

Research Spotlight: Professor Kurt Kotrschal

Photo: Walter Vorbeck



Prof. Kotrschal in social contact with "Wapi," a male Hudson Bay wolf.

Prof. Kurt Kotrschal received his PhD from the University of Salzburg in 1981, and went on to achieve habilitation in 1987, with his early research focusing on functional comparative vertebrate anatomy (fish jaws and fish chemosensory systems). In 1990, he was hired onto the faculty at the University of Vienna, Department of

Behavioural Biology, and to run the Konrad Lorenz Forschungsstelle für Ethologie (Konrad Lorenz Research Station for Ethology)(KLF), a center specializing in the study of social behaviour and cognition of various bird species. Under his leadership, the KLF has grown from local to international prominence in behavioural biology and cognition research. Prof. Kotrschal is also a co-founder of the Wolf Science Center in Austria, which studies social complexity and cognition in wolves, and explores the similarities among wolves, dogs, and humans. In 2010, Prof. Kotrschal was named Austria's 'Scientist of the Year.' And, in 2013, his book *Wolf-Hund-Mensch - Die Geschichte einer jahrtausendealten Beziehung* (*Wolf-Dog-Man - The Story of a Centuries-Old Relationship*) was chosen as Austria's 'Science Book of the Year.'

WALTHAM® spoke to Prof. Kotrschal about his current work and his thoughts on the state of Human-Animal Interaction research today.

What area(s) of human-animal interaction do you study?

We are particularly interested in the nature of the bond between humans and their companion animals, particularly in the contingencies between human personality, interaction style with the dog/cat and how this affects the behaviour and personality of the companion animal (<http://mensch-tier-beziehung.univie.ac.at>). Another line of research concerns the cognitive and cooperative resources of equally raised and kept wolves



ISAZ 2013

Evidence-based Approaches to the Study of Human-Animal Interactions

18-19 July 2013

Chicago, Illinois, US

Sponsored by WALTHAM®



IAHAIO 2013

Humans and Animals: The Inevitable Bond

20-22 July 2013

Chicago, Illinois, US

Sponsored by WALTHAM®



121st American Psychological Association Annual Convention 2013

31 July—4 August 2013

Honolulu, Hawaii, US

and dogs. This comparative research exploring the foundations of the dog-human partnership is conducted at the unique and newly established Wolf Science Center (WSC) in Austria (<http://www.wolfscience.at/english/#>).

What sparked your interest in the field?

An increasing awareness, based on comparative behavioural biology and neurobiology, of the radical similarities among the social mechanisms and dispositions of humans and their mammalian and bird animal companions. But the key experience was provided by our study on the effects of the presence of a dog on behaviour and social cohesion of elementary school children (Kotrschal & Ortbauer, 2003; *Anthrozoös*). This triggered my curiosity of why and how animals affect humans as social partners and in pedagogic and therapeutic settings.

“We hope that...we will support the awareness that dogs are our partners since pre-history and that they and the human-animal bond deserve to be valued and respected by all.”

What are you currently working on?

At the University of Vienna we pursue two main research projects with a work group of approximately 10 post docs and students: In an Austrian Science Foundation-funded project, we extensively and repeatedly test 120 human-dog dyads to hone in on the social psychology of their bond. A central topic in this is attachment, human-animal and vice versa. In the course of a WALTHAM®-funded project, we develop new instruments intended to be more revealing than conventional questionnaires. This is done in cooperation with Andrea Beetz, a psychologist at the University of Rostock. At the WSC we use leash walking and other paradigms to test the components of cooperation of wolves and dogs with people, involving a few PhD and masters students as well as a number of professional, WSC-employed animal trainers.

What impact do you hope your research will have?

We hope to contribute a lot to the basic knowledge about wolves, dogs and the relationship between them and us. We hope that thereby, we will support the awareness that dogs are our partners since pre-history and that they and the human-animal bond deserve to be valued and respected by all.

