

## ¿Tienen alas los búfalos? A bilingual glossary of English animal expressions

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**Abstract:** Figures of speech pertaining to the characteristics and behavior of animals—real or imagined—occur frequently in both Spanish and English. Although some of these expressions are exactly equivalent in the two languages, each language contains some animal similes, metaphors, and idioms that have no counterparts in the other. For the guidance of translators of English medical texts, this paper provides a glossary of metaphoric animal expressions in everyday English that are likely to appear even in technical writing. Also included are a number of medical terms based on animal metaphors and a list of animal similes that have become clichés in English.

### ¿Tienen alas los búfalos? Glosario bilingüe de figuras retóricas inglesas alusivas a los animales

**Resumen:** Tanto en español como en inglés hay abundantes figuras retóricas que derivan de las características y conductas propias de los animales, sean éstas reales o imaginarias. Aunque algunas de las expresiones son exactamente equivalentes en ambos idiomas, en cada lengua hay símiles, metáforas y modismos alusivos a los animales que carecen de correspondencia exacta en la otra. Este trabajo presenta, para beneficio de los traductores de textos médicos en inglés, un glosario de expresiones metafóricas inglesas inspiradas en los animales que pertenecen al lenguaje cotidiano pero que aparecen a menudo incluso en escritos de carácter técnico. También contiene una serie de términos médicos y una lista de símiles de igual derivación que se han convertido en lugares comunes en inglés.

**Key words:** animal, idiom, metaphor, simile. **Palabras clave:** animal, modismo, metáfora, símil.

Panace@ 2005; 6 (20): 86-92

Idioms, metaphors, and other figures of speech pertaining to animals abound in all languages. Because speakers of Spanish share with speakers of English a vast heritage of Western European culture embodying more than two thousand years of legends, proverbs, and folklore, many of the animal metaphors and clichés of English are simply translations of ones that are familiar in Spanish, or viceversa. Some examples follow.

#### Proverbs:

**all cats are grey in the dark:** de noche, todos los gatos son pardos.

**barking dogs seldom bite:** perro ladrador, poco mordedor; perro que ladra no muerde.

**not look a gift horse in the mouth:** a caballo regalado no se le miran los dientes.

#### Idioms:

**neither fish nor fowl:** ni carne ni pescado.

**to kill two birds with one stone:** matar dos pájaros de un tiro.

**to take the bull by the horns:** agarrar el toro por los cuernos.

#### Expressions based on folklore:

**swan song:** el canto del cisne.

**the ugly duckling:** el patito feo.

Sometimes an idea is expressed a little differently in the two languages:

**a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush:** más vale pájaro en mano que ciento volando.

**the cat's got your tongue:** ¿se te ha comido la lengua el gato?

And quite often the animals are different or are not mentioned at all:

**let sleeping dogs lie:** peor es meneallo.

**to put the cart before the horse:** poner el carro delante de los bueyes.

**to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs:** matar la gallina de los huevos de oro.

**at a snail's pace:** a paso de tortuga; a paso de buey.

**to put one's head in the lion's mouth:** meterse en la boca del lobo.

But each language includes a large body of expressions pertaining to animals that have no corresponding expressions in the other language. Because modern speakers and writers of English tend to introduce colloquial expressions even into formal technical speech and writing, including medical material, translators of such material from English must be able to recognize and interpret them.

In addition, although medical terminology includes many animal metaphors such as *lagophthalmos* (Greek, 'hare's eye', 'ojo de liebre') and *musculus* (Latin, 'little mouse', 'ratoncito')

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that are also part of the Western scientific tradition, some terms of this type occurring in English have no obvious counterparts in Spanish.

The following glossary of English animal expressions includes both idioms found in general (lay) language and a number of medical terms based on animal metaphors.

**alligator** (cocodrilo)

**alligator forceps** (pinzas de cocodrilo): a surgical forceps with long narrow jaws.

**ant** (hormiga)

**antsy** (agitado, desasosegado, intranquilo): palabra derivada de la expresión **to have ants in one's pants** (*Arg. pop.* 'tener hormigas en el culo', estar inquieto, movedizo). «Feeling antsy can trigger anxiety, which in turn increases heart rate, further increasing the anxiety.»

