

Don Walker
VIA RON WALKER

1700 units from Johns

1970

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D C G

Submitted by:

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PREFACE

Before I begin my narrative, I must point out that I do not consider myself, by any stretch of the imagination, to be a biologist. What I have written about Dog is based upon my personal, perhaps unenlightened, observations of his behavior. I hope that the following pages will be, at worst, interesting, at best, helpful.

On 5 January 1970, Dog, a baby Hawaiian monk seal, was observed alone by Coast Guard personnel on the beach of Kure Island, Hawaii. Although it was considered strange that a baby seal would not be with his mother, no attempt was made to investigate for fear of disturbing the seals. Since personnel on Kure Island knew very little about the behavior patterns of monk seals, it was believed that perhaps this observed situation was normal.

However, after five days of observing the same small seal alone, I realized that it was most likely orphaned. No grown seal had approached Dog and his tracks had not even crossed another seal's tracks. On 9 January 1970, I decided to "adopt" the baby seal and see if I could perhaps help him out of a near hopeless situation. I went down to the beach and offered Dog some homogenized milk in the palm of my hand. He was extremely anxious to eat but was naturally confused about the best method of obtaining the offered milk. Only a small amount of milk was placed in the palm of my hand. The seal would suck the milk up and also suck my hand. He seemed to crave affection as much as he craved food. Thankfully, he had no teeth at this time.

The bi-weekly Navy log flight was due to arrive shortly and so I left the beach to make preparations for the aircraft's arrival. After the plane had landed, I spotted dog on the runway. Apparently he had followed me up from the beach. I immediately went over to him, picked him up, and took him back to the barracks.

Based on the reading that I have done, I would say that Dog was approximately two weeks old. He weighed thirty-six(36) pounds, looked

generally in good physical condition but was extremely hungry. During the first two weeks after I found Dog, he consumed about three(3) quarts of homogenized milk a day(twenty-four(24) hour period). At this time, the method used to feed Dog was still by hand.¹

During the third and fourth weeks of "captivity", less improvement was shown in comparison to the first two weeks. At one time, the seal became sick and appeared to be very depressed. His heart beat dropped down to about thirty-five(35) beats per minute. He refused to eat and appeared to be quite lathargic.

If this downward trend were to continue, I realized that Dog would soon die. I was now forced to use an alternate, hopefully more effective, feeding method. A copper tube was coated with rubber and forced down Dog's throat. Admittedly, force feeding is not desirable but I was desperate. The old hand method was no longer adequate. I force fed Dog with a blend of tuna fish, salmon, and milk once a day. The approximate volume of this mixture was one-half quart. The tube used to feed Dog was ten(10) inches long and curved at the end to conform to the curvature of his throat. This diet was relatively successful for supplemental feeding but, regrettably, produced a rash of very painful bitten fingers.

At age six weeks, Dog had ten teeth partially in and was consuming about 1.5 gallons of Kuro Island Monk Seal Sauce per day.² He weighed only thirty-two(32) pounds. I believe that the weight loss was due to the period of sickness he experienced and to my lack of expertise in the field of dietary supplements for monk seals.

1. A detailed description of Dog's diet and the method used to feed him will be outline at the conclusion of this narrative.
2. This special recipe will be described at the conclusion of this narrative. To the best of knowledge, it is not available even in the finest dining places.

At the age eight weeks, Dog had developed a good, healthy set of front teeth (canine developed first) and was capable of delivering a painful bite.

At age ten weeks, Dog started to feed, or what appeared to be feeding, on his own in the water. He would chase fish and dig around the bottom of the ocean in search of, I believe, small bits of food to chew on. Several times he was observed chewing sea weed and brown algae. Whether or not he actually ate sea weed and algae, I am not certain. I did, however, observe bit of dried algae in his whiskers during the third month. I have also observed bits of algae in the whiskers of other baby monk seals on Kure.

