

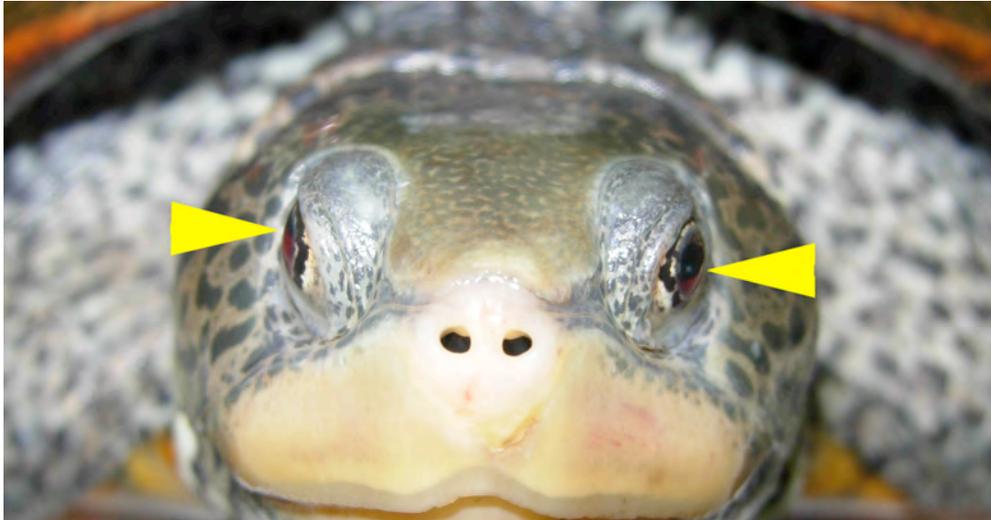


Rounds Notes is a monthly report from Sea Rogers Williams VMD, the views expressed are not necessarily that of the National Marine Life Center. Information in Rounds Notes should be considered confidential and used solely to benefit the health of aquatic animals everywhere.

May 26, 2009

Rounds Notes 10: 26- 27(2009)

Headlines News: The eyes have it,



An adult female diamondback terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*) presented for evaluation secondary to thermal damage following a premature end to brumation. She was found on St. Patrick's Day (we'll call her Patty) after a bitterly cold night with her front end exposed and bleeding from around the eyes, and has benefited from the excellent care of Sue and Don Lewis. She suffered at least Stage 2 congelatio or frostbite, and deeper injuries may yet be uncovered. On physical examination there was blood in the anterior chambers of each eye (behind the cornea and in front of the iris) which is called hyphema. The corneas were clear and failed to take up Fluorescein eye stain, which indicates no corneal ulcers. The amount of hyphema obscures deeper visual evaluation, and on the right it covers the pupil and thus prevents vision. Damage to the posterior segment of the eye (fundus) may render the animal irrevocably blind. Right now we just can't tell, there is no menace and she failed to read correctly from the chart, but these findings can be hard to interpret in reptiles.



The oral cavity found pigmented tissue on each side of the glottis, but was otherwise clear. Overall strength was decreased but postural reactions and sensory and motor reflexes were present in all four limbs. There is however severe impairment of the

function of the hind limbs with paresis on the left and paralysis on the right. This can be due to a central (brain) or spinal injury distal to the brachial plexus.

The skin may have suffered ischemic (lack of oxygen supplying blood) injury as the epidermis is peeling in many areas and the tail tip sloughed during the exam. A cloacal wash was performed to see if she also has intestinal parasites or suffered hemorrhage in the GI tract, and the resultant material contained only mucous. On the bright side is what appears to be a robust circulatory system and no external evidence of pneumonia (nasal discharge, dyspnea, or a buoyancy disturbance).

Initial treatment:

Husbandry: Start with a low salinity environment (4 ppt) with water no deeper than to allow her to raise her head to breath. In a submerged bucket she was able to use her front legs to left her self to breath, around once every minute. Offer food once a day.

Soak the tail in dilute chlorohexiderm 4% diluted in 1:9 parts warm water to create a 0.4% solution, soak for 10 min. once a day.

Apply a very small amount of ophthalmic ointment to both eyes at the time of the tail soak once a day (use 2-3 mm, a “drop” of ointment on each eye between the lids.

Once we have her warmed to a core body temperature of > 70°F we will start antibiotics. [ceftazidime 20 mg/kg SQ q 72 hrs, 5 x]

Physical therapy of passive hind leg movements for 5 min, each day to prevent contracture and keep the hind legs mobile. Report any voluntary movements of the hind legs to Animal Health.

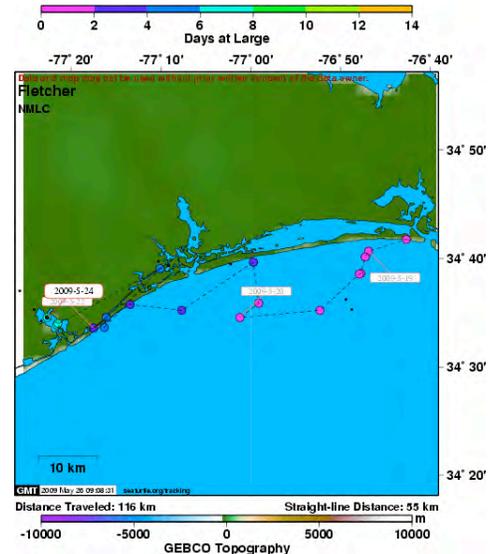
Flash visual evoked potentials (VEP) may be attempted to assess vision, and an ultra-high resolution CT could image the brain and spinal cord, although MRI would be better for neurological disease. She would need to be sedated, and we need to get her more stable before considering these tests.

We will look at internal chemistries and get a set of survey radiographs as part of our in-house evaluation.

So what’s the prognosis for Patty ? To soon to say, but the eye’s may have it, if she is blind she can not be returned to the wild and the remaining options of life-long captive care vs humane euthanasia will have to be discussed.

Sea Turtles at Large

Fletch is transmitting well and appears to have found a nice spot along the coast to enjoy the spring, have a hermit crab on me Fletch, they go great with ol’ Bay.



C. Rogers Williams VMD
Sea Rogers Williams VMD

Attending Veterinarian & Director of Science

[STAFF: Kathy Zagzebski, Don Lewis, Bridget Dunnigan, Brian Moore, Joanne Nicholson, Julie Seligmann.]

