

# ASAB Newsletter

Spring 2012



## *A note from the Newsletter Editor...*

Dear ASAB member,

Welcome to the Spring 2012 edition of the ASAB Newsletter! This year is a particularly special year, as we are celebrating ASAB's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday! Amongst the celebrations was a special plenary lecture from Prof. Aubrey Manning on the history of ASAB at the Winter meeting in London. If you missed out on the meeting, you will find a view from the conference, kindly provided by Fiona Ingleby from the University of Exeter, on page 5. We have updates from ASAB Secretary, Candy Rowe on page 3, and the ASAB Education Officer, Charlotte Evans, on page 4. There are also the usual news and highlight updates on animal behaviour research published in the last few months.

With Easter very surely on its way, it will soon be time for the Easter conference this year taking place in the wonderful Welsh coastal town of Aberystwyth. Rupert Marshall and colleagues have put together a fantastic program, topped off with some brilliant entertainment options – including viewing the local red kite population. If you haven't registered already, make sure you sign up quickly – at just £36 for full registration, places are likely to go like hot (Welsh) cakes.

It's birthday celebrations all round at the moment, and next year, we celebrate 60 years of *Animal Behaviour*, so we are asking all our members to tell us which papers published in the journal over the course of its history you feel have been most influential in the field. Please get in touch with me at [ASABNewsletterEditor@gmail.com](mailto:ASABNewsletterEditor@gmail.com).

With all best wishes,

*Lisa Collins*

## **\*In this edition...\***

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## \*In the news...\*

A brief look at some of the animal behaviour coverage in the media this Winter

### New common marmoset information website

Hannah Buchanan-Smith's team at the University of Stirling have created a new interactive website providing information about common marmoset

(*Callithrix jacchus*) behaviour and how best to care for them in captivity. It is of interest and use to private owners, academic researchers,



educators, zoo, veterinary and laboratory professionals. Fun to use as well as instructive, this online resource is illustrated extensively with photos and over 120 video clips. Funding was provided by N C 3 R s a n d P S G B - C C W P .  
<http://www.marmosetcare.com>

New research from Queen Mary University of London has shown that **goats have local accents** which they pick up from their peers (In press . *Anim. Beh.*). It is well known that young human children can pick up local accents if they move to a new area, and a similar phenomenon has been shown in some birds, bats and whales. Briefer & McElligot have shown here that as kids, pygmy goats mimic the accents of their mother and siblings, but as they get older and join new social groups, their accents change to match those of other goats of the same age.

A team of researchers at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has demonstrated that **male house mice sing songs to attract females**. Using spectrographic analysis, they showed that the songs appear to signal individuality and kinship to potential mates. Although it has been known for some time that male house mice produce ultrasonic vocalisations during courtships, it has always been thought that these were no more than simple squeaks, rather than the complex ballads Penn's team have detected (2012, *Phys. & Beh.* 105: 766).

The precise timing of shearwaters returning to an area after foraging at sea has long been unexplained. However, a team of researchers in Japan has published the first quantitative evidence explaining this phenomenon. They used GPS loggers to track 21 shearwaters and showed that when return journeys were over 100km, the birds initiated their homeward journey at a well defined point in time. By contrast, birds that were less than 100km from home did not commence their journey at a well-defined point. The mechanistic explanations for this behaviour remain



Unknown could be based on learning, rather than watching an internal clock (Shiomi et al., 2011, *Anim. Beh.* 83:355-359).

## \*Now available updated ASAB Guidelines for the Treatment of Animals in Behavioural Research and Teaching\*

The 'Guidelines' outline the best practice for the use of animals for behavioural studies. They are used not only by ASAB, but also by other organizations seeking to implement best practice for behavioural work. They also form the cornerstone of *Animal Behaviour's* ethical reviewing when any ethical issues arise with publications submitted to the journal. They were last published in 2006, and as our understanding of animal ethics changes with the scientific information available, as well as the legislation in place, they have recently been updated by the ASAB Ethics Committee. The Guidelines outline the logic underlying the 3R's and include information on best practice in

husbandry, marking, transportation and fieldwork, as well as other ethical issues relevant to many activities which make use of live animals. They are a must for any researcher or teacher considering embarking on a project which makes use of live animals. The updated Guidelines also include an appendix with useful sources of ethical information. The updated Guidelines were published in the *Animal Behaviour* issue 1, 2012 and can be found at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0003347211004805>

## \* Members' Question Time \*

At the AGM in the summer, a number of suggestions and comments were made from the membership that needed further consideration by Council. These were discussed at the Winter Council Meeting, and we would like to let everyone know what was talked about and decided.