**bark** (ladrar)

**to bark up the wrong tree** (equivocarse de puerta, andar desencaminado): no se refiere a la corteza (*bark*) de un árbol, sino al ladrido (*bark*) de un perro. «Heaps of impressive research articles were published in the medical journals regarding treatments for the germs causing [pellagra], which affected millions and caused people to die in droves. But it turned out the experts were all barking up the wrong tree.»

**bat** (murciélago)

**bat ear** (orejas en asa, orejas de soplillo): a congenital deformity of the external ear, with poor development of the cartilage of the helix and anthelix; also *lop-ear*.

**batty** (loco; excéntrico): palabra derivada de la expresión **to have bats in one's belfry** (estar chiflado, estar mal de la azotea, estar como una cabra, estar loco de atar, estar como una chota). (Some sources incorrectly trace this slang expression to the English writer William Battie, who in 1758 published a *Treatise on Madness*.) «The teacher's report indicates that Mark is, to put it frankly, driving them batty.»

**bee** (abeja)

**beeline** (camino derecho): derivada de la expresión **to make a beeline for** (ir derecho hacia un punto), que proviene de la creencia de que las abejas regresan a la colmena por el camino más corto, sin dar rodeos. «By the fourth day, normal mice make a beeline for the submerged platform, knowing precisely where it is.» «The molecules seem able to choose the right receptor, making a beeline to where they are needed.»

**bird** (pájaro, ave)

**birds of a feather flock together** (Dios los cría y ellos se juntan). «Other theorists explain the peer association/antisocial conduct in terms of birds of a feather flocking together.»

**the birds and the bees** (hablar de "lo de la cigüeña" o contar el cuento de "la semillita y el repollo", frases eufemísticas que significan proporcionar educación sexual). «When we consider that pregnancy is the most common cause of *primary* amenorrhea in the inner city,

we must wonder at what age it is appropriate to inform members of the community approaching adolescence about the birds and the bees.»

**buck** (macho de ciertos animales, como el conejo, el gamo, el ciervo o la cabra)

**buck teeth** (dientes de conejo): a prominent, projecting upper front tooth. «External predictors of difficult intubation or ventilation include presence of a beard or mustache, abnormal facial shape, extreme obesity or cachexia, buck teeth, high arched palate, receding mandible, and bull neck.»

**buffalo** (no se refiere al búfalo de río, también conocido como 'búfalo acuático' o 'de agua', cuyo nombre científico es *Bubalus bubalis*, sino al bisonte, *Bison bison*)

**buffalo hump** (cuello de bisonte; corcova, joroba característica del síndrome de Cushing). «Mice lacking a gene called neuroendocrine 7B2 not only have the characteristic buffalo hump, but display a range of other signs observed in Cushing's syndrome.»

**buffalo wings** (no son alas de búfalo, sino alas de pollo estilo Buffalo, por referencia a esta ciudad estadounidense del estado de Nueva York; la grafía correcta es, pues, *Buffalo wings*): «Although tomatoes, citrus fruits, and Buffalo wings do not increase reflux, their presence in refluxed gastric contents can exacerbate heartburn and esophagitis.»

**bull** (toro)

**bull's eye** (ojo de buey, diana de un blanco de tiro, escarapela). «It can be difficult to differentiate between erythema multiforme (EM) and certain morphea lesions, especially if the EM lesion is not the typical bull's-eye with central clearing.»

**bull's eye maculopathy** (maculopatía en ojo de buey): a ring of retinal pigmentation surrounding the macula lutea, noted in macular corneal dystrophy and Stargardt's disease.

**like a bull in a china shop** (como un elefante en una cacharrería). «Professor Austad calls free radicals 'biochemical bulls in the cell's china shop'.»

**bull neck** (*med.* cuello proconsular; *coloq.* cuello de toro). «External predictors of difficult intubation or ventilation include presence of a beard or mustache, abnormal facial shape, extreme obesity or cachexia, buck teeth, high arched palate, receding mandible, and bull neck.»

**butterfly** (mariposa)

**to have butterflies in one's stomach** (sentir/tener un nudo en el estómago). «The same 11-point visual analog scale was used to rate GI events (abdominal pain, nausea, 'butterflies,' urgency to defecate, flatulence/passing gas, regurgitation, hunger, heartburn, abdominal cramping and burping/belching).»

**butterfly fracture** (fractura en alas de mariposa): a comminuted fracture in which there are two smaller fragments on each side of a main fragment.

