enshrinement in law) before working very hard to improve the welfare of animals such as rodents and rabbits which most people already assume are sentient.

Fascinating talks included the importance of overnight monitoring of mice to reveal the natural behaviours of these nocturnal animals and the importance of the provision of enrichment materials with which mice can interact to prevent boredom. A related talk showed that inactive behaviour in mice who are not sleeping may be an indicator of a negative state rather like boredom in humans, and which could be used as a welfare indicator for lab mice.
From the beginning in 1926, one of UFAW’s charitable objects has been to enlist the influence of university men and women on behalf of animals, wild and domestic as this was identified as one of the best ways of achieving our goal of promoting and supporting animal welfare science to gain insight into what matters to animals, to assess their welfare and improve the quality of their lives.

Our university outreach programme of LINKS helps us to achieve this goal by engaging with staff and students at universities and educational institutions around the world to encourage interest in animal welfare by providing support for novel activities in their institution.

Africa has been somewhere we have been keen to improve our contact with and we are pleased that in the autumn of 2019 two Nigerian universities - Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta and the Obafemi Awolowo University – became part of the LINK network. We look forward to helping support animal welfare activities at both.

Here are just a couple of examples of some of the activities that we have recently supported via the LINK scheme:

**Animal Welfare Judging and Assessment contest, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, USA**

Atlantic Veterinary College, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada (LINK: Professor Mike Cockram)

In November 2019, the LINK scheme once again helped support students attend and participate in the veterinary division of the Animal Welfare Assessment contest held at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, USA – from both the University of Prince Edward Island and Iowa State University. These contests seek to teach students to assess the welfare of animals in a variety of settings using science-based methods and reasoning and contestants are judged on how well they presented and justified their positions.

University of Prince Edward Island student Jess Rose said: “Though I'd always had an interest in animal welfare, I’d had limited opportunity to educate myself about it. The AVMA Animal Welfare Assessment Contest sounded like a great opportunity, and in actuality, it exceeded all my expectations. I learned not just about species and industry-specific care, but about how to systematically approach and evaluate welfare and quality of life in a more general sense. Coupled with the opportunity to meet giants in the discipline like Dr Temple Grandin, I will carry what I gained during my experience in Colorado forward with me into my career for many years to come”.

We remain interested in hearing from anyone interested in finding out more about the LINK scheme and joining the network, which now covers 115 universities in over 40 countries.

A full list of link institutions and their activities can be found on our website.
Several major awards are ongoing, including the Research Training Scholarship made to Elena Armstrong at Newcastle University. The ultimate aim of this project is to discover novel ways of telling how much stress chickens experience during their lifetimes. By looking at birds raised in different production systems such measures may give us valuable insights into which systems offer the best welfare. This year Elena has submitted another paper for publication, entitled Do keel bone fractures induce a depressive-like state in laying hens? Elena also presented her work at the UFAW symposium in Bruges in 2019.

At the University of Guelph in Canada, Andrea Polanco and Georgia Mason were awarded one of UFAW’s 3Rs awards to understand the lifetime welfare of animals used in scientific research. Georgia and Andrea have recently concluded their study which aimed to understand whether laboratory monkeys have a life worth living (that is, that they have more positive experiences than negative ones). To understand this, we need to know more than just the state of welfare of the animal at any given time, we need to know what their entire life experience was. This is a very difficult thing to measure, but one way may be to use the development of abnormal behaviours as a potential indicator of whether the overall lifetime experience of an animal was negative. To test this hypothesis, the detailed health records kept on rhesus macaque monkeys used in laboratories were examined. The researchers wanted to discover whether signs of poor welfare such as repetitive stereotypical behaviours might arise as a result of negative life events or whether positive events might reduce them. Several life events were found which might predict the development of stereotypical behaviours although the overall hypothesis that stereotypical behaviours might serve as indicators of cumulative welfare (ie the long-term or lifetime welfare of the animal) was not proven.

The results of the study will be presented at the upcoming ISAE meeting in Bangalore, India (see page 7).

