



# WAHG

WELLINGTON  
ANIMAL HOSPITAL  
GROUP

**WELLINGTON ANIMAL HOSPITAL:**

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**BOULEVARD ANIMAL HOSPITAL - PAARL:**

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**FRANSCHHOEK ANIMAL CLINIC:**

**Tel No:** 021 876 2504

Village Artisan, 54 Cabriere Street, Franschhoek

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8 June 2023

Jaco, in reply to your most recent letter, my apologies for the fact that you only received half of the information (only my report as an attachment to EAW's reply). I'm relieved that you took the time to read, reply and not outright completely disregard my role, since, as you or one of your officers pointed out that I'm not a specialist exotic animal veterinarian and just a general practitioner. May I, however, point out that I dedicated the past 39 years of my life to the study and practice of reptile husbandry and breeding, worked alongside multiple extremely knowledgeable members of the exotic animal and zoology World and that I have 24 years of veterinary experience in the field. Lastly, may I remind you that, not many years ago, the Cape of Good Hope SPCA called on my knowledge to draft a report on the overall health and condition of several snakes in their care, following a recent confiscation.

I'm going to keep my reply brief and to the point.

1a(i) These two birds are inseparable and bonded as a pair. You have three options here...

Separate them and cause more distress or the euthanasia of both. Or, you could leave them together and content as they are.

(ii+iii) Examined and no visible nasal discharge

(iv) Contact CEAH for their records

(v) Examined, no ulceration, pruritus, no discomfort. This individual has minimal hair coverage on his scrotal skin and this has always been the case.

1b(i) This individual arrived in a grossly obese state being fed a completely incorrect diet before.

Simply by changing to the diet all the marmosets are on, he's slimming down nicely.

Incidentally, his name is Arnie, due to his build and resemblance to Mr Schwarzenegger.

(ii) again, no evidence of MBD, soft mandible, current or old fractures palpable, making radiographs unnecessary at this point.

1c (i) Blue Tongued Skinks move in a naturally cumbersome manner and this one is no exception.

None of its prior or current body shape anomalies have any effect on its quality of life. It arrived in this state in 2007 and I cannot see how it could still be here 16 years later if it did.

(ii) Carpet python was removed from its enclosure, examined and palpated. Particular attention was given to the oral cavity and respiration and no abnormalities were found.

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Directors: Dr EB Compion, Dr E du Plessis, Dr JB Morkel, Dr GJ van Tonder, Dr PW van Zyl

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- (iii) Skin shows lateral scarring, well healed and old. I can only speculate about potential burns or scuffles with other iguanas in the past, but no new wounds here.
- (iv) Reticulated python is feeding reliably. No open mouth breathing or dyspnoea observed. Shedding pattern normal for adults of the species and any other large python/boa.

- 1d (i) Donated to EAW with chronic dietary deficiencies and, yes Vit A too, with subsequent effect
- (ii) Large bird, palpated, not obese. Breast exposed due to chronic plucking though
  - (iii) Guinea pigs of different sexes are kept separate. No intent to spay females.  
In the case of cystic ovarian disease, humane euthanasia will be performed.
  - (iv) Affected individuals are separated from the group and treated with Ivermectin
  - (V) None. The Chinchillas, Guinea Pigs and, in fact, all other species housed at Exotic Animal World are fed according to their dietary needs.

1e (i+ii) see reply from EAW

- 1g (i) not a single tick seen, but all have been treated with Fipronil after your visit.  
Respiratory infections typically affect only the adult Leopard Tortoises. It was elected to do regular checks for nasal discharge and dyspnoea. Affected individuals will be euthanized.

1h (i+ii+iii) The owls were thoroughly observed and monitored for distress. Please refer to reply EAW. At the time of the visit, all the owls were perched up in the trees and bushes in the enclosure. These are all rescues, imprints or previously injured birds, mostly from Eagle Encounters. I asked the same question about Mocca, but it's unfortunately also imprinted.

- 1l (i) All the hedgehogs were examined and found to be free of parasites or respiratory disease.  
Refer to reply by EAW

- 1j (i) Odd feet and dropped wing, but feeding well and flying freely in aviary on examination.  
(ii) Wild birds to be released once weather improves in Spring. Pigeons to be moved.

