SEMINAR WITH DR. RAY COPPINGER!

DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS
EKSTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AND LEARN FROM ONE OF THE GREATEST PIONEERS IN THE WORLD OF DOGS!
DR. RAYMOND COPPINGER IS COMING TO DENMARK FOR THE SEMINAR OF THE YEAR 2011!

Dr. Raymond Coppinger majored in literature and philosophy as an undergraduate at Boston University. His Ph.D. thesis in biology (at the University of Massachusetts) is on the effect of experience and novelty on avian feeding behavior. He joined the founding faculty at Hampshire College in 1969, where he is a professor of biology. He teaches and does research on animal behavior, especially the behavior of canids.

Dr. Coppinger's first professional study of dogs was on the runners of a dog sled. During a twelve-year mushing career, he progressed from a five-dog to a sixteen-dog team, won many races on the northeast (USA) circuits, and developed a new strain of fast, responsive sled dogs. Several of these were sold to drivers bound for the Alaskan Championship races. His research projects with sled dogs include responses of racing dogs to the stress of heat retention, and the amount of energy required to pull a sled and driver.

In 1976, Dr. Coppinger and his wife Lorna founded the Livestock Guarding Dog Project at Hampshire College. This long-term investigation into the behavior of a new kind of dog for farmers and ranchers in the United States has resulted in greater understanding about early developmental behavior of dogs, and how early experience (or lack of it) can affect their adult behavior. This project took him all over the world and gives him unique first-hand knowledge that few others have experienced.

Recently, Dr. Coppinger has turned his attention to assistance dogs. His first-hand knowledge of harnesses for dogs, the mechanics and physiology of pulling, and the relationship between experience, training, and behavior give him a unique insight into the lives of the dogs which are being asked to enhance the lives of people with special needs.

Dr. Coppinger (and his colleagues and students) have published over fifty papers on his dog research. His favorite publication, however, is the book /Fishing Dogs/, a humorous and iconoclastic look at dogs, fishermen, and professors. His latest book, co-authored with Lorna Coppinger, is /DOGS: A New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior, and Evolution/ (Scribner, NY, 2001; Univ. Chicago Press, 2002).

Program:

DAY 1: BEHAVIOURAL ECOLOGY OF DOGS

Dogs exist in amazing numbers around the world. Most of them are classified by the World Health Organization as Neighborhood Dogs. These are dogs that are loosely attached to people and are in continuous contact within the greater population of dogs. Exploring the behavior of these village dogs gives us not only the dynamics of how dogs earn a living, but also suggests how they evolved and adapted to civilization. It also provides an insight into dog behavior.

Behavioral ecologists look at the results of an animal's motions. The animal hunts for food. Hunting for food has a cost, which can be measured in many ways, including the expenditures of time and energy.

The big question for the behavioral ecologist is, how do animals capture enough energy to accomplish all of their biological requirements? Natural selection favors those with the most efficiently shaped motor patterns for feeding or for avoiding hazards, or the ones that can successfully attract a mate and provide for offspring. Yet, behavioral ecologists don't really care whether these behaviors are genetic or learned.

They just ask the question: 'How does the animal earn a living, how does it forage, reproduce and stay out of trouble while going about its survival business?'

Dr. Coppinger will review and expand on these concepts (and much more) to help us understand how our dogs came into being and how they operate in their environment. He will concentrate on his recent studies of village dogs typified by the dogs in the Mexico City dump and try to compare them with the rest of the dog world. This population gave Dr. Coppinger new insights into the natural history of dogs, into their behavioral ecology, and the continuing evolution of dogs and their people friends.

DAY 2: EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT: THREE KINDS OF BEHAVIORS

In this lecture we will look closely at three types of behavior and show how they are related to the genetics of animals:

Intrinsic Behaviors

Accommodative Behaviors

Emergent Behaviors

In summary, the brain of the growing pup has intrinsic elements such as wiring of alarm calls and hypertrophied eye – stalk behaviors in some breeds. Then there are wiring diagrams that are affected by environmental stimulation — accommodative systems of developing rules about the sensory world and how it will be seen. And finally, two or more rules expressed in the same integrated sequence of motion create emergent behaviors. These emergent behaviors can have their own feedback effect on the developing behavioral repertoire.

Development therefore can mean a number of different processes. They are all genetic, at least the result of gene expression. The resulting form of the animal could be selected for, which is why the three behaviors discussed in this lecture are part of evolutionary development, or as we now know it: Evo-Devo.

Days with Dr. Coppinger will certainly be full of great stories, fascinating observations, and ideas that may challenge how you look at dogs in the world.

Time and place for the seminar:

Saturday August 27th – 9a.m. to 5p.m.

Sunday August 28th – 9a.m. to 5p.m.

Address:

Store Restrup Herregård, Restrup Kærv 10, 9240 Nibe.

It's possible to stay overnight at the beautiful St. Restrup Herregård.

Check out their webpage for more information: www.royalclassics.dk

Cost for the seminar including breakfast, lunch and afternoon cake:

Enrolment and payment before May 30th: 2.500dkr.

Enrolment and payment after May 30th: 2.750dkr.

Contact Line or Tore Kollerup Oftedal for enrolment at alpha@alpha-center.dk or phone#: 0045 40757324 / 0045 42367900.