

# Lawton and Stoakes

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## NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2017



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### Staff News

Laura will start her second year of her Veterinary Nursing course at City and Islington College in September having passed the first year exams in June. Her practical training continues as usual at Lawton and Stoakes with a view to qualifying in January 2019 once her Practical Exams are finished.

Lily is continuing with her studies and is on the first year of the Veterinary Nursing course and Samantha is hoping to start the Veterinary Nursing Course in February 2018. Lauren is hoping to start her Veterinary Care Assistant distance learning course in the near future in preparation for starting Veterinary Nurse training in September 2018.

Daniella is now a clinical coach and is taking an active role in the training of our nurses alongside Lynne. Daniella has also taken on the administration of our facebook page and we encourage you to take a look as there is a lot of information for pet owners there.

### What's New?

We have invested in a new Pharmacy Refridgerator to keep medicines at the correct temperature. The temperature is strictly controlled to keep medicines at 5°C and temperatures are recorded internally and the information can be downloaded to computer to enable us to abide by Veterinary Medicines Directive Regulations. Correct storage is essential for some of our medicines such as Insulin and Vaccines and some eye preparations and these storage instructions should be followed at home.

### STAFF

#### VETERINARY SURGEONS

**Dr Martin Lawton** B.Vet.Med; Cert. V. Ophthal; Cert. L.A.S; C.Biol; M.S.B; D.Zoo.Med; FRCVS

**Dr Lynne Stoakes** B.Vet.Med. MRCVS

**Dr Noemie McDermott** B.Vet.Med. MRCVS

**Dr Daniella Sellick** B.Vet.Med. MRCVS

#### RECEPTIONISTS

**Julie Austin**

**Coral Wilkinson**

#### NURSING STAFF

**Laura Bouchier** 2<sup>nd</sup> yr trainee

**Lily Knell** 1<sup>st</sup> yr trainee

**Samantha Osborne** Nursing Assistant

**Lauren Turk** Nursing Assistant



## How do you give your Parrot a Health check?

Unfortunately birds have evolved to hide evidence that they may be unwell as a protective mechanism necessary in the wild. In captivity this behaviour means that illness can often go unnoticed until the bird is in an advanced stage of disease. Here are some tips for ensuring that your bird gets the attention it needs when it needs it early in the course of disease so that your vet has the best chance of helping it.

What to look for:

**Change in Behaviour** – Changes may be sudden or gradual and include a change in personality, being more or less aggressive, or more hyperactive or lethargic. Your parrot may stop talking or making noise.

**Eyes** – A normal parrot's eyes are bright and alert. Half closed, dull eyes could indicate disease. A discharge or scratching at the eyes may be sign of irritation.

**Irregular breathing** – The cere at the top of the beak is where the bird's nostrils are and these should be clear with no discharge. Constant sneezing, discharge or swelling could indicate an upper respiratory or sinus infection. The breathing movements in a normal bird are barely noticeable but if there is a respiratory problem the breathing becomes laboured with bobbing movements of the tail and whistles or wheezes may be audible.

**Feathers** – Should be smooth and brightly coloured. The parrot will spend a lot of its time preening to keep its feathers in tip-top condition. If the feathers are dull, broken or if there is a change in the normal colouring this could indicate a health problem. Excessive feather picking can be medical or behavioural and a visit to your vet is recommended.

**Droppings** – These vary with the diet. Usually dark, greeny-brown in colour with white urates (from the kidney) and clear urine. A change in the balance of these or changes in colour or consistency can be a sign of many internal conditions. Matted or stained feathers around the vent can be a sign of diarrhoea.

By monitoring your bird's behaviours, preferences and bodily functions and getting to know what is normal for them you will be best placed for noticing when changes occur that could indicate the first signs of disease.

It is important to make an appointment to see your vet as soon as you notice any changes so that help can be given as early as possible. If you have any concerns about your parrot's state of health why not phone for an appointment with one of our vets?



## Hibernating your tortoise

Don't forget to book your pre-hibernation check up. Your tortoise will be weighed and measured and we will check its mouth, nose, eyes and skin for any signs of disease. Any queries you have regarding how and how long to hibernate can be raised with your veterinary surgeon at this time.

