



Tid Bits

By Lisa Treen

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Only **\$129.99**

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How to Buy

- Visit our showroom
- Shop online
- By phone order

Pictures, dimensions and detailed description of our products can be found on www.vebopet.com.au
Retail shop enquiries welcome.

Put on your poker-face, new research proves that dogs can read emotion in human expressions

Research findings suggest that dogs can see at a glance if we are happy, sad, pleased or angry. Researchers at the University of Lincoln in the UK showed 17 dogs images of human dog and monkey faces as well as inanimate objects.

The study revealed that dogs react uniquely when presented with a human face and their method of processing and understanding the human face is very similar to our own method. When presented with non-human faces, there was no remarkable reaction; but when presented with human faces, the dogs all consistently exhibited "left gaze bias" - a tendency that's never before been seen in non-humans. Surprisingly, when the dogs in the study were shown an upside-down human face, they still looked left. In contrast, humans lose their left gaze bias altogether when shown an inverted face.

This may be because the right side of a dog's brain, which processes information from the left visual field, is better adapted to interpreting human facial emotion than the left side, the scientists believe. This study suggests that dogs are looking toward the left for the same reasons that humans exhibit left gaze bias - to examine the more emotion-rich side of the human face.

As reported in New Scientist magazine, head Scientist, Dr Kun Guo suggests that through thousands of generations, dogs may have evolved the left gaze bias as a way to gauge our emotions. They truly are our best friends.

Is there anything you can't buy online?

Apparently not according to a new report from the IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare). Over a six-week observation they found more than 1,400 live, exotic animals being traded online. Most of the data found that trade consisted of mostly exotic and endangered birds, but in the United States alone, there were 13 primates, five big cats and two rhinoceros.

While many animals are legal to trade, endangered species are not. The IFAW's report found that the Internet's global reach has enabled buyers and sellers of rare species - and the products derived from them - to find each other more easily.

Pressure from such groups is said to be the reason why eBay instituted a complete ban on the sale of elephant ivory, early in October. Stamping out the live animal trade could prove more difficult, however, as the number and nature of websites involved in the trade is different. Whereas most of the ivory trade was directly traced to eBay, live animal trafficking takes place across dozens of American, British and Russian websites, largely forums and classified ad sites.

'Hyper carnivores'—Victoria's Wild Dog problem just got bigger

As reported in the Herald Sun, Victoria's wild dogs are getting bigger, smarter and more fearless. There are growing fears from local farmers that these dogs will start attacking humans.

Once, these dogs roamed farmland as rogue individuals but now they're hunting in packs. Farmers, scientists and two government departments have joined forces in a campaign against these dogs. Research scientist Ricky Spencer, from the University of Western Sydney, said wild dogs are getting larger and prepared to attack prey larger than themselves. The campaign involves shooters, poison baits, electric fencing, trappers and hi-tech satellite-linked infra-red cameras.

Farmers through Gippsland and the northeast are losing lambs, calves, goats and even young horses. The Department of Sustainability and Environment have set up 30 cameras in the mountains of Gippsland where forest meets farmland. Movement activated camera's can now give researchers an idea on how the dogs roam the landscape.

It is believed the number of dogs has increased dramatically since the fires of 2002 and they've evolved to the size of German Shepherds. The environment is conducive to their growth as there is unlimited supply of food in domestic livestock and kangaroos. Researchers also believe that the dogs can sense when an electric fence isn't working properly, therefore allowing them to a smorgasbord livestock.

My Dog Eats Better Than Your Kids

That's the title of a new book by Scientist Dr Peter Dingle. "While most family dogs are fed a nutrient-packed meal of dried or canned food, children are being pumped with over-processed rubbish with cancer-causing chemicals," said Dr Dingle.

That's good news for our pets but bad news for the kiddies. Dingle's bingle with modern, processed food is that it's chock full of preservatives and additives, whereas our modern dogs are getting a more balanced and nutritious diet.

Your Dog's bark now has been recorded with byte

Some very interesting insights into the minds of dogs came out of the first Canine Science Forum in Budapest. The Forum was attended by more than 200 experts to discuss what is going on inside the mind of a dog and it would seem there's quite a lot going on in our bone brains.

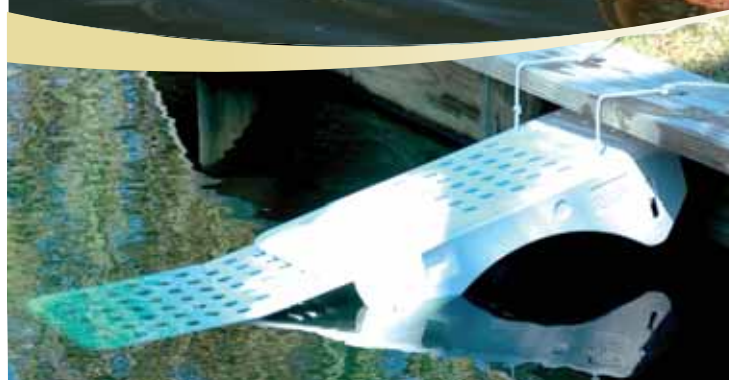
Scientists from Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest have produced evidence that dog barks contain information that people can understand. This team have developed a computer program that can aggregate hundreds of barks recorded in various situations—like playing, being left alone and when confronted by a stranger. They found each of the different types of bark has distinct patterns of frequency, tonality and pulsing. An artificial neural network can use these features to correctly identify a bark it has never encountered before. This is further evidence that barking conveys information about a dog's mental state, reports New Scientist magazine.

And further research, as yet unpublished from the Kyoto University in Japan, proves that dogs can distinguish human genders. Researchers played dogs a series of recordings of unfamiliar voices—both male and female—with each voice followed by a photo of a human face on a screen. If the gender of the face did not match that of the voice, the dogs stared longer, a sign that their expectations had been violated.

During another study, Scientists have found dogs are developing a sense of fair play. Dogs are leaning morals from human contact and that they have a sense of social rules. During this study, dogs which held up a paw were rewarded with a food treat. When a lone dog was asked to raise its paw but received no treat, the researchers found it begged for up to 30 minutes. But when they tested two dogs together but rewarded only one, the dog which missed out soon stopped playing the game. Fair enough.

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