What's next for your research?

Continuing to delve deeper into the nature of the human-animal bond and into the question of how wolves/dogs cooperate with humans. Towards the applied side, we are starting more research on the effects of dogs at school.

(continued on next page)

Upcoming Events



[CompCog 3rd Annual ToK Conference](#)

Transfer of Knowledge Conference on Comparative Cognition: The Evolution of Social Cognition

3-5 July 2013

Vienna, Austria



[UFAW International Animal Welfare Science Symposium](#)

Science in the Service of Animal Welfare: Priorities Around the World

4-5 July 2013

Barcelona, Spain

[Course on Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law](#)

8– 20 September 2013

Cambridge, UK



[Research Day](#)

Cats, the Ins and Outs: Improving their future through research

9 November 2013

Tempe, Arizona, US

What's next for the field?

Hard to tell, as virtually all academic disciplines have adopted "anthrozoology" or "animal studies" into their research and teaching curricula. Worldwide the field is very quickly gaining attention and pace in academia. This will increasingly affect societal attitudes towards animals. At present they are mainly seen as commodities and food at our disposal. In the future, the balance will tip towards more respect and awareness that non-human animals are not so different from us, deserving of respect and dignity. Not the least because relating to other animals was the major catalysing factor in the evolution of human spirituality, psychology, and cognitive abilities.



American Heart Association: Pet Ownership May Reduce Heart Disease Risk

The American Heart Association (AHA), the U.S.'s largest cardiovascular health organization, convened a panel of experts — including WALTHAM®-funded researchers, Drs. Erika Friedmann and Hayley Christian — to review years of data on the cardiovascular benefits of owning a pet. In a scientific statement released in the 14 May 2013 issue of *Circulation*, the Journal of the American Heart Association, the group concluded that pet ownership, particularly dog ownership, is probably associated with decreased risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), and that it may have some causal role in reducing this risk.

The statement went on to recommend that pet ownership, particularly dog ownership, may be reasonable for reduction of CVD risk, but that pet adoption, rescue, or purchase should not be done for the primary purpose of reducing CVD risk.

The full statement can be downloaded by following [this link](#).

International Federation for Animal Health Launches a Campaign Highlighting the Benefits of Pets for the Elderly

In support of the Europe 2020 Initiatives, the EU is promoting innovative partnerships on active and healthy ageing. As part of this, the International Federation for Animal Health-Europe (IFAH-Europe) is launching a new campaign promoting the benefits of pets for the elderly. The campaign aims to highlight the various ways in which animals not only bring companionship and pleasure but many other benefits to those in a later stage of life. The campaign will run via a Facebook page entitled [We Care](#), and will be supported with more in-depth information on how to care for pets available on the [IFAH-Europe website](#).

Counting Down to ISAZ and IAHAIO 2013

WALTHAM® is a proud sponsor of the upcoming International Society for Anthrozoology (ISAZ) and International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO) conferences, taking place 18-22 July 2013 in Chicago, Illinois, US. We are especially pleased that more than 20 Mars and WALTHAM®-sponsored studies will be presented at the conferences.

For more information and to register, please visit the [ISAZ](#) and [IAHAIO](#) websites.

If you are planning to attend the conferences, please be sure to visit us at the WALTHAM® booth.



Announcing the 2013 Mars Fellows

The Mars Fellowship program is a partnership between Mars, Incorporated and the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO). The program was created to foster relationships among early- to mid-career HAI researchers, and to provide opportunities for these emerging scholars to attend and present at IAHAIO conferences.

