

## **Tortoise with a bad eye**

### **Initial examination**

We were presented with an 8 year old Hermans tortoise who had been hibernated at home in a box indoors overwinter. She presented with a swollen left eye.

Treatment was started with oral antibiotics and eye drops and she was admitted to the clinic for investigation and treatment.



*above, tortoise at presentation*

### **Investigation**

The eyelids were so tightly stuck together that she needed to be anaesthetised to be properly examined. We have a fully equipped vivarium and a special anaesthetic box for reptiles so she was well looked after.

Under anaesthetic the lids were gently opened up and retracted. The eye was full of pus. If a dog, cat or person gets conjunctivitis they have a runny discharge, but reptiles get a hard dry discharge which in this case had built up during hibernation to form a solid round lump. Luckily the lump of pus was quite mobile and was gently pulled out from under the lids using specialist ophthalmic forceps (see photo). Remarkably the eye itself was fairly normal underneath.



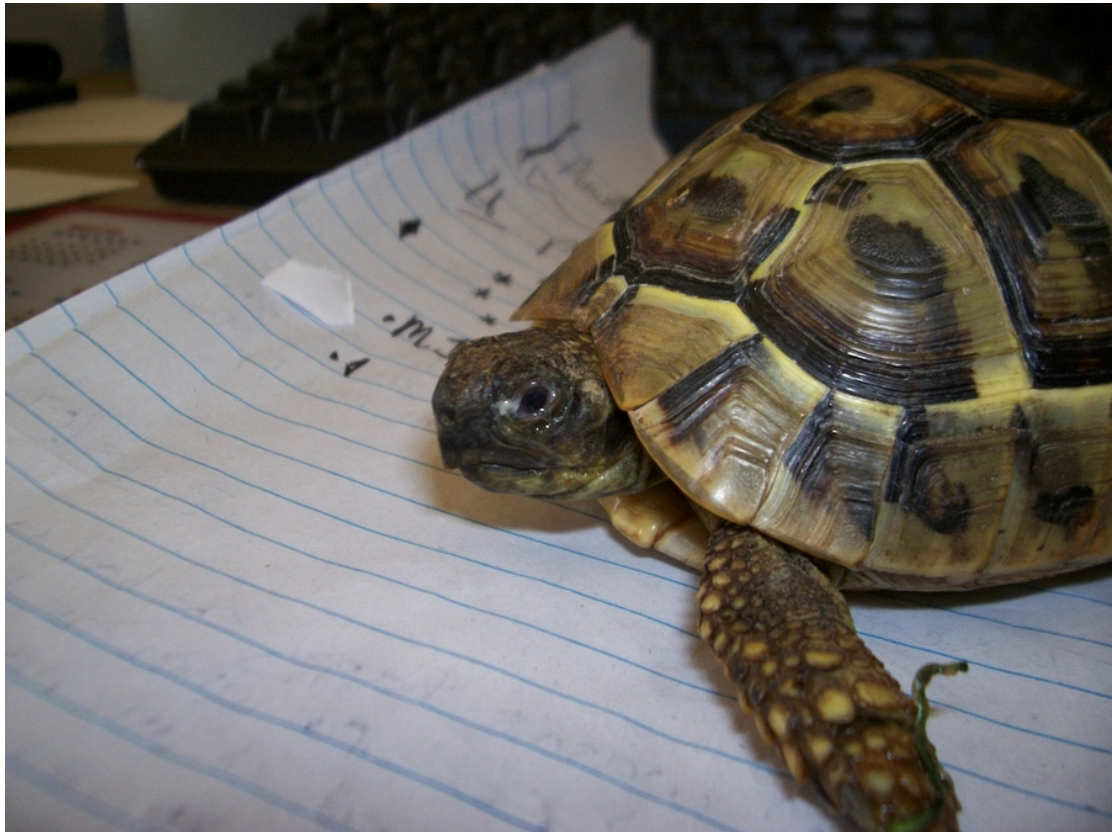
*above, the tortoise under anaesthetic (with breathing tube) showing the removed lump of pus in the forceps*



*above, immediate post-op appearance showing swollen lids, but a normal eyeball.*

She recovered from the anaesthetic uneventfully and was placed in the practice vivarium. Fresh green food was provided.

She was discharged with antibiotic eye drops to apply four times a day and made a full recovery.



*above, how she looked when she went home: the eye is back to normal.*

## **Discussion**

It is important to hibernate tortoises correctly with regular monitoring. There is further information about hibernation available on this website under the “Pet Health Care Sheets” section. We also offer a hibernation service at the practice, please call for more details.