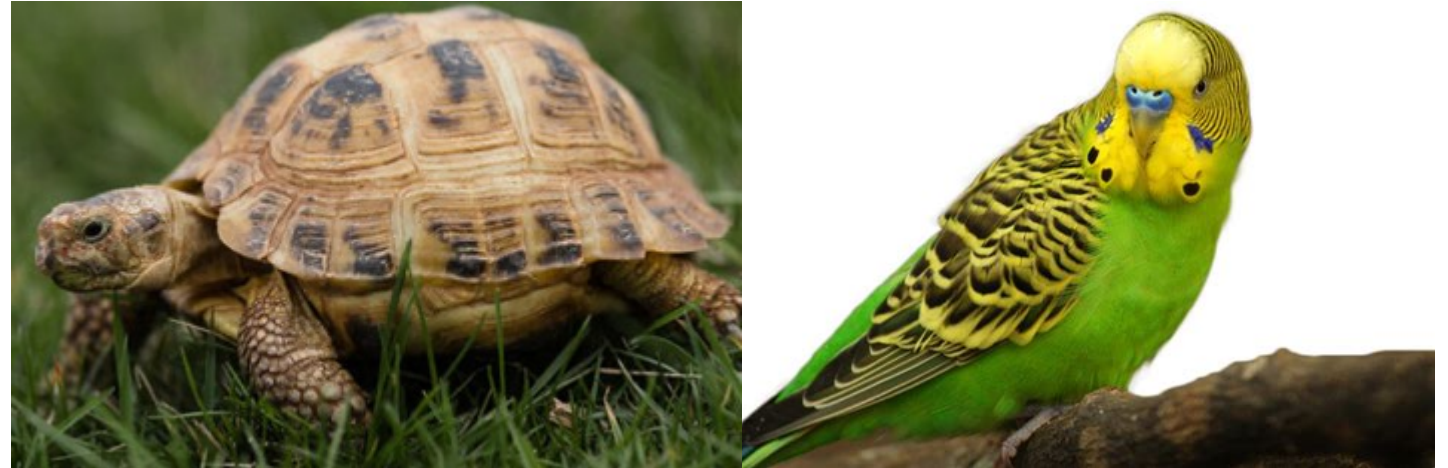


# Konsequenzen der Diskrepanz von natürlicher und menschenbestimmter Ernährung -- Reptilien / Ziervögel

Marcus Clauss  
mclauss@vetclinics.uzh.ch





## Gliederung

- Reptilien
  - Gicht
- Reptilien & Ziervögel
  - Adipositas
- Reptilien
  - Wachstum
  - Pyramidenpanzer bei Schildkröten
- Reptilien & Ziervögel
  - Calcium-Mangel
  - Vitamin A-Mangel
  - andere Mangelerkrankungen





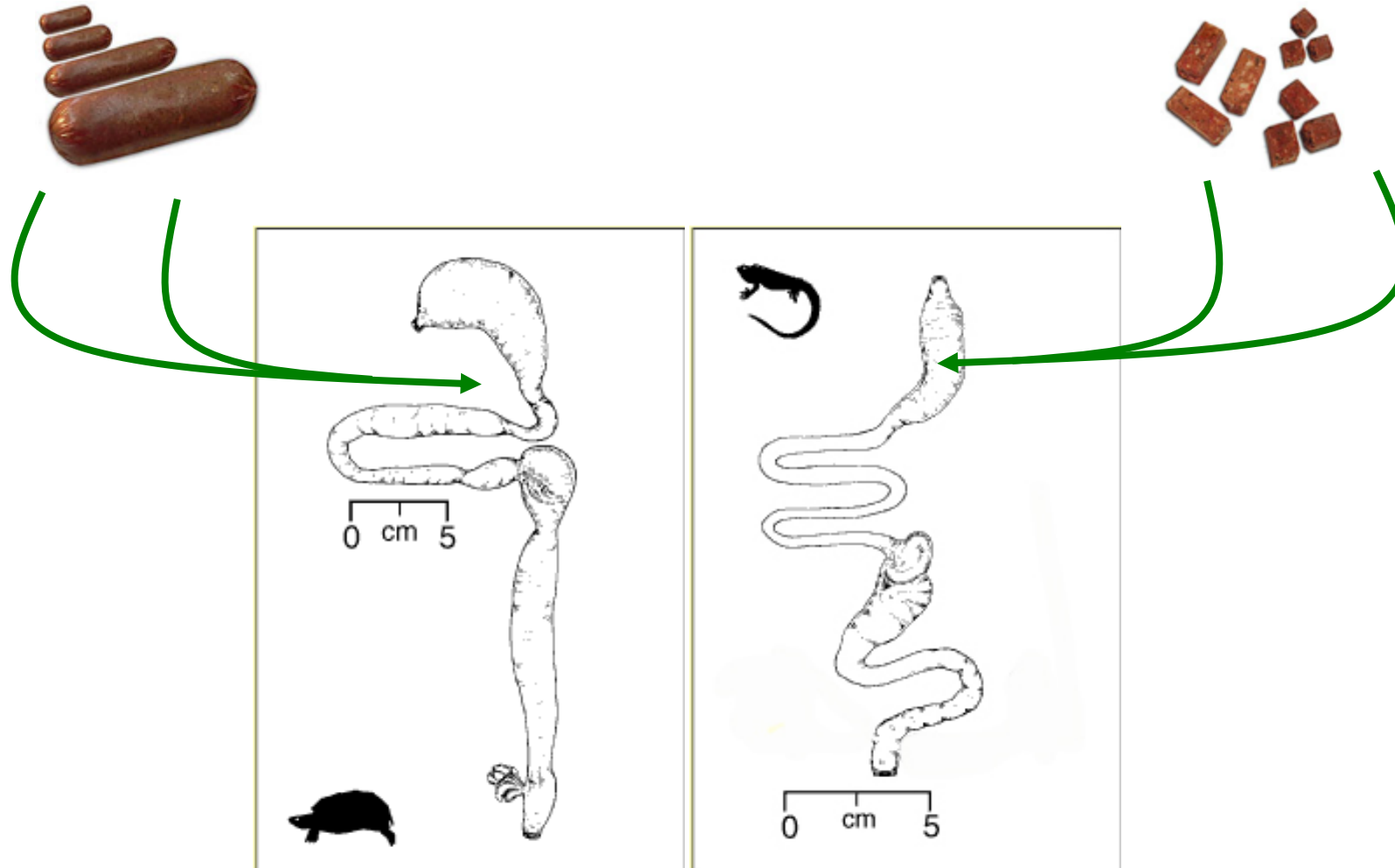
**University of  
Zurich** UZH

**Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife**

# Reptilien - Gicht

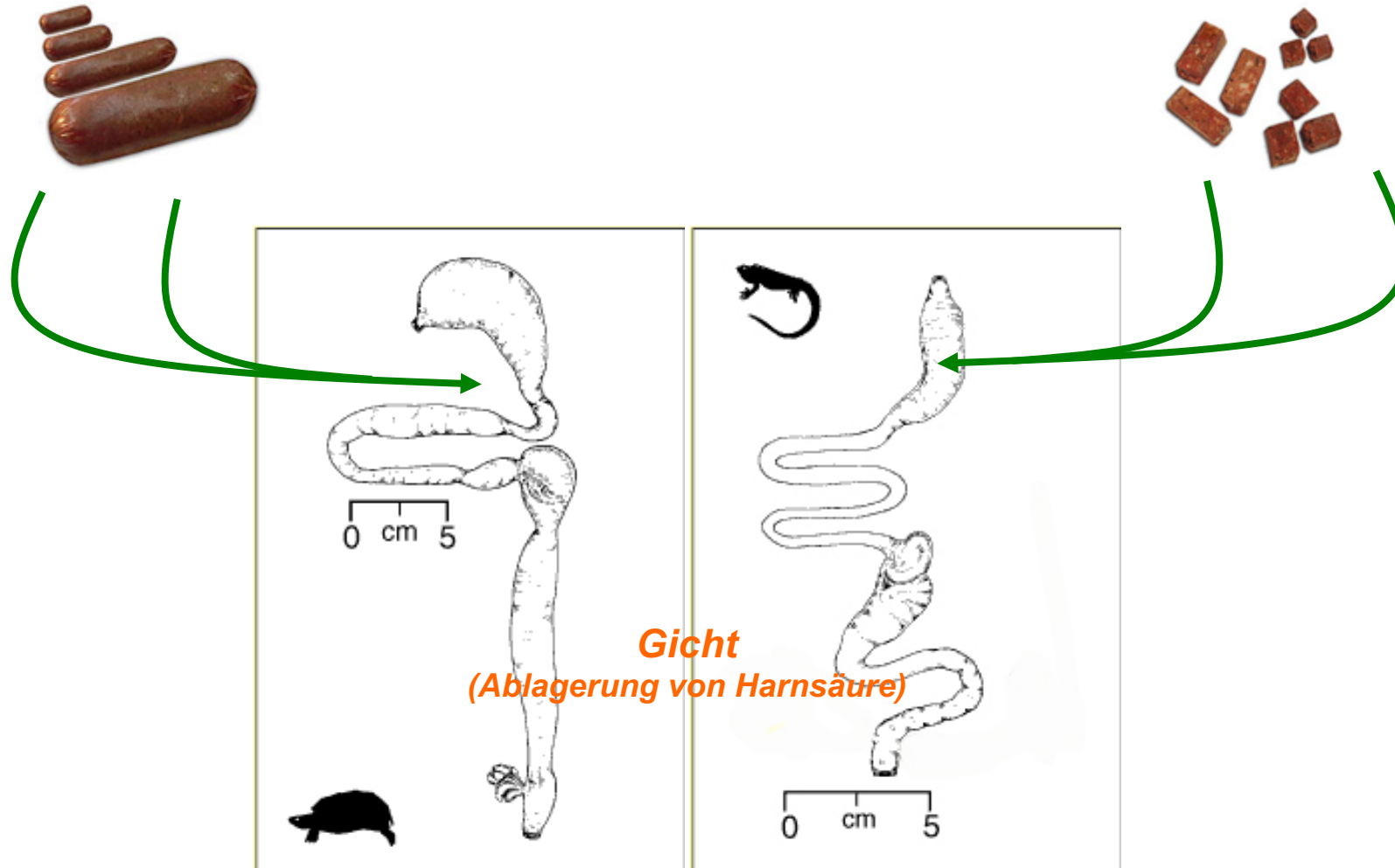


## Einsatz von Fleisch / 'Katzenfutter' bei Herbivoren



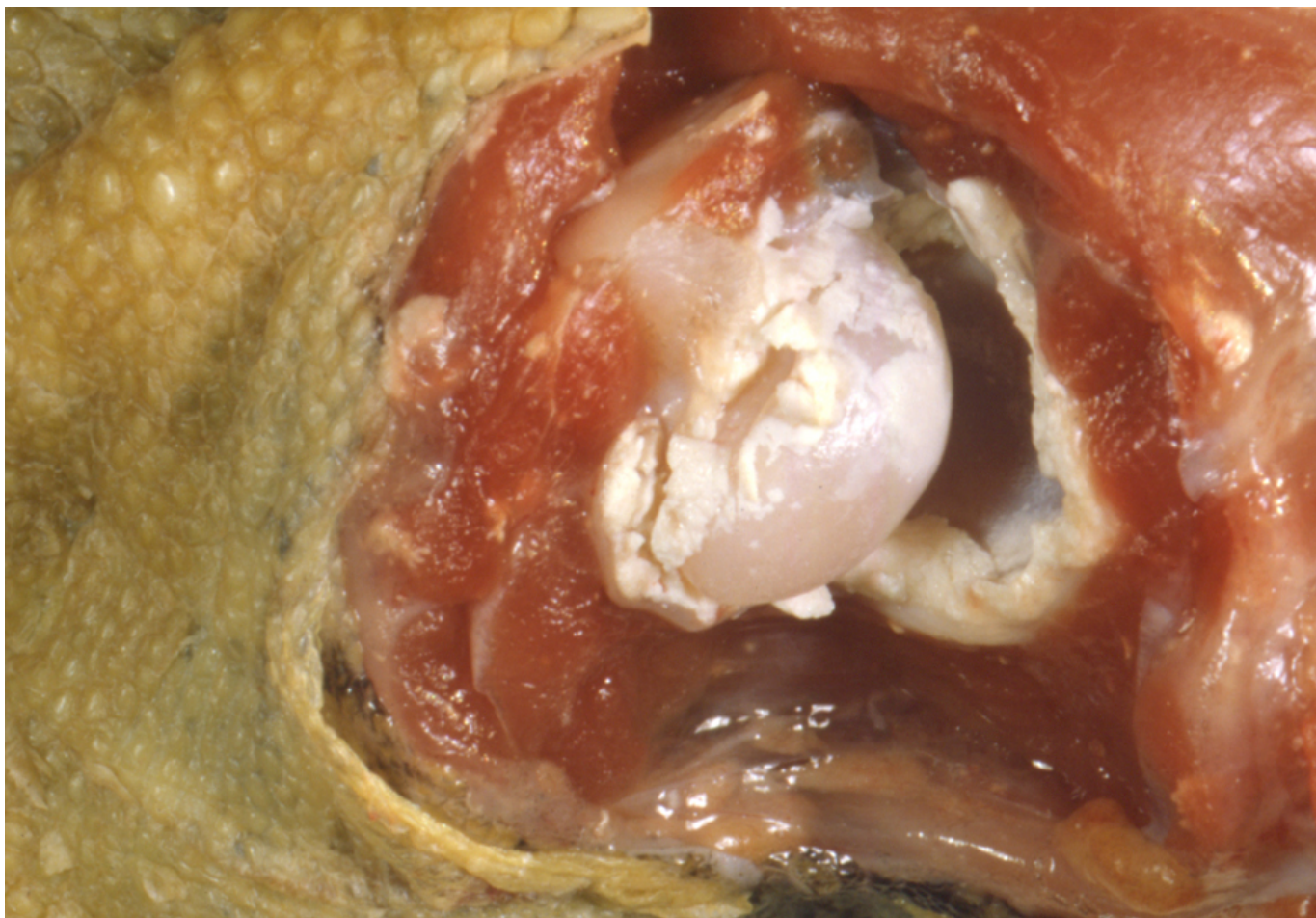


## Einsatz von Fleisch / 'Katzenfutter' bei Herbivoren





## Gicht







## Gicht





## Gicht







## Gicht



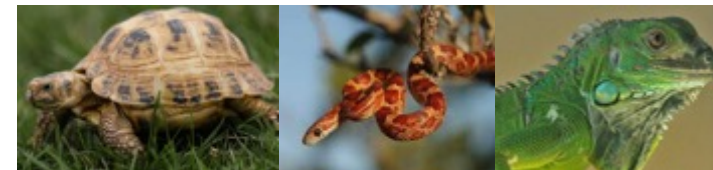




**University of  
Zurich** UZH

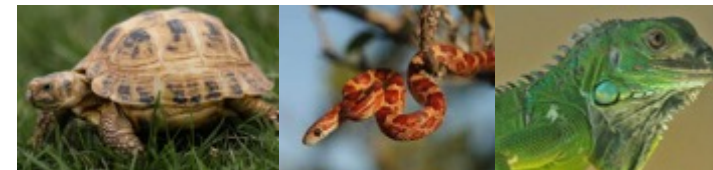
**Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife**