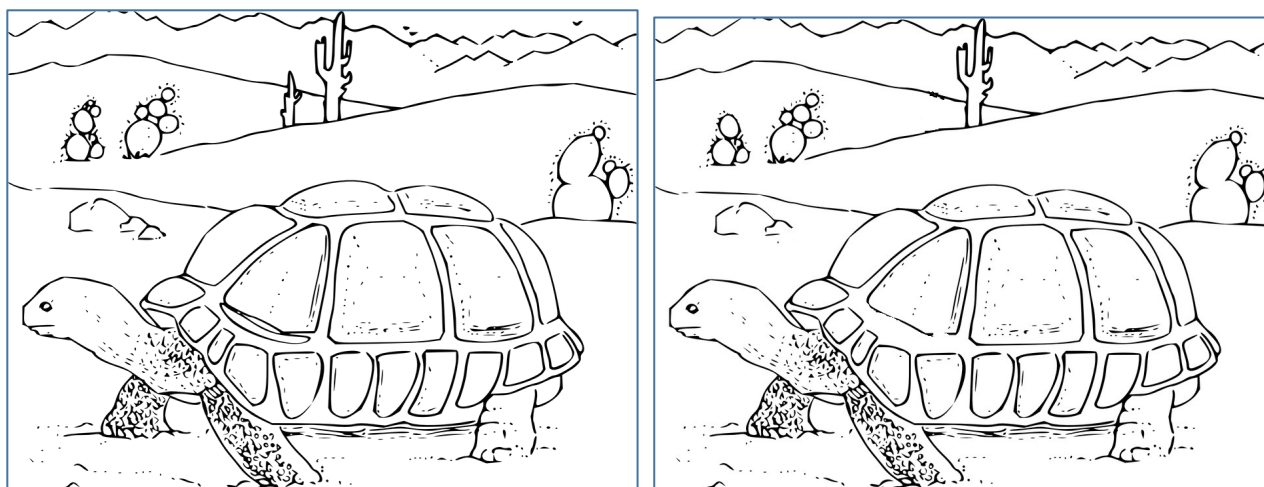
## Autumn clear up

Autumn brings beautiful changes to the trees around us prior to the leaves falling. Don't forget when tidying up why not try stacking the leaves in a bin made of chicken wire supported on posts rather than burning the waste (remember to leave one side open for access!). This way you will be providing hibernation places for all sorts of creatures that are helpful to gardeners such as frogs, toads and hedgehogs and in a year's time you will have a lovely crumbly mulch to put around your plants and block out weeds!



## KIDS CORNER

Can you spot the 5 differences between these two pictures?



## Arthritis the hidden disease

We all know that our pets cannot tell us when they are in pain and research has shown that over 90% of cats over 12 years old and over 80% of dogs over 8 years old have arthritis. We want to help them be pain free and live a long and happy life so here is a list of things to look out for in your older pets that may mean they are struggling with arthritis:

- They no longer jump as high or as easily as they used to. Some may jump to a middle object such as using a chair to get on a table.
- They play less frequently than before and spend more time sleeping.
- They are reluctant to climb the stairs or jump into the car.
- They are hesitant when jumping down from heights such as the table or the boot.
- They may appear more unsettled when at rest.
- They may have a lameness that comes and goes.
- They are slower to get up after lying down for a while than they used to be.
- Difficulty going to the toilet.
- Generally more grumpy.

There are many things you can do to help your pet if you think they have arthritis. First come and see one of our vets to discuss pain relief and joint supplement options, which is often the mainstay of treatment. There are also things you can do at home to help which include:

- Soft and comfortable beds in a draft free location.
- Provide non-slip flooring around the house.
- Instead of long walks or periods of play these should be little and often.
- Providing ramps or a series of platforms for easy access to higher places.
- Low sided litter trays for cats for easier access.
- Keeping claws at a good length, especially in old cats that will often get them stuck on furniture.



## EXOTIC SPOT

### Skinny Pigs

These are cute, almost hairless relatives of the ordinary guinea pig. They were originally produced from laboratory animals with a genetic mutation but are now being specifically bred for the pet market. Skinny pigs require more care than their hairy counterparts.



As they grow older skinny pigs do have a little fur on their heads and feet. The skin covering the rest of the body is exposed and is smooth and rubbery. They cannot keep themselves warm so should be kept indoors in a heated environment at 75-79°F (24-26°C) and should not be exposed to sunlight. They require more food and water to maintain their body temperature due to the lack of insulating fur and should be fed on grass, vegetables and hay. They should not be bedded on sawdust or anything that may injure their skin so soft fleece or towels are better but these must be changed at least every other day or the urine they absorb will cause skin problems.

Skinny pigs are generally affectionate creatures and prefer to be kept with company of their own kind and can live for between 4-6 years if well looked after. They may not be suitable for the first time pet owner due to their special needs and we would recommend that anyone considering owning a skinny pig to do their research and consider whether they can cater for the needs of these unusual animals before purchasing one (or preferably two!).



This is Max who is a 13 year old cat who recently got into trouble when he went missing from home. He eventually returned but with a very sore bottom! He has had surgery to remove the infected tissue and with much patience he has put up with daily cleaning of the wound for several weeks such that it has now totally healed. He deserves an award for his bravery and his owners deserve an award for persevering with his medication when he made it quite clear he didn't like it!