First, Prof Peter Slater (St Andrews) was concerned about the cost of the summer ASAB conference, and asked if retired members could be considered for reduced rates at future ASAB conferences. Of course, our Winter meetings at the ZSL are free, allowing all our members to easily attend at least one ASAB meeting a year. In addition, the annual student conferences at Easter are always very cheap, and if you haven't booked for Aberystwyth yet on 11-13<sup>th</sup> April, you can still register for a stunning £36! So, this really leaves us with our summer meetings to consider. Council decided that we should encourage ASAB and ECBB summer conference organisers to consider allowing retired members to be eligible for reduced rates, and we have updated our conference guidelines accordingly.

Second, Dr Alan McElligott (QMUL) asked for more information about the research that ASAB supports and how decisions are made by the Grants Committee. With the changeover to an e-Newletter and a change of editor, we had stopped announcing ASAB grant awards to the membership. However, this is easily fixed, and all information about the research projects and vacation scholarships that ASAB has funded since 2010 can now be found on our website as a downloadable excel spreadsheet

(<http://asab.nottingham.ac.uk/grants/research.php>). This spreadsheet will be regularly updated, so all information about previous funding can be found on the website. In addition, the website makes clear the guidelines and procedures by which the ASAB Grants Committee work to and make their decisions. And from now on, we will be adding reports and news items to our e-Newsletter about work funded by ASAB to give everyone a better idea of what science we are supporting.

Third, Alan was also concerned about the low level of funding for vacation scholarships reported at the AGM. Although the funding for vacation project scholarships was low in 2010/11, this is because it fluctuates a lot between years due to the small number of applications. ASAB will be making further details on the success rates of funding applications to different schemes available in the near future. In the meantime, if anyone has any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact Tom Pizzari, our Secretary of the Grants Committee.

Finally, I'd just like to thank all the members that attended the AGM in the summer. It's important for Council to have feedback and comments from the membership to make changes and develop the society. I would like to encourage those of you who will be in Essen at the ECBB to come along to our annual AGM during the meeting and participate in the workings of your society.

**Candy Rowe, Secretary, on behalf of ASAB Council.**

## \*Searching for lost members!\*

ASAB is keen to make contact with lost members, some of whom are listed here. Should you know any of these people, it would be great if you could ask them to contact Sue Healy, the Membership Secretary ([susan.healy@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:susan.healy@st-andrews.ac.uk)) or send their contact details to Sue.

Kelly Moyes

Caroline Louise McNeill

MA Hancocks

Gemma Wilkinson

JC Spensley

Robert Thom

SJS Neill

Helen Gath

David LockettDJ Morris

Wrangham and Ross

AN Poole

Christine JT Rendall

Elly Hiby

Emma Conquest

Nigellas Hillgarth

Sian Evans

Francoise Wemelsfelder

JK Gray

Gregory Deakin

JD Hetherington

Joe Garner

## \* ASAB Education report \*

It has been a busy year so far for the education committee. Thanks to Lisa recent copies of feedback are now available online from the ASAB website.

The Association for Science Education Conference, held in Liverpool was a great success. The ASE annual conference is open to everyone with an interest in science education. It attracts over 3000 science educators from all phases of science education.

ASAB was represented at the conference in a number of ways. We took part in 'The Biology Stand' and used this opportunity to talk to delegates, hand out resources and persuade Newly Qualified Teachers that teaching animal behaviour is really the best way to engage their students. The ASAB workshop was well attended and our resources have been requested since.



**Hanging around the ASAB stand at the ASE conference**  
**Photo: C.Evans**

Frontier Science was a theme presented by the University of Liverpool Academic Staff and Professor Jane Hurst spoke 'On the scent of sexual

attraction'.... which went down really well for 9:30 on a chilly Thursday morning! Many animals use scents or pheromones released into the environment to attract and to choose suitable mates. Jane also described darcin, the pheromone that attracts female mice to the odour of a particular male. Named 'darcin' after Darcy, the attractive hero in Jane Austen's novel "Pride and Prejudice", this unusual protein in male mice urine attracts females and is responsible for learned preference for specific males.