# Reptilien & Ziervögel - Adipositas

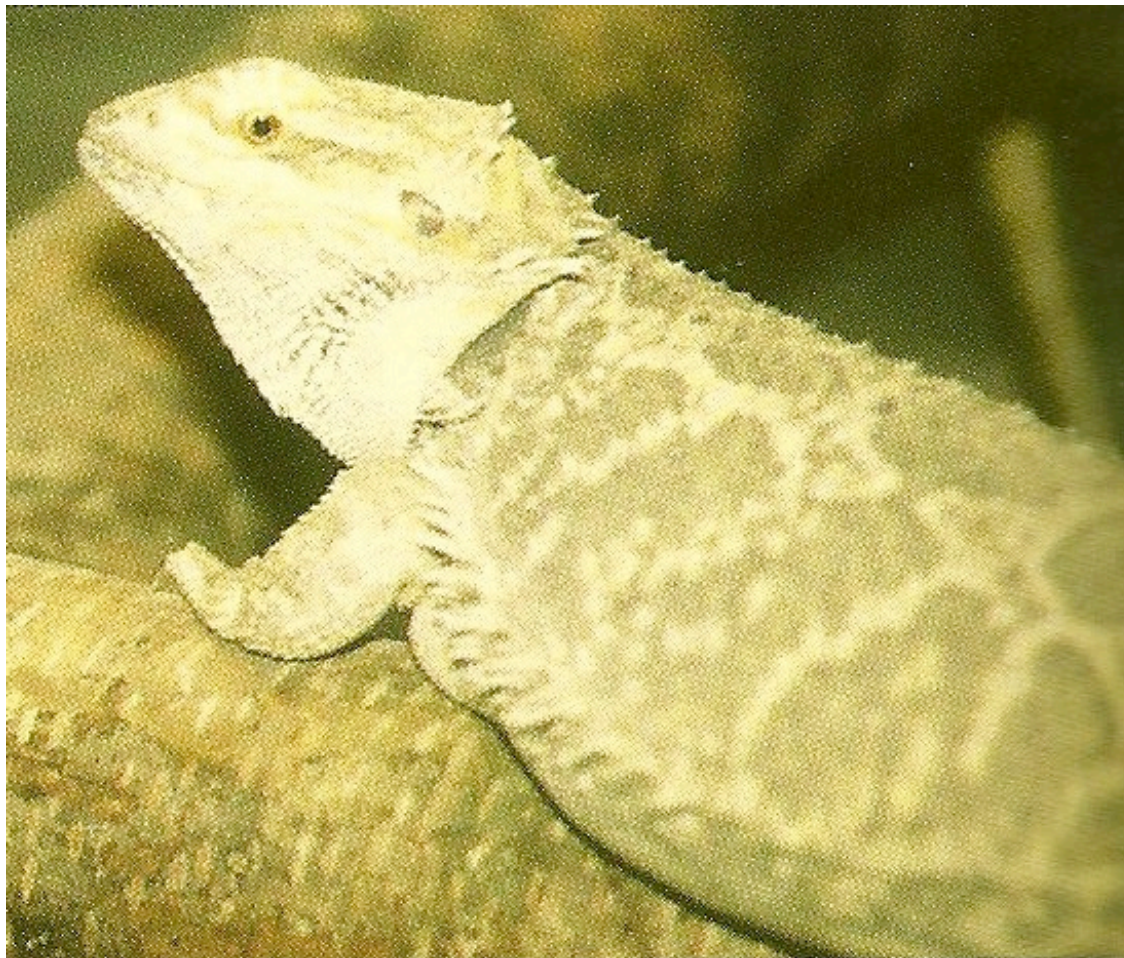


## Adipositas

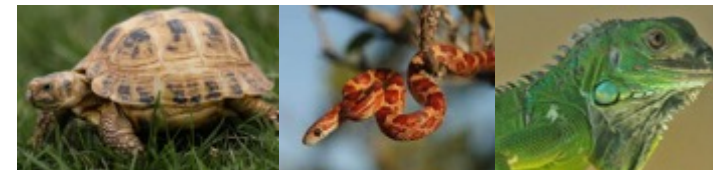




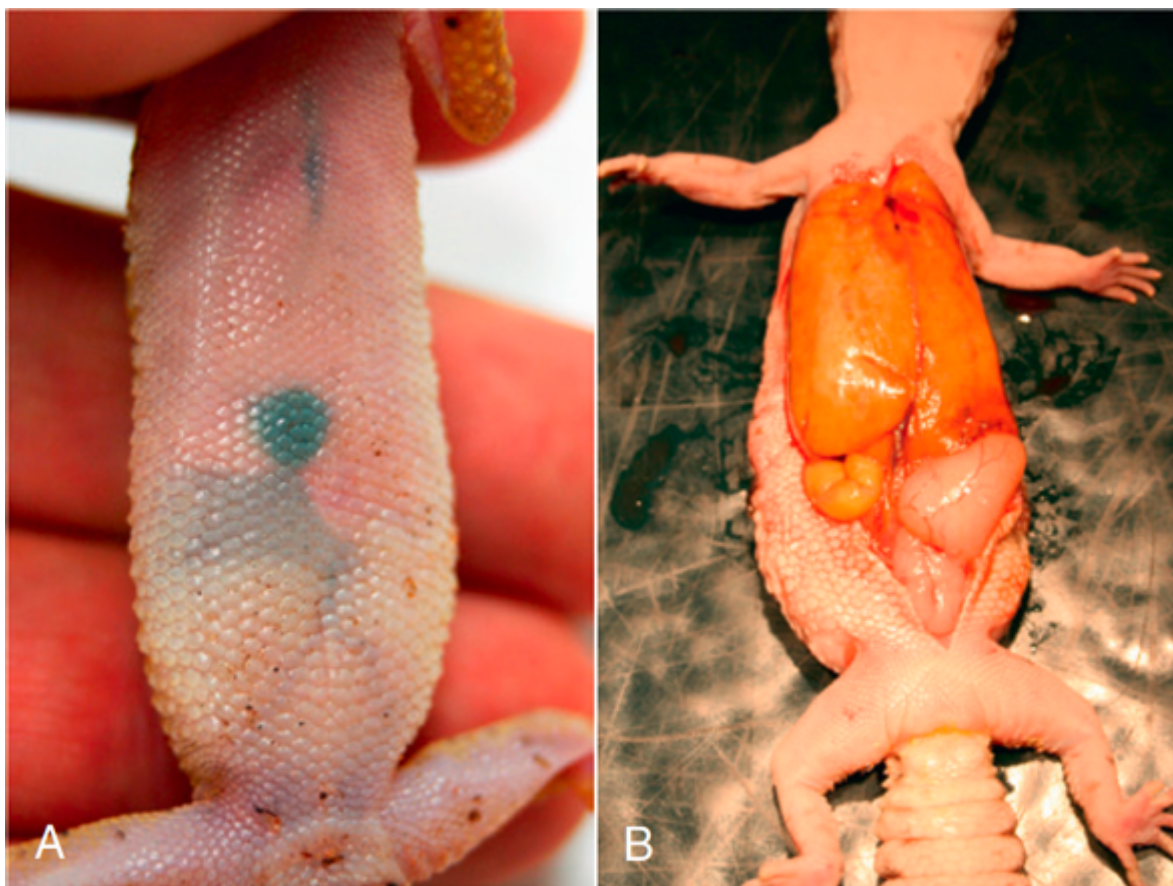
## Adipositas



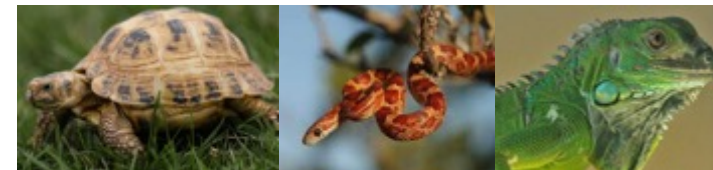




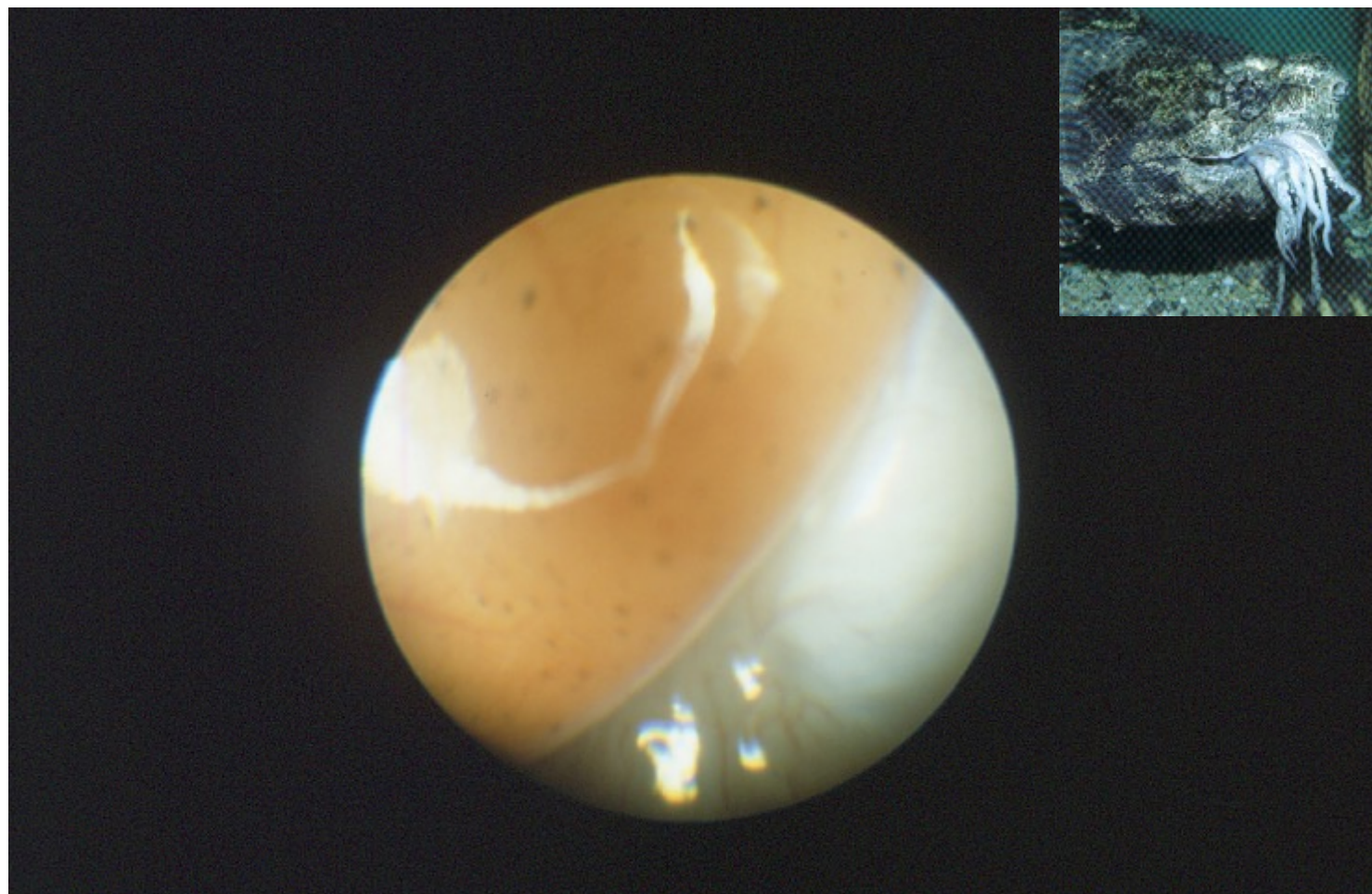
## Adipositas



**FIG 84.21** Hepatic lipidosis in leopard geckos (*Eublepharus macularius*) visible through ventrum (A) and at necropsy (B); note the dark green gall bladder in (A). (Courtesy of Thomas H. Boyer.)



## Adipositas







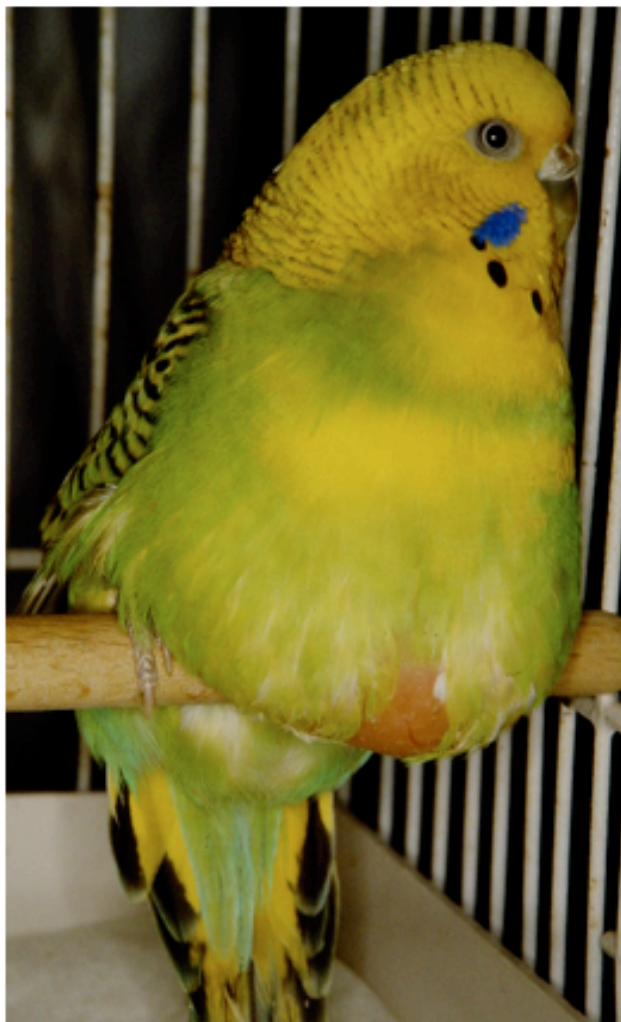
## Adipositas



**FIGURE 4-1** Delayed molt associated with obesity in a Green-cheeked amazon (*Amazona viridigenalis*). Note the old, worn and blackened contour feathers. (Photo courtesy B. Speer.)



## Adipositas

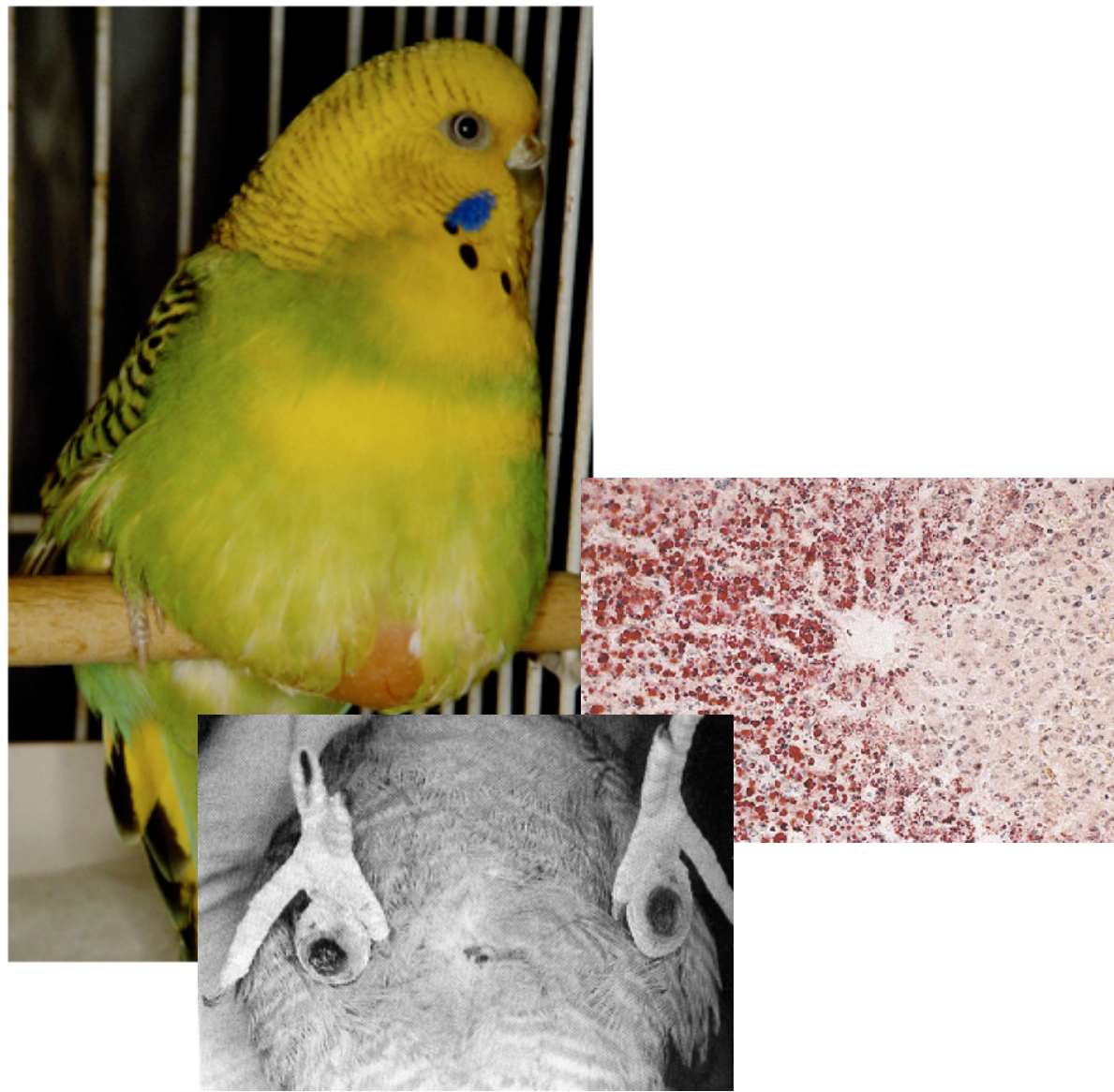


© KUMMERFELD





## Adipositas

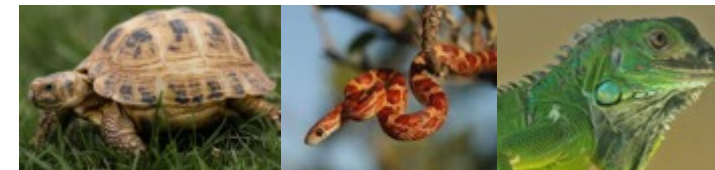




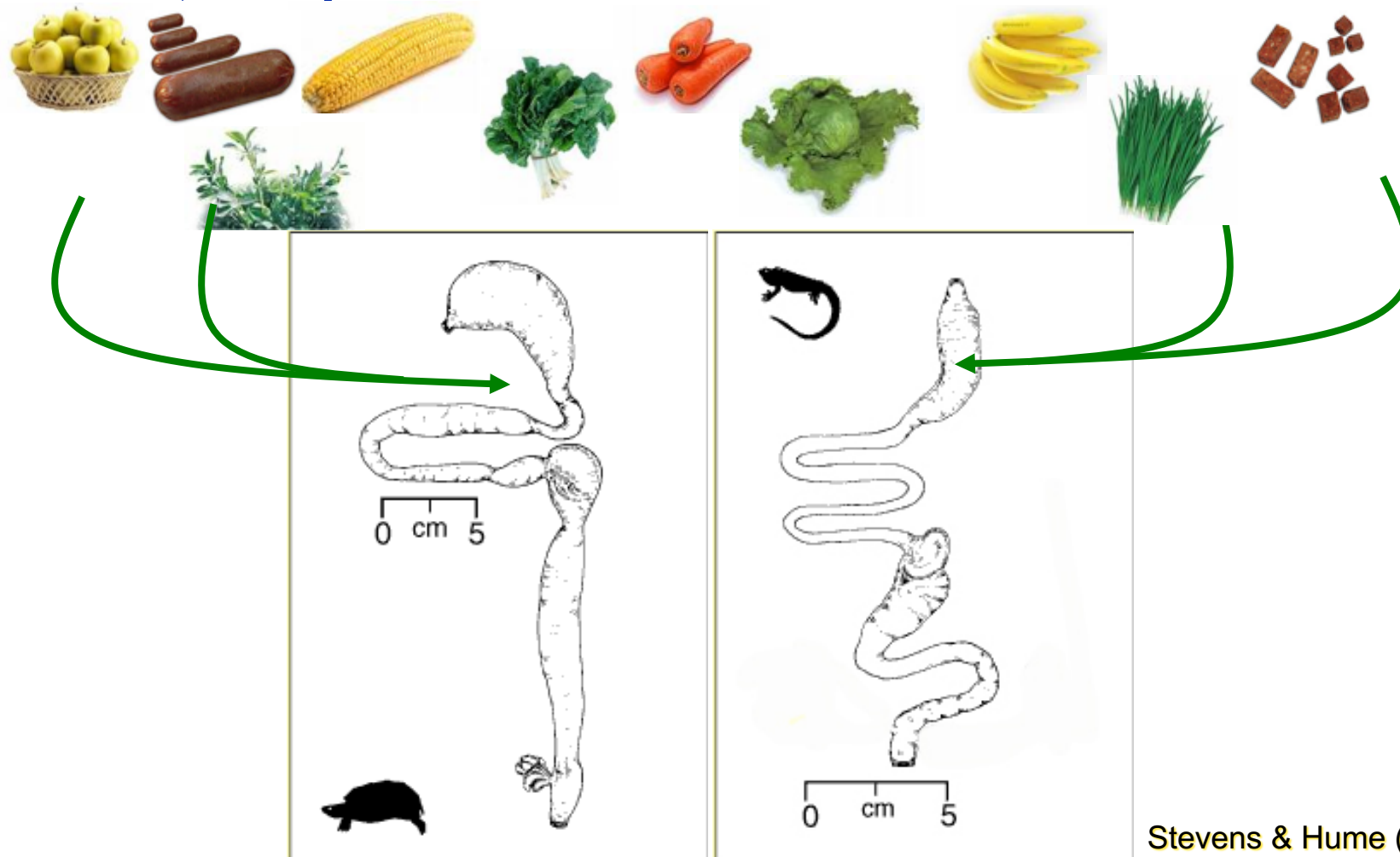
**University of  
Zurich** UZH

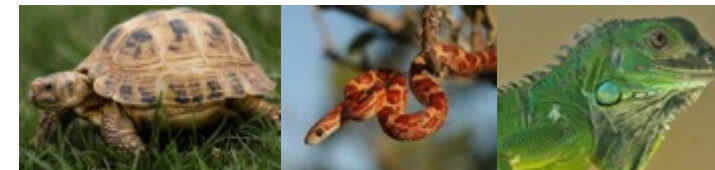
**Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife**

