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Ophthalmic Disease in Veterinary Medicine. By Charles L. Martin, Manson Publishing, 73 Corringham Road, London, NW11 7DL, UK. 2004. 512 pp. ISBN 978-1840760163. UK £95, US $181.53 (hardback). [Forthcoming in paperback, Blackwell Publishing, 2121 State Ave., Ames, IA 50014-8300, USA. Jan 2009. 512 pp.]

Review by Murray E. Fowler

The author indicates in the preface that the book is not meant for the ophthalmic specialist, but for the generalist who desires a concise, well-explained discussion of eye conditions. The book is lavishly illustrated with more than 700 excellent color photographs, black and white line drawings, color drawings, flow charts, tables, and lists. The reviewer has seldom seen this quality of illustration in a book.

The expanded table of contents provides a quick direction to the section desired by the reader. The initial chapters discuss general topics such as ocular examination, ophthalmic pharmacology, and basic ocular pathology. Additional introductory chapters discuss problem-based management of ocular diseases and basic principles of ophthalmic surgery. The remaining chapters are devoted to anatomic areas of the eye and adnexa. Chapters are well referenced for those who may wish to delve into a specific topic in more detail.

Eye examination and treatment requires a unique array of instruments and pharmaceuticals that may be novel for a nonspecialist. The agents are described by pharmacologic action and in sufficient detail to assist the generalist to more accurately make a diagnosis and provide effective therapy. The reviewer was particularly impressed with the description and illustration of the placement of a subpalpebral lavage tube in the horse. The ocular pathology chapter was written by a pathologist. The illustrations are outstanding and the discussions are written for nonpathologists. The various pathologic processes are described in detail. The problem-based management chapter is filled with charts, lists, and diagrams that provide a step-by-step evaluation of a clinical sign.

The surgery chapter emphasizes preparation for surgery, instrumentation, basic principles of surgery, and the postoperative care required for successful resolution of the condition. Intraocular surgery requires special equipment and instruments, and patients requiring such surgery should be referred to specialists. However, extraocular surgery may be performed by the general practitioner.

Wildlife veterinarians must deal with ophthalmic emergencies. This book provides the information necessary to determine if more-sophisticated diagnostic evaluation and management is required so that an appropriate referral may be made. It also provides the necessary information for dealing with cases in the field. The color drawings are particularly useful. Important structures are emphasized. The majority of the illustrations are original (presumably by the author); a few are credited to colleagues.

Each of the anatomic discussions follow a similar outline, that being the special anatomy and physiology necessary for examination, diagnosis, and management of the condition. Each disease described presents data on breed prevalence. The author lists the "incidence" of the disease in a breed, but the precise definition of the word "incidence" is the rate of occurrence. The proper term should be "prevalence." This minor error does not negate the value of the tables; the tables are based on hundreds of thousands of cases.

The concluding chapter lists ocular diseases presumed to be inherited by a particular animal breed. The diseases that have been studied intensively are referenced. Breed predisposition is listed for dogs, cats, horses, and cattle.

The appendices are also quite useful in this book. Appendix 1 provides rule-outs (differential diagnosis) of systemic diseases based on ocular lesions. Appendix 2 is an excellent glossary of ophthalmic terms. The index provides a useful feature by printing the page numbers for the major discussion of a topic in bold face.

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