The Nucleus Group, a group of learned societies & similar not for profit organisations which includes the Society of Biology and ASAB host a series of talks each year entitled, 'Biology in the Real World'.

In 2012, in recognition of the Olympics taking place in the UK, the Nucleus Group hosted a series of talks on 'Biology in the Real World – A Sporting Chance'. Rob Thomas - our very own education secretary gave the most engaging and fascinating lecture as part of the series. His lecture entitled 'the race to reproduce' included tales of sex violence and underhand animal tactics..... His presentation can be found, with the others, on the Society of Biology's website :  
<http://www.societyofbiology.org/education/teaching/bitrw>

We have three new resources in the pipeline – details will be in the next edition of feedback.

Finally, we still need more fans! ASAB Education is very excited to have its own Facebook page. Currently 154 people receive an almost daily fix of animal behaviour, interesting links and upcoming news. You can find us here:  
<https://www.facebook.com/ASABEducation>

**Charlotte Evans**  
**ASAB Education Officer**  
**behaviour@cardiff.ac.uk**





## \* ASAB Winter Meeting 2011 – View from the Conference\*

The 2011 ASAB winter meeting took place on the 1st and 2nd of December at ZSL London Zoo. Organised by David Shuker and Nathan Bailey (University of St. Andrews), the meeting focussed on why animals sometimes make what appears to be the 'wrong' mating decision.

Marlene Zuk (University of California) opened the meeting with an entertaining and enthusiastic plenary lecture, which highlighted that our understanding of mate choice behaviour has come a long way since the initial reluctance to accept the idea. She addressed the question of apparent errors of mate choice through some of her most recent work on the adaptive significance of same-sex pairings in animals. Many of the presentations on the first day built on this theme of mating decisions which seem to be maladaptive but might have 'hidden' adaptive significance. We heard about optimality modelling and balancing the costs and benefits associated with mate choice, as well as the possibility of different functions of sexual behaviour which might allow for flexible mating preferences.

The poster presentations took place in the evening along with some well-earned refreshments. The room was wall-to-wall with posters and each seemed to receive a lot of attention. Delegates got involved in productive and insightful discussions about their research and how they related to the ideas presented during the day.

On the second day of the meeting, plenary speaker Karin Pfennig (University of North Carolina) talked about the fascinating dynamics of mate choice and mate recognition in her study species, and emphasised the importance of considering the trade-offs inherent in mating decisions. The following presentations largely focussed on mechanisms of

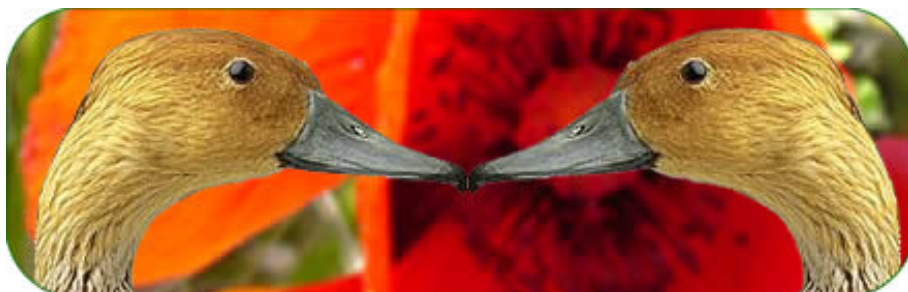
mate choice and how these could lead to a 'wrong' mating decision, with talks encompassing reproductive interference, mate choice copying and environmental influences on condition and behaviour.

In another plenary talk, Aubrey Manning (University of Edinburgh) described some of his experiences in ASAB meetings throughout his career and emphasised the importance of bringing together scientists of all ages and nationalities. This was highlighted during the meeting, with presentations from graduate students, post-docs, fellows and professors from all over the world.

