

Ask Arthur

with



dr arthur
frauenfelder

WHY do we have to microchip our pets?

When the NSW Act came into being on June 1, 1999, a lot of confusion occurred. This was to be expected because even the minister overseeing the implementation had admitted that the introduction was months ahead of the final touches and paper work.

A few pertinent observations:

▲ All cats and dogs now sold in NSW either as puppies or adults are required by law to be microchipped for lifetime identification.

This microchipping can be done by a registered implanter, either a veterinarian, a registered pet shop owner or the operator of the local pound.

▲ All dogs need to be microchipped to be registered.

▲ Registration of individual animals with the local council in NSW can now be for life if the animal is microchipped.

▲ All local councils in NSW are required by law to supply at least one leash-free area for dogs (except coursing and hunting dogs) to exercise while supervised by their owners. Obviously there are teething problems with this arrangement, especially with dog fights, until people realise that a large amount of care is necessary.

Albury has these areas.

▲ The main consideration is that in the long term, people will have to be more accountable for their animals, as the animals will be permanently identified as belonging to a particular person without any doubt or discussion.

Considering the problems of stray animals without any ID being found by the rangers or being presented to veterinarians, the inconvenience will pale in years to come.

Why are animals dehorned?

This relates to the removal of horns on the head of cattle and other animals.

Horns were needed in the wild as a protection against predators and a means of proving their dominance over other members of the mob or herd.

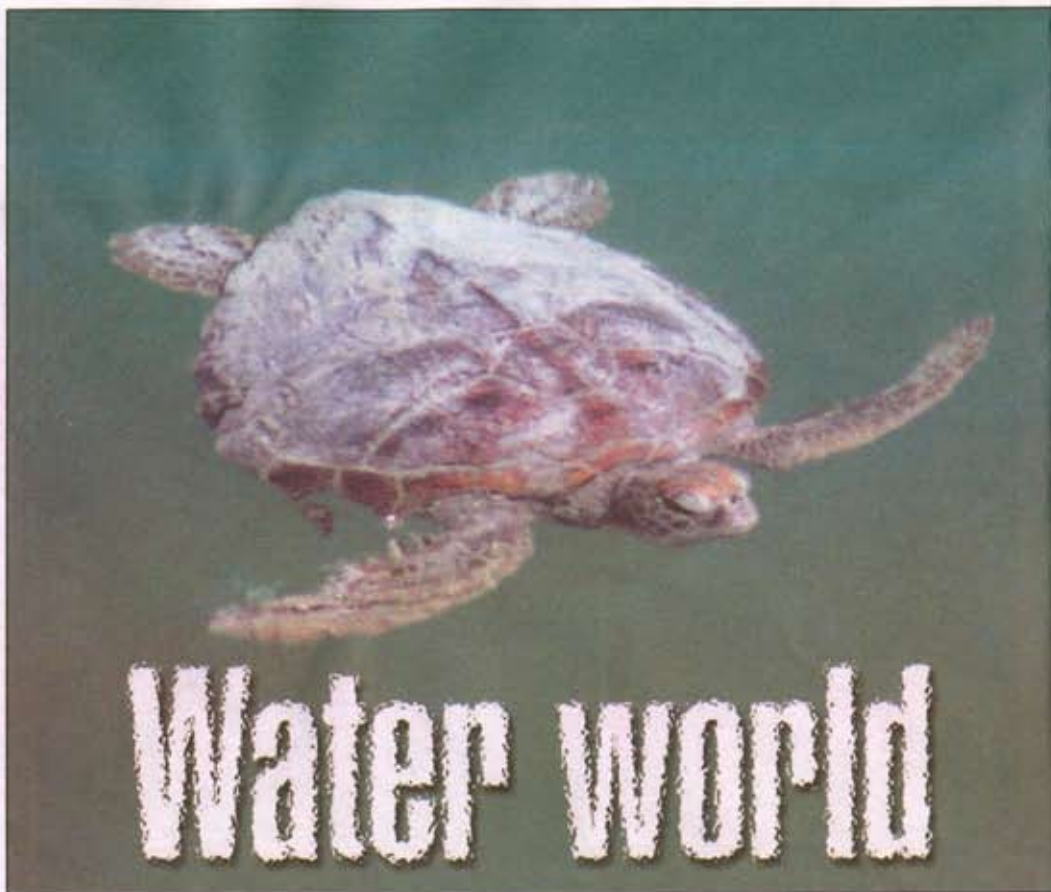
Since domestication horns really are no longer needed and in fact can be a problem when cows fight and either bruise their muscle or udder (with resultant blood in the milk).

Some types of cattle have been selected because they have no horns at all. However, most still grow horns and so in intensive farming such as dairy cattle, feed lot cattle or milking goats, a lot of thought has been put into prevention of injury.