It was at the beginning of the third month that I first made some futile efforts to wean Dog. By this time, he had acquired a good solid mouth full of teeth. He had twenty(20) teeth in all. Once I took him out to the small island, Sand Island, southwest of Kure and unsuccessfully attempted to return him to the environment in which he belonged. During this attempt, Dog was, for the first time, exposed to other seals. Unfortunately, no other seals really noticed him and he paid little attention to them.

The first seal that^{he} encountered, shortly after his initial failure, was a young male. The meeting produced little friendship; a short fight broke out. Actually it was more of a verbal clash and soon the large male swam away.

The second seal Dog encountered was a large female. It was on the reef side of Sand Island and occurred about five minutes after the first encounter.

I was walking along the beach at the time and Dog was swimming in the water. The large female swam in between us and dog and sort of forced Dog to deeper water. Immediately, Dog attempted to feed on his new found mother substitute. I am not sure if he was successful; however, after about ten(10) minutes of playing, the female tried to bring Dog up on the beach. As soon as Dog tried to leave the water, a large male approached and was very aggressive toward the female. He would not allow her to come up on the beach until Dog was driven away. Once Dog lost interest in the female seal and returned to us, the male seal allowed the female to come up onto the beach.

From age ten to twelve weeks, Dog steadily gained weight; at the end of twelve weeks he weighed forty(40) pounds. This weight gain was accompanied by the loss of baby fur. He also acquired a beautiful black and silver coat(his belly was silver). In comparison to the other seals' pups on the beach, Dog was underweight but more mature looking.

After the twelfth week, and to the end of the thirteenth week, Dog gained weight at an amazing pace. He gained twenty pounds in less than two weeks, shooting his weight up to sixty pounds. Unfortunately, he still appeared to be at least forty pounds underweight. All during this development, no large change in Dog's length was noted. Dog was still nursing and consumed six to eight quarts of milk a day. I believe that he would have consumed more but due to a limited amount of funds, I had to limit him to about six or eight quarts.

During the fourteenth week, Dog was completely taken off the bottle and forced to eat fresh fish. It was during this time that Dog started

to stay with larger seals on the island. The last day that I saw Dog, I force fed him half a large mullet. I had to insure that he was getting food. That day he swam off with a large, old female seal and I have not seen him since.

During these first two months, Dog would not swim unless accompanied by a human being. All during the time he was in the water, he would attempt to nurse on his swimming partner. When allowed to, he would cling to an arm, a leg, or just cling to one's entire body. He would gladly accept a free ride anywhere.

It was during the third month that Dog was left on the beach by himself. He started to swim by himself at this stage and developed an extremely bad habit; he swam at night. I feel the Dog felt a need to swim during the night in an attempt to relieve his loneliness. He desired to find companionship. All during his development he craved affection. When left alone during the first two months, he would cry for as long as thirty minutes and attempt to follow the last person to be with him. It was during these first few weeks that personnel aboard this unit spent as much as twelve hours a day with Dog. It was, in my opinion, not enough time but circumstances prevented us from devoting more time to him. However, as pointed out above, during the third month, Dog was on the beach by himself most of the time and happy, just to be near a person. He would attempt to follow anybody when they were near him, moving from place to place.

I do not know what happened to Dog but I am not too optimistic. He was not ready to go it alone. Unless he found another seal to protect him, I am afraid that he never made it past the sharks.

6.

PART II

When I first found Dog, I attempted to feed him by pouring milk into the palm of my hand and letting him suck it up. This method was slow and quite messy. Next I tried to feed him by using a rubber glove filled with milk. This, however, also produced limited results. I noted that in order to induce sucking, Dog needed a smooth, slightly rounded surface, not a nipple. I next tried a sponge soaked with milk. He sucked this more readily but much milk was wasted so I modified the sponge by inserting a tube through it and let him suck on this. This method was indeed better but still a great deal of milk was lost and it was difficult for Dog to get good suction.