**butterfly needle** (palomita, aguja con aletas). «By intracervical administration of 0.75 mg PGE2, using a bu-

terfly needle, the authors preinduced 32 patients with an immature portio vaginalis cervicis (CS 5 points) who had indications for termination of a full-term pregnancy.»

**butterfly rash** (vespertilio, eritema vespertilio o lupus vespertilio): exantema eritematoso cuya forma se ha comparado tradicionalmente en España a la de un murciélago con las alas extendidas. «The butterfly erythema of juvenile dermatomyositis may be mistaken for the malar blush of systemic lupus erythematosus.»

**camel** (camello)

**the last straw breaks the camel's back** ('a la bestia cargada el sobornal la mata', 'no mata al asno la carga, sino la sobrecarga', 'lleva la burra la carga, mas no la sobrecarga'). De ahí deriva la expresión:

**the last straw** (la gota que colma el vaso). «Climate may be the last straw for people whose health is already poor, such as the sick and elderly.» «Myocardial perfusion gradually improved during the next three days, but then a prolonged hypotensive episode proved to be the last straw.»

**cat** (gato)

**cat's eye amaurosis** (ojo de gato amaurotico, leucocoria): blindness of one eye, with bright reflection from the pupil, as from the tapetum of a cat; often indicative of retinoblastoma.

**cat's eye pupil** (pupila en ojo de cerradura): narrow pupil due to coloboma iridis in Schmid-Fraccaro syndrome (cat's eye syndrome), due to a chromosomal abnormality.

**to let the cat out of the bag** (irsele a uno la lengua o irse de la lengua, dejar escapar un secreto): «It is increasingly clear that, once multiple sclerosis reaches this phase, the cat is out of the bag.»

**catnap** (cabezada, siestecita): a short sleep (también se emplea como verbo con el significado de echar una cabeceada, dormir una siestecita). «Not all the reduction in nighttime sleep duration observed in the elderly can be explained by the habit of daytime catnapping.»

**copycat, copy-cat** (copión, mono de imitación). «This copy-cat behavior of the developing child is unfortunately not limited to wholesome traits and positive attitudes.»

**chicken** (pollo)

**chicken breast**: véase **pigeon-breast** en la entrada PIGEON.

**chicken fat clot** (coágulo en grasa de pollo): a yellowish clot formed post mortem or in vitro, consisting of coagulated plasma from which erythrocytes have settled before clotting occurred.

**chicken feed** (fruslería, minucia, bagatela, insignificancia, miseria, muy poco dinero, el chocolate del loro). «Allowances made to injured workers were typically lump sum payments, and chicken feed at that.»

**chickenpox** (varicela): *varicella*. A highly contagious infectious disease caused by human herpesvirus 3, usually affecting children, spread by direct contact or the respiratory route via droplet nuclei, and characterized

by the appearance on the skin and mucous membranes of successive crops of typical pruritic vesicular lesions that are easily broken and become scabbed, and generally accompanied by mild constitutional symptoms. It is relatively benign in children except in those with severe underlying disease, but adult infection may be complicated by pneumonia and encephalitis.

**clam** (almeja)

**to clam up** (cerrarse como una almeja, no soltar prenda). «Even the frank and uninhibited patient may clam up when the sexual history is explored.»

**cock** (gallo)

**cock-and-bull story, a** (cuento chino, embuste, mentira disfrazada con artificio). «In Korsakoff psychosis the combination of disorientation and anterograde amnesia usually leads to confabulation, and the patient often displays remarkable fertility in inventing a cock and bull story to bridge every gap in his memory.»

**cow** (vaca)

**cow** (generador de radionúclidos): a system in which a long-lived radioisotope (e.g. <sup>99</sup>Mo) is permanently bound and decays to a shorter-lived daughter radioisotope that may be chemically removed or eluted (e.g. <sup>99</sup>Tc). The latter process is referred to as milking the generator. The radioisotope generator is colloquially termed a 'cow'.

**to cow** (acobardar, intimidar). «Even some members of the attending staff were cowed by his formidable memory and unconquerable self-confidence.»

**till the cows come home** (hasta el día del juicio final, cuando las ranas críen pelo, hasta que san Juan baje el dedo; indica una fecha que nunca llega o un plazo que nunca se cumple; por tiempo indefinido). «Trace amounts of radionuclide may remain bonded to erythrocytes until the cows come home.»