WALTHAM® wishes to congratulate the Mars Fellows for 2013:

Dr. Hayley Christian, *University of Western Australia, Australia*

Dr. Sarah Ellis, *University of Lincoln, UK*

Dr. Rebekah Fox, *Uppsala University, Sweden*

Dr. Nancy Gee, *SUNY Fredonia, US*

Ms. Minal Kavishwar, *Animal Angels Foundation, India*

Dr. Kerstin Meints, *University of Lincoln, UK*

Dr. Marguerite O'Haire, *The University of Queensland, Australia*

Dr. Irene Rae, *University of Wisconsin-Madison, US*

Dr. Lisa Wood, *University of Western Australia, Australia*

Dr. Hannah Wright, *University of Lincoln, UK*

American Psychological Association Launches New Open Access, Peer-Reviewed HAI Publication

Human-Animal Interaction Bulletin (HAIB) is an international, open access, peer-reviewed publication that has been newly-launched by the HAI sub-section (Section 13 of Division 17) of the American Psychological Association (APA). HAIB is devoted to the dissemination of research in the field of human-animal interaction, and its goal is to bring together researchers, academicians, clinicians/practitioners, and scholarly students working in different areas for the advancement of the human-animal interaction field in the psychological sciences.

HAIB publishes peer-reviewed innovative, original, high-quality research articles including empirical and evidence-based methods (e.g., clinical, experimental and applied research), epidemiologic survey research, and qualitative and descriptive investigations. In order to make the publication accessible to both practitioners and scientific researchers, contributions are encouraged from the broad spectrum of investigative techniques utilized by the social sciences and humanities.

WALTHAM® is pleased to note that two studies appearing in the inaugural issue received funding through the NIH/Mars-WALTHAM® Public-Private Partnership:

Experimental Trial Demonstrates Positive Effects of Equine Facilitated Learning on Child Social Competence. Pendry, P. and Roeter, S.

Do Dog Behavioral Characteristics Predict the Quality of the Relationship between Dogs and Their Owners? Hoffman, C.L. and Chen; P., Serpell, J.A.; Jacobson, K.

In this issue, you can also read a review of the Partnership's 2011 volume, *How Animals Affect Us: Examining the Influence of Human-Animal Interaction on Child Development and Human Health*, edited by McCardle, P.; McCune, S.; Griffin, J.A.; and Maholmes, V.

To obtain free access the first issue of HAIB, or to review the author submission guidelines, please visit <http://www.apa-hai.org/human-animal-interaction/human-animal-interaction-bulletin/>.

The Australian Anthrozoology Research Foundation (AARF) Celebrates a Two-Year Milestone

The Australian Anthrozoology Research Foundation (AARF), founded in May 2011, is celebrating its second year of supporting anthrozoology research in Australia. AARF was formed in response to a growing recognition within the scientific community that modern lifestyles present humans with health challenges that require innovative approaches to disease prevention, treatment and management. AARF's mission is to maximise human health by supporting scholarly research in human-animal interaction. More specifically, AARF aims to increase the number of research projects and the breadth, depth and quality of scholarly activity within the field, as well as to raise awareness and credibility of the science of Anthrozoology in the academic and public realms. According to its website, AARF is the leading Australian organisation supporting and funding anthrozoology research at Australian universities. WALTHAM® congratulates AARF on reaching this important milestone, and wishes the team continued success! For more information about AARF and its programs, please visit <http://www.anthrozoologyfoundation.org/>.

HAI: A Growing Presence at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development

Two sessions on Human-Animal Interaction were presented at this year's biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), which took place 18-20 April 2013, in Seattle, Washington. The sessions were organized by Dr. Kristen C. Jacobson and Dr. Kerstin Meints, both of whom are researchers working on NIH/Mars-WALTHAM[®]-funded projects.

The poster symposium organized by Dr. Jacobson, and co-chaired by Dr. James Griffin (NIH) and Dr. Sandra McCune (WALTHAM[®]), focused on *Research on Human-Animal Interaction and Youth Socioemotional Development*, and included 5 presentations that examined the effects of pet ownership and animal-assisted interventions on children from a variety of backgrounds, and with diagnoses such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Dr. Meints chaired a paper symposium entitled, *Dog Bite Prevention: Risky Misunderstandings and How to Play it Safe*, which included 4 presentations examining the reasons for dog bites to children, children's understanding of dog body language and facial expressions, and the evaluation of a bite prevention programme.