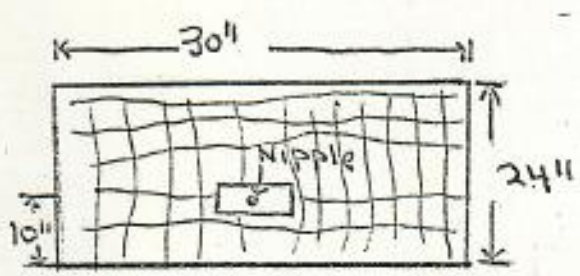
Next, I tried using a piece of VCSCCEL tubing which is made of neoprene. The tube was flattened to create a smooth, slightly curved surface. A piece of surgical tubing was inserted into the neoprene to allow for milk transfer.



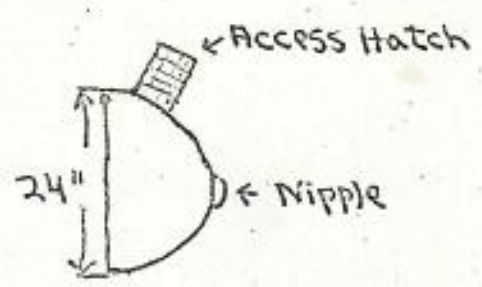
This set up seemed to work as well as the real thing so I stuck with it.

All during the first month, Dog was hand fed. The need for an automatic mother was rather pressing. I created a design for a feeder that would satisfy some of the requirements that a mother must. The feeder was made of hardware cloth and covered with burlap. The nipple was installed about half way the front surface (about ten (10) inches off the ground). The surgical tube for the nipple was hooked to the top of a quart plastic bottle. The bottle was hung upside down inside the feeder. A light bulb was installed in order to keep the milk warm during the night

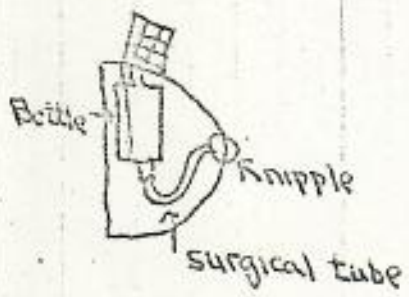
and also to provide heat for Dog.



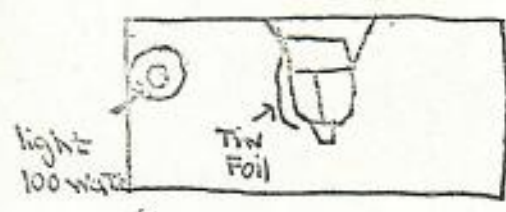
Front View



Side View



Cut Away: Inside View



Wire Cover removed

The artificial mother worked well and Dog soon adapted to her almost completely. He would cuddle up along side of her and spend the night. The only draw back to this was that when the milk stopped, Dog did not necessarily follow suit. Once he turned mother over and crawled into the access hatch on top. I found him the next morning and had an extremely difficult time removing him.

Later, when Dog started to develop a good set of front teeth, he would use his nipple to teeth on. During the last part of the second month and the first part of the third, he would go through at least one nipple every five days.

Although this mother gave Dog comfort, he would still follow anyone who happened to pass by. If they paid no attention to him, he would crawl back to the mother. A softer, perhaps warmer, mother would have been more ideal but I did not have the required materials to build such a structure.

All during the time that I observed Dog, his feces were a very runny, bright yellow. I do not know if this is normal or not. I have observed the same type of feces from other seal pups such younger. The adult feces seem to be more solid but then again, this is not always true. Dog's heart rate varied between ninety-two(92) and ninety-six(96) beats per minute under normal circumstances.

A final word about Kure Island Monk Seal Sauce. It consisted of eggs, whole milk, evaporated milk, cheese, molasses, honey, and butter(occasionally some bacon grease). For one quart of sauce, six eggs were added, one can of evaporated milk, a piece of cheese about 1/4" by 1/2" by 1/2". Molasses was added until the milk became brown. At this point, I added butter or bacon grease. These were mixed completely in a blender and poured into a quart bottle. Whole milk was used to fill up the container and a vitamin/mineral supplement was added.