



Veterinary Association of Namibia

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
THE VETERINARY  
ASSOCIATION OF  
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# THE MANGA

Issue 2 of 2023

## President's Desk



We are looking forward to 6 fun filled months at VAN.

We have the Congress coming up and the Cardiology CPD with Prof Johan Schoemann. If you haven't signed up for that one then do not forget to do so.

Behind us we have a packed time full of discussions about antimicrobial resistance and every speaker at these

events have made it their duty to help us become proper guardians of antimicrobial use.

A few points to consider here are:

When you speak to or consult a farmer about a case, touch on the proper use, at the right time, and the correct amount of medications to use. This includes dewormers, antibiotics and also NSAIDS, although they don't form part of the resistance problem, it is our responsibility to inform farmers, why meat and milk withdrawal times are to be adhered to.

This brings up the next HUGE point that is lying ahead for every veterinarian and every farmer in this country and that is the review of the medicines and scheduled substances (up-scheduling discussions). If you have not yet made time to work through those papers and comment on the proposed changes, please clear an evening to do so. **Remember the deadline for comments is the 21<sup>st</sup> of July.**

May the next six months bring success in your fields.

Good luck,

*Dr Theuns Laubscher*  
VAN President

# VAN NEWS



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**IDEXX**

Environment

Animals

People

**Antibiotic Stewardship and Evidence-Based Medicine: what is it, and how to do it?**

FREE CPD Event  
With Professor Mark Holmes

Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2023 – 9am to 14pm  
Venue: Central Veterinary Laboratory, Windhoek

## Antibiotic Stewardship CPD Event By Dr Lyndsay Scott

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2023, VAN had the absolute pleasure of hosting a free CPD event with the renowned Prof Mark Holmes – an enthusiastic and very knowledgeable speaker with a passion for his field of interest. Prof Holmes started us off with the evolution of antibiotic resistance, how to get involved with clinical research and the necessity of practicing evidence-based veterinary medicine. We ended with the importance of antibiotic stewardship and how it is the responsibility of us all to guard our antibiotics and educate on appropriate antibiotic use to all those we encounter. It wasn't all just lecture-type talks; a lot of discussions and chats happened in between the lectures – all of the delegates were so invested and interested, keeping Prof Holmes busy in between his lectures and during the breaks.

This event would not have been possible without the kind and generous sponsorship of Idexx – many thanks for sponsoring this important event. Our gratitude also to CVL for sponsoring the venue.

## SMALL ANIMAL CARDIOLOGY CPD

Hosted by:

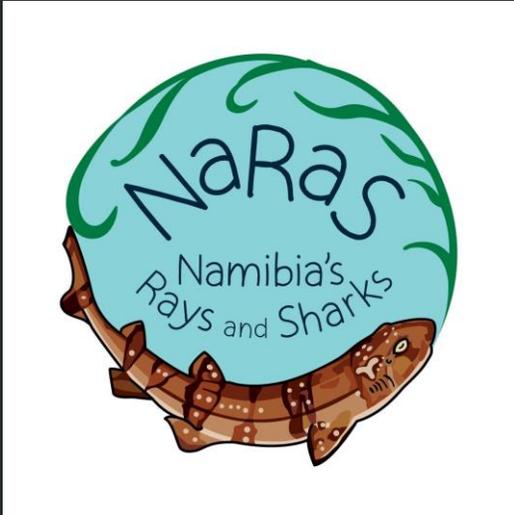


## Small Animal Cardiology CPD Event

We will be hosting a Cardiology CPD with Prof Johan Schoemann at The Village Garden in Windhoek on the **22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2023**. If you have not yet registered, you can click [HERE](#).

**Costs:** VAN Members    N\$500  
Non-VAN Members    N\$800

We hope to see you there!



## Surgical implantation of acoustic transmitters in elasmobranchs

9th-14th of February 2023, Lüderitz

By Dr Andrea Klingelhoefter

In February I had the opportunity to supervise a training session for marine biologists to surgically implant acoustic tags. This was one of the requirements from the Veterinary Council, for the purpose of monitoring animal welfare as well as surgical standards.

The target species were elasmobranchs, which include sharks, rays, skates and sawfish. There are approximately 204 species of elasmobranchs in Southern Africa, however there is no baseline data for Namibia at all.

The Namibia's Rays and Sharks (NaRaS) project, led by Dr Ruth Leeny from the Namibia Nature Foundation, is the first of its kind and was created to undertake dedicated research on these species. NaRaS has several exciting projects happening, one of them being the acoustic tracking work along Lüderitz. This research will hopefully lead to a better understanding of how these animals make use of the Namibian Islands Marine Protected Area (NIMPA), with the aim of improved protection of the NIMPA through updated management plans.

Matthew Parkinson, a Marine Instrument Technician from the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB), conducted the training.

### Why not external tags?

There are a number of disadvantages to external tags. Biofoul, which is the accumulation of microorganisms, plants, algae, or small animals, is very common around the external tag. This can eventually inhibit the signal or result in premature tag loss. It also has several animal welfare concerns including tissue damage, infection, chronic non-healing wounds, entanglement risk, increased drag and decreased swimming capacity.

