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"Jackdaw" - Bitten by Cat



Spring is in the air and that fact has become all the more apparent by the increasing number of fledglings which are being brought to our surgery. In a large number of cases these are young birds which have fallen victim to that remarkably efficient hunter, the domestic cat!

My own cat, Asterix (17yrs) has always felt that catching birds was beyond his capabilities and so has been somewhat unsuccessful in that department.

Other cats however can amass quite a haul over the spring and summer period. Those casualties that are brought into our surgery are usually poor candidates for treatment and are usually euthanased to put an end to their traumas. Very occasionally however an individual can be given the opportunity to recover if the circumstances allow. Recently, a young Jackdaw has been given the chance to recover from a cat bite injury.

A client, Michelle Pitt, who has experience in the rearing of members of the crow family decided to give the wild bird a fighting chance. Surprisingly, this type of bird can be tamed and take to domestic life quite readily provided that the support and treatment is available to do so.

There are many documented instances where members of the crow family have been domesticated and kept as household pets. They are reported to be among the most intelligent of birds and some even have the ability to mimic human speech.

On a slightly different note this is also the time of the year when the RSPCA send out their seasonal appeal to the public to leave baby animals alone!

Every spring and summer the RSPCA is flooded with calls from people who pick up young animals, thinking they have been abandoned or orphaned. Often the parents are waiting nearby and, in many cases, the youngster would be better off left alone. Each year, around 20,000 fledglings are passed to the RSPCA.

Fledglings usually leave the nest about 2 weeks after hatching---just before they can fly. They will have grown most of their feathers and be very mobile and can walk, run and hop onto low branches. Fledglings are fed by their parents who are rarely far away, encouraging the youngster to stay in cover.

RSPCA senior scientific officer Tim Thomas says: "Baby animals are best left alone. Only intervene if the youngster is injured, in danger or truly alone. Wild animals can suffer greatly by being handled and this should be avoided at all costs."

Visit the RSPCA website www.rspca.org.uk for more information.

Terry Dunne BVMS, Cert SAO, MRCVS

This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at www.fairfield-vets.co.uk

You won't care how much we know - until you know how much we care