It became clear throughout the meeting that, instead of dismissing apparent errors of mate choice, a lot of insight can be gained through more detailed research. It was interesting to see the wide range of interpretations of what was meant by a 'wrong' mating decision, and what the adaptive significance, if any, might be. There was ample opportunity for discussion, not only in questions directed at the speakers, but also whilst chatting over coffee or lunch breaks (during which many people enjoyed a wander in London Zoo).

The organisers mentioned a high standard and volume of applications for presentations, and this was reflected in the twenty or so spoken presentations, as well as a room packed with posters, which we were treated to over the two-day conference. The meeting successfully integrated empirical studies with theory, and encompassed a variety of perspectives on mate choice behaviour.

**Fiona Ingleby**  
**University of Exeter**





# **ASAB Easter Conference 2012**

**11th – 13th April 2012**

**Aberystwyth University, UK**

**Postgraduate workshop: Wednesday 11th**  
**Conference sessions: Thursday 12th & Friday 13th**

**\*Deadline for abstract submission March 1<sup>st</sup>\***  
**Registration open!**

**For further information:**

**[www.aber.ac.uk/en/ibers/events/](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/ibers/events/)**

**Follow us on Twitter: #EasterASAB2012 or find  
us on Facebook: Asab Easter Conference 2012**



## **\*ASAB Joint Meeting with the Society for Experimental Biology (SEB), and the National Centre for the 3Rs (NC3Rs)\***

### **Implementing the 3Rs in behavioural and physiological research**

**4-5th July 2012, London, UK**

#### **FREE registration and £1000 Poster Prize!**

Interested in improving your science? Want the latest information on innovative techniques that make data collection easier and also improve the ethics of your experimentation? This collaborative meeting aims to provide cutting edge approaches to refining existing protocols, reducing the number of animals used and replacing whole animals with alternatives. Speakers who are leaders in the field of behavioural and physiological research will cover a range of topics including **Physiological measurements in the field; Improved handling of animals; Non-invasive sampling; Use of invertebrates and embryos to replace adult vertebrates; Neuroscience, Development and Toxicology ; Behaviour, Phenotyping and Welfare**

Website and email contact: <http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/event.asp?id=1673>; [lsneddon@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:lsneddon@liverpool.ac.uk)

#### **Confirmed Speakers:**

##### ***Improved reporting of animal-based studies***

Dr Nathalie Percie du Sert, NC3Rs. The ARRIVE guidelines

##### ***Improved handling***

Professor Jane Hurst, UK. Practical aspects of improving the handling of rodents

Professor Craig Franklin, Australia. Field-based physiology: benefits of taking your lab to the animal

##### ***Non-invasive sampling***

Dr Julie Lane, UK. Measuring welfare using non-invasive sampling

Dr Lynne Sneddon, UK. Non-invasive measures of stress: impact of transport on ornamental fish

Dr Peter Hubbard, Portugal. Water hormone measurements: male urinary pheromones induce endocrine responses in females in the Mozambique tilapia

##### ***Use of invertebrates and embryos***

Dr Daniel Osorio, UK. Recent developments in the welfare of cephalopods

Dr Mark Briffa, UK. Replacing vertebrates in behavioural and physiological experiments

Professor Andrew Cossins, UK. Physiological research: using embryos and *C. elegans* to replace adult vertebrates

##### ***Neuroscience, development biology and toxicology***

Dr Vicky MacRae, UK. Use of cell lines to replace mouse models of vascular calcification

Dr Nic Bury, UK. FIGCS: An *in vitro* model to replace ecotoxicity testing of fish to pharmaceuticals

Dr Kath Sloman, UK. The consideration of early life stages in predicting lifetime welfare of zebrafish

##### ***Behaviour and welfare***

Dr Joseph Garner, USA. Improving the well-being and efficacy of mouse models

Dr Rob Deacon, UK. Phenotyping of mice using behavioural measures

Dr Matt Leach, UK. Pain assessment using facial expressions in mammals

Dr Alex Weiss, UK. Personality, well-being and the health of captive animals

Dr Rod Wilson, UK. To enrich or not to enrich? Evidence for cold and warm water laboratory fish

## **\*14<sup>th</sup> International Society for Behavioural Ecology Congress\***

**12-17<sup>th</sup> August 2012, University of Lund, Sweden**

#### **Plenary speakers:**

Baron John Krebs (Oxford)