Alongside our major awards, we also offer small grants for scientific projects or other activities which help advance animal welfare. As a recent example, we supported Dr Katrina Rosenberger of Agroscope Research Institution, Switzerland to undertake a study to improve the on-farm assessment of goat welfare using a combination of quantitative behavioural tests and qualitative behavioural assessments. In her application, Katrina said: “Farm animals in particular often face stressful situations that can induce negative emotional states and thus reduce welfare. As public perception of animals used for human consumption is changing and increasingly putting pressure on policy makers to ensure good animal welfare, scientifically valid and efficient techniques for the detection of on farm assessment of emotional states are urgently needed.” The project is due to commence in March 2020 and last approximately 5 months.

We also recently supported Dr Arvind Sharma, a PhD student at the Centre for Animal Welfare and Ethics, School of Veterinary Science, University of Queensland, Australia, with a travel grant to partially fund his travel, attendance and poster presentation at the UFAW Symposium in Bruges. Dr Sharma said: “My presentation entitled ‘Hair cortisol analysis in sheltered cows and its association with various welfare indicators’ was very well attended. I had many visitors and queries from academia on my unique study and the concept of sheltering of abandoned and unproductive cows in India. …It was a very productive interaction with the research team from Leibniz Institute for Farm Animal Biology, Germany who are doing similar work on hair cortisol analysis in pigs and cattle. This interaction resulted in getting ideas on future directions my work on hair cortisol analysis in cattle can possibly move. I heartily thank UFAW, for giving me the opportunity to attend … I return home enlightened and motivated.”

For more information about research funding from UFAW please visit: www.ufaw.org.uk/grants

www.ufaw.org.uk
UPCOMING MEETINGS

UFAW 2020 One Day Conference – Recent advances in animal welfare science

In 2008 Birmingham hosted the first of our biennial series of one-day conferences. These seek to provide a forum at which the broad and growing international community of scientists, veterinary surgeons and others concerned with animal welfare can come together to share knowledge and practice, discuss advances and exchange views. The line-up for the seventh of these conferences on ‘Recent advances in animal welfare science’ which is being held on 1st July 2020 at the University of Birmingham, UK, has just been announced. In addition to featuring 16 talks the conference will also include over 60 poster presentations. The programme reflects not only a variety of topics across farm, companion, laboratory and wild animals, but also representation from central Europe, the USA, Norway and the UK.

The fifth Annual Meeting of the Animal Welfare Research Network (AWRN) will also take place in Birmingham on the 2nd and 3rd of July after the UFAW Conference. It is anticipated that Thursday 2nd July will be the AWRN meeting and Friday 3rd will be a full day Grant Writing and Reviewing Workshop. The date and venue have been selected to allow delegates to combine our meeting with that of the AWRN so do please consider attending both events. More information about the AWRN meeting can be found on their website www.awrn.co.uk

For further information see www.ufaw.org.uk/bham20. Registration costs £63, including lunch and refreshments. Talks start at 9.10am with registration from 8.30am, and end at 17.30pm. We hope to see you there.

UFAW session at the Animal Science and Technology Meeting in Edinburgh

UFAW is running an interactive session entitled Measuring and Refining Animal Welfare – is the Evidence Good Enough? at the upcoming Animal Science and Technology Meeting (AST2020) to be held in Edinburgh on the 24-26th March. AST2020 intends to promote education and elevate standards for laboratory animal care at a meeting which will be the largest of its kind held in the UK. In our session, UFAW CEO Huw Golledge and co-organisers Dr Jennifer Lofgren (Global Head of Animal Welfare at Novartis) and Dr Emily Sena (Senior Lecturer at Edinburgh University) will discuss how to use scientific evidence to decide when a particular animal welfare intervention or way of measuring welfare can be safely adopted, enabling those attending to make evidence-based judgements about when to adopt new techniques for improving the welfare of lab animals.

