

Many of the essays contain very severe criticisms against the animal-rights movement, describing its activities as “evil” and calling the activists “adaptively unfit” from a Darwinian perspective. For the naïve reader this seems unnecessarily harsh, although it is less surprising if one is familiar with how animal-rights activism, and in particular its violent branches, is perceived within the medical research community. One would hope that the authors distinguish between violent activism and a more moderate animal welfare movement, but this is unfortunately not always very clear. I think this reflects a widespread opinion among researchers that concern for animal welfare will undermine biomedical research. Would increased dialogue between animal welfare scientists and medical researchers help to change this perception? I hope so, and I recommend this book as important reading for anyone interested in participating in this dialogue.

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Practical Wildlife Care

L Stocker (2000). Published by Blackwell Science Ltd, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0EL, UK. Distributed by Marston Book Services Ltd, P O Box 269, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4YN, UK. 296 pp. Paperback (ISBN 0 632 05245 7). Price £19.99.

This book is an excellent and very practical manual of wildlife care. Aimed at the veterinary nurse, animal care student or rehabilitator, there is much in here to interest the veterinarian as well. There is an emphasis throughout on the need for teamwork between veterinarian and nurse or rehabilitator. The style is not too dry and scientific to put off the untrained enthusiast, but is sufficiently detailed to provide the professional with the information needed.

The book starts with a review of the requirements for the nursing and welfare of wildlife under rehabilitation and includes a very useful section on health and safety for personnel and a review of zoonotic diseases. The first part of the book takes the reader through first aid and emergency procedures, followed by nursing techniques including fluid therapy and wound and fracture management. There is nothing here that will be a surprise to the qualified veterinary nurse, although it is handy to have the principles of nursing applied directly to wildlife. In particular, the application of nursing principles to the avian patient often does not come easily to those experienced only with companion mammals. The similarities and differences are clearly explained. Plentiful good, clear photographs and drawings illustrate the text.

There follow chapters on generic avian and mammalian disease, followed by chapters broken down by species or group. Swans, hedgehogs and foxes merit a chapter to themselves, and others are dealt with in generic groups (eg seabirds, birds of prey). The rearing of orphan mammals and of birds is covered in separate chapters.

If this book has a weakness, it is that it represents the methods and views of one author and his organisation (with a few named inclusions). It is in no way a review of current views and techniques across the field of rehabilitation. For example, his assertion that “euthanasia is constantly being abused and animals are killed because somebody does not want to put in the time and effort necessary” would not be considered by many to fully address the welfare issues involved. In the chapter on seabirds, a well-known publication on post-release survival with conclusions contrary to the author’s viewpoint is not mentioned. Also, there is no

attempt to quantify expected success of any recommended treatment with recorded data. For example, when presenting a protocol for the emergency treatment of wounds resulting in prolapse of internal organs, the author states that “the animal might still die but it definitely will if no action is taken”. Readers are left with no quantitative measure of their chance of success with which to assess the welfare benefit to the patient when considering using this protocol. This approach should be borne in mind when following the techniques presented.

The excellent and comprehensive coverage of nursing and rehabilitation techniques, however, far outweighs any drawbacks. This book contains a wealth of practical and innovative techniques and deserves a place on the shelf of every rehabilitator and veterinary surgery where wildlife is treated.

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Sheep Ailments: Recognition and Treatment

E Straiton (2001). Published by The Crowood Press Ltd, The Stable Block, Crowood Lane, Ramsbury, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 2HR, UK; <http://www.crowood.com>. 192 pp. Hardback (ISBN 1 86126 397 X). Price £18.99.

First published in 1972, this is the seventh edition of the book previously entitled *The TV Vet Book for Sheep Farmers*. In the Preface, Mr Straiton contrasts the paucity of veterinary treatments available to him as a veterinary student in 1938 with “the veritable armoury of preventative drugs [available now], so comprehensive that it should be a disgrace to lose a single ewe or lamb”. It is, therefore, somewhat surprising that currently perinatal lamb mortality averages 15 per cent, frequently exceeding 25 per cent, and annual ewe mortality ranges from five to seven per cent. Neither statistic has improved over the past four decades; indeed, there is evidence that with a greatly increased flock size per shepherd, husbandry standards are falling and mortality rates increasing. In the Foreword, Dr J A Watt highlights the most critical step in addressing this problem: the dissemination and application of veterinary knowledge based upon sound scientific principles. Does this book’s popular format of concise practical information accompanied by a large number of sequential photographs of common conditions succeed, or has it been surpassed by digital computer imagery presented on CD-ROM or on Internet sites?

There are numerous errors throughout the text. For example, treacle is glucogenic not ketogenic; ewes suffering from ovine pregnancy ketosis are often hyperglycaemic such that glucose test strips would not be diagnostic. Mention should be made of flock testing for 3-OH-butyrate four to six weeks prior to lambing and the influence of dam nutrition upon lamb birthweight. Numerous treatments such as anabolic steroids for ovine pregnancy toxæmia and chloramphenicol for listeriosis have not been available for many years. Under swayback, one preventative regimen recommends feeding a 0.5 per cent copper lick; the accompanying illustration features Texel sheep — a breed known to be highly susceptible to copper toxicity. In the section dealing with bacterial polyarthritis, no mention is made of *Streptococcus dysgalactiae*, the most common cause of joint ill, and its prevention by means of metaphylactic penicillin injection. Surprisingly, antibiotic aerosol is preferred to strong veterinary iodine for navel dressing; most bacteraemias arise via the oropharynx and gastrointestinal tract. The site used for intraperitoneal glucose injection (Figure 3, p 61) is incorrect. The section entitled “How long should ewes be kept?” could be developed to