**cow face** (facies bovina): a term sometimes applied to the appearance of the face in craniofacial dysostosis.

**crow** (cuervo)

**to crow** (alardear, jactarse, pavonearse). «It now appears that advocates of monotherapy may have been crowing prematurely about the success of their method.»

**to eat crow** (retractarse, cantar la palinodia, reconocer el propio error). «If these findings are confirmed by further studies, proponents of more expensive and more toxic therapies may be compelled to eat crow.»

**dog** (perro)

**to dog** (perseguir, acosar, no dejar a sol ni a sombra a alguien, no perder de vista a una persona). «Every member of the house staff considered it a privilege to dog Osler's footsteps when he made hospital rounds.»

**dog ear scar** (cicatriz en culo de pollo): an irregular tag formed in wound closure. «Embarrassing dog ears can be avoided by placing a few stitches at wide intervals before completing closure instead of attempting to suture the wound from one end to the other.»

**scotty dog** (perrito de Lachapelle): a fanciful description of a lumbar vertebra in an oblique x-ray: the spinous

process and lamina form the body of the dog, the nearer inferior articular process its foreleg and the opposite inferior articular process its hindleg, the transverse process its head, and the superior articular process its ear. The neck of the dog corresponds to the position of the pars interarticularis. In spondylolysis, fibrotic and sclerotic changes may create the appearance of a collar on the dog, and in spondylolisthesis the dog appears to have been decapitated.

**to be in the doghouse** (ponerse a malas; ganarse la enemistad, ser víctima del enfado de otra persona, caer en desgracia). «The manufacturer is in the doghouse for having released samples to private physicians before receiving FDA approval to market the drug.»

**like the tail wagging the dog** ('donde manda el perro, se ata al amo', 'el perro pasea al amo'). «Do the counties approach first- or second-time drug offenders with a public health model, or is the criminal justice tail wagging the treatment dog?»

**you can't teach an old dog new tricks** ('loro viejo no aprende a hablar'; 'a perro viejo no hay tus tus'; 'a moro viejo no enseñes algarabía'). De allí deriva la expresión:

**to teach an old dog new tricks** ('enseñar mañas nuevas a perros viejos'; 'a burra vieja, albarda nueva'). «*Immunotherapy for Cancer: Teaching an Old Dog New Tricks.*»

**underdog** (el que lleva las de perder). «Quacks position themselves as the underdog in a conspiratorial scenario where they are combating a medical or scientific establishment.»

**duck** (pato)

**to duck** (agacharse, zambullirse, y también esconderse, eludir, esquivar, meter la cabeza bajo el ala, esconder la cabeza como el avestruz). «Soon it may be harder than before for clinical investigators to duck responsibility for untoward treatment outcomes resulting from design flaws in clinical trials.»

**like water off a duck's back** (como si se le hablara a la pared, entrar por un oído y salir por el otro, resbalarle algo a alguien). «The very possibility of dying is foreign to the adolescent mentality, and discussions of morbidity and mortality statistics rebound from the young like water off a duck's back.»

**fish** (pez)

**fish-eye disease** (distrofia corneal dislipoproteinémica por déficit de lecitina-colesterol aciltransferasa, enfermedad del ojo de pez): dyslipoproteinemic corneal dystrophy is a familial disorder characterized by deficiency of lecithin-cholesterol acyltransferase, with elevated LDL triglycerides and corneal opacities.

**fish-mouth meatus** (meato en boca de pez): gaping of the urethral meatus in gonorrhea.

**fish-scale gallbladder** (vesícula biliar cuya mucosa tiene aspecto de escamas de pez): scaly appearance of the mucosa of the gallbladder due to the presence of many small cysts.

**to have other fish to fry** (tener algo mejor que hacer). «We invited him to accompany us on teaching rounds, but he excused himself, saying that he had other fish to fry.»

**flea** (pulga)

**fleabite** (cosa sin importancia, nimiedad; gasto pequeño). «Compared to the cost of malignant and degenerative diseases to the national economy, these expenses for preventive measures are a mere fleabite.»

**fly** (mosca)

**a fly in the ointment** (pega, traba, inconveniente). «Evidence of enhanced spectrum and bioavailability in Phase I trials is encouraging, but isolated reports of significant hepatotoxicity may prove to be a fly in the ointment.»

