

Study: Docking dogs' tails makes them mean

by UPI

VICTORIA, British Columbia -- Cutting off a dog's tail deprives it of communication ability and makes it become more aggressive, Canadian researchers in British Columbia report. Biologist Tom Reimchen and graduate student Steve Leaver of the University of Victoria used a robotic dog with exchangeable regular and bobbed tails to study 492 dogs' reactions in the summer of 2006 in off-leash environments, The Times-Colonist, a newspaper in Victoria, reported. They discovered dogs will approach a dog with a docked tail more cautiously than they will a dog with a complete tail, which Reimchen said could make the dog with a docked tail more aggressive. The study, which appears in the European science journal Behavior, concludes if a puppy's tail is cut off when it's two or three days old, as often done by breeders of such dogs as Doberman Pinschers and Rottweilers for cosmetic reasons, that puppy's experiences with other dogs could be affected for the rest of its life, making it more remote and aggressive, the report said.

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