# Reptilien - Wachstum

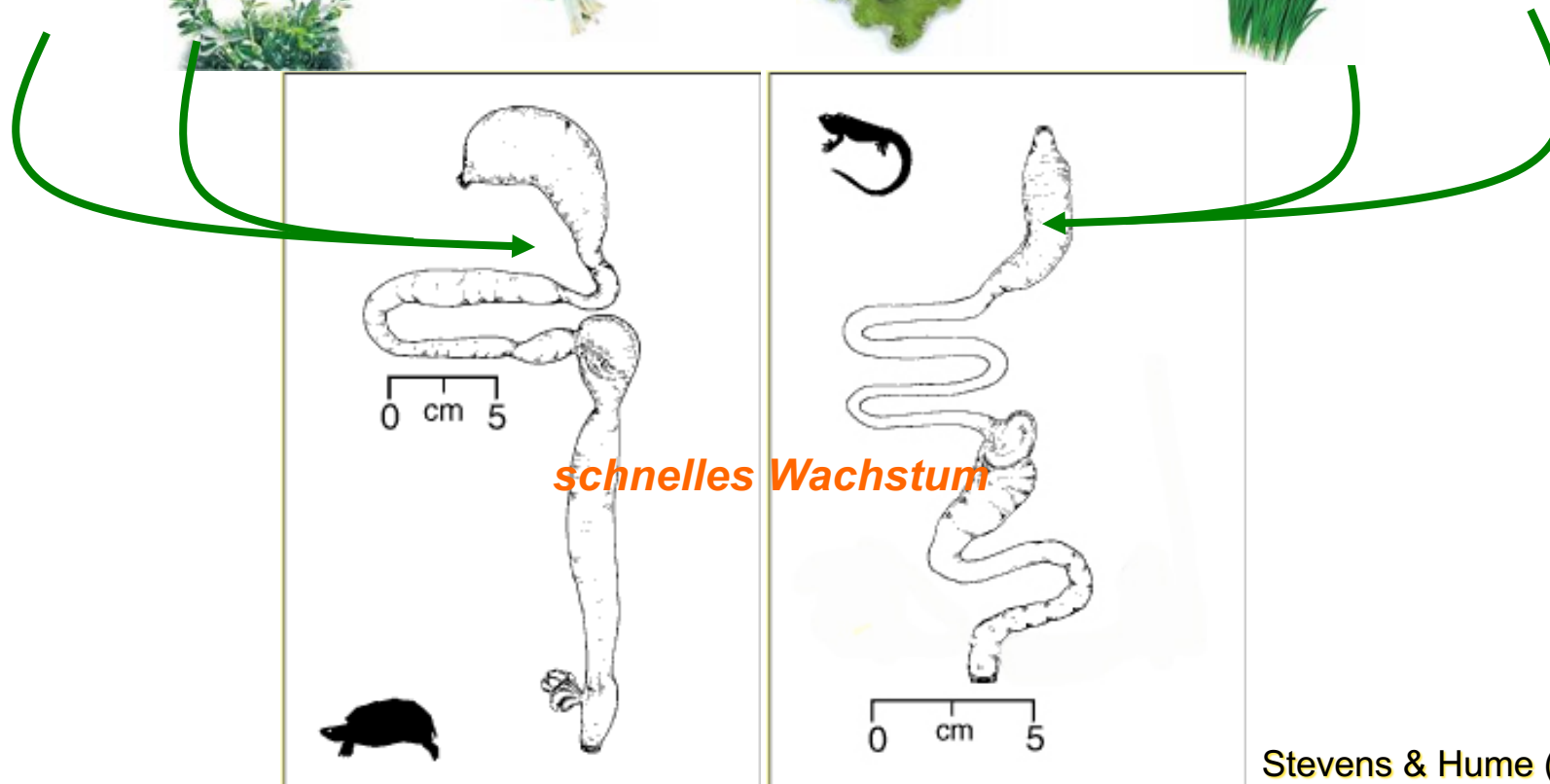


## Fütterung mit energiedichten Futtermitteln oder unbegrenzte Mengen gut verdaulicher, adäquater Futtermittel





## Fütterung mit energiedichten Futtermitteln oder unbegrenzte Mengen gut verdaulicher, adäquater Futtermittel

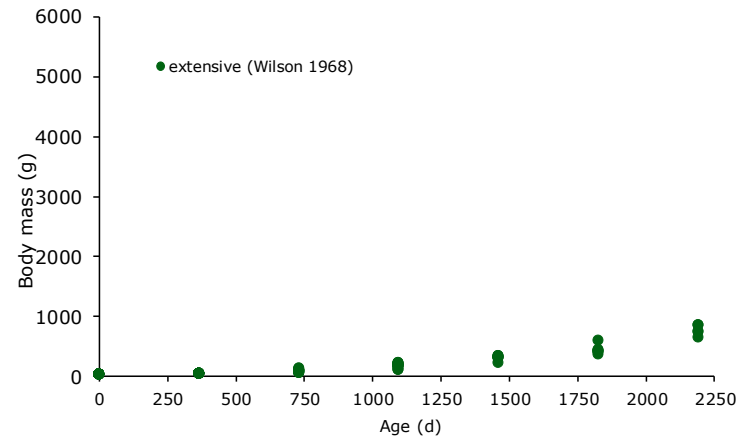




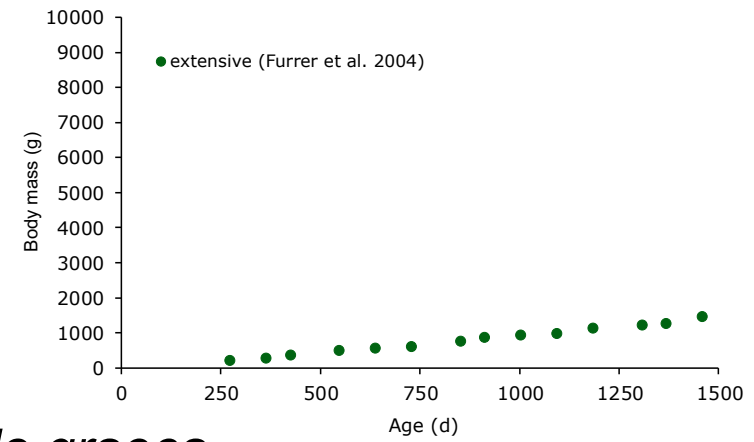


## Wachstum bei Schildkröten

*Geochelone pardalis*

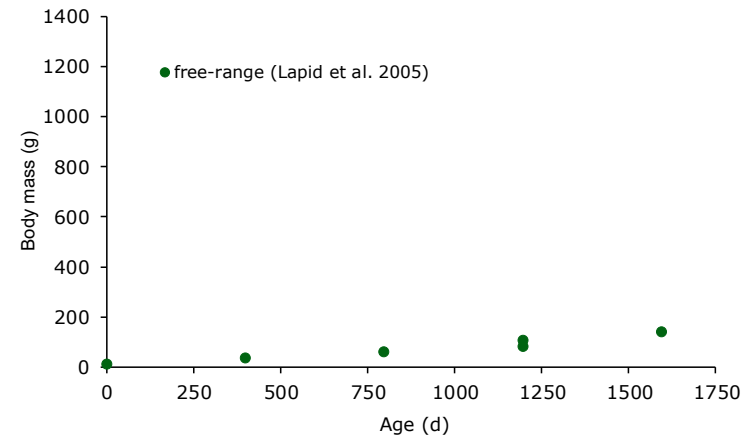


*Geochelone nigra*



*Testudo graeca*

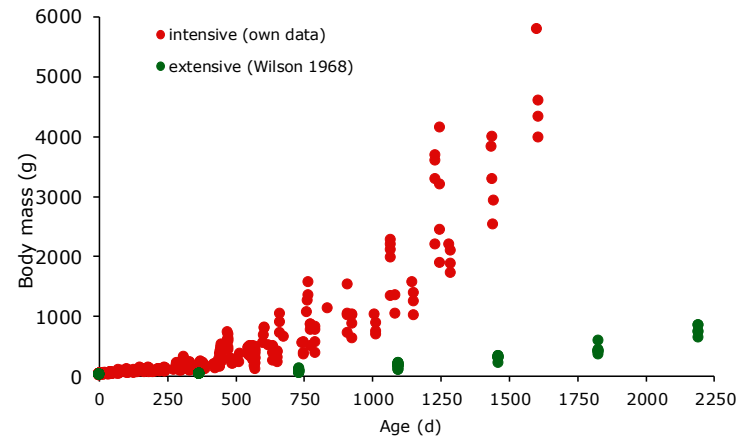
● extensive or free-range



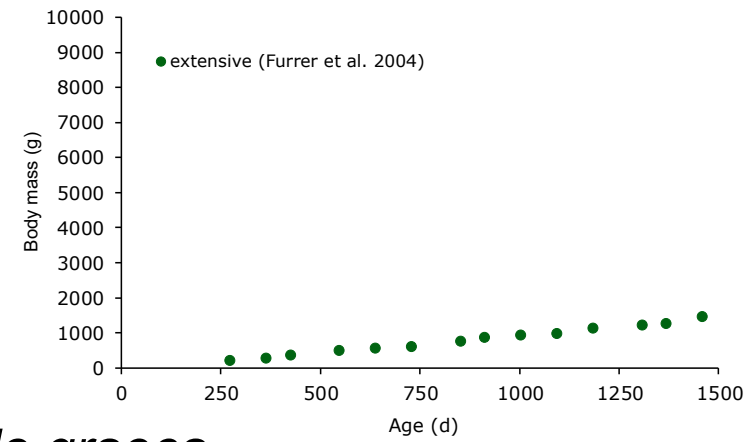


## Wachstum bei Schildkröten

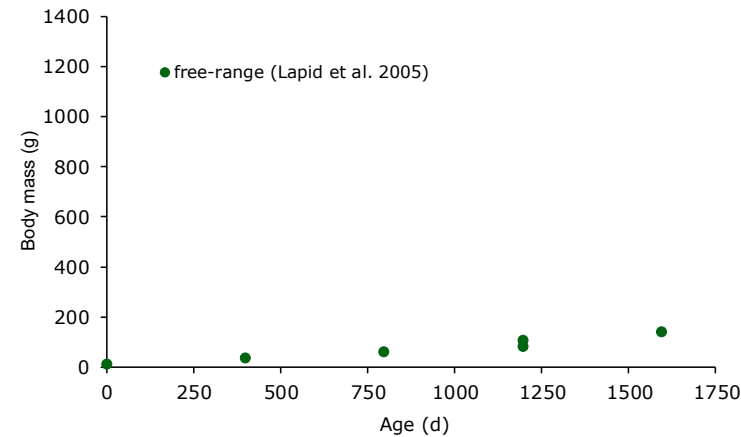
*Geochelone pardalis*



*Geochelone nigra*



*Testudo graeca*

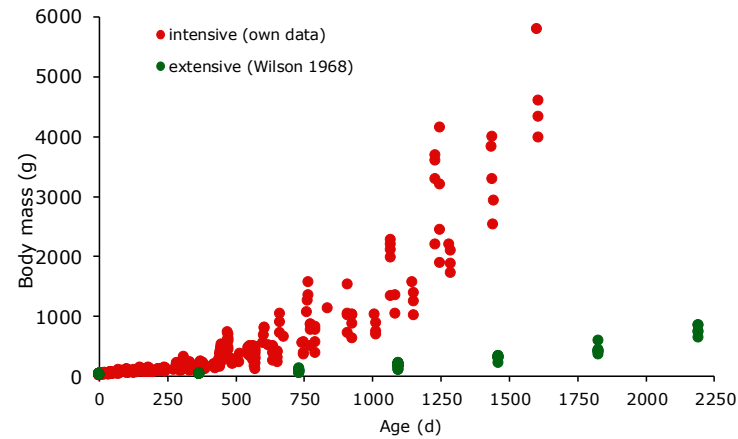


- extensive or free-range
- intensive

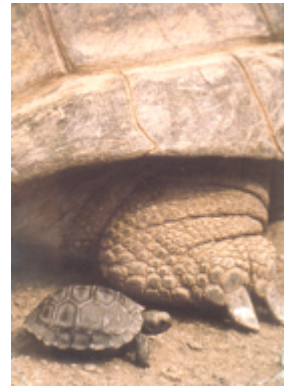
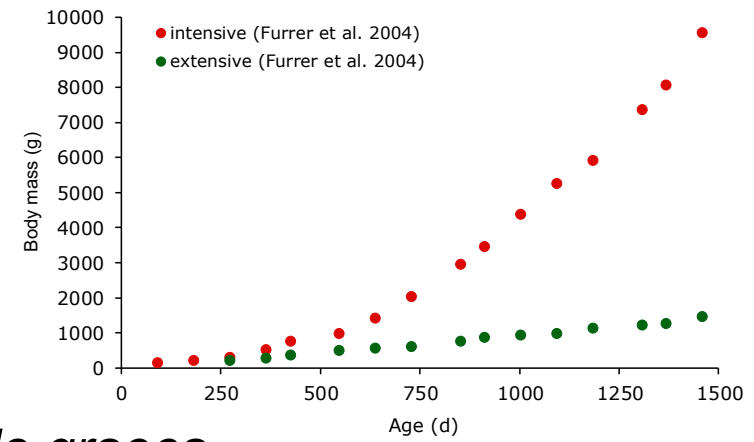


