

8-12 Fitzilian Avenue
Harold Wood
Romford
Essex
RM3 0QS
Tel: 01708 384444
Fax: 01708 344318
E-mail: News@ExoticVets.net
www.Vets.gb.com



Consultations
by appointment
Mon-Fri: 9am-11am
12pm-2pm
4pm-7pm

Sat: 11am-1pm
3pm-5pm

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2010

WELCOME!

In This Issue:-

STAFF NEWS: Nurse and vet training
WHAT'S NEW: New equipment purchased
MEDICAL FOCUS: Blindness in cats
STAR PET: Roxy a success story
KIDS CORNER: A puzzle for our younger readers
EXOTIC SPOT: Soft Shelled Turtles by Kelly Adams
OTHER NEWS: Vaccines and parasites in the news

STAFF NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS to Kelly on passing her Level 3 Nursing Exams. Kelly is now a fully qualified Veterinary Nurse and once she has registered will be able to use the letters RVN after her name. **WELL DONE KELLY!**

Jamie has just taken his Level 3 theory exams and is finishing his Portfolio in preparation to take the practical nursing exams which hopefully he will be able to do in December.

Helen is enrolled at Writtle College to start her training (no-longer NVQ) in September.

Miss Stoakes has attended a Continuing Education Day on "Pancreatic and Liver Disease The Old and The New" held at BSAVA headquarters in Gloucester.

Mr Lawton will be away for 3 days in August as he is Lecturing on Exotic Animal Dermatology in Vienna.

**LOOK OUT FOR THE NEXT ISSUE
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF
LAWTON AND STOAKES
VETERINARY SURGEONS!!**

WHATS NEW?

At Lawton and Stoakes we continue to make improvements to the practice as part of our ongoing refurbishment. New lighting has been installed in the dog recovery room to enable our nurses to monitor our patients more efficiently.

Improvements also continue in the exotics room with more Herptek Plastic vivaria being installed. These Vivaria are water and chemical proof and



have integrated heating and lighting so that we can maintain hygiene of our hospitalised exotic patients and keep them at their preferred temperature zone and control the humidity in their immediate environment.

Following the breakdown of our hardworking electronic Haematology machine (used to provide us with information on a patients red and white blood cells) a new and improved machine has been purchased which will, like our Biochemistry machine, have monthly quality controls carried out to ensure that



it gives us accurate results every time. This technology enables us to provide results of blood tests sometimes within minutes helping us to provide the best treatment for our patients.

BLINDNESS IN CATS

Sudden loss of vision can occur in cats due to trauma, infections, inflammation, tumours or hypertension (high blood pressure).

Traumatic causes are usually fairly obvious. Corneal injuries can occur from cat fights or from thorns or other plant material penetrating the surface of the eye. These types of injury, however, usually affect one eye only and so total blindness does not occur. Road accidents can cause fractures of the facial bones or skull and can lead to neurological damage resulting in sudden blindness even though the eyes themselves appear normal. Both of these conditions require emergency treatment if the sight is to be saved.



Penetrating wound of cornea

Infections with viruses particularly Feline Infectious Peritonitis, Feline Leukaemia Virus, Feline Immunodeficiency Virus or parasites such as Toxoplasma can affect the internal structures of the eye and these causes need to be ruled out in any cat presenting with sight problems and this is usually done by sending away a blood sample to check for the antibodies to these infectious agents. Unfortunately these conditions are not curable and treatment may be aimed at controlling the presenting signs.

Non specific inflammation of the optic nerve or retina can occur and can lead to sight problems. It can only be diagnosed by ruling out other causes of inflammation, such as the infectious agents listed above, and is treated with anti-inflammatory drugs.

Tumours can occur within the eye or behind the eye in the eye socket and can be diagnosed using ultrasound although a surgical biopsy is often required to identify the tumour type.

The most important cause of sudden onset blindness in elderly cats is **retinal detachment due to high blood pressure**. See the Spring 2010 issue of the Newsletter for information on measuring blood pressure in cats. High Blood Pressure in cats is usually secondary to another condition, commonly kidney failure or Hyperthyroidism (overactive Thyroid Gland).

If the sight is to be saved treatment needs to be prompt.

If an underlying cause is found this must be treated and human drugs are often used alongside veterinary drugs

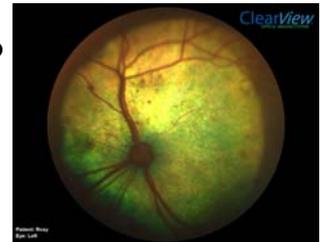
to reduce the blood pressure and this can, in some cases, help the retinas to reattach with consequent improvement in the vision.

Cataracts are not as common in cats as they are in dogs and usually the cat loses its sight gradually and learns to cope to such an extent that the owner may be unaware that their cat cannot see until they move furniture around and the cat starts to bump into things, giving the appearance that the cat has suddenly lost its sight. It is possible to operate on cataracts and restore sight to a previously blind animal.