Mostly horns are treated very early in life where a caustic stick or a hot ring is used to burn out the bud of horn before it grows to a decent size. Otherwise local anaesthetic and either large dehorners (like giant pruning shears) or a giggly wire (with cutting spurs on the sides) are used to remove them.

In deer, sedation, local anaesthetic and cutting is used to harvest the velvet (the large antlers) so that they can be sold on the overseas market to be used as a healing agent and an aphrodisiac.

This procedure helps prevent animals hurting each other and is a lot less painful than it has been in the past.



Monkey Mia in Western Australia may be the place where dolphins are in the spotlight but look further afield and you will discover some of the most important natural and cultural treasures the Earth has to offer. **Sue Wallace** takes a closer look at Shark Bay

SHARK Bay on Western Australia's rugged coastline has that wow factor that is priceless.

Stand on top of Eagle Bluff, a short drive from Monkey Mia Resort, and you can see schools of sharks and sting rays lurking below as they chase fish in the clear shallows of the turquoise waters.

Western Gulf on Shark Bay is one of the most stunning places on Earth.

Blue waters, white sand and red cliffs abut each other and make for knockout scenery, add spectacular marine life and it is easy to see why it is classified as a World Heritage Area.

There are only 720 sites with that listing on Earth and 144 of these are listed for their natural values.

Shark Bay is one of 16 that satisfy all four of the criteria for World Heritage listing.

It is a pristine area, where nature can be seen in all its glory and once visited will always be treasured.

Guide Leon Deschamps, from Monkey Mia Wildsights, grew up in the area and takes great pride in showing its many attractions.

Spend a day with him and you come away far richer after learning about the fascinating history of the area which includes buccaneers, pearling and sheep farming.

The Peron Peninsula was a pastoral lease sheep farm for about 130



in short

Where to stay: Monkey Mia Dolphin Resort Shark Bay; 1800 653 611.

How to get there: By road: Monkey Mia is a day's drive from Perth, 850kms.

By air: Skippers Aviation flies to Shark Bay Airport five days a week.

For reservations phone: 1300 729 924.

From Albury: Rex flies to Sydney, go to www.rex.com.au, and Virgin Airlines have some great specials to Perth, go to

www.virginblue.com.au Monkey Mia Wildsight Tours are based at the resort and offer cruises and tours including four-wheel driving and astronomy.

For bookings: phone 1800 241 481.

years before becoming the Francois Peron National Park and is now home to Project Eden, an ambitious exercise in re-establishing endangered native species to mainland Australia.

There is an interesting interpretive centre at Peron Homestead and you can visit a shearing shed, full of nostalgia.

You can even have a dip in a warm artesian bore hot tub and if you go at dusk you may see kangaroos and emus drinking at the nearby waterholes.

You will see the strange looking stromatolites of Hamelin Pool,

which are an outstanding example of a major stage of the Earth's evolutionary history.

They were the first life forms to appear on Earth 3500 million years ago.

The rock-like structures are made up of colonies of cyanobacteria, which are extremely rare.

They are usually grazed by fish, snails and other animals but in Hamelin Pool salt concentrations are so high that most plants and animals cannot survive and these organisms flourish much as they did billions of years ago.

The stromatolites of Hamelin Pool have only been growing for the past 2000 years but represent the Earth's oldest lifestyle.

Next stop is a visit to Shell Beach along the shore of Hamelin Pool, which is a huge expanse of beach made up of tiny shells.

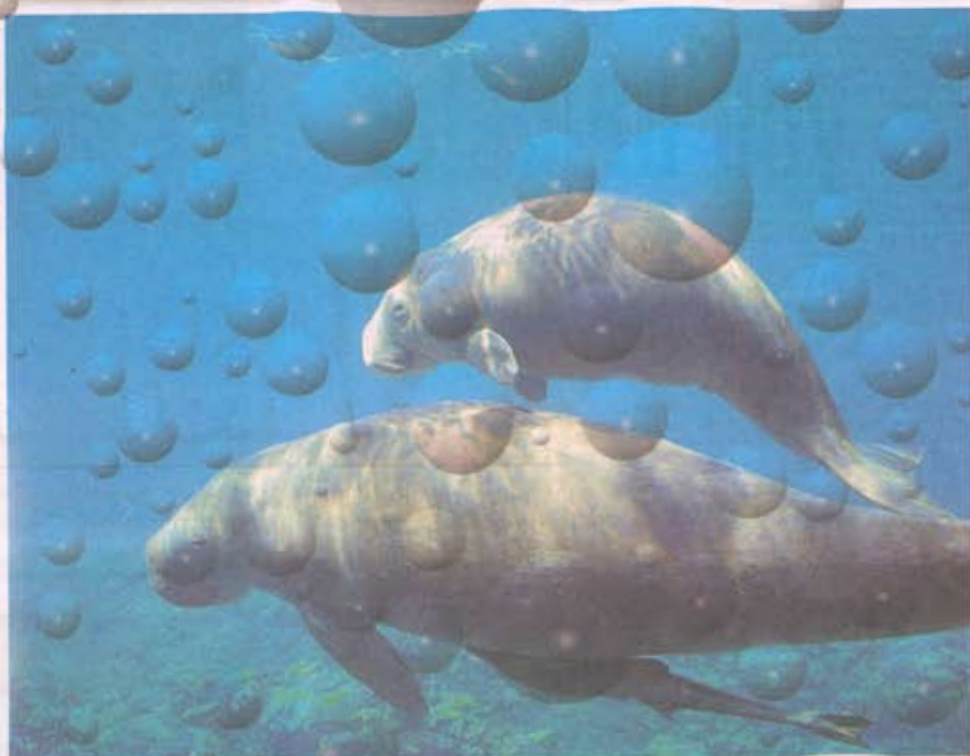
The area has one of the highest hyper saline marine environments in the world and most marine life can not survive in the super salty waters so there are few predators or competitors for food and places to live.