**frog** (rana)

**frogleg position** (postura de rana, es decir, con las extremidades inferiores en abducción y rotación externa): a position in which the supine subject's thighs are flexed and fully abducted, with the lateral aspects of the knees resting on the supporting surface.

**leapfrog** (juego de pídola, del burro). «The cardiovascular gene therapy development cascade: a game of leapfrog, 2001-2020.»

**to have a frog in the throat** (carraspeo, carraspera). To be unable to speak clearly until you give a slight cough.

**gill** (agalla)

**to be green around (or about) the gills** (estar blanco como el papel, tener mala cara, tener aspecto enfermizo, estar pálido como una hoja de papel). «As soon as we suggested the possibility of surgical intervention, she began looking green around the gills.»

**goose** (ganso)

**gooseflesh** (carne de gallina). También se conoce como **goose pimples** o **goose bumps**.

**wild-goose chase** (búsqueda inútil, caza infructuosa). «This pursuit of a master gene for intelligence is probably, after all, just a wild goose chase.»

**hen** (gallina)

**be as scarce as hen's teeth** (raro, muy infrecuente, excepcional, que sale de lo común o es difícil o imposible de encontrar): «At the end of the twentieth century, persons under thirty with smallpox vaccination scars were as rare as hen's teeth.»

**hog** (cerdo)

**to go the whole hog** (llegar hasta el final, echar el resto, liarse la manta a la cabeza, poner toda la carne en el asador, jugarse o jugárselas el todo por el todo). «Some women, on an emotional and psychological level, may feel more comfortable going the whole hog, she notes, referring to the current standard of care of mastectomy or lumpectomy (surgical removal of the tumor), followed by radiation.»

**hornet** (avispon)

**to stir up a hornets' nest** (revolver/alborotar el avisponero, producir indignación general, provocar una oleada de ira, desencadenar una lluvia de protestas, provocar un escándalo). «To judge from the e-mail and text-message

feedback we have received, our two-part series on medical treatment vs. bypass surgery in the management of coronary artery disease has stirred up a hornets' nest.»

**horse** (caballo)

**a charley horse** (calambres o agujetas en la pierna).  
**closing or shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted (or been stolen)** ('a burro muerto, la cebada al rabo', 'después de vendimias, cestos', 'la casa quemada, acudir con el agua'). «Administering antibiotics after fulminant sepsis has developed, instead of prophylactically in such procedures, is much like locking the stable door after the horse has been irrevocably lost.»

**don't change horses in the middle of the stream** ('en tiempos de tribulación, no hacer mudanza').

**to get something straight from the horse's mouth** (saber algo de buena tinta, beber en buenas fuentes). «Challenged to produce proof of their assertions, they claimed to have received their information straight from the horse's mouth, the National Institutes of Health.»

**that's a horse of a different color** (eso es otro cantar; eso es harina de otro costal). «Minimum daily requirements of nutrients and vitamins are well established for oral intake, but standards for parenteral alimentation are a horse of a different color.»

**horseplay** (jugueteo brusco, pelea en broma, juego de manos, como en la clásica expresión 'juego de manos, juego de villanos'). «The Industrial Commission has sternly declined to pay benefits to workers injured as a result of horseplay on the job.»

**hound** (perro de caza, podenco)

**to hound** (acosar, perseguir). «Another popular strategy of health insurers is to delay payments while hounding both providers and beneficiaries with supplementary questionnaires and demands for completion of detailed forms.»

**lobster** (langosta)

**lobster claw hand** (tipo de ectrodactilia denominado 'en pinza de langosta o de cangrejo'): a congenital anomaly of the hand in which the division between the fingers extends into the spaces between the metacarpal bones and the number of digits may be reduced to two or three.

**mare** (yegua)

**a mare's nest** (galimatías, rompecabezas; situación muy confusa): «The alleged anticancer role of beta-carotene and retinol has proven to be a mare's nest.»

**on (or by) shank's mare** (a pie, andando, 'en el coche de san Fernando, un poco a pie y otro poquito andando'). «In the more mountainous districts, visiting nurses and physicians may even be forced to travel by shank's mare.»

