Headlines News: Shell Game

Pseudoshell continues to revel its self

More necrotic (dead) dermal bone scutes have been removed as the pseudoshell develops and pushes the dead tissue away from the skin, or in some cases punches straight through the dead bone. Once the bony plate is loose, water and bacteria are trapped, and the pieces must be removed, being careful but to remove a piece that would avulse and expose ulcerated pseudooshell or worse the coeloum or lungs below. A small blister on the pseudoshell was aseptically aspirated and the fluid culture, but the cytology was not inflammatory and I hope that this lesion is sterile.

An ultrasound was also preformed to evaluate the urinary bladder and the physical exam finding that the left renal tissue area seems bigger then the right. The bladder was again large, but now that we know what we’re looking at, it makes for sense and is an excellent acoustic window for the kidneys and other colemic structures. The renal tissue appears slightly cystic and is not well defined on the ultrasound, however, both sides were similar. No reproductive structures or developing eggs were seen. The B-mode echocardiography feature allows for the very accurate measure of heart rate (45 bpm) and the heart had good contractility, vascular structures deep in the coelum were well perfused. It is somewhat frustrating to see these large vessels pulse when getting a peripheral blood sample is so hard to collect.
We are planning to continue the current treatment, antibiotics (enrofloxicin PO 10 mg/kg q5d), topical shell treatments (mucriprin and SSD) and supportive care. Patty’s appetite seems to vary but has been very good lately and her weight is stable. It seems clear at this point we will likely lose the entire carapace to avascular necrosis secondary to the thermal injury (she froze solid) but signs of new carapace growth are not yet evident.

Terrapins, Cooters, and Turtles, oh my . . .:

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The diamondback terrapins are just about to turn the corner into standard head-start rehabilitation. I feel these hatchling are all in critical care until they are eating, pooping, and reliably gaining weight. The smallest of the terrapins (#8) gave us quite a scare when he almost turned belly up in a feeding tank that was too warm (careful with that temperature control, do not use the touch test but a thermometer is necessary to match their tank water temperature when feeding). He made a fine recovery thankfully, and once he gets to 5.0g we can shift to feeding 6 days a week instead of daily. All the turtles are eating thawed frozen brine and other appropriate items.

Cooters are cooters and once they get their growth on, they tend to thrive here, soon we’ll be talking about slowing this growth to maintain better bone structure and overall metabolic health over fast growth.

Sea Rogers Williams VMD
attending veterinarian and director of science

[STAFF: Kathy Zagzebski, Bridget Dunnigan, Brian Moore, Joanne Nicholson]