### Coded Transmitters - 69 kHz

Transmitters with unique ID codes for surgically implanting in a broad range of aquatic animals from salmon smolts to great whites

Coded 69 kHz transmitters provide researchers with the means to track and monitor movement and behaviour patterns of a wide variety of aquatic animals. Coded tags are programmed with a unique ID that is specific to each individual fish being tagged.

The tags can function as basic pingers giving location and time of arrival near receivers or used for more detailed research when equipped with temperature and/or depth sensors.

Available in a range of sizes from 6.3 mm to 16 mm in diameter and in a variety of battery models, the tags can be used in studies from one month up to several years in duration. Transmission range can be in excess of several hundred meters depending on environmental conditions.





## Discussion of Procedure

### Handling

The animals were caught by anglers using circle hooks with flattened barbs to minimize injury. Circle hooks are more likely to hook an animal in the corner of the mouth and are therefore preferable to J-hooks.

They were then very gently landed and placed in a canvas tarpaulin/sling that was custom-made for this purpose. Care was taken to keep the animal submerged under water. They were carried to a hole dug in the sand while remaining in the sling and fresh, cool seawater was topped up from a height with a bucket every few minutes to ensure adequate ventilation.

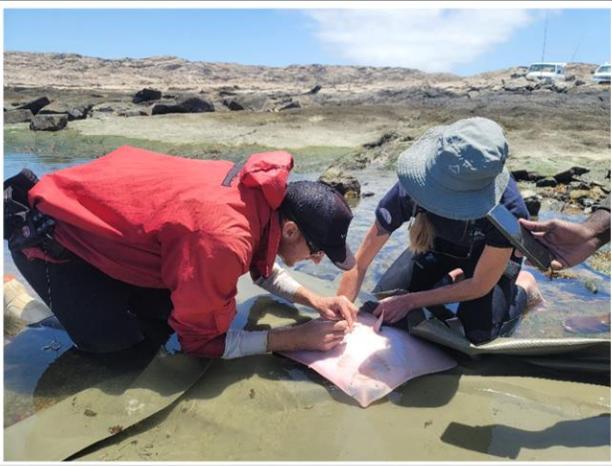
The rays and skates were handled with wet towels to avoid injury from the spines. After the procedure, the animals were walked as deep into the water as possible, while still in the sling, before being released. They were monitored from afar until they swam out of sight.

### Anaesthesia?

The elasmobranchs were placed on their back for a few minutes until they underwent tonic immobility. They then remained this way until they were placed the right way around again. Recovery is immediate. Tonic immobility is a natural reflex in these species that induces a state of unconsciousness similar to hypnosis.

### The Surgical Procedure

A sterile surgical set was used, and the surgeon's hands were prepped. A small incision is made, approximately 3-4cm in length. In sharks the incision is made in the midline of the abdomen, caudal to the pectoral fins. In rays and skates, the incision is made off-centre. Once the abdominal cavity was entered, the appropriately sized acoustic tag was placed into the cavity and pushed to the side. The incision was then closed using three or more simple interrupted sutures with Supramid suture material.



*Matthew Parkinson performing surgery on a biscuit skate.*





Supramid is a coated multifilament/pseudo-monofilament, non-absorbable suture material. As it is coated, it acts like a monofilament in that it does not harbour bacteria, but it has excellent knot-holding ability which is crucial in aquatic species that experience constant drag while moving in water.

Post-operatively the wound was covered with an antibiotic powder that forms a gel when it contacts water (courtesy of Sterkspruit Veterinary Clinic, Lydenburg).

It is a simple and quick procedure. Scalpel blades become blunted quickly, as elasmobranchs have a tough skin covered in dermal denticles/ placoid scales, almost like little teeth.

In total 11 suitable animals were tagged. These included four biscuit skates (*Raja straeleni*), five bluntnose guitarfish (*Acroteriobatus blochii*), and two whitespotted smooth-hound sharks (*Mustelus palumbes*). A second tagging session will take place in July this year.

### Specific Welfare and Ethical Considerations

Animals that were somewhat injured during angling were released again and not put under further stress of surgery. Animals that were too small for the size of the tag were also released again.

Sharks that are Critically Endangered or Endangered (as classified on the IUCN Red List of Threatened species) were not operated on.

If you would like to learn more about how the acoustic trackers work, you can read about it [HERE](#) on this blog post from NaRaS Research Assistant, Hayley Brand.

You can also visit their [Facebook page](#) if you are interested in learning more about their other projects.



*A smooth-hound caught at night (Picture taken by Hayley Brand)*



*Dark shysharks were often caught, but are too small to be tagged*

## CASE REPORT



# Cutaneous Mast Cell Tumour in a Cat

By Dr Antje Menne & Dr Clemens Lichtenberg

A 10-year-old male domestic shorthaired cat presented with the complaint of hair loss on both flanks. The hair loss has been going on for the last 3-4 months. The cat has been licking these areas excessively.

On examination bilateral patchy alopecia at both flanks was noticed. Signs of crusting were also visible in these areas. No hair loss on the abdomen. Ears were WNL, no inflammation seen.