More details about the meeting can be found at www.ast2020.org

UFAW session at the 54th International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE) meeting in Bangalore, India

In a first for the two organisations, UFAW and the ISAE are organising a joint session on The welfare of animals used in research and teaching at ISAE’s 54th annual meeting which will be held in Bangalore, India from 3rd-7th August 2020. Professor Georgia Mason from the University of Guelph will give a plenary talk.

More details can be found at www.isae2020.com

Cross-fertilization between neuroscience and animal welfare workshop

Jointly supported by UFAW and the Animal Welfare Research Network (AWRN) this workshop will bring together neuroscience and animal welfare researchers in an attempt to find ways to use some of the latest cutting-edge research in neuroscience to better understand or improve the welfare of animals. Speakers will include Professor Angela Roberts (University of Cambridge), an expert on the neuroscience of internal affective states; Professor Francis McGlone (Liverpool John Moores University), an expert on pain and pleasant social touch; Professor Alon Chen (President of the Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel), an expert on stress neuroscience and Professor Judith Homberg (Radboud University, The Netherlands) an expert on early-life stress and gene X environment interactions. It will be held at the University of Newcastle, UK on 22nd-23rd June 2020.

For further information see www.awrn.co.uk
In September, UFAW was proud to join over 200 charities across the country to celebrate all the amazing individuals who support vital services by leaving a gift to charity in their Will. Remember A Charity Week, fronted by former Strictly Come Dancing judge Len Goodman, shines a light on the importance of gifts in Wills to charities, and how this year’s theme aimed to challenge some of the most common misconceptions around gifts in Wills, inspiring people to consider their favourite charity in their Will. Legacies constitute a huge tranche of our income, and have the power to make a difference to a significant number of animals worldwide.

Some of the most popular misconceptions around making a Will were highlighted, including:

**Myth:** Leaving a gift in your Will is only for the rich and famous

**Reality:** Every single person can leave a gift in their Will.

**Myth:** Most people in the UK assume that you can’t leave money in your Will to family as well as your favourite charity

**Reality:** This is simply not true. After taking care of your loved ones, you can do both. And it doesn’t have to be money you can leave to charity, it can be a small percentage of your estate or an item.

**Myth:** Leaving a small gift in your will to your favourite cause won’t make any difference

**Reality:** The truth is, when combined with other people’s gifts, it could make a huge difference. In fact, many charities wouldn’t exist if it were not for gifts in Wills. Large or small amounts left to any charity in a Will really could make all the difference.

**Myth:** Leaving a gift in a Will is complex and difficult

**Reality:** Leaving a gift in a Will is easier than you think, whether you are considering revisions to an existing Will or making one for the first time. A professionally written Will ensures that your wishes are clear and your affairs are in order and you could also save your loved ones from additional administrative demands at a difficult and stressful time.

UFAW has put together a simple guide which should be of some assistance to you when speaking to a solicitor and making your Will which can be downloaded free from our website www.ufaw.org.uk/support/leaving-a-gift-in-your-will

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**Mr Roger Ewbank: 1931-2019**

UFAW is sad to announce that its former Director, Mr Roger Ewbank OBE MVSc MRCVS passed away on the 16th November 2019 aged 88 years.

Roger qualified as a veterinary surgeon in 1957, doing three years in veterinary practice before being appointed as a lecturer in animal husbandry at the University of Liverpool. He became UFAW’s Director in 1979, bringing to the role considerable skills in drafting guidelines, codes of practice and legislation. During his tenure, UFAW launched the journal Animal Welfare, the Hume Fellowships, student scholarships and zoo awards. He was chosen to act as one of the first inspectors of zoos when such an inspection became a requirement in 1984. Roger also contributed to many publications on animal welfare, particularly of farm animals, and edited the third and fourth editions of the Farm Animal Handbook. He served as a member of the UK Government’s Farm Animal Welfare Council from 1970 to 1987, on the Animal Procedures Committee from 1987 to 1995 and was a prime mover in the formation of the Companion Animal Behaviour Therapy Studies Group – a forum in which veterinary practitioners and others with an interest in clinical behaviour medicine could share best practice.

We offer our sincere condolences to Roger’s family.