Details of these programs can be found on pages 69 and 215, respectively, of the [SRCD program book](#). Abstracts for both sessions can be found by searching for the last name of the session organizer in the [SRCD abstract database](#).

New Organization: Animal Assisted Intervention International

For the past three years, a group of healthcare, social service, and animal training practitioners have been working to create an organization that caters to professionals providing animal-assisted intervention (AAI) services. The result of this effort is the newly-launched Animal Assisted Intervention International (AII).

The objectives of AII are to:

- Establish and promote standards of excellence in all areas of Animal Assisted Intervention work
- Facilitate communication and learning amongst members and their staff and volunteers
- Disseminate information to the public about the benefits of AAI

AII will offer meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars, listservs, and publications to assist with AAI professional development. For more information, please visit: <http://animalassistedintervention.org/>.

Dogs in the Workplace: A New Avenue for Research



The latest estimates suggest that 1.4 million US dog owners take their pets to work. In fact, some of today's most internationally-recognized brands – Amazon, Google, and Mars, Incorporated – have adopted pet-friendly workplaces. When thoughtfully implemented, these arrangements appear to not only provide numerous benefits to employees, but also to employers.

Recent research conducted at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) explored the effects of having pet dogs in the workplace, and found that dog owners at the participating organization had more favourable perceptions of job satisfaction than non-dog owners, and these related to factors such as communication, benefits, rewards, promotion, and operating procedures. When compared to non-dog owners, those having dogs at work also reported lower levels of stress throughout the workday, while dog owners who did not bring their dogs to work reported consistently increasing levels of

stress as the day progressed (Barker, et al. 2012). Assessing the impact of these arrangements on the health and well-being of pets is essential, and Professor Daniel Mills, of Lincoln University (UK), is currently conducting a WALTHAM®-funded study exploring the physiological and cognitive effects on dogs of being housed in an office environment, as well as the concerns that workers have about caring for their dogs during the workday.

While we wait for the scientific results to come in, anecdotal accounts support VCU's findings that allowing pets in the workplace can decrease employee stress, improve quality of life, and boost office morale and camaraderie. Visiting the office may also be an enriching experience for dogs. And, from an employer perspective, employees who bring their dogs to work are likely to work longer hours and be absent less often. Employers also cite increased productivity and efficiency as benefits of having pets in the workplace. A pet-friendly workplace is also a benefit that may help organizations to attract and retain new employees.

For those who love animals, it can be difficult to imagine why anyone would object to having pets at the office. However, employees and customers with allergies, phobias, or even a simple dislike of dogs must be taken into consideration. Written rules that include expectations and responsibilities around health, behaviour, noise, and cleanliness are essential, as is the proper insurance to cover any injuries or damage that could occur. Despite the extra planning and consideration needed to create a pet-friendly workplace, the enthusiasm for such arrangements is clear, and the continued growth and success of these programs depends on their thoughtful implementation.

Green Chimneys HAI 2013



The HAI 2013 Organizers and Presenters

The Sam and Myra Ross Institute at Green Chimneys recently hosted its 2013 Human-Animal Interaction Conference, entitled '[People, Animals and Nature: Modeling a New Paradigm.](#)' The conference was held at Green Chimneys' inspiring and pastoral campus in Brewster, New York, and was geared toward practitioners working in the fields of nature-based and animal-assisted interventions. Sessions and breakout groups examined the complex interactions among people, animals, and the environment, and the ways in which these important relationships can be nurtured to produce mutually-beneficial outcomes. Additional photos of the event can be viewed [here](#).

Traveling Exhibit Highlights the Human-Animal Bond

The AVMA, the Smithsonian Institution and Zoetis are teaming up to bring the wonders of the human-animal bond to communities across the United States. This collaboration will begin its nationwide, two-year tour this summer with a launch at the AVMA's Annual Convention in Chicago.