Prof. Anna Qvarnstrom (Uppsala)

Prof. Lars Chittka (Queen Mary University, London)

Prof. Rudiger Wehner (Zurich)

Prof. Craig Packer (Minnesota)

Prof. Rosemary Gillespie (UC Berkeley)

Prof. Cynthia Moss (Maryland)

Further details, abstract submission (deadline March 15<sup>th</sup> 2012) and registration can be found online at:

<http://www.isbe2012lund.org/>

## **\*VIth European Conference on Behavioural Biology\***

**20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> July 2012, Essen, Germany**

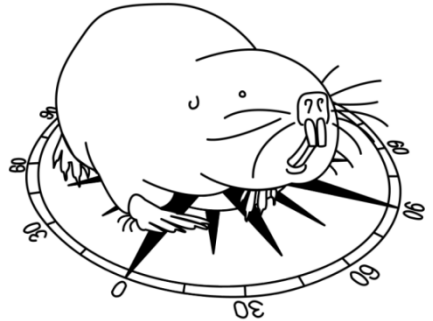
The next European Conference on Behavioural Biology will take place in Essen, Germany, from Friday, July 20, to Sunday, July 22, 2012. The meeting is organized by Hynek Burda, Sabine Begall, Marcus Schmitt, Marie-Therese Bappert, and Philip Dammann. ASAB members can find all information on the meeting web site:

[www.ecbb2012.org](http://www.ecbb2012.org).

The following symposia have been confirmed:

1. Behavioural physiology (R. Bshary, Switzerland).
2. Behavioural biology meets society: from pure to applied ethology in pest management (A. Cini, Italy).
3. Intraspecific variation in primate social dynamics (K. Cronin, The Netherlands).
4. Behaving with a social network in mind (V. Dufour, C. Sueur, France).
5. Group selection vs. kin selection - what really drives social evolution (J. Heinze, J. Korb, Germany).
6. From animal social groups to love: a comparative view on bonding (K. Kotrschal, Austria).
7. Behavioral aspects of magnetic orientation (P. Nemec, Czech Republic).
8. The voice of emotion: Bioacoustic tools to assess emotions in animals (M. Scheumann, Germany).
9. The role of public information in sexual selection (K. Witte, Germany).
10. Impact on behavioural research of the new Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used in scientific procedures (A. Vitale, Italy).

ECBBVI • 20 - 22 July 2012



European Congress on Behavioural Biology  
University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany

## **\*Conference on “Non-invasive Monitoring of Hormones” \***

**23<sup>rd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> September 2012, University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna, Austria**

This conference, organised by the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna (Biochemistry) and the International Society of Wildlife Endocrinology (ISWE; 3rd annual meeting), aims at bringing together scientists of different research fields sharing a common interest in non-invasive methods for monitoring hormones.

Additionally, a PhD course on methods of non-invasive monitoring of steroid hormones will be offered the week prior to the conference (17th - 21st September 2012).

For detailed information visit: <http://www.vetmeduni.ac.at/en/noninvasive/>

## **\*History comes to life: Seventeenth Century Natural History, Medicine and the ‘New Science’ ”\***

**9-5.30pm, April 27<sup>th</sup> 2012, Royal Society London**

This conference considers the interrelationships between medicine and the endeavour of natural history in the seventeenth-century. It will be held to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Martin Lister (1639-1712), Royal Physician and the first arachnologist and conchologist. The meeting will not only address Lister's work but will consider to what extent practices and technologies of natural history changed between the Renaissance and the seventeenth century. We will also explore how acquisition of natural history knowledge and new schemes of taxonomy affected perception and treatment of animals for medical and experimental use.

Speakers and session chairs include:

Prof. Tim Birkhead FRS(Sheffield), Dr Isabelle Charmantier (Exeter), Prof. Anita Guerrini (Oregon State), Dr Sachiko Kusakawa (Cambridge), Dr Gillian Lewis (Oxford), Dr Dániel Margócsy (Hunter), Dr Brian Ogilvie (Massachusetts), Dr Anna Marie Roos (Oxford), Dr Charlotte Sleigh (Kent), Dr Alexander Wragge-Morley (UCL).

More information can be found online at <http://royalsociety.org/events/2012/history-comes-to-life/>