Because of this, salt-tolerant species such as the tiny cockleshell, *Gragum erugatum*, flourish in great numbers creating the unusual phenomenon of Shell Beach.

A visit to the small seaside town of Denham and you can see St Andrew's By the Sea which was built from shell and the remains of the streets that were paved in shells.

A stop at the Ocean Marine Park lets you get up close and personal with a variety of marine life including sharks and pink snapper.

Leon also points out



TOP LEFT: Turtles are often seen swimming off the coast of Monkey Mia in the blue waters of Shark Bay.

LEFT: Up close and personal with sharks, sting rays and pink snapper at the Ocean Marine Park.

TOP: Stunning sunsets are common at Monkey Mia.

TOP LEFT: Monkey Mia Resort caters for all budgets and provides a variety of accommodation.

TOP RIGHT: Eagle Bluff is where you can see sharks and sting rays swimming below.

TOP: The Shotover takes tourists out to sea. Owner Harvey Raven is passionate about living in harmony with the environment.

RIGHT: There are more than 10,000 dugongs living in Shark Bay.



tracks of endangered species such as the Mala banded hare wallaby, Shark Bay mouse and Western barred bandicoot.

Shark Bay is home to 13 threatened reptile species, three rare bird species and 35 migratory bird species.

It is a fantastic day out that reveals so many attractions of Shark Bay.

Back at the resort, Monkey Mia Wildsights owner Harvey Raven talks about his love for the area.

Harvey arrived in 1983

after a nationwide search was conducted for someone to operate the highest quality wildlife cruises and tours.

Harvey, who comes from a sea-faring background dating back to 1592, arrived with the catamaran, Shotover, and devised eco-friendly tours.

An offshore yacht master instructor with more than 40 years experience including 20 years of international racing, he is one of Australia's most experienced catamaran skippers.

The best way to see the marine life of Shark Bay is to get out on the Shotover.

All year round there are dolphins, dugongs and huge loggerhead and green turtles and in the warmer months they are joined by sea snakes, sharks, sting rays, flying fish and the long tom, a fish that skips across the sea on its tail.

It was a perfect day when we set sail to find dugongs, known as sea pigs, of Shark Bay.

They forage on massive seagrass beds and before

long one surfaces not far from us.

These massive creatures are alert, shy and very curious.

Harvey Raven is very aware of threats to the environment and marine life but is confident he is causing the least possible disruption to the fragile environment while sharing it with visitors.

"We are very aware of preserving the environment for the future and we have gone to great lengths to ensure what we are doing won't harm this area," he said.

"Shotover is primarily wind and solar powered and has virtually eliminated noise, air and water pollution.

"The fridge is even cooled by the sun.

"The chemical free loo uses seawater and solar electricity and our cleaning products are made from sustainable natural ingredients which are phosphate and nitrate free and not tested on animals.

"We conserve fossil fuel by using extremely efficient high-tech propellers coupled with

seidem used small engines."

Fossil fuel is further conserved by technologically extending oil changes to once a year.

Storing electricity in gel batteries eliminates the gassing and disposal problems of lead and acid batteries.

"We want the best for the marine animals and we make sure we create a minimal effect on their pristine environment," Harvey said.

"This area is a haven for marine life and we don't ever want to see

that change, you have to be aware of the damage that can be done."

Another dugong, one of the 10,000 living in the area, pops his head up and swims off.

Then as the Shotover pulls closer to shore, a logger head turtle swims by on one side and a pod of dolphins on the other.

You don't know where to look next as the eagle eyed crew spot passing marine life.

A Swedish visitor sums up his experience with a simple, "This is paradise" and I just have to agree.