**mole** (topo)

**to make a mountain out of a molehill** (hacer una montaña de un grano de arena, hacer aspaviento por nada): «Performing routine fiberoptic cystoscopy in every male with dysuria is making a mountain out of a molehill.»

**monkey** (mono)

**monkey business, monkeyshine(s), monkey tricks** (diabluras, travesuras, payasadas); **monkey business** significa también trampa o chanchullo: «Hockster was accused of suppressing unfavorable results and similar monkey business in the handling of experimental data.»

**monkey paw** (mano simiesca): a deformity in which the thumb extends in the same plane as the palm and fingers.

**to monkey with** (interferir causando perjuicio, enredar, manipular, pero también sobornar o cohechar, según el contexto). La expresión *don't monkey with me* corresponde al español 'no me tomes el pelo'. «The question then arises whether it is safer to monkey with the procedure itself or with the statistical management of the data generated.»

**to throw a monkey wrench into the works** (fastidiarlo todo, echarlo todo a perder): «The manufacturer then threatened to throw a monkey wrench into the works by withdrawing the new drug application and filing for bankruptcy.»

**a monkey on one's back** (llevar una cruz auestas, cargar con la cruz, referido a un problema serio o difícil de resolver o de nunca acabar, una pesadumbre o un incordio persistente; de ahí que se utilice también con el significado de 'drogadicción'): «It is difficult and generally impossible to achieve financial security and social stability with a monkey on one's back.»

**mouse** (ratón)

**joint mouse** (ratón articular, artrofito): a fragment of damaged cartilage or fibrotic or calcified synovial membrane lying loose within a joint.

**mouse** (ojo morado). A discolored swelling under the eye caused by a blow; a black eye.

**mouse-tooth forceps** (pinzas con dientes para tejidos): a tissue-grasping forceps with narrow jaws and fine teeth, usually a single tooth on one jaw meshing with two on the other.

**pig** (cerdo)

**pigtail** (coleta): a term used for any elongated or tubular device that is twisted, at least at one end, like a pig's tail. «A pigtail catheter.»

**a pig in a poke** (comprar o aceptar algo a ciegas): «To establish a working relationship for transcription of dictation without determining limits of service and agreeing on maximum turnaround times is like buying a pig in a poke.»

**to piggyback** (verbo derivado de la expresión **to carry someone piggyback**, llevar a alguien a cuestas o a babaucha; significa juntar dos cosas en una serie): «These electrocardiograms, created by two hearts in the same patient, were recorded from a 50-year-old man with advanced ischemic cardiomyopathy. He had a heart transplant in which the donor's heart was attached to his own heart ('piggyback heart').» «It is convenient to piggyback the Pitocin infusion on a physiologic

electrolyte solution, permitting the Pitocin infusion to be stopped abruptly without interrupting the electrolyte infusion.»

**pigeon** (paloma)

**pigeon-breast** (tórax en quilla): «Hemodynamic and cardiodynamic changes as well as decreased myocardial contractility were more frequently observed in patients with pigeon breast.»

**pigeonhole** (casillero, casilla, y figuradamente, categoría; **to pigeonhole**: encasillar, catalogar, clasificar): «It is less important to fit each patient into a convenient nosologic pigeonhole than it is to rule out malignancy and start timely treatment for infection.»

**pigeon-toe** (pie varo): «Failure to correct the components of *talipes equinovarus* in proper sequence can convert a pigeon-toe deformity into rocker-bottom foot.»

**possum** (más correctamente, **opossum**) (zarigüeya)

**to play possum** (hacerse el muerto, el dormido): «Endoscopic ultrasound can overcome the potential of some pancreatic tumors to play possum.»

**rabbit** (conejo)

**rabbit punch** (golpe en la nuca, golpe en el occipucio; ‘golpe de conejo’ designa en boxeo al golpe prohibido que se da en la nuca, y se utiliza también fuera del ámbito pugilístico): a blow to the occiput causing unconsciousness.

**rabbit stools** (heces caprinas; coloquialmente, ‘cagarrutas’): «In general, scybalous or rabbit stools are less ominous than ribbon stools, but both can result from either functional or organic intestinal disorders.»

**sheep** (oveja)

**black sheep** (la oveja negra de la familia): «The  $\delta$  subtype has been the black sheep of PPARs (peroxidase proliferator-activated receptors).»