## Wachstum bei Schildkröten

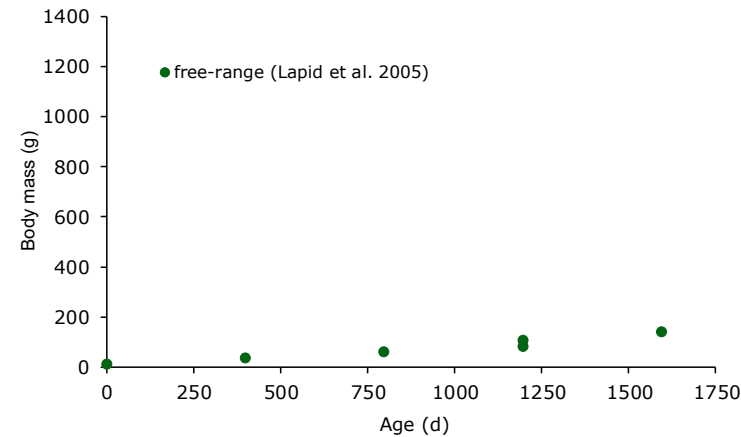
*Geochelone pardalis*



*Geochelone nigra*



*Testudo graeca*



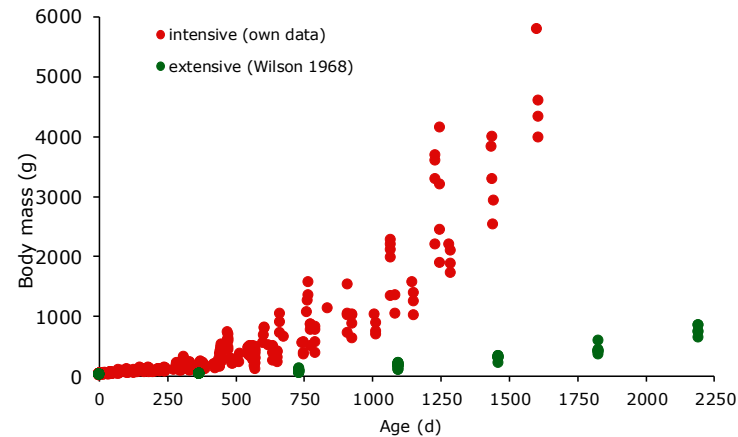
- extensive or free-range
- intensive



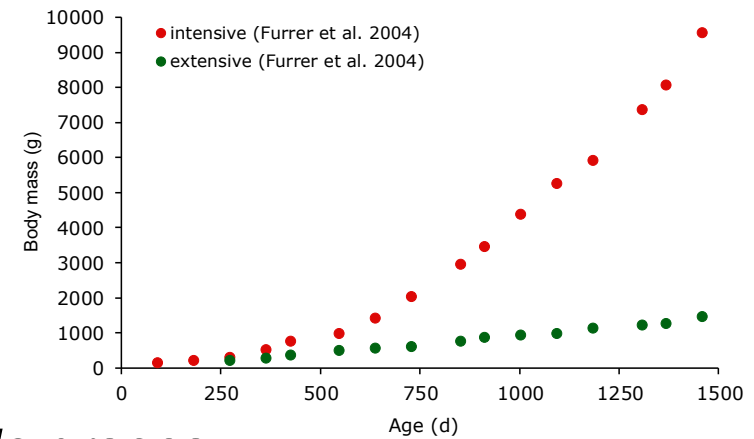


## Wachstum bei Schildkröten

*Geochelone pardalis*

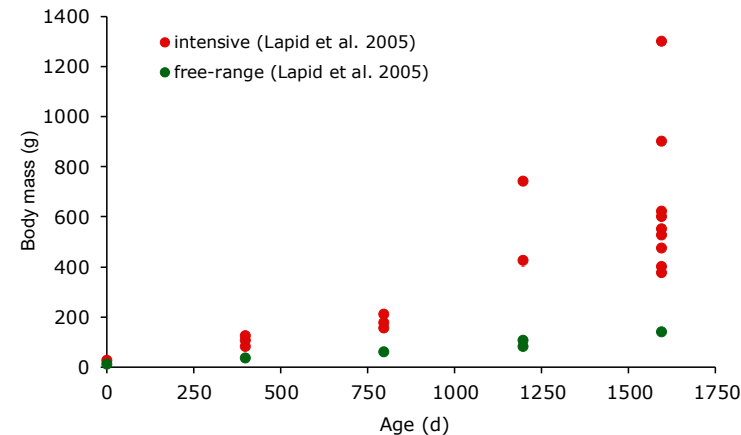


*Geochelone nigra*



*Testudo graeca*

- extensive or free-range
- intensive

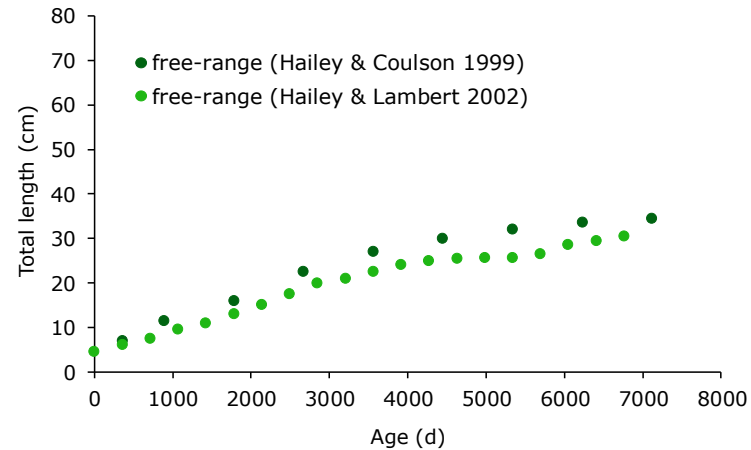




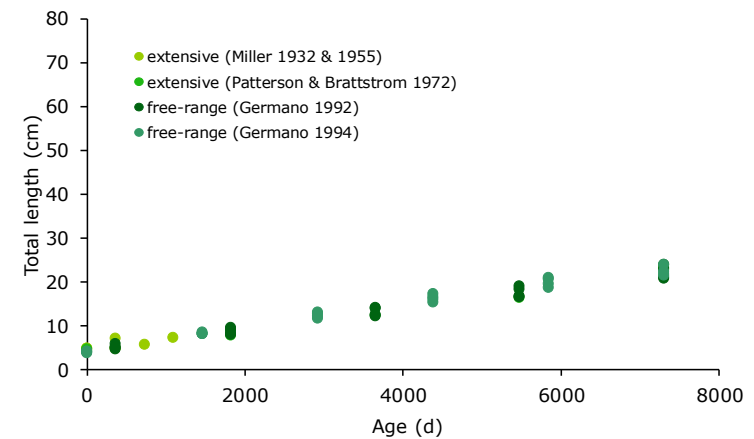
## Wachstum bei Schildkröten



*Geochelone pardalis*

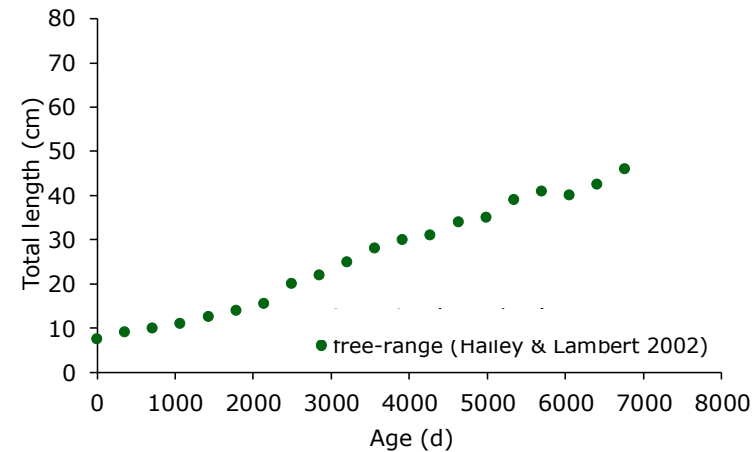


*Gopherus agassizi*



*Geochelone sulcata*

● extensive or free-range

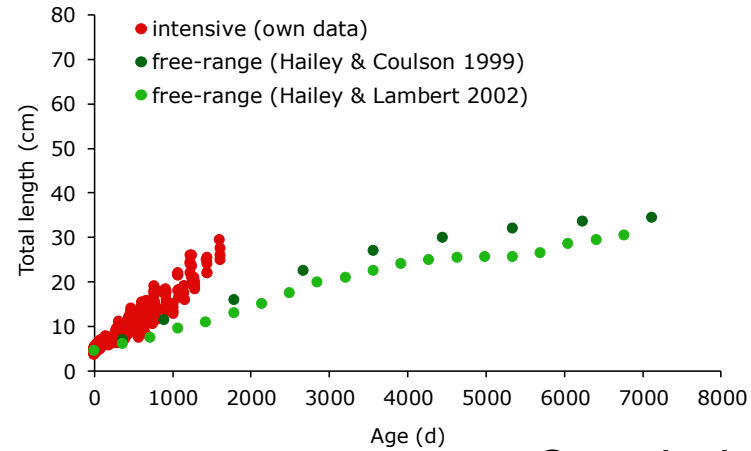




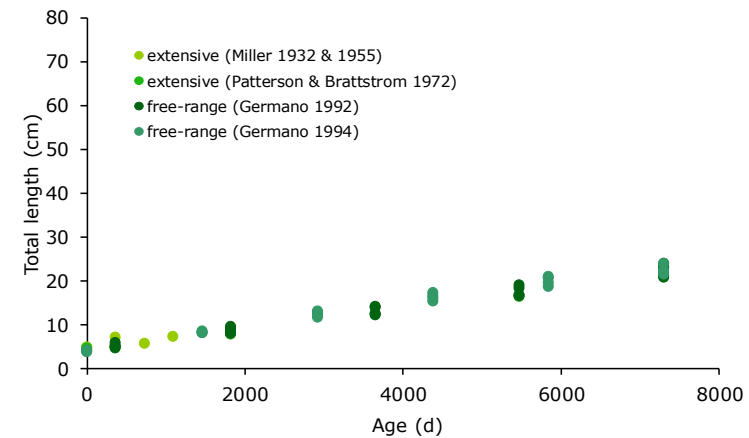
## Wachstum bei Schildkröten



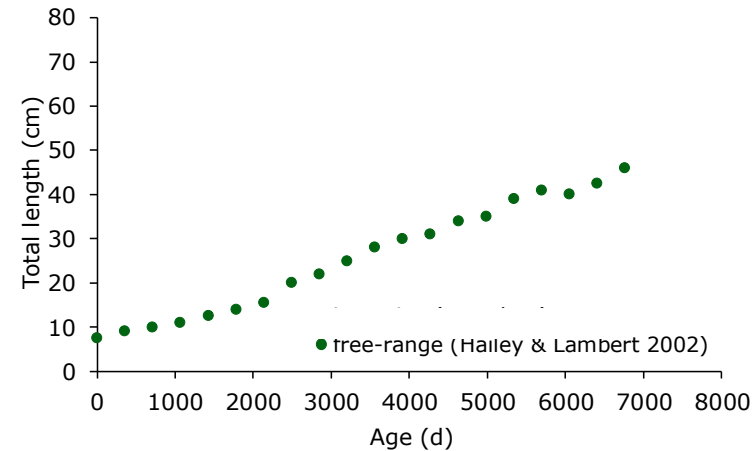
### *Geochelone pardalis*



### *Gopherus agassizi*



### *Geochelone sulcata*



- extensive or free-range
- intensive

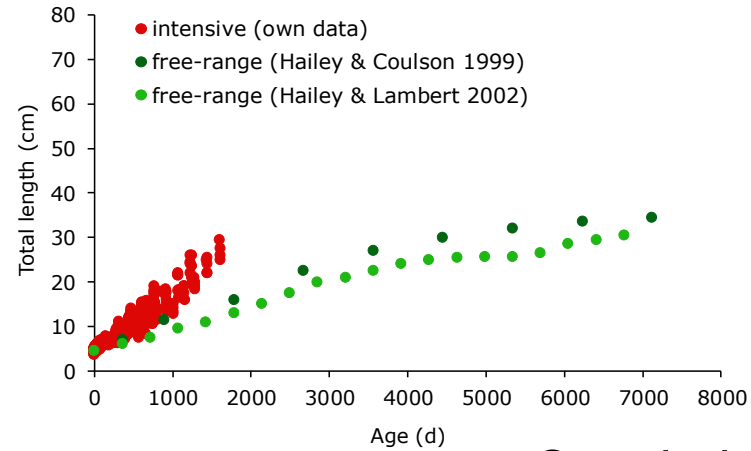




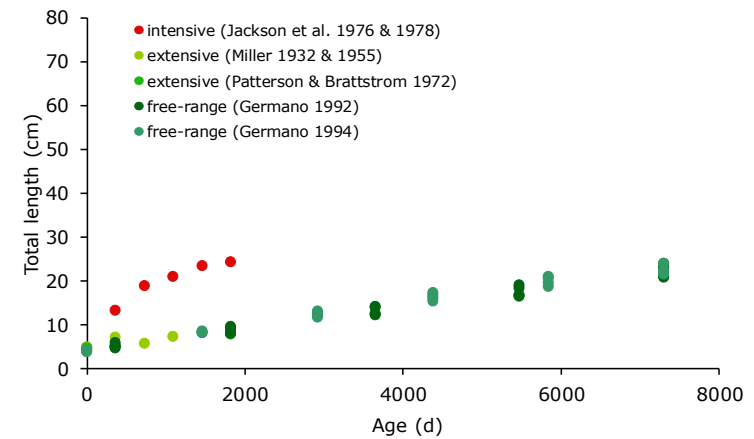
## Wachstum bei Schildkröten



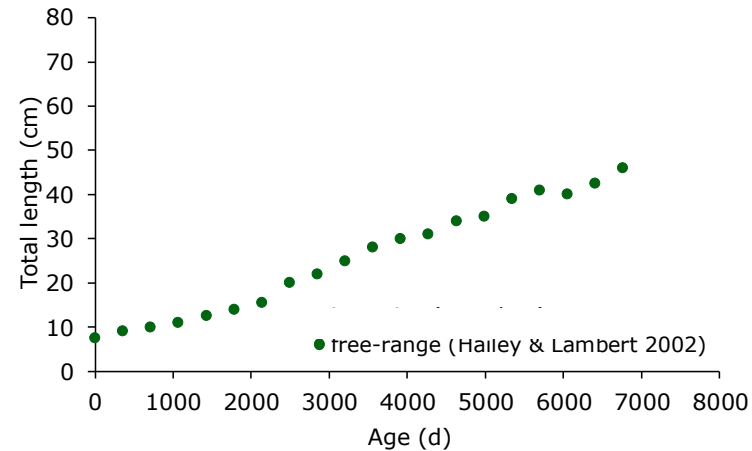
### *Geochelone pardalis*



### *Gopherus agassizi*



### *Geochelone sulcata*

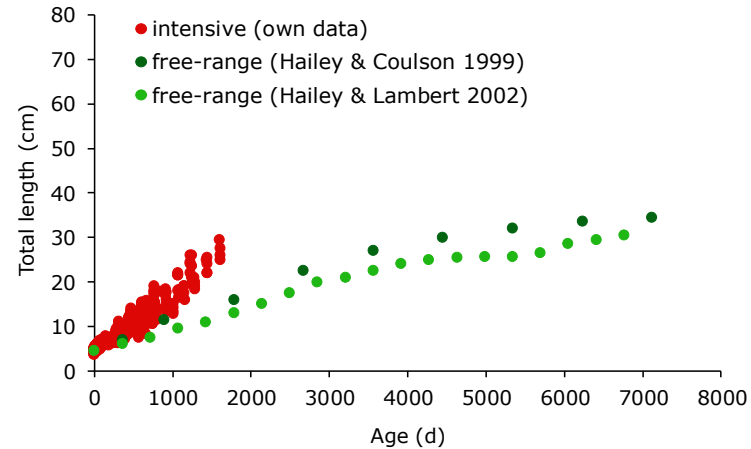




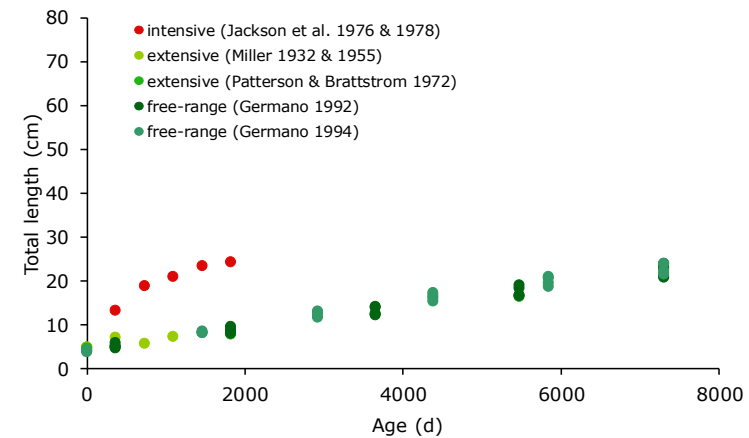
## Wachstum bei Schildkröten



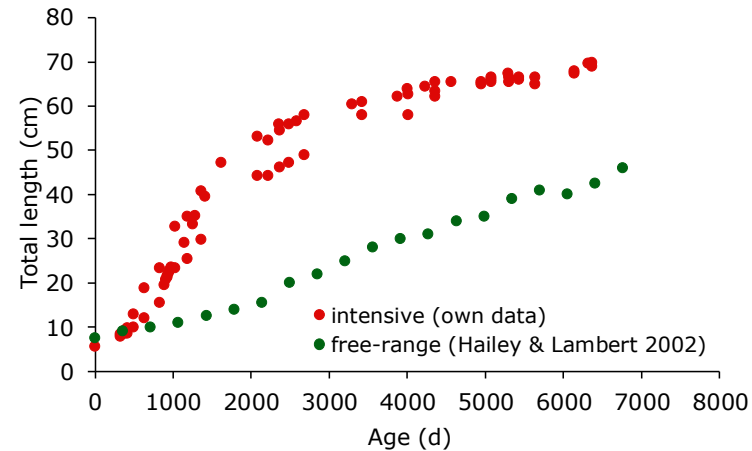
### *Geochelone pardalis*



### *Gopherus agassizi*



### *Geochelone sulcata*



- extensive or free-range
- intensive

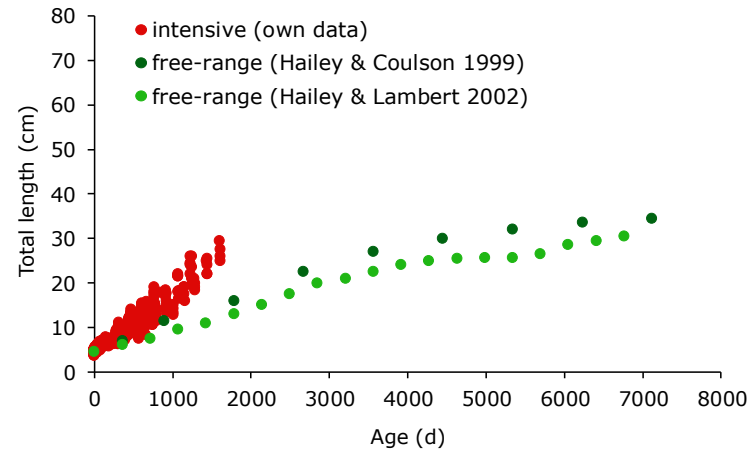




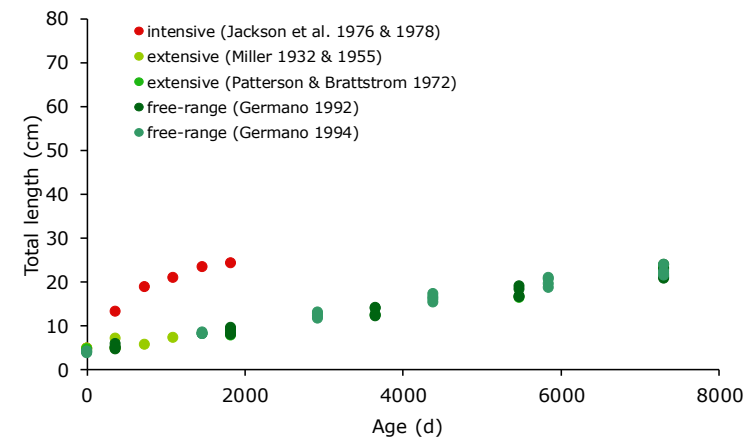
## Wachstum bei Schildkröten



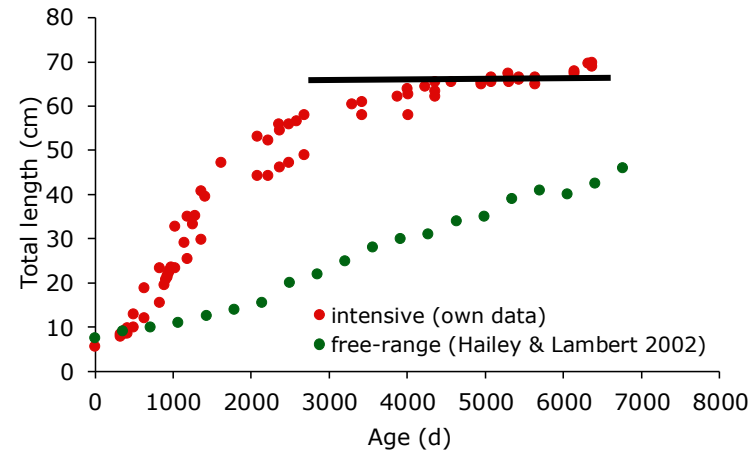
### *Geochelone pardalis*



### *Gopherus agassizi*



### *Geochelone sulcata*



- extensive or free-range
- intensive



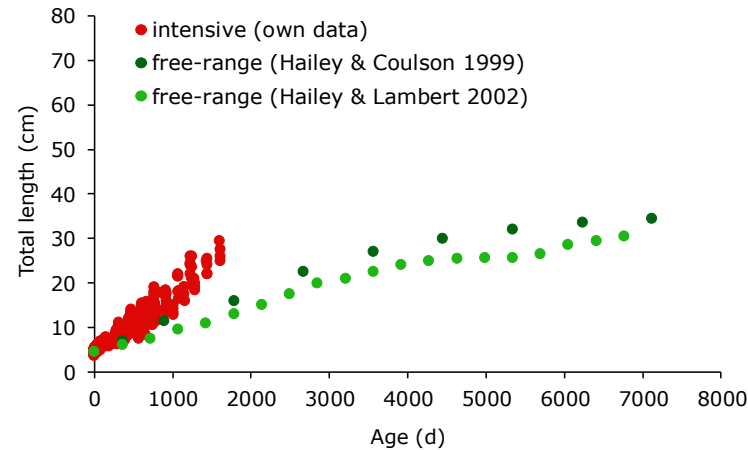




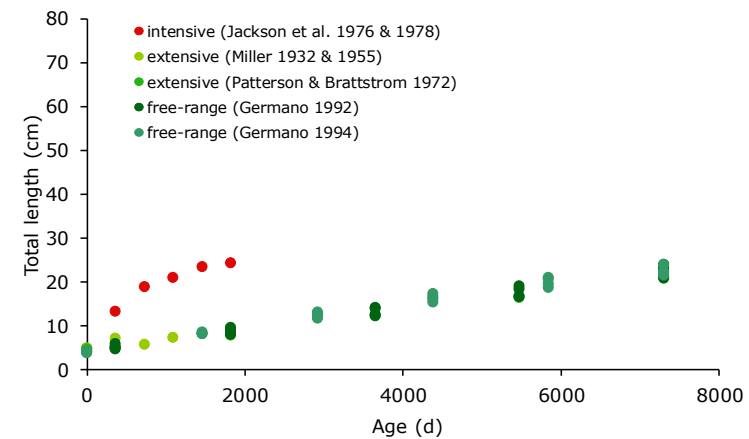
## Wachstum bei Schildkröten



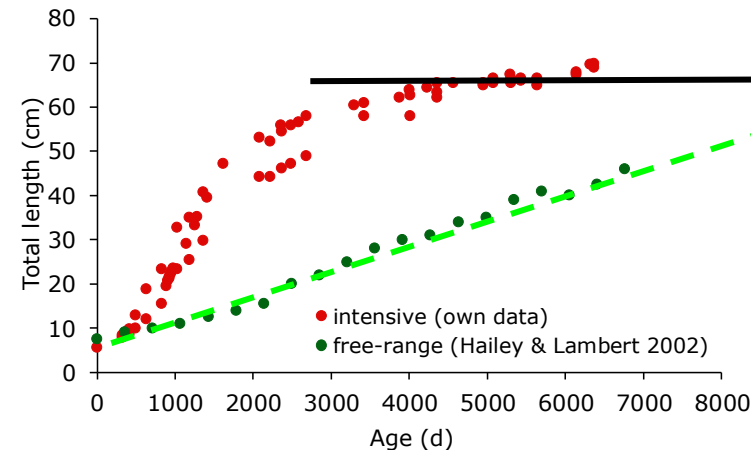
*Geochelone pardalis*



*Gopherus agassizi*



*Geochelone sulcata*



- extensive or free-range
- intensive

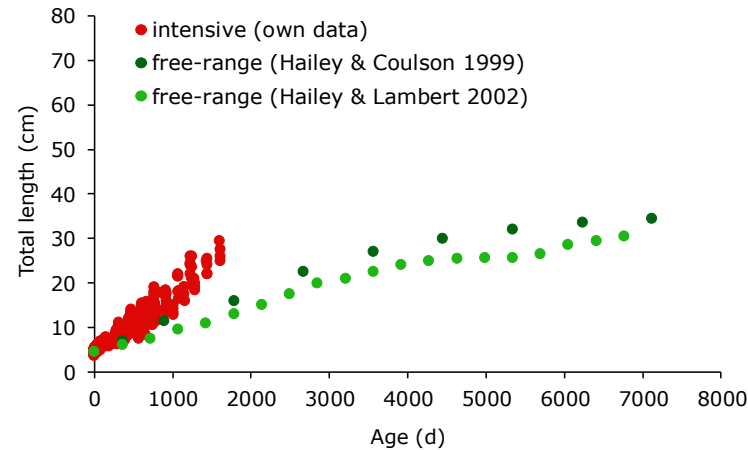




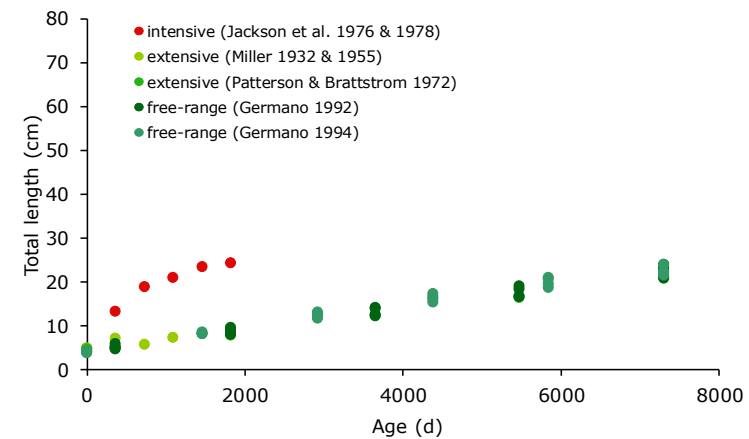
## Wachstum bei Schildkröten



### *Geochelone pardalis*

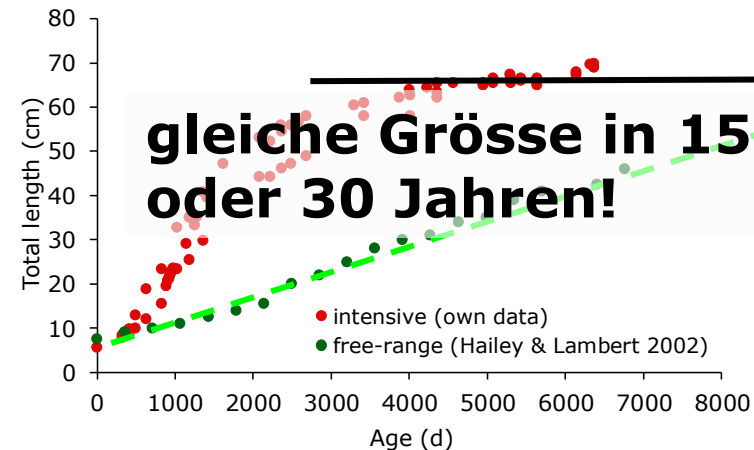


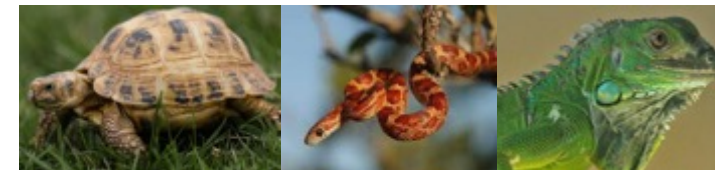
### *Gopherus agassizi*



### *Geochelone sulcata*

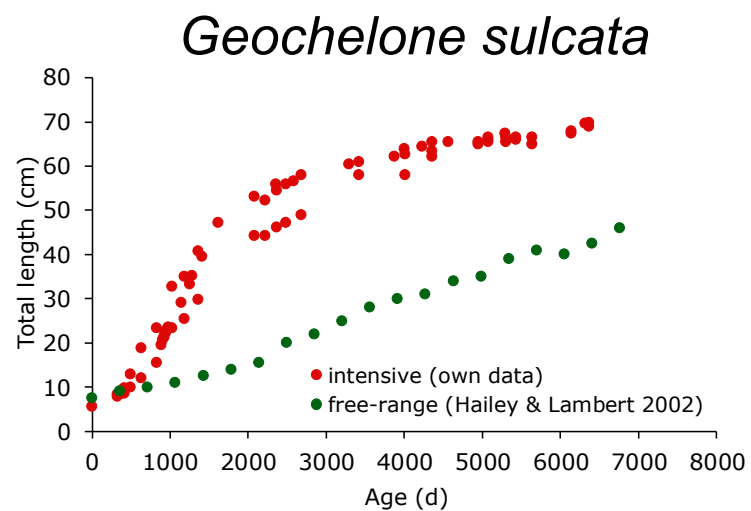
- extensive or free-range
- intensive

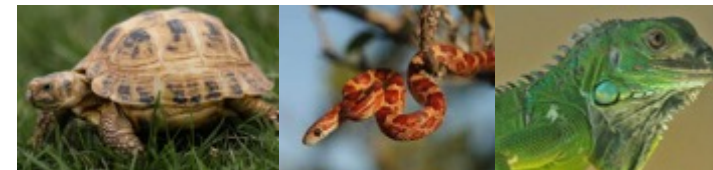




## Ist schnelles Wachstum ein Problem ?

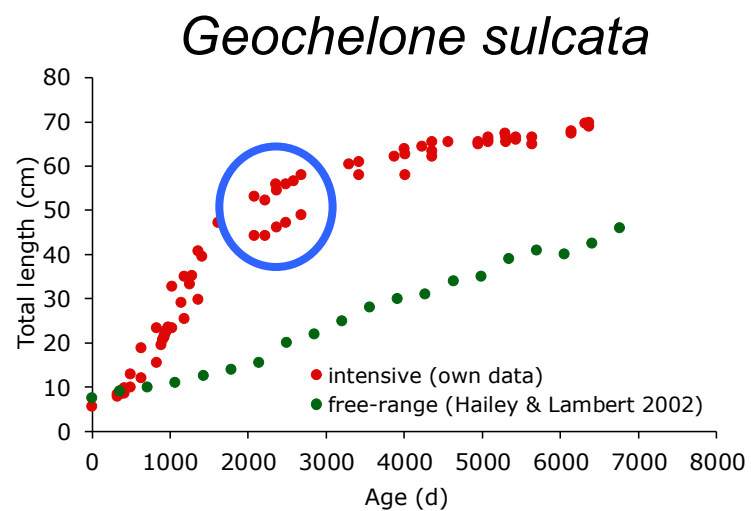
- extensive or free-range
- intensive





## Ist schnelles Wachstum ein Problem ?

- extensive or free-range
- intensive





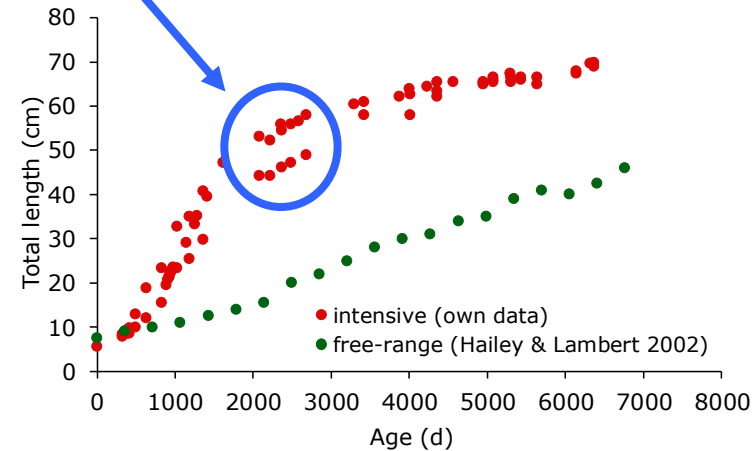


## Ist schnelles Wachstum ein Problem ?



*Geochelone sulcata*

- extensive or free-range
- intensive





**University of  
Zurich** UZH

**Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife**

# Reptilien - Pyramidenwachstum





## Ist schnelles Wachstum ein Problem ? Hat es etwas mit der Panzerform zu tun ?







## Ist schnelles Wachstum ein Problem ? Hat es etwas mit der Panzerform zu tun ?







## Ist schnelles Wachstum ein Problem ? Hat es etwas mit der Panzerform zu tun ?





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

June 1976]
HERPETOLOGICA
139

——, R. W. McDIARMID, AND D. L. WIEGMANN. 1975. Tadpoles, predation and pond habitats in the tropics. *Biotropica* 7:100-111.

RIVERO, J. A., AND A. E. ESTREYER. 1969. Observations on the agonistic and breeding behavior of *Leptodactylus pentadactylus* and other amphibian species in Venezuela. *Breviora* (321):1-14.

VINTON, K. W. 1951. Observations on the life history of *Leptodactylus pentadactylus*. *Herpetologica* 7:73-75.

Received: 6 October 1975  
Accepted: 27 February 1976  
(Full page charges borne by authors)

*Amphibians and Reptiles, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, USA*

---

ACCELERATED GROWTH RATE AND EARLY MATURITY  
IN *GOPHERUS AGASSIZI* (REPTILIA: TESTUDINES)

CRAWFORD G. JACKSON, JR., JOHN A. TROTTER, THOMAS H. TROTTER  
AND MARY W. TROTTER

**ABSTRACT:** A group of sibling desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizi*) were measured at hatching and at intervals afterwards for 3 years. Extraordinary mean increases in carapace length of 176% (156.3%–226%), 43% (39%–48%), and 11% (10%–13%) were observed for the first 3 years of growth, respectively. Mean carapace lengths at the end of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years corresponded approximately with those of *G. agassizi* measured previously by other investigators after 11, 17, and 18 years of growth, posthatching. The weight and length relationship is described by a geometric type curve whose equation is:  $wt \text{ (grams)} = 0.00049 \times \text{carapace length}^{3.06}$ . All tortoises appear to be  $\delta \delta$  at or very near sexual maturity as judged by gular development, tail size, enlarged chin glands, and increasing aggressiveness. The phenomenal growth rate and early maturity is ascribed to (1) not entering dormancy during the first two winters, and (2) being provided with continuous high quality nutrition.

It is generally accepted by herpetologists that many turtle species (especially terrestrial forms) have relatively slow growth rates, often requiring a number of years to reach sexual maturity. Recently, Patterson and Brattstrom (1972) published the most extensive long-term tortoise growth study. Their work furthered the observations begun by Miller (1932, 1955) on a group of captive *Gopherus agassizi* hatchlings, bringing the observed growth period up to 30 years. Other scattered, fragmentary observations on the growth of both captive and wild *G. agassizi* were summarized from the literature by Ernst and Barbour (1972). Additional accounts were compiled by Hardy (1972). The most recent growth study of free-living *G. agassizi* involved 22 individuals (estimated age range, 3.3–10.1 yr) during a 10-yr period in southern Nevada by Medica et al. (1975). Their tortoises exhibited a mean annual plastral growth rate of 9.1 mm ( $\pm 11.9$  mm carapacial growth) which was positively correlated with winter rainfall. Additionally, their individual growth records indicated that almost no growth occurred before mid-April or after the first week in July, thus confining the growth season to only about 11 weeks. The observed carapace growth rate of captives (in the 50–200 mm carapace length range) reported by Patterson and Brattstrom (1972) is comparable to that of the free-living tortoises studied by Medica et al. (1975), although the rate is slightly greater

HERPETOLOGICA 32:139–145. June 1976.





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

June 1976] HERPETOLOGICA 139

—, R. W. McDIARMID, AND D. L. WIEGMANN. 1975. Tadpoles, predation and pond habitats in the tropics. *Biotropica* 7:100-111.

RIVERO, J. A., AND A. E. ESTREYER. 1969. Observations on the agonistic and breeding behavior of *Leptodactylus pentadactylus* and other amphibian species in Venezuela. *Breviora* (321):1-14.

VENTON, K. W. 1951. Observations on the life history of *Leptodactylus pentadactylus*. *Herpetologica* 7:73-75.

Received: 6 October 1975  
Accepted: 27 February 1976  
