BOOK REVIEWS


Biology, Husbandry, and Medicine of the Green Iguana is a comprehensive look at one of the most commonly kept reptiles in the pet trade. Edited by Dr. Elliot Jacobson, an internationally recognized authority on reptile medicine, this book covers the depth and breadth of what is currently known and recommended in green iguana husbandry and medicine. Dr. Jacobson has assembled 18 contributors in 10 chapters that cover the natural history, biology, nutrition, husbandry, clinical evaluation and diagnostic techniques, infectious and noninfectious diseases, drug dosages, anesthesia, surgery, and diagnostic imaging. Rather than dwell on the medicine of the green iguana, Dr. Jacobson has balanced medicine with the biology, captive husbandry, and nutrition of the green iguana. There is a thorough and detailed discussion of the biology, reproduction, and nutrition of wild iguanas. Nearly half the text is devoted to this aspect, an important but often overlooked component of veterinary reptile medicine. Color plates are collectively placed in the middle of the book. All photographs are sharply focused and appropriately labeled. Photomicrographs of peripheral blood films are remarkably clear. One color plate depicting the typical green coloration of the female iguana, however, appears gray.

The book starts with three chapters on the biology, reproduction, and nutrition in the wild. Extensive references compliment the text. Discussions focusing on population biology, predation, age class survivorship, conservation and natural history, reproduction, and digestive physiology provide a background of information that compliments a complete knowledge of iguanas for the practitioner. The importance of ultraviolet light, vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and water is presented in concise and easy to understand text. Appropriate tables provide an easy reference to what is being explained in the text.

The next two chapters discuss nutrition in captivity and husbandry. Investigation into the quality of manufactured diets and recommendations for which diets to use are presented and well referenced. Manufactured versus natural diets are presented in an easy to understand format. Caging requirements are thoroughly discussed and supported by color plates.

Chapter 6 discusses the clinical evaluation and diagnostic techniques used with the green iguana. The color plates interrupt it, but this is only a minor intrusion into the text. There is a discussion of the topical and regional anatomy in the context of clinical illnesses or abnormalities observed. Clinical techniques such as phlebotomy, biopsies, and cytodiagnostics are thoroughly discussed and supported by appropriate color plates.

Chapter 7 focuses on infectious and noninfectious diseases of the green iguana and appears to cover what is currently known about these entities. With 147 references supporting this chapter, it may be the most complete discussion of disease in the green iguana available in a concise text.

Thorough discussion of drug dosages and chemotherapeutics is provided in chapter 8 along with a formulary, specifically referenced to the species studied for pharmacokinetic data. This points out the need for further investigation into drug metabolism in the green iguana.

Anesthesia and surgery are discussed in chapter 9. Most of the more commonly performed surgical techniques are presented and discussed in such a way that any general practitioner with a basic understanding of reptilian surgery can perform such procedures. The discussions are supported with detailed and in most cases exquisite color plates.

The chapter on diagnostic imaging discusses radiographic technique based on organ systems. The discussion of radiographic and ultrasonic appearance of internal organs is appropriate, but the photographs are not as detailed in this chapter. Lesions discussed in the captions are not labeled, and although experienced veterinarians will be able to discern the findings, novice veterinarians could have difficulty in interpreting the lesions. Use of a gecko to demonstrate radiographic evidence of lower respiratory tract infection in an iguana is somewhat inappropriate, and lesions are difficult to observe. Ultrasonography of the renal tissue from a monitor lizard is depicted, whereas the image of an iguana would be more consistent with the text. Labeling or outlining of anatomy and lesions would improve this chapter.

A straightforward, simple index is supplied at the end of the book. No appendices are presented, and in this text probably are not warranted, because most aspects are thoroughly discussed in the text.

General comments

Biology, Husbandry, and Medicine of the Green Iguana is a truly comprehensive look at the green iguana. Inclusion of the natural history, thorough discussion of husbandry, numerous current references, and outstanding color plates make this book a necessity for any veterinarian or professional herpetologist who sees iguanas. Add to this the affordable price and it becomes a must for students entering the field. Dr. Jacobson and his expert contributors have published a complete text for the practitioner that is a significant contribution to the field of veterinary medicine.—Wm. Kirk Suedmeyer, D.V.M., Dipl. A.C.Z.M., The Kansas City Zoo, 6700 Zoo Drive, Kansas City, Missouri 64132, USA.

Conservation Medicine, Ecological Health in Practice
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