6 Infra Red lamps of 175W each, as used in poultry industry, ordered from The Lamp Factory.  
With regards to the natural /circadian biorhythms, temperate species, such as Corn Snakes, should be given a proper rest/cooling period for +3mths of the year. In this period they require access to fresh water and secure hiding spots, but no lighting, feeding or supplementary heating.

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There simply is no lighting in a deep underground burrow! Corn snakes occur naturally as far North as Southern Canada....we'll never achieve their Winter temperatures indoors over here. The corn snake in question is not on display, but housed in the Old Kitchen Area. Considering keeping reptiles above 26°C in South Africa throughout the year as good practice, is utter nonsense and irresponsible. Some species even require cooling in Summer! The only dictator of required temperatures is where the specific species originates from.

8. No foul odours noticed during my visit and it was an overcast day after heavy rain.  
Consider visiting EAW on a warmer day, when opening the sides will not expose the animals to cold drafts.
9. On the day of my inspection, the Carpet Python did indeed make use of the climbing branches in its enclosure to bask under its IR lamp, so your comment comes as a surprise to me. Regardless, I take note of your keen eye on aesthetics.
11. Agreed and as stated, visitors are warned of the risk bites and scratches. Risky encounters are constantly monitored for.

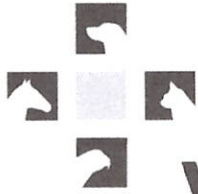
I cannot comment on EAW's business plan, other than that, with Covid, the recent fire and even more recent power cable theft, they've pulled off a miracle to keep their animals, staff and integrity going. I agree, and I'm sure they will too, that they are in the tourism business and not conservation. They never claimed to be. They deliberately discourage any breeding of the animals in the facility unless these, like the lemurs, form part of a greater conservation plan. The only, probably small, role they play in conservation, is to tell the story of confiscated, smuggled and neglected exotic animals and to, hopefully, discourage the keeping of these by the tourists who visit EAW.

My question to you would be, should we lose a facility like this one, where do these animals go? The SPCA? Do you have the capacity to take on, treat and house literally hundreds of unwanted exotic pets and injured wildlife every year on top of what you already do? Each and every person at EAW works hard, not for themselves, but for the animals in their care. They have a personal relationship, with every animal there, unlike you'll see anywhere else. I'm going to refrain from launching similar personal attacks on individual staff members' knowledge, cage décor and the comic strip jokes you refer to and remind you that I asked for all of us to work together.

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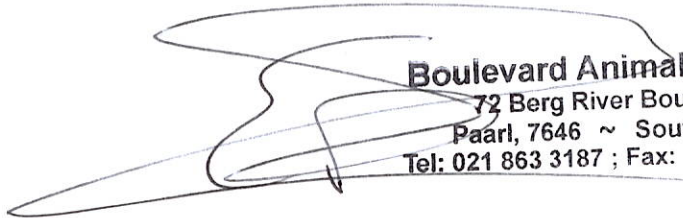
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Threatening to close facilities down and to throw people in prison (this is not an isolated case) or to run to the media, is nothing other than bullying and harassment. I cannot for one minute believe this is the tactic the SPCA wants to follow or endorse. There's a serious flaw in this approach and it damages everything the SPCA stands and works for.

Read Warning EAW/05/19, my previous report, EAW's reply (accidentally not forwarded to you last week) and this second reply from me together.

Regards

Dr Egbert Compion BVSc

  
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9/6/2023

**Additional report as per request**

Blue tongue skink : radiographs show and old injury and damage to the right elbow joint, an old, recovered injury to one of the caudal most ribs on the right as well as lateral deviation of the mid-tail section. No effect on mobility. Good bone density and no evidence of active MBD.

Buffel (Green Iguana) : radiographs show old, healed injury to left radius causing incongruity in elbow joint. Both femurs show old, healed midshaft fractures. None of these conditions affect mobility. Good bone density all round and no evidence of active MBD.

Second Green Iguana : radiographs show no abnormalities and good bone density all round. No evidence of active MBD

Mufasa, Lemur : Depigmentation of skin over scrotum and prepuce. After consultation with Drs Willemien van Wyk, Bruce Peck and Karli du Preez, I elected to collect a skin biopsy from the affected site. No ulceration, inflammation, pruritus or discomfort in this area, but the skin surface was damp from droplets of urine this morning. Potential depigmentation from contact with urine (Mufasa is polyuric secondary to diabetes)? Awaiting report from pathologists.

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