The exhibit, [Animal Connections: Our Journey Together](#), is housed in an expandable 18-wheel semitrailer and will introduce visitors of all ages to the human-animal bond and the critical role that veterinarians play in animal health. Visitors are offered a variety of interactive ways to learn about the important roles that animals – small and large, domestic and wild – play in our society and in our lives. Exhibit sections focus on animals in the home, on the farm, at the zoo and in the wild.

The free mobile museum will debut in Chicago at the AVMA's 150th Anniversary Convention at McCormick Place, and then head out across the country, visiting more than 75 locations.

HAI Research in the News

[Dogs and cats in the home: Happiness for all?](#)

19 May 2013, *Scientific American*

[Why “just knowing it works” is not enough.](#)

15 May 2013, *The Australian Anthrozoology Research Foundation*

[Owning a dog is linked to reduced heart risk](#)

9 May 2013, *New York Times*

[Therapy dogs to be used to help child literacy skills in Long Beach](#)

29 April 2013, *Press-Telegram* (Long Beach, California, US)

[Study reveals how service dogs help children with autism](#)

15 April 2013, *CBC News*

[When best friends can visit](#)

10 April 2013, *New York Times*

[One Health Commission all about the human-animal bond](#)

3 April 2013, *Tribune Media Services*

[Cats could help kids with autism](#)

3 April 2013, *CatChannel.com*

[Convention brings together experts on human-animal interaction](#)

13 March 2013, *Chicago Tribune*

[How Guinea pigs could help autistic children](#)

27 February 2013, *National Public Radio*

[More companies, citing benefits, allow pets at work](#)

27 February 2013, *USA Today*

[How smart is your dog? Find out with 'Dognition'](#)

4 February 2013, *Tech News Daily*

[Human-animal interaction researcher here Friday](#)

3 February 2013, *SUNY Fredonia News Services*

[The dogs that detect cancer](#)

1 January 2013, *Daily Express*

[Research could validate horse therapy benefits at East Texas center](#)

26 December 2012, *news-journal.com* (Longview, Texas, US)

[The healing power of dogs](#)

21 December 2012, *National Geographic*

HAI Funding Opportunities

[NIH Grants for Time-Sensitive Research on Obesity Policy and Program Evaluation \(R01\)](#)

Application Deadline: Multiple

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) announces a funding opportunity (RO1) to support time-sensitive research to evaluate a new policy or program expected to influence obesity related behaviors (e.g., dietary intake, physical activity, or sedentary behavior) and/or weight outcomes in an effort to prevent or reduce obesity.

[Horses and Humans Research Foundation 2013 Call for Research Proposals](#)

Application Deadline: 15 June 2013

Horses and Humans Research Foundation (HHRF) has an open call for proposals to investigate the therapeutic effects of horses on humans. The Foundation's broad research agenda includes basic research as well as clinical studies that will ultimately impact physical and mental health and quality of life for those engaged in equine-assisted activities/therapies (EAAT). The average grant award is \$50,000 for up to a 1.5-year period.

[Human-Animal Bond Research Initiative & Morris Animal Foundation Request for Pre-proposals Addressing Evidence-based Benefits of Human-Animal Interactions](#)

Application Deadline: 28 June 2013

The Human-Animal Bond Research Initiative (HABRI) has announced that it will be making funds available for high-quality research designed to better understand the human and animal health benefits of the human-animal bond. Requests for pre-proposals are open now through June 28, 2013 and approximately \$300,000 in funding will be awarded to 10 grant recipients.

Pre-proposals should focus on the health effects of animals on humans with the following conditions: autism, cancer, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's disease & dementia, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and childhood allergies & immunity.



HAI Job Opportunities

Senior Faculty Position -- Director, Center for Animal Welfare Science

Location: Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, US

Closing Date: Until filled

A tenure-track senior faculty position in domestic animal welfare is available to head the Center for Animal Welfare Science. This individual will lead a team of scientists and educators in the Department of Animal Sciences (College of Agriculture) and Comparative Pathobiology and Veterinary Clinical Sciences (College of Veterinary Medicine) by facilitating research, teaching, and extension efforts.