**snake** (serpiente)

**snake in the grass** (traidor, judas). «When elevation of transaminases persists, concurrent primary or metastatic malignancy may be the snake in the grass.»

**snake oil** (ungüento amarillo, remedio inútil): «A spokesman for the Center for Science in the Public Interest called nutraceuticals ‘modern-day snake oil.’» «Dismissed a decade ago as ‘snake oil,’ glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate have since gained respect as treatments for osteoarthritis.»

**spider** (araña)

**spider fingers** (aracnodactilia): a condition characterized by long, slender fingers and toes, seen in Marfan’s syndrome and other inborn dysmorphisms.

**spider nevus, vascular spider** (telangiectasia aracniforme): a telangiectasis consisting of a central red spot and radiating dilated arterioles resembling the legs of a spider.

**squirrel** (ardilla)

**to squirrel away** (atesorar, acumular, esconder, poner a buen recaudo): «Insulin helps to stabilize plasma glucose in two ways: by attaching to cell surfaces, particularly muscle cells, so as to enhance glucose uptake, and by prompting the liver to squirrel away surplus glucose for release between meals.»

**stag** (venado, ciervo)

**stag party** (reunión de hombres, fiesta de solteros). «The patient remembered arriving at a stag party around 11:00 p.m. but after that his memory was blank.»

**staghorn calculus** (cálculo renal coraliforme). «A large, dark brown, very hard staghorn calculus was found impacted within the dilated renal pelvis.»

**swan** (cisne)

**swan-neck catheter** (catéter en cuello de cisne): a catheter with a semirigid curved segment, used in peritoneal dialysis.

**swan-neck finger** (dedo en cuello de cisne): a degenerative or traumatic deformity of a finger in which the proximal interphalangeal joint is hyperextended and the distal interphalangeal joint is flexed.

**turkey** (gallipavo, pavo)

**cold turkey** (abandonar bruscamente el consumo habitual del alcohol u otras drogas). «Without counseling, nicotine replacement yields approximately double the success rate of cold turkey smoking cessation.»

**weasel** (comadreja)

**to weasel out of** (escabullirse, esquivar el bulto, rehuir una obligación). «Smaller agencies will no longer be able to weasel out of bearing their fair share of the costs and responsibilities.»

**wolf** (lobo)

**to cry wolf** (dar una falsa alarma, venir muchas veces con el mismo cuento, gritar ‘¡que viene el lobo!’ [cantineleta del pastorcito mentiroso]). «The general perception now is that these watchdogs have been crying wolf in hopes of diverting attention from their own predicament.»

**keep the wolf from the door** (mantenerse a flote, ganar lo suficiente para vivir). «Because many HMOs now deny payments to dermatologists for the treatment of common skin disorders that are deemed to be within the competence of primary care providers, some dermatologists have branched out into dermatological and cosmetic surgery in order to keep the wolf from the door.»

**worm** (gusano)

**to open a can of worms** (abrir la caja de Pandora): «Some clinicians avoid discussing the sexual history for fear of opening a can of worms.»

To conclude this glossary, I present a list of animal similes that may appear in the most formal material because they are all clichés, familiar to every native speaker of English.

as busy as a beaver <i>or</i> a bee	laborioso como una hormigueta
as blind as a bat	ciego como un topo, no ver tres en un burro

as free as a bird	libre como un pájaro
as gentle <i>or</i> as innocent as a lamb	más manso que un cordero
as happy as a lark	como unas pascuas, más feliz que una lombriz
as hungry as a horse <i>or</i> a bear	tener un hambre canina, tener un hambre de lobo(s)
as mad as a hornet	perder los estribos, echar chispas, ponerse como un basilisco, poner el grito en el cielo
as proud as a peacock	engreído como gallo de cortijo
as quiet as a mouse	sigiloso como un gato, silencioso como una tumba
as slippery as an eel	escurridizo como una anguila
as sly as a fox	astuto como el zorro
as strong as an ox	fuerte como un toro
as stubborn as a mule	más terco que una mula
as weak as a kitten	más frágil que el cristal
as wise as an owl	saber más que Merlín, saber un punto más que el diablo, saber más que los ratones, coloraos, sabérselas todas.

### Acknowledgement

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Laura Munoa, Verónica Saladrigas, Karen Shashok, Carmen Ugarte and Federico Romero, who carefully read through the manuscript and provided many valuable suggestions.

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