If you are concerned about your cat's sight it is important to have them checked by a veterinary surgeon as soon as possible so that the cause can be found and treated without delay as this can lead to restora-

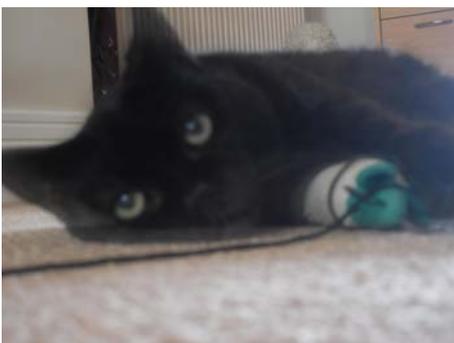


Detached retina



Retina reattached after treatment

STAR PET



Meet Roxy a 17 year old BDSH cat who was referred to the Practice by her Veterinary Surgeon to be examined by Mr Lawton, our Ophthalmologist, as she had gone blind. Roxy's owners had noticed that she was bumping into objects when coming into the house from outside. On examining Roxy Mr Lawton found she had detached both her retinas. Roxy had her blood pressure measured and it was found to be very high. She has responded very well to treatment and can now see again. Roxy was described by her referring veterinary surgeon as a lovely cat and despite her advancing years and thanks to her taking her medicines she now has her quality of life back again. We all hope she continues to do well!

KIDS CORNER



Well done to **Ben Tidiman** who guessed correctly that the photo in the last issue was a ferret!

Ben won a £15 WHSmith Voucher.



This Issue we have a brain teaser for you. Can you find the animals in the list below? **As always there is a prize for the first correct entry!** The winner will be notified after September 27th

WORD SEARCH

B	U	D	G	E	R	I	G	A	R	A	T	B	C
D	C	H	I	N	C	H	I	L	L	A	E	E	G
F	H	B	N	M	S	N	C	F	R	V	T	O	P
J	P	S	S	N	A	K	E	A	Q	R	G	U	A
W	E	R	G	U	Y	R	N	E	A	T	I	T	R
L	R	M	H	A	G	T	E	K	R	A	I	T	R
N	S	E	G	T	U	A	E	P	O	B	Y	O	O
C	I	D	F	L	I	E	R	T	B	U	T	R	T
S	A	D	A	F	N	G	H	A	J	K	O	R	B
C	N	B	V	E	E	T	R	R	P	N	E	A	N
W	S	A	C	X	A	R	P	O	O	D	L	E	T
H	N	F	T	R	P	O	O	T	N	R	Y	B	M
S	C	B	C	N	I	B	G	O	R	A	B	U	S
N	K	E	W	C	G	O	L	D	F	I	S	H	M

RABBIT	SNAKE
PERSIAN	POODLE
PARROT	TARANTULA
CHINCHILLA	GUINEA PIG
GOLDFISH	BUDGERIGAR

EXOTIC SPOT

Soft Shelled Turtles (Trionychidae Family) BY Kelly Adams

There are several sub species of soft shelled turtles, all with a characteristic rubbery flattened shell which lacks the bony scutes that other chelonia possess. The colour of the shell is similar to the colour of the sand or mud in the particular region that the species of turtle comes from, allowing them to lie in wait of passing food and perform a surprise attack on the unsuspecting prey. The carapace has a layer of solid bone beneath it, with the outer part of the shell and the edges being softer and more flexible, allowing the turtle to move more easily in water and on the muddy beds of lakes.

Soft shelled turtles have long necks, enabling them to breathe air above the surface of the water whilst keeping their bodies submerged in the mud. They can, however, stay underwater for extended periods as they are able to extract a small amount of oxygen out of the water via their skin.

The turtles have a very strong jaw and bite, with an extendable neck that darts at prey and which also enables them to fight with enemies. A large turtle kept as a pet could cause serious damage to a human hand if given the opportunity!!

Soft shelled turtles are carnivorous, and in the wild their diet would consist of fish, shrimp, crayfish, water insects and even small birds and mammals. A varied diet should be offered to captive turtles with a suitable Calcium and Vitamin D3 supplement. As with other turtles, soft shells need to be fully submerged in water to be able to swallow their food.

The housing for a pet soft shelled turtle needs to be a large tank with a sand substrate, a basking area such as a ledge or a rock, a full spectrum UV bulb and a heater above the basking area, a water heater and a high powered water filter as these creatures are very messy feeders. The water should be completely changed at least every two weeks. Plants and hides such as driftwood or caves in the tank are appreciated by the turtles but care must be taken not to place anything in the tank that the turtle can injure itself on, particularly as the shell is soft and more easily scratched. Shell infections are the commonest reason for presentation to the veterinary surgeon and can be life threatening if not treated properly.

Soft shelled turtles can be aggressive and therefore are not recommended pets for the first time turtle keeper. They do not get on well with other turtles, so ideally should be kept individually or if more than one turtle is being kept their interaction should be closely monitored. Because of their aggressiveness and strong bite handling should be kept to a minimum.



OTHER NEWS

VACCINES have been in the news recently particularly concerning the re-vaccination schedule. Lawton and Stoakes follow the vaccine manufacturers recommendation to vaccinate annually. To vaccinate less frequently than this could lead to a proportion of dogs being unprotected and disease outbreaks may occur. Don't forget that as well as protecting against the major diseases your pet will receive a full health check and you can use this opportunity to ask the Veterinary Surgeon any questions you may have about the health of your pet.

LUNGWORM this potentially serious parasite of dogs was once seen in localised areas in southern England and Wales. However, cases have recently been reported in the London area. This parasite is spread by the dog ingesting slugs or snails and the adult parasite lives in the arteries of the lungs of dogs. In some cases this can be fatal. Please ask our receptionists for advice on the routine worming of your dog to prevent this nasty condition.

