

Current Therapy in Medicine of Australian Mammals

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BOOK REVIEW

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Current Therapy in Medicine of Australian Mammals. Edited by Larry Vogelneust and Timothy Portas. CSIRO Publishing, Clayton South VIC, Australia. 2019. 784 pp. ISBN 978146307517. US\$174.99 (AUD\$220).

Review by Robert Johnson

The first chapter of *Current Therapy in Medicine of Australian Mammals*, on wildlife health in Australia, sets the mood for the rest of the book. The authors explain what is being done and what can be done to protect not only the diverse mammalian fauna of Australia, but also the livestock, the humans, and the environment they share. The geographical isolation of Australia has enabled the evolution of unique species. From a veterinary perspective, and more broadly a zoological perspective, a stand-alone text on Australian mammals is necessary for veterinarians dealing with these species, from the single clinical case to managing a large population. The prior seminal text, *Medicine of Australian Mammals* (Vogelneust and Woods 2008), was produced over 10 yr ago. *Current Therapy* is a fitting complement to the earlier edition. The new text is organized differently from the original volume and is more usable because of this revised formatting. Section 1 focuses on general topics and conditions affecting multiple taxa, and Section 2 provides taxon-specific updates and topics. Chapters that stood out to me in Section 1 included “Veterinary Aspects of Native Mammal Conservation Translocations;” “Wildlife Rehabilitation Practices in Australia;” “Capture, Physical and Chemical Restraint;” “Nutrition;” “Antimicrobial Resis-

tance;” “Emerging Infectious Diseases;” “Toxoplasmosis;” “Mycobacteriosis;” and “Haemoprotozoan Parasites.” Section 2 adds new information to taxon-specific topics. The authors of Chapter 37, “Possums and Gliders,” summarized well the theme of *Current Therapy*: “This chapter is an extension of the information in the first edition of *Medicine of Australian Mammals* and should not be read in isolation...Only additional information published since the first edition is covered here.” A minor criticism is the absence of a foreword. A written compliment from a significant participant in the field of wildlife medicine would fit well at the beginning of this book.

The authorship of *Current Therapy* is diverse and, like the first edition, reflects the wide reach of the veterinary skill set that exists in Australia. Wildlife and zoo veterinarians will appreciate this readable, well-illustrated, easy-to-use text. The information is current, comprehensive, and accurate. The multitude of tables in the text are excellent, given that busy veterinarians need easy access to concise and well-tabulated factual information. The plates in the appendices embellish the written word. For the visual reader, images, particularly those in color, are essential in a text like this. Pictures often demonstrate concepts more succinctly than mere words. For example, the illustrations of the comparative anatomy of various gastrointestinal tracts in Chapter 14 are particularly useful. The appendices will be frequently referred to by clinicians. Appendices include “Clinical pathology and physiological values;” “Blood collection sites;” “Suggested chemical restraint agents, regimens and doses;” “Drug formulary;” and “The

dentition charts for selected Australian mammal families.” Such a resource will enable practitioners to give high-quality and effective point-of-care treatment for their patients without having to call their favorite zoo or wildlife veterinarian too often for advice.

Clearly, unique species suffer from unique conditions. For example, Australian marsupials are particularly susceptible to toxoplasmosis infection. Chapter 21, “Toxoplasmosis,” well summarizes the current knowledge, clinical management, epidemiology, and threat to free-living populations affected by the disease. It is a major cause of morbidity and mortality in captive animals. However, the impact of the pathogen on free-living marsupials is largely unknown. Chapter 33, “Koala Retrovirus,” highlights a virus unique to koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*). The role of the virus (KoRV) in disease is complex. A positive PCR result needs to be interpreted in the light of clinical signs and decisions to be made regarding population management. Chapter 39, “Devil Facial Tumor Disease,” describes a unique disease process in the world’s largest marsupial carnivore, the Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*). Chapter 42, “Hendra Virus,” tracks the course of a paramyxovirus, spread by pteropid bats, which kills bats, horses, and people. Veterinarians in

eastern Australia interacting with bats, horses, and their caregivers need to be acutely vigilant. The importance of the wildlife–livestock–human interface features prominently in many of the chapters.

With a masterly mix of experience, a most readable format, and excellent images, the editors and authors have set a high standard. This second edition will be the benchmark upon which future editions will be built.

So, who should buy the new edition? *Current Therapy* would be of value to veterinarians (private practitioners and zoo and wildlife veterinarians), biologists, zoologists, and wildlife workers around the world, who have the good fortune to work with Australian mammal species. The editors and the authors are to be congratulated. I look forward to the third edition!

LITERATURE CITED

- Vogelnest L, Woods R, editors. 2008. *Medicine of Australian mammals*. CSIRO Publishing, Clayton South VIC, Australia, 704 pp.

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