

# Tid Bits Continues

## Your iPod vs the family pet

A survey of 3,000 pet owners recently carried out by insurers Petplan, revealed that home gadgets are endangering the health of pets. The worst culprit being the evil iPod. Apple's device is the likeliest gadget to cause injury to a cat; rabbits are particularly at risk from Sony PlayStations, while guinea pigs are most at peril from DVD players. We weren't able to uncover just what rabbits are doing with PlayStations and why guinea pigs are messing with home entertainment systems.

Plasma TVs also rank high up the list of pet threats, according to the survey, typically because dogs jump at the screen when one of their brethren appears. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a number of pets have been trodden on by stumbling players of the Nintendo Wii Fit system. Ouch.

## Sleeping with pets is disruptive

A survey of 300 sleep-disorder patients at Minnesota's Mayo Clinic Sleep Disorders Centre revealed that nearly 60% of people let their pets sleep in the bedroom, while a quarter allowed pets in their bed at night. Of those, 53% had their sleep disrupted every night. Meanwhile, 21% of dog owners complained about their doggies snoring. Despite knowing that sleeping with pets can mean a disrupted night's sleep, most pet owners felt that having their pets with them in the bedroom was comforting.

## Big is not better for Brazil's list of endangered animals

Brazil's new list of endangered animals is nearly three times as long as the last list 20 years ago. The new list names 627 creatures in danger of extinction, up from 218 on the last list in 1989. Expanding agriculture and people infringing on protected areas are mainly to blame. Brazil's conservation units are under-funded and unable to combat the problems they face. Deforestation of the Amazon by soy farmers and ranchers clearing land for crops and cattle are also part of the problem. Illegal trafficking of exotic animals is also a contributing factor in the swelling list.

## It's a bird, it's a plane, no it's a plane hitting deers, pigs and birds

Nagpur International airport, in India is a dangerous place if you're a deer, pig, dog, bird or plane. In the last few months there have been several incidents of planes hitting stray animals on the runway. Now airport authorities and the forest department have decided on a final action against wild animals roaming the airport campus. They will capture the barking deer and remove them to deer park. Similarly pigs will be taken away.

Prior to wandering wildlife, the airport had recently fought a tough battle with strange uninvited guests—monkeys. About 70 monkeys creating nuisance at the airport premises were trapped and relocated to nearby jungles.

## Florida's newest air defence has gone to the dogs

Florida's Southwest International airport has unleashed its newest tool to combat bird strike just in time for the fall migration season. Sky, a 1-year-old Border Collie is employed to ward off birds from the airfield. Sky's job is to round up the birds and scare them off. About 20 airports—both commercial and military—in the US employ specially trained dogs in this manner.

But it's not just dogs that intercept unauthorised and flighted intruders. At New York's JFK International airport, a team of specially trained falcons are used for such mid-air dogfights. They deployed to take out various birds entering protected air-space. Big birds or flocks of birds can disable wing tips, dent the fuselage, foul the motor or break windshields.

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## Matrimony is going to the mutts in a big way

From the files of only in America... comes a report from the Chicagoist (a website devoted to Chicago) that the world record for canine marriages is set to be broken at a local park. Apparently the current world record stands at 178 canine weddings which was set back in 2007 in Littleton, Colorado. In an effort to beat this number, a doggy "speed dating" event will take place first, which we imagine will include a lot of quick and dirty butt sniffing among the dogs and plenty of giggly awkwardness among the owners. A wedding reception, photos opportunities and games and prizes will follow.

Wow, we're still getting our heads around the fact that there was a world record for this to begin with.

## And you want more evidence of how dogs can benefit humans?

A new study into tumours in dogs may help explain how why and how certain cancers develop. This may lead to better treatments for both canine and human cancer patients.

Dr Ali Mobasher, an Associate Professor from the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science at The University of Nottingham, says that there are significant similarities between certain types of human and canine cancer such as breast cancer and prostate cancer.

According to the researcher, the two species of mammals have similar genes, and studying the bioenergetics of canine tumours may enable scientists gain a comparative understanding of human tumour metabolism. "The benefits of taking a comparative approach to cancer research will be of mutual benefit to humans and companion animals. That is because cancer is cancer. It is a similar disease in animals and humans," Dr Mobasher said.

## A dog isn't just for one term, Mr Obama, it's for life

Barack Obama has promised his girls a puppy and the hustings are hotting up as to what breed the President elect should get for that big white kennel. Past White House residents have included JFK's Welsh terrier. Lyndon Johnson had Beagles and Gerald Ford found a good use for his Golden Retriever, Liberty, whistling for her to come and break up boring meetings. George Washington found time to dedicate to ten hounds while winning the Revolutionary War. The Clintons had a chocolate Labrador called Buddy who seemed to be the only family member to forgive Bill during the Lewinsky affair. We'll skip the jokes about who was the real dog or which one was sent to the doghouse. George Bush Sr had an English Springer Spaniel called Millie. One of Millie's puppies, Spot, returned to the White House with W and passed away in 2004. George W will be leaving the White House with his two Scottish Terriers called Barney and Miss Beasley.

We here at Urban Animal have a suggestion for the new leader of the free world. We believe it would send a poignant message if the chosen dog was a rescue mutt. It would show that Obama is in touch with the people and that, just as anyone can become President, any canine can become First Dog.



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