(Full page charges borne by authors)

Amphibians and Reptiles, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, USA

---

ACCELERATED GROWTH RATE AND EARLY MATURITY IN *GOPHERUS AGASSIZI* (REPTILIA: TESTUDINES)

CRAWFORD G. JACKSON, JR., JOHN A. TROTTER, THOMAS H. TROTTER AND MARY W. TROTTER

ABSTRACT: A group of sibling desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizi*) were measured at hatching and at intervals afterwards for 3 years. Extraordinary mean increases in carapace length of 176% (156.3%–226%), 43% (39%–48%), and 11% (10%–13%) were observed for the first 3 years of growth, respectively. Mean carapace lengths at the end of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years corresponded approximately with those of *G. agassizi* measured previously by other investigators after 11, 17, and 18 years of growth, posthatching. The weight and length relationship is described by a geometric type curve whose equation is:  $wt \text{ (grams)} = 0.00049 \times \text{carapace length}^{3.06}$ . All tortoises appear to be  $\delta \delta$  at or very near sexual maturity as judged by gular development, tail size, enlarged chin glands, and increasing aggressiveness. The phenomenal growth rate and early maturity is ascribed to (1) not entering dormancy during the first two winters, and (2) being provided with continuous high quality nutrition.

It is generally accepted by herpetologists that many turtle species (especially terrestrial forms) have relatively slow growth rates, often requiring a number of years to reach sexual maturity. Recently, Patterson and Brattstrom (1972) published the most extensive long-term tortoise growth study. Their work furthered the observations begun by Miller (1932, 1955) on a group of captive *Gopherus agassizi* hatchlings, bringing the observed growth period up to 30 years. Other scattered, fragmentary observations on the growth of both captive and wild *G. agassizi* were summarized from the literature by Ernst and Barbour (1972). Additional accounts were compiled by Hardy (1972). The most recent growth study of free-living *G. agassizi* involved 22 individuals (estimated age range, 3.3–10.1 yr) during a 10-yr period in southern Nevada by Medica et al. (1975). Their tortoises exhibited a mean annual plastral growth rate of 9.1 mm ( $\approx 11.9$  mm carapacial growth) which was positively correlated with winter rainfall. Additionally, their individual growth records indicated that almost no growth occurred before mid-April or after the first week in July, thus confining the growth season to only about 11 weeks. The observed carapace growth rate of captives (in the 50–200 mm carapace length range) reported by Patterson and Brattstrom (1972) is comparable to that of the free-living tortoises studied by Medica et al. (1975), although the rate is slightly greater

HERPETOLOGICA 32:139–145. June 1976.

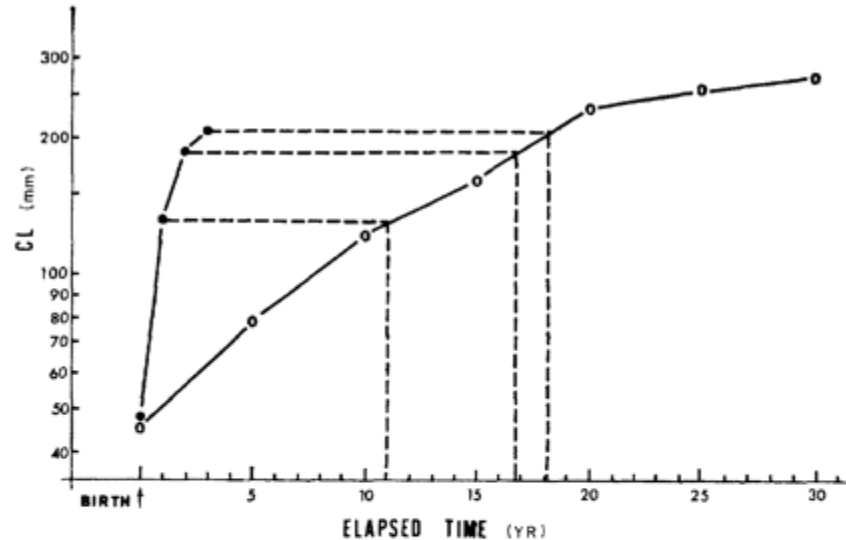


FIG. 1.—Comparison of carapace length (CL) growth curve of *Gopherus agassizi* of present study with that of the Miller captives (data from Patterson and Brattstrom, 1972). Points represent mean values. Dashed lines are estimated age differences at equivalent sizes between the two groups. Closed circles (●) = present study; open circles (○) = Miller captives.



## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

June 1976] HERPETOLOGICA 139

—, R. W. McDIARMID, AND D. L. WIEGMANN. 1975. Tadpoles, predation and pond habitats in the tropics. *Biotropica* 7:100-111.

RIVERO, J. A., AND A. E. ESTREYER. 1969. Observations on the agonistic and breeding behavior of *Leptodactylus pentadactylus* and other amphibian species in Venezuela. *Breviora* (321):1-14.

VINTON, K. W. 1951. Observations on the life history of *Leptodactylus pentadactylus*. *Herpetologica* 7:73-75.

Received: 6 October 1975  
Accepted: 27 February 1976  
(Full page charges borne by authors)

Amphibians and Reptiles, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, USA

### ACCELERATED GROWTH RATE AND EARLY MATURITY IN *GOPHERUS AGASSIZI* (REPTILIA: TESTUDINES)

CRAWFORD G. JACKSON, JR., JOHN A. TROTTER, THOMAS H. TROTTER AND MARY W. TROTTER

**ABSTRACT:** A group of sibling desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizi*) were measured at hatching and at intervals afterwards for 3 years. Extraordinary mean increases in carapace length of 176% (156.3%–226%), 43% (39%–48%), and 11% (10%–13%) were observed for the first 3 years of growth, respectively. Mean carapace lengths at the end of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years corresponded approximately with those of *G. agassizi* measured previously by other investigators after 11, 17, and 18 years of growth, posthatching. The weight and length relationship is described by a geometric type curve whose equation is:  $wt \text{ (grams)} = 0.00049 \times \text{carapace length}^{3.06}$ . All tortoises appear to be  $\delta \delta$  at or very near sexual maturity as judged by gular development, tail size, enlarged chin glands, and increasing aggressiveness. The phenomenal growth rate and early maturity is ascribed to (1) not entering dormancy during the first two winters, and (2) being provided with continuous high quality nutrition.

It is generally accepted by herpetologists that many turtle species (especially terrestrial forms) have relatively slow growth rates, often requiring a number of years to reach sexual maturity. Recently, Patterson and Brattstrom (1972) published the most extensive long-term tortoise growth study. Their work furthered the observations begun by Miller (1932, 1955) on a group of captive *Gopherus agassizi* hatchlings, bringing the observed growth period up to 30 years. Other scattered, fragmentary observations on the growth of both captive and wild *G. agassizi* were summarized from the literature by Ernst and Barbour (1972). Additional accounts were compiled by Hardy (1972). The most recent growth study of free-living *G. agassizi* involved 22 individuals (estimated age range, 3.3–10.1 yr) during a 10-yr period in southern Nevada by Medica et al. (1975). Their tortoises exhibited a mean annual plastral growth rate of 9.1 mm ( $\pm 11.9$  mm carapacial growth) which was positively correlated with winter rainfall. Additionally, their individual growth records indicated that almost no growth occurred before mid-April or after the first week in July, thus confining the growth season to only about 11 weeks. The observed carapace growth rate of captives (in the 50–200 mm carapace length range) reported by Patterson and Brattstrom (1972) is comparable to that of the free-living tortoises studied by Medica et al. (1975), although the rate is slightly greater

HERPETOLOGICA 32:139–145. June 1976.

Anzeichen sexueller Reife  
(Anatomie und Verhalten)

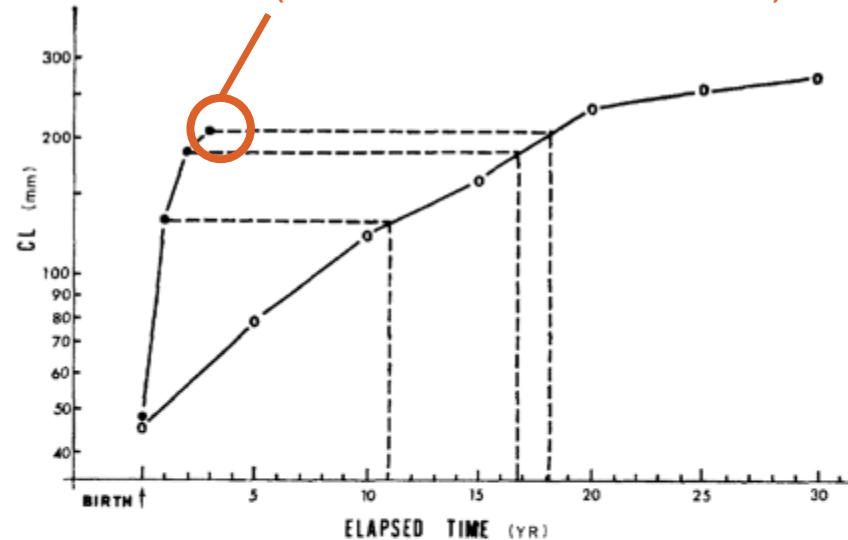


FIG. 1.—Comparison of carapace length (CL) growth curve of *Gopherus agassizi* of present study with that of the Miller captives (data from Patterson and Brattstrom, 1972). Points represent mean values. Dashed lines are estimated age differences at equivalent sizes between the two groups. Closed circles (●) = present study; open circles (○) = Miller captives.



## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

June 1976] HERPETOLOGICA 139

—, R. W. McDARMID, AND D. L. WIEGMANN. 1975. Tadpoles, predation and pond habitats in the tropics. *Biotropica* 7:100-111.

RIVERO, J. A., AND A. E. ESTREYER. 1969. Observations on the agonistic and breeding behavior of *Leptodactylus pentadactylus* and other amphibian species in Venezuela. *Breviora* (321):1-14.

VINTON, K. W. 1951. Observations on the life history of *Leptodactylus pentadactylus*. *Herpetologica* 7:73-75.

Received: 6 October 1975  
Accepted: 27 February 1976  
(Full page charges borne by authors)

Amphibians and Reptiles, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, USA

### ACCELERATED GROWTH RATE AND EARLY MATURITY IN *GOPHERUS AGASSIZI* (REPTILIA: TESTUDINES)

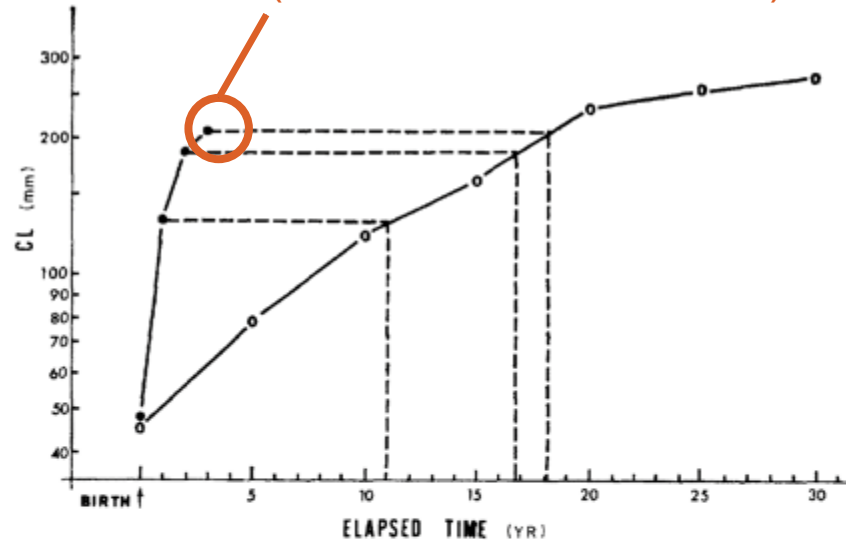
CRAWFORD G. JACKSON, JR., JOHN A. TROTTER, THOMAS H. TROTTER AND MARY W. TROTTER

**ABSTRACT:** A group of sibling desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizi*) were measured at hatching and at intervals afterwards for 3 years. Extraordinary mean increases in carapace length of 176% (156.3%–226%), 43% (39%–48%), and 11% (10%–13%) were observed for the first 3 years of growth, respectively. Mean carapace lengths at the end of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years corresponded approximately with those of *G. agassizi* measured previously by other investigators after 11, 17, and 18 years of growth, posthatching. The weight and length relationship is described by a geometric type curve whose equation is:  $wt \text{ (grams)} = 0.00049 \times \text{carapace length}^{3.06}$ . All tortoises appear to be  $\delta \delta$  at or very near sexual maturity as judged by gular development, tail size, enlarged chin glands, and increasing aggressiveness. The phenomenal growth rate and early maturity is ascribed to (1) not entering dormancy during the first two winters, and (2) being provided with continuous high quality nutrition.

It is generally accepted by herpetologists that many turtle species (especially terrestrial forms) have relatively slow growth rates, often requiring a number of years to reach sexual maturity. Recently, Patterson and Brattstrom (1972) published the most extensive long-term tortoise growth study. Their work furthered the observations begun by Miller (1932, 1955) on a group of captive *Gopherus agassizi* hatchlings, bringing the observed growth period up to 30 years. Other scattered, fragmentary observations on the growth of both captive and wild *G. agassizi* were summarized from the literature by Ernst and Barbour (1972). Additional accounts were compiled by Hardy (1972). The most recent growth study of free-living *G. agassizi* involved 22 individuals (estimated age range, 3.3–10.1 yr) during a 10-yr period in southern Nevada by Medica et al. (1975). Their tortoises exhibited a mean annual plastral growth rate of 9.1 mm ( $\approx 11.9$  mm carapacial growth) which was positively correlated with winter rainfall. Additionally, their individual growth records indicated that almost no growth occurred before mid-April or after the first week in July, thus confining the growth season to only about 11 weeks. The observed carapace growth rate of captives (in the 50–200 mm carapace length range) reported by Patterson and Brattstrom (1972) is comparable to that of the free-living tortoises studied by Medica et al. (1975), although the rate is slightly greater

HERPETOLOGICA 32:139–145. June 1976.

Anzeichen sexueller Reife  
(Anatomie und Verhalten)



Innenhaltung, Zentralheizung,  
trocken, hauptsächlich  
Gemüse/Salat

FIG. 1.—Comparison of carapace length (CL) growth curve of *Gopherus agassizi* of present study with that of the Miller captives (data from Patterson and Brattstrom, 1972). Points represent mean values. Dashed lines are estimated age differences at equivalent sizes between the two groups. Closed circles (●) = present study; open circles (○) = Miller captives.





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

June 1976] HERPETOLOGICA 139

—, R. W. McDIARMID, AND D. L. WIEGMANN. 1975. Tadpoles, predation and pond habitats in the tropics. *Biotropica* 7:100-111.

RIVERO, J. A., AND A. E. ESTREYER. 1969. Observations on the agonistic and breeding behavior of *Leptodactylus pentadactylus* and other amphibian species in Venezuela. *Breviora* (321):1-14.

VINTON, K. W. 1951. Observations on the life history of *Leptodactylus pentadactylus*. *Herpetologica* 7:73-75.

Received: 6 October 1975  
Accepted: 27 February 1976  
(Full page charges borne by authors)

Amphibians and Reptiles, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, USA

### ACCELERATED GROWTH RATE AND EARLY MATURITY IN *GOPHERUS AGASSIZI* (REPTILIA: TESTUDINES)

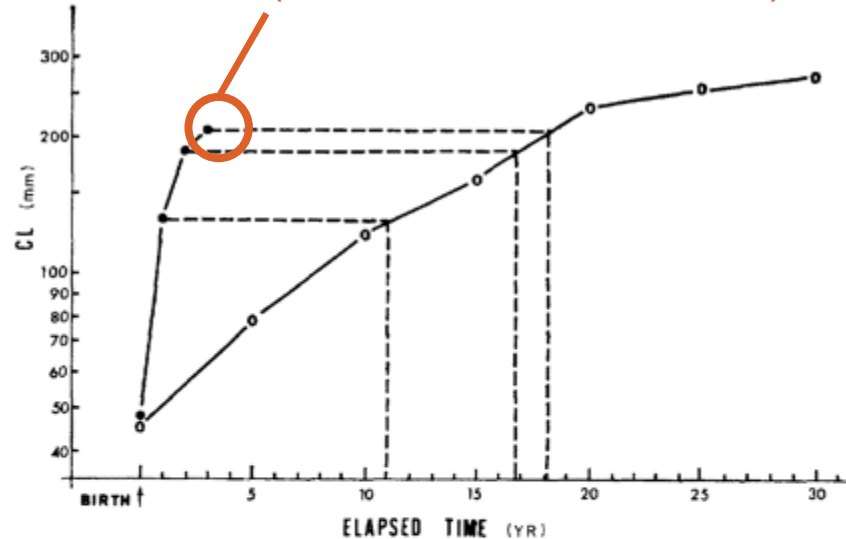
CRAWFORD G. JACKSON, JR., JOHN A. TROTTER, THOMAS H. TROTTER AND MARY W. TROTTER

**ABSTRACT:** A group of sibling desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizi*) were measured at hatching and at intervals afterwards for 3 years. Extraordinary mean increases in carapace length of 176% (156.3%–226%), 43% (39%–48%), and 11% (10%–13%) were observed for the first 3 years of growth, respectively. Mean carapace lengths at the end of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years corresponded approximately with those of *G. agassizi* measured previously by other investigators after 11, 17, and 18 years of growth, posthatching. The weight and length relationship is described by a geometric type curve whose equation is:  $wt \text{ (grams)} = 0.00049 \times \text{carapace length}^{3.06}$ . All tortoises appear to be  $\delta \delta$  at or very near sexual maturity as judged by gular development, tail size, enlarged chin glands, and increasing aggressiveness. The phenomenal growth rate and early maturity is ascribed to (1) not entering dormancy during the first two winters, and (2) being provided with continuous high quality nutrition.

It is generally accepted by herpetologists that many turtle species (especially terrestrial forms) have relatively slow growth rates, often requiring a number of years to reach sexual maturity. Recently, Patterson and Brattstrom (1972) published the most extensive long-term tortoise growth study. Their work furthered the observations begun by Miller (1932, 1955) on a group of captive *Gopherus agassizi* hatchlings, bringing the observed growth period up to 30 years. Other scattered, fragmentary observations on the growth of both captive and wild *G. agassizi* were summarized from the literature by Ernst and Barbour (1972). Additional accounts were compiled by Hardy (1972). The most recent growth study of free-living *G. agassizi* involved 22 individuals (estimated age range, 3.3–10.1 yr) during a 10-yr period in southern Nevada by Medica et al. (1975). Their tortoises exhibited a mean annual plastral growth rate of 9.1 mm ( $\pm 11.9$  mm carapacial growth) which was positively correlated with winter rainfall. Additionally, their individual growth records indicated that almost no growth occurred before mid-April or after the first week in July, thus confining the growth season to only about 11 weeks. The observed carapace growth rate of captives (in the 50–200 mm carapace length range) reported by Patterson and Brattstrom (1972) is comparable to that of the free-living tortoises studied by Medica et al. (1975), although the rate is slightly greater

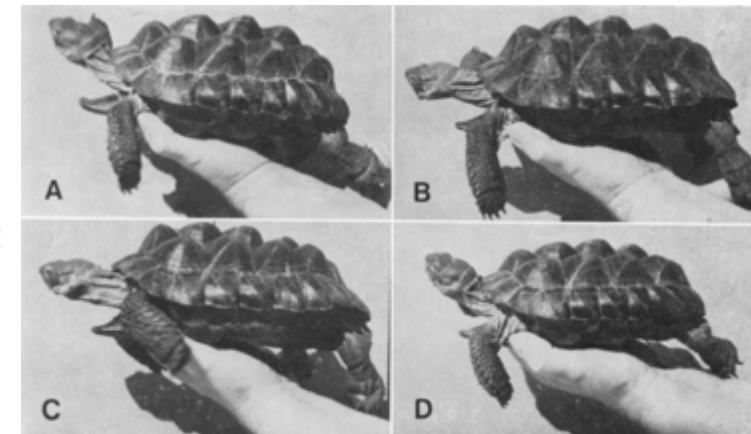
HERPETOLOGICA 32:139–145. June 1976.

Anzeichen sexueller Reife  
(Anatomie und Verhalten)



Innenhaltung, Zentralheizung,  
trocken, hauptsächlich  
Gemüse/Salat

FIG. 1.—Comparison of carapace length (CL) growth curve of *Gopherus agassizi* of present study with that of the Miller captives (data from Patterson and Brattstrom, 1972). Points represent mean values. Dashed lines are estimated age differences at equivalent sizes between the two groups. Closed circles (●) = present study; open circles (○) = Miller captives.





# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

## RESEARCH

### EFFECT OF SUPPLEMENTAL HEAT IN CAPTIVE AFRICAN LEOPARD TORTOISES (*STIGMOCHELYS PARDALIS*) AND SPURRED TORTOISES (*CENTROCHELYS SULCATA*) ON GROWTH RATE AND CARAPACIAL SCUTE PYRAMIDING

Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, and Kaleb K. Heinrich, MS, DA

#### Abstract

Carapacial scute pyramiding (CSP) is common in captive-raised turtles and tortoises. Several dietary and environmental hypotheses have been proposed to explain this phenomenon, but few have been scientifically investigated. The effect of increased heat exposure on CSP and growth was examined in juvenile African leopard (*Stigmochelys pardalis*) and spurred (*Centrochelys sulcata*) tortoises. Monthly measurements of individual tortoise surface temperature, length, height, width, weight, and pyramid height of treatment (heat) and control (no heat) groups for 2 years were higher in the treatment groups. Allometric comparison further revealed increased pyramiding in the treatment group. Humidity and diet did not differ between treatment and control groups. The results of this research investigation indicate that growth rate and CSP appear to be directly related and both increase with excess nocturnal heat. The significance of the atypical carapace growth and subsequent consequences for naturally occurring tortoise populations, especially in the context of global climate change, is unknown but requires further investigation. Copyright 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**Key words:** Carapacial scute pyramiding; chelonian; deformity; pyramidal growth syndrome; shell; temperature

The order Chelonia is unique in the animal kingdom based on possession of an external shell composed of the dorsal carapace, the intermediate bridge, and the ventral plastron. Furthermore, chelonians are the only vertebrates whose limbs exist deep to their ribs. Shell growth is manifested via dynamics lacking in other vertebrates. Developmentally, the ribs become associated with carapacial dermis that eventually becomes the bony part of the shell. The vertebral neural arches are also incorporated in the shell at the carapacial midline.<sup>1</sup> Epidermal scutes are formed long before ossification of the dermal layer of the shell.<sup>1</sup> Although ossification of the ribs begins embryologically, dermal plates of the carapace do not ossify until after hatch. Complete ossification of the carapace may take several years in captive-raised tortoises (Heinrich ML, unpublished data). Despite lack of a congruency between epidermal scutes and dermal bony plates, the dermal layer is thought to play a major role in epidermal scute formation.<sup>1</sup>

Based on decades of knowledge accrued by laypersons and curators of zoological and educational institutions, many species of turtles and tortoises have been successfully maintained

and reproduced in captivity. Subsequently, many species are readily available to the general public for captive care. With this influx of turtles and tortoises hatched and raised in captivity, an

From the Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM USA; and the Department of Biology, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, TX USA.  
Address correspondence to: Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM 88220. E-mail: carlsbadclinic@gmail.com.  
© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.  
1557-5063/15/2101-\$30.00  
http://dx.doi.org/10.1053/j.jepm.2015.12.005



# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

## RESEARCH

### EFFECT OF SUPPLEMENTAL HEAT IN CAPTIVE AFRICAN LEOPARD TORTOISES (*STIGMOCHELYS PARDALIS*) AND SPURRED TORTOISES (*CENTROCHELYS SULCATA*) ON GROWTH RATE AND CARAPACIAL SCUTE PYRAMIDING

Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, and Kaleb K. Heinrich, MS, DA

#### Abstract

Carapacial scute pyramiding (CSP) is common in captive-raised turtles and tortoises. Several dietary and environmental hypotheses have been proposed to explain this phenomenon, but few have been scientifically investigated. The effect of increased heat exposure on CSP and growth was examined in juvenile African leopard (*Stigmochelys pardalis*) and spurred (*Centrochelys sulcata*) tortoises. Monthly measurements of individual tortoise surface temperature, length, height, width, weight, and pyramidal height of treatment (heat) and control (no heat) groups for 2 years were higher in the treatment groups. Allometric comparison further revealed increased pyramiding in the treatment group. Humidity and diet did not differ between treatment and control groups. The results of this research investigation indicate that growth rate and CSP appear to be directly related and both increase with excess nocturnal heat. The significance of the atypical carapace growth and subsequent consequences for naturally occurring tortoise populations, especially in the context of global climate change, is unknown but requires further investigation. Copyright 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**Key words:** Carapacial scute pyramiding; chelonian; deformity; pyramidal growth syndrome; shell; temperature

The order Chelonia is unique in the animal kingdom based on possession of an external shell composed of the dorsal carapace, the intermediate bridge, and the ventral plastron. Furthermore, chelonians are the only vertebrates whose limbs exist deep to their ribs. Shell growth is manifested via dynamics lacking in other vertebrates. Developmentally, the ribs become associated with carapacial dermis that eventually becomes the bony part of the shell. The vertebral neural arches are also incorporated in the shell at the carapacial midline.<sup>1</sup> Epidermal scutes are formed long before ossification of the dermal layer of the shell.<sup>1</sup> Although ossification of the ribs begins embryologically, dermal plates of the carapace do not ossify until after hatch. Complete ossification of the carapace may take several years in captive-raised tortoises (Heinrich ML, unpublished data). Despite lack of a congruency between epidermal scutes and dermal bony plates, the dermal layer is thought to play a major role in epidermal scute formation.<sup>1</sup>

Based on decades of knowledge accrued by laypersons and curators of zoological and educational institutions, many species of turtles and tortoises have been successfully maintained

and reproduced in captivity. Subsequently, many species are readily available to the general public for captive care. With this influx of turtles and tortoises hatched and raised in captivity, an

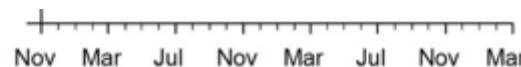
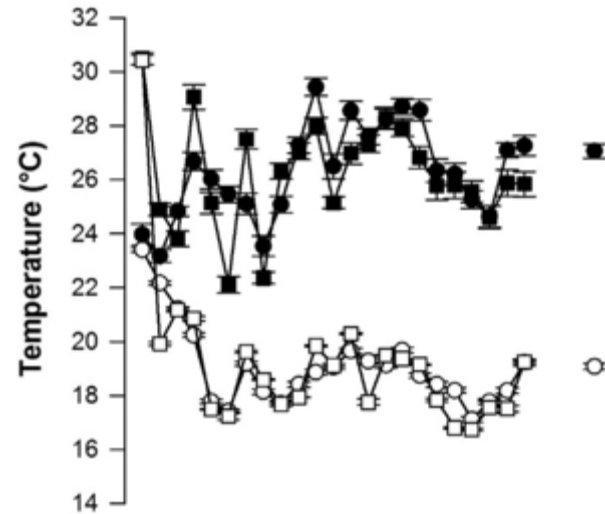
From the Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM USA; and the Department of Biology, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, TX USA.

Address correspondence to: Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM 88220. E-mail: carlsbadac@gmail.com.

© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1557-5063/15/2101-\$30.00

<http://jks.doi.org/10.1053/j.jepm.2015.12.005>







# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

## RESEARCH

### EFFECT OF SUPPLEMENTAL HEAT IN CAPTIVE AFRICAN LEOPARD TORTOISES (*STIGMOCHELYS PARDALIS*) AND SPURRED TORTOISES (*CENTROCHELYS SULCATA*) ON GROWTH RATE AND CARAPACIAL SCUTE PYRAMIDING

Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, and Kaleb K. Heinrich, MS, DA

#### Abstract

Carapacial scute pyramiding (CSP) is common in captive-raised turtles and tortoises. Several dietary and environmental hypotheses have been proposed to explain this phenomenon, but few have been scientifically investigated. The effect of increased heat exposure on CSP and growth was examined in juvenile African leopard (*Stigmochelys pardalis*) and spurred (*Centrochelys sulcata*) tortoises. Monthly measurements of individual tortoise surface temperature, length, height, width, weight, and pyramid height of treatment (heat) and control (no heat) groups for 2 years were higher in the treatment groups. Allometric comparison further revealed increased pyramiding in the treatment group. Humidity and diet did not differ between treatment and control groups. The results of this research investigation indicate that growth rate and CSP appear to be directly related and both increase with excess nocturnal heat. The significance of the atypical carapace growth and subsequent consequences for naturally occurring tortoise populations, especially in the context of global climate change, is unknown but requires further investigation. Copyright 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

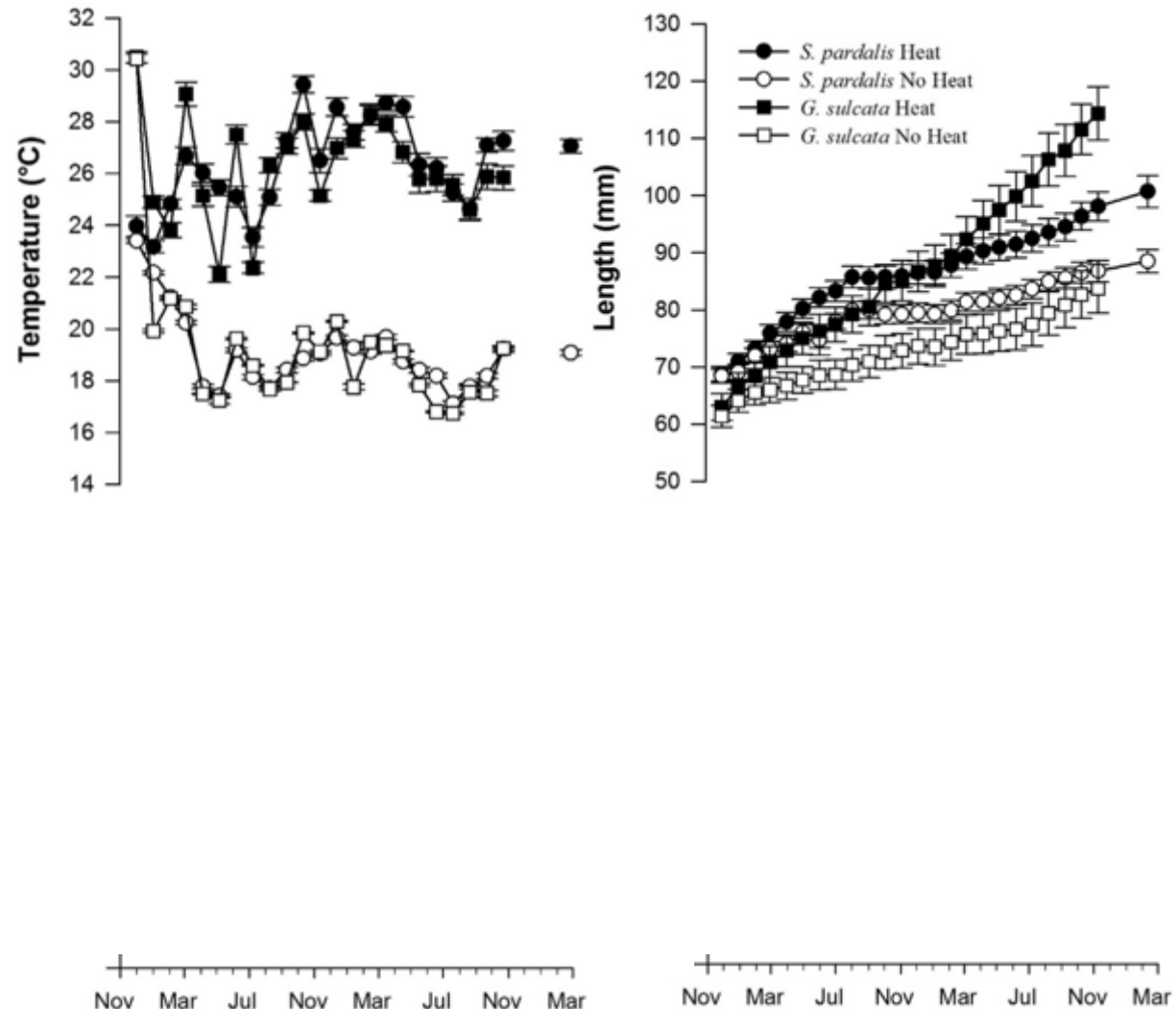
**Key words:** Carapacial scute pyramiding; chelonian; deformity; pyramidal growth syndrome; shell; temperature

The order Chelonia is unique in the animal kingdom based on possession of an external shell composed of the dorsal carapace, the intermediate bridge, and the ventral plastron. Furthermore, chelonians are the only vertebrates whose limbs exist deep to their ribs. Shell growth is manifested via dynamics lacking in other vertebrates. Developmentally, the ribs become associated with carapacial dermis that eventually becomes the bony part of the shell. The vertebral neural arches are also incorporated in the shell at the carapacial midline.<sup>1</sup> Epidermal scutes are formed long before ossification of the dermal layer of the shell.<sup>1</sup> Although ossification of the ribs begins embryologically, dermal plates of the carapace do not ossify until after hatch. Complete ossification of the carapace may take several years in captive-raised tortoises (Heinrich ML, unpublished data). Despite lack of a congruency between epidermal scutes and dermal bony plates, the dermal layer is thought to play a major role in epidermal scute formation.<sup>1</sup>

Based on decades of knowledge accrued by laypersons and curators of zoological and educational institutions, many species of turtles and tortoises have been successfully maintained

and reproduced in captivity. Subsequently, many species are readily available to the general public for captive care. With this influx of turtles and tortoises hatched and raised in captivity, an

From the Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM USA; and the Department of Biology, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, TX USA.  
Address correspondence to: Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM 88220. E-mail: carlsbadclinic@gmail.com.  
© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.  
1557-5063/15/2101-\$30.00  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1053/j.jepm.2015.12.005>





# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

## RESEARCH

### EFFECT OF SUPPLEMENTAL HEAT IN CAPTIVE AFRICAN LEOPARD TORTOISES (*STIGMOCHELYS PARDALIS*) AND SPURRED TORTOISES (*CENTROCHELYS SULCATA*) ON GROWTH RATE AND CARAPACIAL SCUTE PYRAMIDING

Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, and Kaleb K. Heinrich, MS, DA

#### Abstract

Carapacial scute pyramiding (CSP) is common in captive-raised turtles and tortoises. Several dietary and environmental hypotheses have been proposed to explain this phenomenon, but few have been scientifically investigated. The effect of increased heat exposure on CSP and growth was examined in juvenile African leopard (*Stigmochelys pardalis*) and spurred (*Centrochelys sulcata*) tortoises. Monthly measurements of individual tortoise surface temperature, length, height, width, weight, and pyramid height of treatment (heat) and control (no heat) groups for 2 years were higher in the treatment groups. Allometric comparison further revealed increased pyramiding in the treatment group. Humidity and diet did not differ between treatment and control groups. The results of this research investigation indicate that growth rate and CSP appear to be directly related and both increase with excess nocturnal heat. The significance of the atypical carapace growth and subsequent consequences for naturally occurring tortoise populations, especially in the context of global climate change, is unknown but requires further investigation. Copyright 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

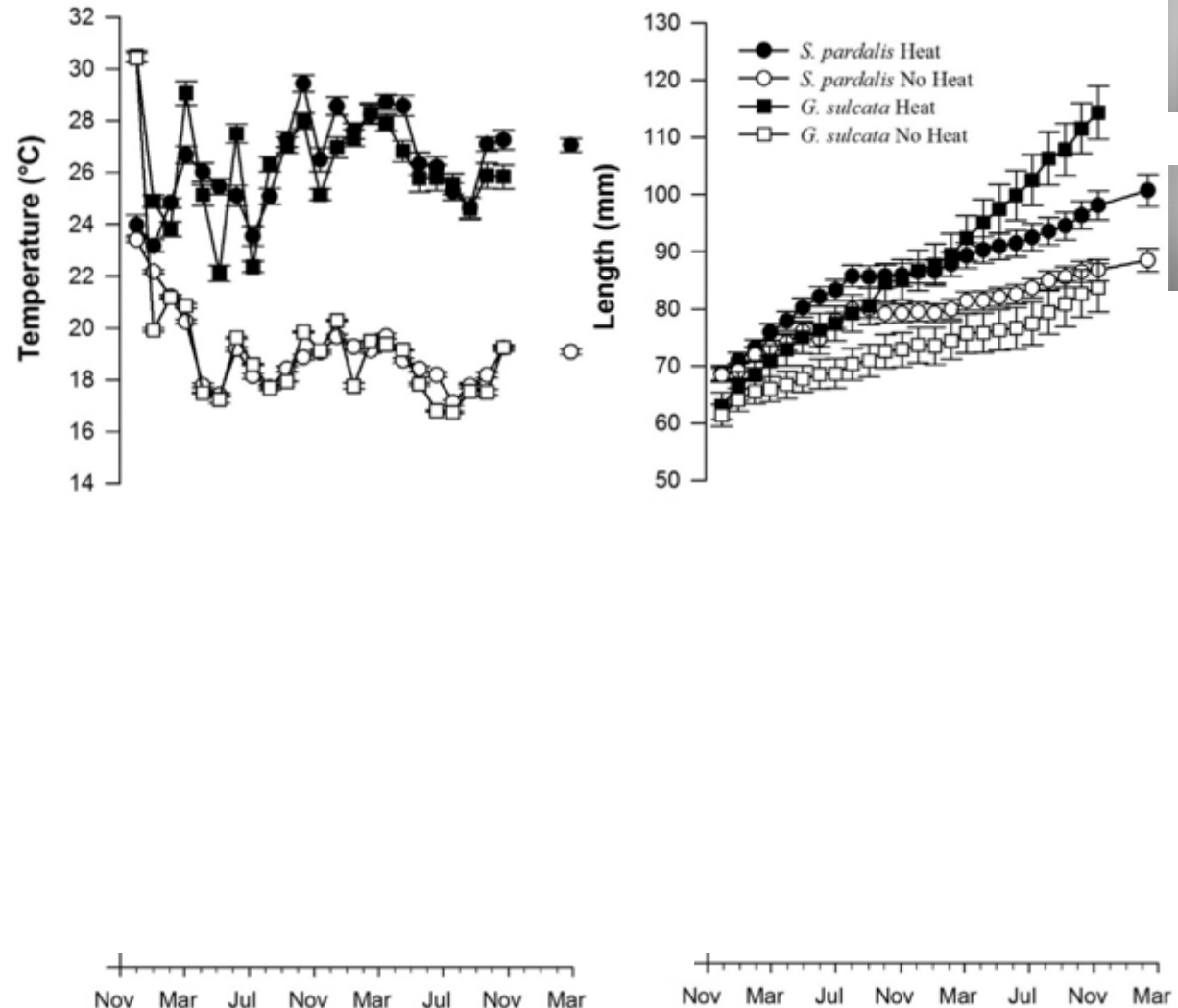
**Key words:** Carapacial scute pyramiding; chelonian; deformity; pyramidal growth syndrome; shell; temperature

The order Chelonia is unique in the animal kingdom based on possession of an external shell composed of the dorsal carapace, the intermediate bridge, and the ventral plastron. Furthermore, chelonians are the only vertebrates whose limbs exist deep to their ribs. Shell growth is manifested via dynamics lacking in other vertebrates. Developmentally, the ribs become associated with carapacial dermis that eventually becomes the bony part of the shell. The vertebral neural arches are also incorporated in the shell at the carapacial midline.<sup>1</sup> Epidermal scutes are formed long before ossification of the dermal layer of the shell.<sup>1</sup> Although ossification of the ribs begins embryologically, dermal plates of the carapace do not ossify until after hatch. Complete ossification of the carapace may take several years in captive-raised tortoises (Heinrich ML, unpublished data). Despite lack of a congruency between epidermal scutes and dermal bony plates, the dermal layer is thought to play a major role in epidermal scute formation.<sup>1</sup>

Based on decades of knowledge accrued by laypersons and curators of zoological and educational institutions, many species of turtles and tortoises have been successfully maintained

and reproduced in captivity. Subsequently, many species are readily available to the general public for captive care. With this influx of turtles and tortoises hatched and raised in captivity, an

From the Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM USA; and the Department of Biology, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, TX USA.  
Address correspondence to: Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM 88220. E-mail: carlsbadac@gmail.com.  
© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.  
1557-5063/15/2101-\$30.00  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1053/j.jepm.2015.12.005>





# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

## RESEARCH

### EFFECT OF SUPPLEMENTAL HEAT IN CAPTIVE AFRICAN LEOPARD TORTOISES (*STIGMOCHELYS PARDALIS*) AND SPURRED TORTOISES (*CENTROCHELYS SULCATA*) ON GROWTH RATE AND CARAPACIAL SCUTE PYRAMIDING

Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, and Kaleb K. Heinrich, MS, DA

#### Abstract

Carapacial scute pyramiding (CSP) is common in captive-raised turtles and tortoises. Several dietary and environmental hypotheses have been proposed to explain this phenomenon, but few have been scientifically investigated. The effect of increased heat exposure on CSP and growth was examined in juvenile African leopard (*Stigmochelys pardalis*) and spurred (*Centrochelys sulcata*) tortoises. Monthly measurements of individual tortoise surface temperature, length, height, width, weight, and pyramid height of treatment (heat) and control (no heat) groups for 2 years were higher in the treatment groups. Allometric comparison further revealed increased pyramiding in the treatment group. Humidity and diet did not differ between treatment and control groups. The results of this research investigation indicate that growth rate and CSP appear to be directly related and both increase with excess nocturnal heat. The significance of the atypical carapace growth and subsequent consequences for naturally occurring tortoise populations, especially in the context of global climate change, is unknown but requires further investigation. Copyright 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

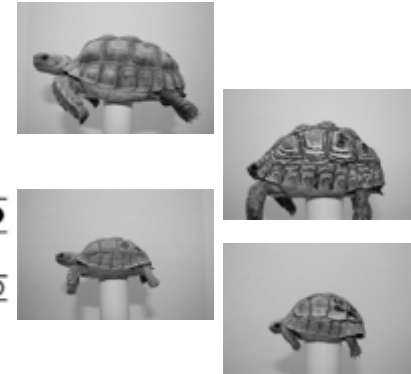
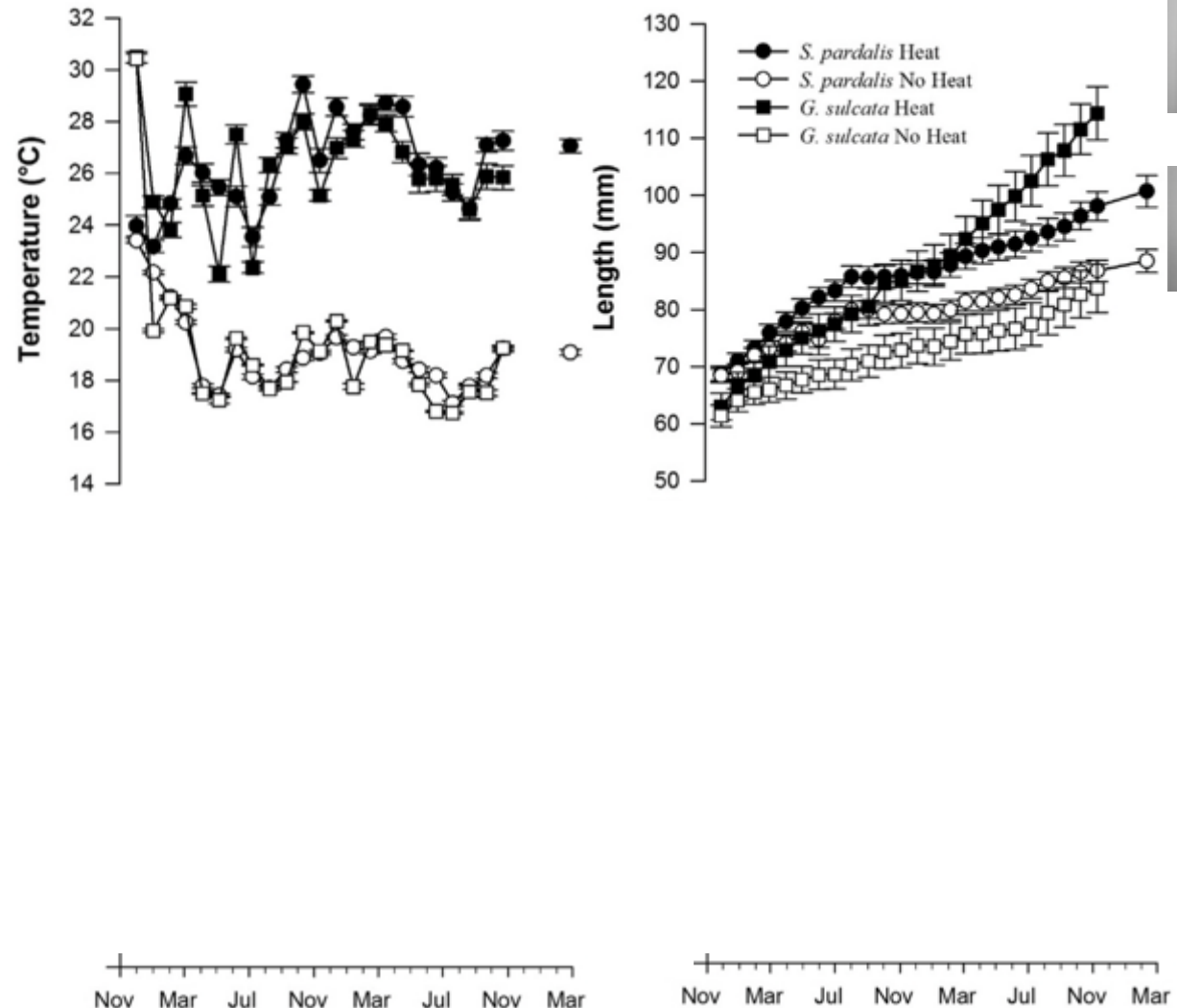
**Key words:** Carapacial scute pyramiding; chelonian; deformity; pyramidal growth syndrome; shell; temperature

The order Chelonia is unique in the animal kingdom based on possession of an external shell composed of the dorsal carapace, the intermediate bridge, and the ventral plastron. Furthermore, chelonians are the only vertebrates whose limbs exist deep to their ribs. Shell growth is manifested via dynamics lacking in other vertebrates. Developmentally, the ribs become associated with carapacial dermis that eventually becomes the bony part of the shell. The vertebral neural arches are also incorporated in the shell at the carapacial midline.<sup>1</sup> Epidermal scutes are formed long before ossification of the dermal layer of the shell.<sup>1</sup> Although ossification of the ribs begins embryologically, dermal plates of the carapace do not ossify until after hatch. Complete ossification of the carapace may take several years in captive-raised tortoises (Heinrich ML, unpublished data). Despite lack of a congruency between epidermal scutes and dermal bony plates, the dermal layer is thought to play a major role in epidermal scute formation.<sup>1</sup>

Based on decades of knowledge accrued by laypersons and curators of zoological and educational institutions, many species of turtles and tortoises have been successfully maintained

and reproduced in captivity. Subsequently, many species are readily available to the general public for captive care. With this influx of turtles and tortoises hatched and raised in captivity, an

