

Successful cataract operation on three Sea Lions in Mundomar Benidorm

Lolo, Erick and Roberta , three **harbour seals** (*Phoca vitulina*), also known as the **common seal**, have regained clear sight after a cataract operation in **Mundomar Benidorm**.

The ophthalmic intervention, which lasted four hours for each of the mammals restored their sight after they were diagnosed with severe cataracts.

The operation was performed by two of the best doctors in this international field, *Dr Carmen Colitz* an ophthalmologist and *Geraldine Lacave* a specialist in marine animals. Veterinary staff from *Mundomar* were also on hand to assist the doctors.

The technique involved making an incision in the cornea, applying a gel inside which enlarged the cornea permitting the cataract to be located with the latest equipment.

One of the sea Lions Lolo, was diagnosed with a cataract in his right eye but with this state of the art equipment the doctor detected the onset of a cataract in his other eye.

Once the surgeons located the problem the lens and the surrounding lens capsule is removed to clean the cavity. After stitching the cornea an implant is put in place.

Although this is a difficult operation the successful outcome is due in part to the youth and good health of the mammals.

Lolo , Roberto y Erick are recovering in Mundomar, cared for by their keepers who administer their daily medication of painkillers and antibiotics as well as three different types of eye drops which have to be administered three times a day, 15 minutes apart.

The after care from the **Mundomar** staff permit the sea lions to return to their familiar routine with the rest of the sea lions and their full recovery is expected in a couple of weeks.

Mundomar is a pioneer in marine mammal surgery and its surgical work on sea lions has been recognized by the Iberian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AIZA) of which it is a member.