Hair plucks, deep skin scrapes and tape impression smear were done on the alopecic areas/ margins of these areas. Nothing significant was detected, just that the hair is very brittle, most likely due to excessive licking. Some bacteria without WBC's were noticed. FIV/FelV was negative on test.

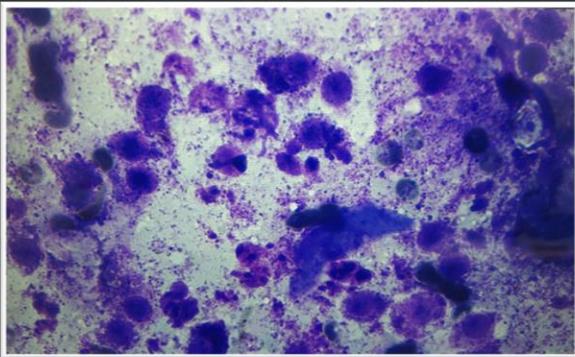
Allergy was suspected. The cat was treated for flea allergy first with Bravecto and Depo-medrol, to see if she responds to this or if it might be an atopic or food allergy. He was placed on Hills Z/D diet as well.

**3 weeks later** ...the owner brought the cat back in. He said there has been no improvement at all. The cat is still licking herself excessively.

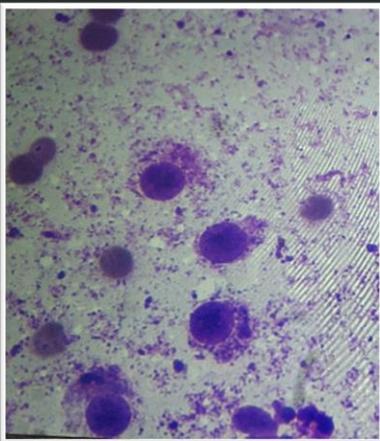
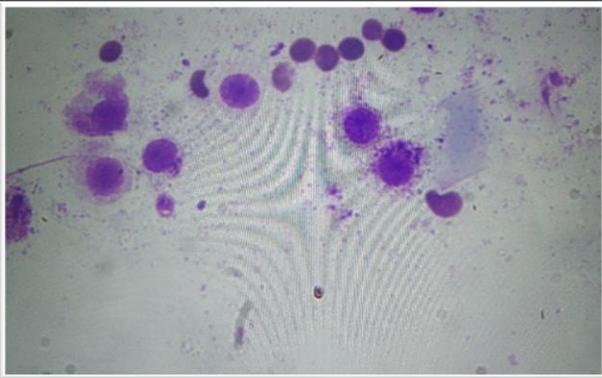
During examination, by coincidence, a small lump was detected in the skin at the right front shoulder. The area was covered with hair. The lump was red, smooth and about 2mm in size (No picture unfortunately). A FNA of this lump was made. Mast cells were visible on this Diff-Quick stained slide. Another impression smear was made of the alopecic area, which just showed a few white blood cells, RBC and bacteria.

The owner was informed about the finding and a skin biopsy of the small red lump, and the alopecic area was performed under general anesthesia and sent for histopathology. A mast cell tumour was suspected.





FNA of red, smooth lump at shoulder



**2 weeks later...** Histopathology report came back and identified the lump at the shoulder as a **feline cutaneous mast cell tumour** and the alopecic area as a **ulcerative to hyperplastic, mild superficial perivascular mastocytic dermatitis with superficial dermatofibrosis**.

The owner was informed about the diagnosis. He said the cat has not improved since the removal of the lump at the shoulder. Due to financial constraints and personal reasons, he elected euthanasia.

### Feline cutaneous mast cell tumour

About 20% of skin neoplasias in cats, are cutaneous mast cell tumours (Sabattini & Bettini , 2019). Cutaneous Mast cell tumours in cats can be anything from one single mass to more than (Krick, 2016)100 small masses. They are smooth to ulcerative, pink, alopecic masses that occur mostly on the head (50%) and trunk (35%) (Ganta, 2019). No grading system has been developed, which makes determination of prognosis difficult (Sabattini & Bettini , 2019). Most mast cell tumours seem to be benign but about 20% tend to metastasize to regional lymph nodes, organs or cause disseminated cutaneous disease (Sabattini & Bettini , 2019). Surgical excision is the treatment of choice (Krick, 2016).

### References

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- Krick, E. L. (2016). *FELINE MAST CELL TUMORS*. Retrieved from University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine: <https://www.vet.upenn.edu/docs/default-source/penn-annual-conference/pac2016-proceedings/companion-animal-track-1/feline-mast-cell-tumors--dr-krick.pdf?sfvrsn=3#:~:text=Cats%20with%20cutaneous%20mast%20cell,can%20often%20be%20diagnosed%20cytologically.>
- Sabattini , S., & Bettini , G. (2019). Grading Cutaneous Mast Cell Tumors in Cats. *Veterinary Pathology*, 43-49.

## Contact Us

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We would love to hear from you!

Have an interesting case, story or pictures to share with us?

Please send them [secretary@van.org.na](mailto:secretary@van.org.na)



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