Assistant Professor, Human-Animal Interactions

Location: Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, US

Closing Date: Until filled

A tenure-track faculty position is available in Human-Animal Interactions based in the Department of Comparative Pathobiology at Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine. The successful applicant will be expected to develop both independent and collaborative research programs in Human-Animal Interactions, compete effectively for external funding and to teach, advise, and interact with undergraduate, professional, and graduate students. The successful applicant will be able to work collaboratively with other members of the Center for Animal Welfare Science.

Assistant Professor, Animal Welfare

Location: Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, US

Closing Date: Until filled

A tenure-track faculty position in Animal Welfare is available at Purdue University. The home department will be determined based on the area of expertise of the successful applicant. The successful applicant will be expected to develop both independent and collaborative research programs in Animal Welfare, compete effectively for external funding and to teach, advise, and interact with undergraduate and graduate students. The successful applicant will be able to work collaboratively with other members of the Center for Animal Welfare Science.

Assistant Professor, Comparative Psychology (Animal Behavior and Cognition), Ethology, and/or Human-Animal Studies

Location: Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky, US

Closing Date: Until filled

Candidates should be prepared to contribute to the growth of a new interdisciplinary Bachelor of Science in Animal Studies (<http://psychology.eku.edu/animal-studies-major>) that incorporates science, humanities, and applied fields related to animals and animal-human interaction. The position will involve teaching introduction to animal studies, comparative psychology, and other courses in Psychology and in Animal Studies, as well as opportunities to supervise master's theses in the candidate's areas of expertise.

(continued on next page)

HAI Job Opportunities

[Vice President, Children's Innovation Institute](#)

Location: American Humane Association, Washington, DC, US

Closing Date: Until filled

The Vice President, Children's Innovation Institute, works closely with the Chief Research Officer & Sr. VP, Humane Science and Policy, as well as the President & CEO and Board of Directors to develop the research agenda for the American Humane Association Children's Innovation Institute, identifying and implementing research opportunities which advance welfare, wellness and well-being of animals and children, and promoting understanding of the human-animal bond. Serving as principal investigator on innovative research projects, the Vice President, Children's Innovation Institute recruits and leads research teams, establishes relationships with national thought leaders and develops a network of key stakeholders, partners and funders. Responsibilities include creating and marketing research concepts, preparing proposals, negotiating contracts and agreements, ensuring deliverables are met in a timely manner, developing publications, and maintaining contact with key networks of constituents.

Tell a Friend

Forward the *WALTHAM[®] Human-Animal Interaction eNewsletter* on to your colleagues interested in HAI research and activities.

Subscribe to the eNewsletter by contacting us at info@WALTHAMe-newsletter.com.

About Mars, Incorporated and the WALTHAM[®] Centre for Pet Nutrition

Mars, the world's largest producer of pet food, has long conducted research on the nutritional needs of pets, and more broadly, in the area of Human-Animal Interaction. The WALTHAM[®] Centre for Pet Nutrition has been a leading scientific authority in pet nutrition and well-being, advancing the frontiers of scientific research into the nutrition and healthy longevity of companion animals for nearly 50 years. Located in Leicestershire, England, the renowned state-of-the-art science institute focuses on the nutritional and behavioural needs of companion animals and their benefits to humans, enabling the development of innovative products which meet these needs in a practical way. WALTHAM[®] has, in collaboration with some of the world's leading scientific institutes, pioneered many important breakthroughs in pet nutrition that support leading Mars brands such as WHISKAS[®], PEDIGREE[®], NUTRO[®], TRILL[®], CESAR[®], SHEBA[®], KITEKAT[®], AQUARIAN[®], WINERGY[®], and the ROYAL CANIN[®] Brand.

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