From the Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM USA; and the Department of Biology, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, TX USA.  
Address correspondence to: Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM 88220. E-mail: carlsbadac@gmail.com.  
© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.  
1557-5063/15/2101-\$30.00  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1053/j.jepm.2015.12.005>







## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

### RESEARCH

#### EFFECT OF SUPPLEMENTAL HEAT IN CAPTIVE AFRICAN LEOPARD TORTOISES (*STIGMOCHELYS PARDALIS*) AND SPURRED TORTOISES (*CENTROCHELYS SULCATA*) ON GROWTH RATE AND CARAPACIAL SCUTE PYRAMIDING

Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, and Kaleb K. Heinrich, MS, DA

##### Abstract

Carapacial scute pyramiding (CSP) is common in captive-raised turtles and tortoises. Several dietary and environmental hypotheses have been proposed to explain this phenomenon, but few have been scientifically investigated. The effect of increased heat exposure on CSP and growth was examined in juvenile African leopard (*Stigmochelys pardalis*) and spurred (*Centrochelys sulcata*) tortoises. Monthly measurements of individual tortoise surface temperature, length, height, width, weight, and pyramid height of treatment (heat) and control (no heat) groups for 2 years were higher in the treatment groups. Allometric comparison further revealed increased pyramiding in the treatment group. Humidity and diet did not differ between treatment and control groups. The results of this research investigation indicate that growth rate and CSP appear to be directly related and both increase with excess nocturnal heat. The significance of the atypical carapace growth and subsequent consequences for naturally occurring tortoise populations, especially in the context of global climate change, is unknown but requires further investigation. Copyright 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

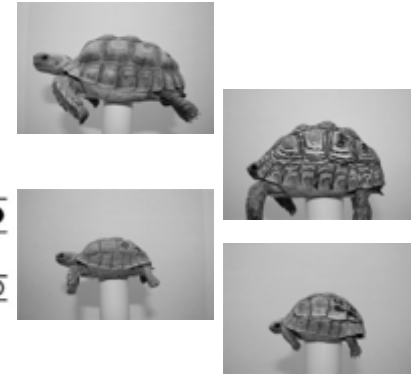
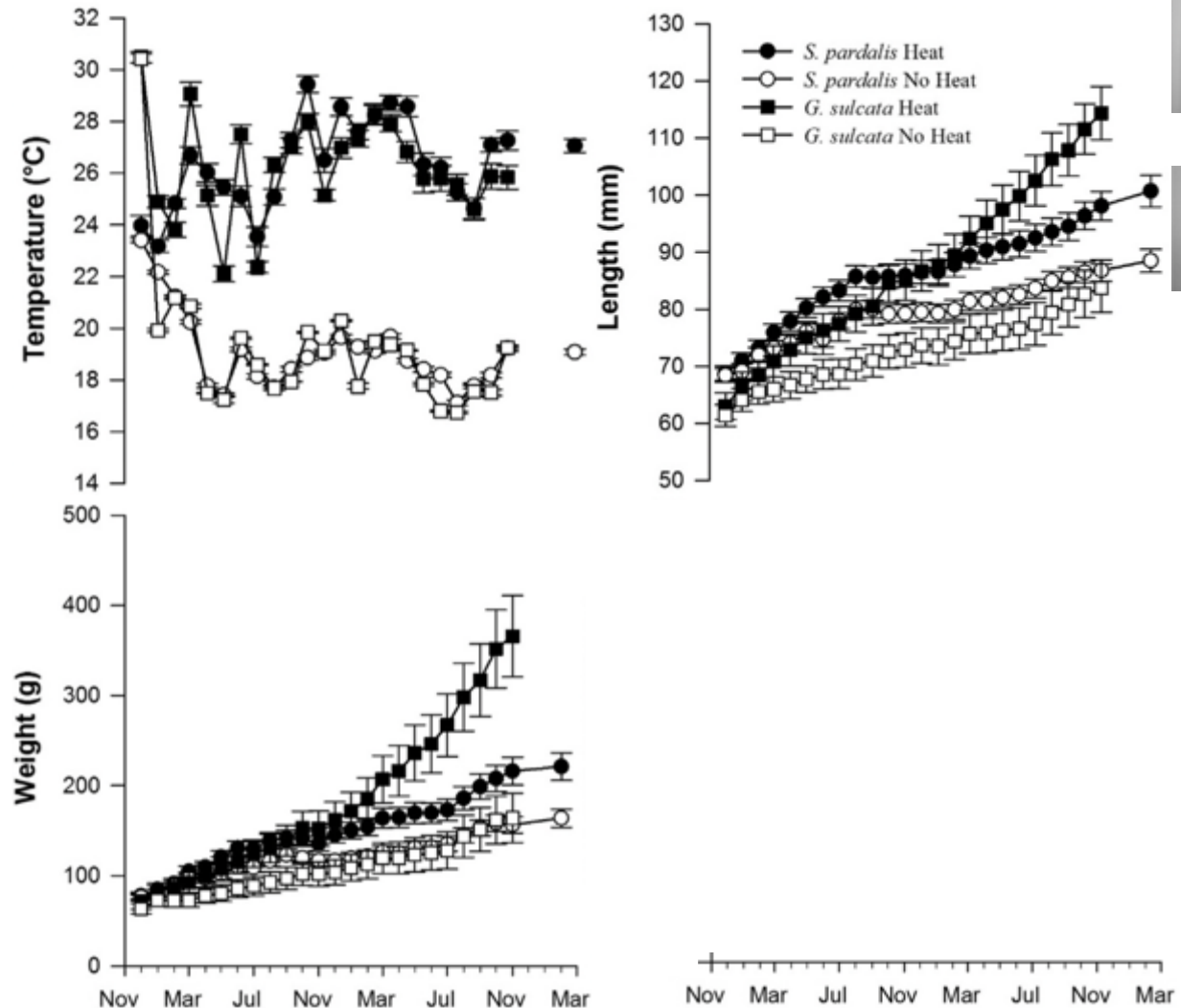
**Key words:** Carapacial scute pyramiding; chelonian; deformity; pyramidal growth syndrome; shell; temperature

The order Chelonia is unique in the animal kingdom based on possession of an external shell composed of the dorsal carapace, the intermediate bridge, and the ventral plastron. Furthermore, chelonians are the only vertebrates whose limbs exist deep to their ribs. Shell growth is manifested via dynamics lacking in other vertebrates. Developmentally, the ribs become associated with carapacial dermis that eventually becomes the bony part of the shell. The vertebral neural arches are also incorporated in the shell at the carapacial midline.<sup>1</sup> Epidermal scutes are formed long before ossification of the dermal layer of the shell.<sup>1</sup> Although ossification of the ribs begins embryologically, dermal plates of the carapace do not ossify until after hatch. Complete ossification of the carapace may take several years in captive-raised tortoises (Heinrich ML, unpublished data). Despite lack of a congruency between epidermal scutes and dermal bony plates, the dermal layer is thought to play a major role in epidermal scute formation.<sup>1</sup>

Based on decades of knowledge accrued by laypersons and curators of zoological and educational institutions, many species of turtles and tortoises have been successfully maintained

and reproduced in captivity. Subsequently, many species are readily available to the general public for captive care. With this influx of turtles and tortoises hatched and raised in captivity, an

From the Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM USA; and the Department of Biology, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, TX USA.  
Address correspondence to: Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM 88220. E-mail: carlsbadac@gmail.com.  
© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.  
1557-5063/15/2101-\$30.00  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1053/j.jepm.2015.12.005>





# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

## RESEARCH

### EFFECT OF SUPPLEMENTAL HEAT IN CAPTIVE AFRICAN LEOPARD TORTOISES (*STIGMOCHELYS PARDALIS*) AND SPURRED TORTOISES (*CENTROCHELYS SULCATA*) ON GROWTH RATE AND CARAPACIAL SCUTE PYRAMIDING

Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, and Kaleb K. Heinrich, MS, DA

#### Abstract

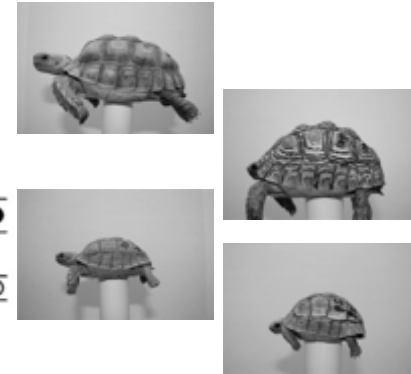
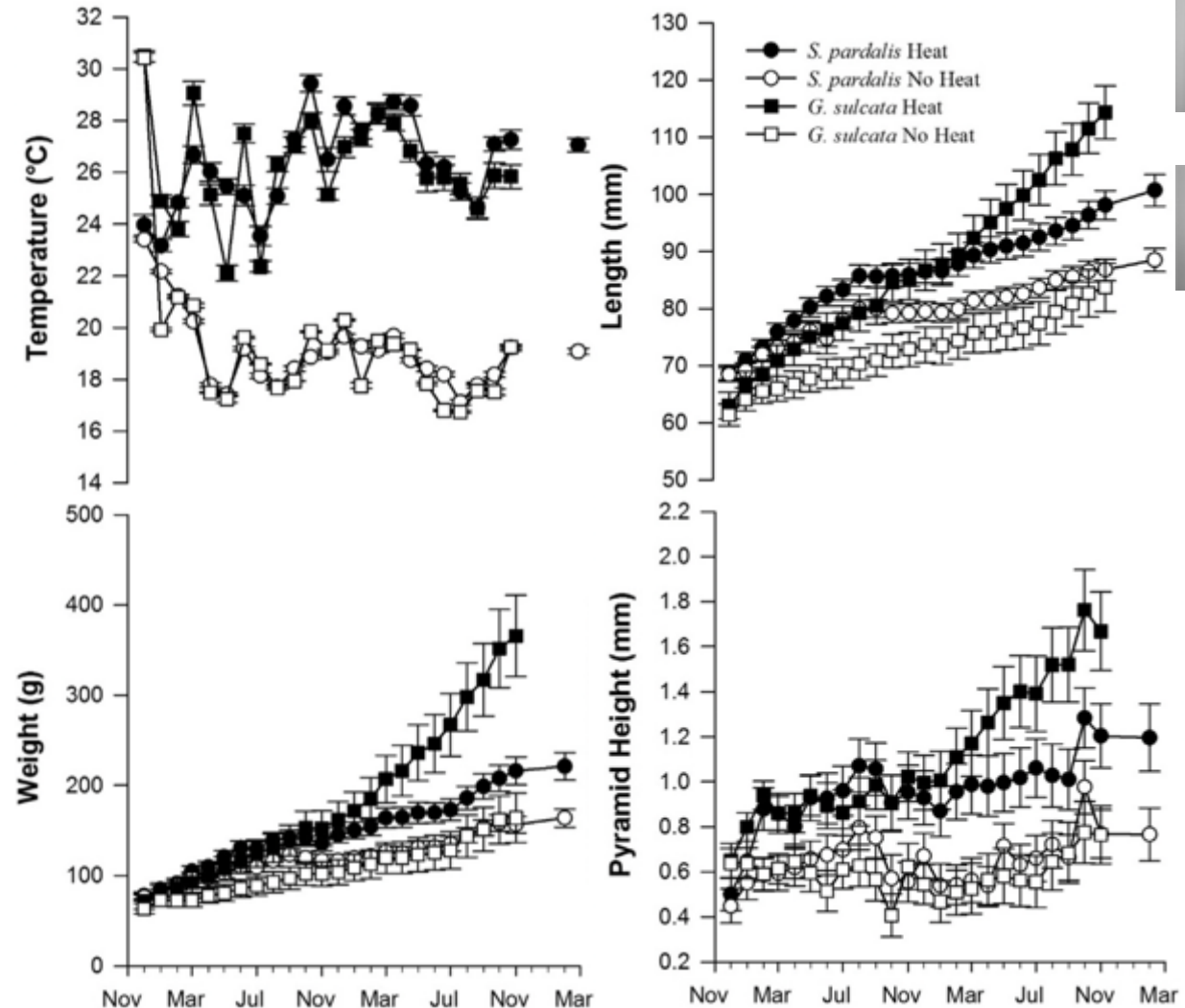
Carapacial scute pyramiding (CSP) is common in captive-raised turtles and tortoises. Several dietary and environmental hypotheses have been proposed to explain this phenomenon, but few have been scientifically investigated. The effect of increased heat exposure on CSP and growth was examined in juvenile African leopard (*Stigmochelys pardalis*) and spurred (*Centrochelys sulcata*) tortoises. Monthly measurements of individual tortoise surface temperature, length, height, width, weight, and pyramidal height of treatment (heat) and control (no heat) groups for 2 years were higher in the treatment groups. Allometric comparison further revealed increased pyramiding in the treatment group. Humidity and diet did not differ between treatment and control groups. The results of this research investigation indicate that growth rate and CSP appear to be directly related and both increase with excess nocturnal heat. The significance of the atypical carapace growth and subsequent consequences for naturally occurring tortoise populations, especially in the context of global climate change, is unknown but requires further investigation. Copyright 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**Key words:** Carapacial scute pyramiding; chelonian; deformity; pyramidal growth syndrome; shell; temperature

The order Chelonia is unique in the animal kingdom based on possession of an external shell composed of the dorsal carapace, the intermediate bridge, and the ventral plastron. Furthermore, chelonians are the only vertebrates whose limbs exist deep to their ribs. Shell growth is manifested via dynamics lacking in other vertebrates. Developmentally, the ribs become associated with carapacial dermis that eventually becomes the bony part of the shell. The vertebral neural arches are also incorporated in the shell at the carapacial midline.<sup>1</sup> Epidermal scutes are formed long before ossification of the dermal layer of the shell.<sup>1</sup> Although ossification of the ribs begins embryologically, dermal plates of the carapace do not ossify until after hatch. Complete ossification of the carapace may take several years in captive-raised tortoises (Heinrich ML, unpublished data). Despite lack of a congruency between epidermal scutes and dermal bony plates, the dermal layer is thought to play a major role in epidermal scute formation.<sup>1</sup>

Based on decades of knowledge accrued by laypersons and curators of zoological and educational institutions, many species of turtles and tortoises have been successfully maintained and reproduced in captivity. Subsequently, many species are readily available to the general public for captive care. With this influx of turtles and tortoises hatched and raised in captivity, an

From the Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM USA; and the Department of Biology, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, TX USA.  
Address correspondence to: Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM 88220. E-mail: carlsbadclinic@gmail.com  
© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.  
1557-5063/15/2101-\$30.00  
http://dx.doi.org/10.1053/j.jepm.2015.12.005





# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

## RESEARCH

### EFFECT OF SUPPLEMENTAL HEAT IN CAPTIVE AFRICAN LEOPARD TORTOISES (*STIGMOCHELYS PARDALIS*) AND SPURRED TORTOISES (*CENTROCHELYS SULCATA*) ON GROWTH RATE AND CARAPACIAL SCUTE PYRAMIDING

Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, and Kaleb K. Heinrich, MS, DA

#### Abstract

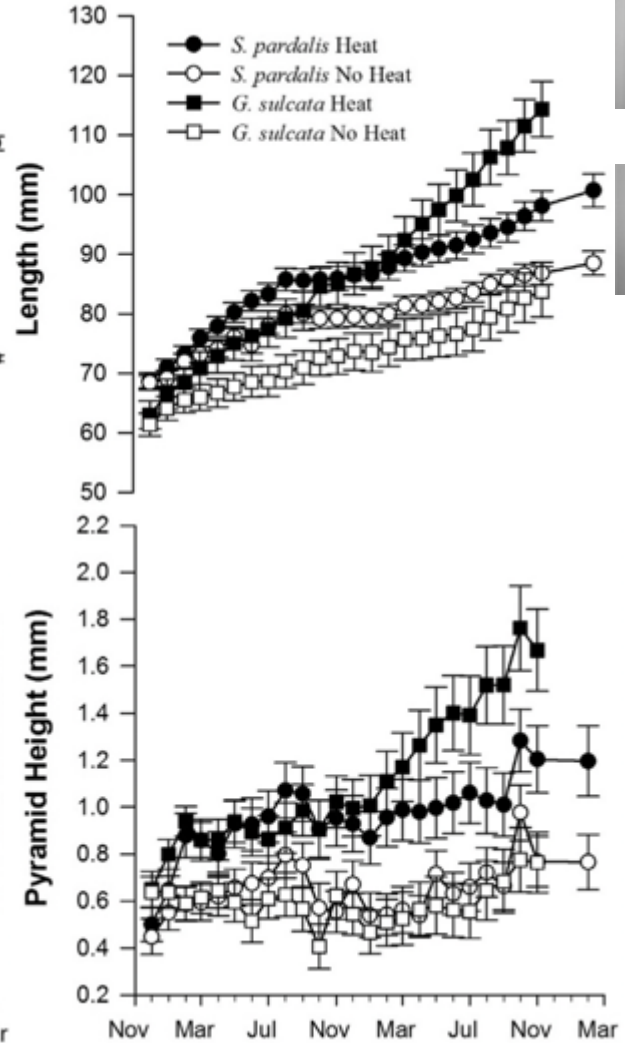
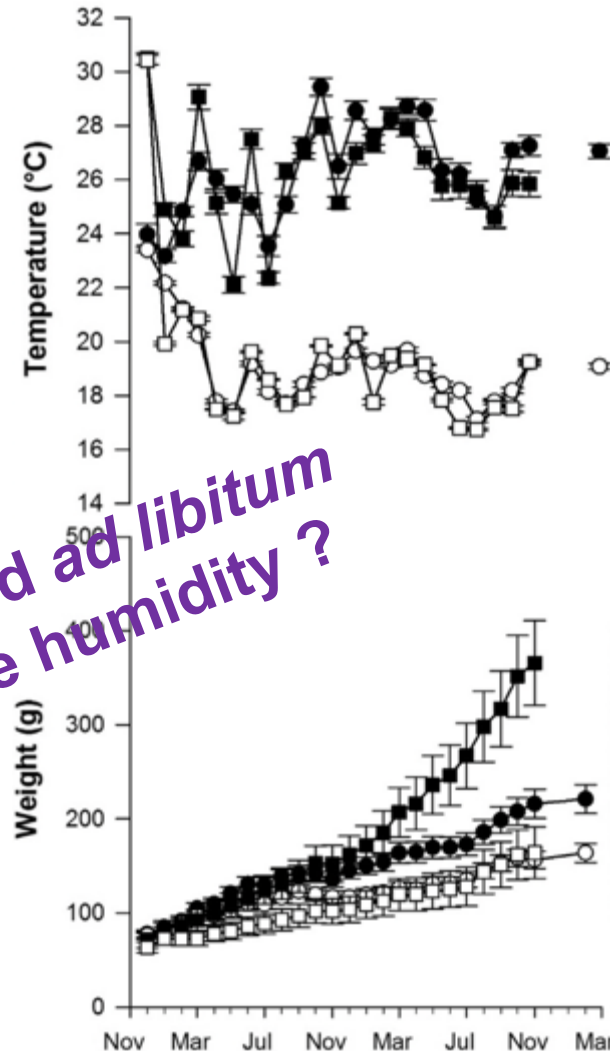
Carapacial scute pyramiding (CSP) is common in captive-raised turtles and tortoises. Several dietary and environmental hypotheses have been proposed to explain this phenomenon, but few have been scientifically investigated. The effect of increased heat exposure on CSP and growth was examined in juvenile African leopard (*Stigmochelys pardalis*) and spurred (*Centrochelys sulcata*) tortoises. Monthly measurements of individual tortoise surface temperature, length, height, width, weight, and pyramid height of treatment (heat) and control (no heat) groups for 2 years were higher in the treatment groups. Allometric comparison further revealed increased pyramiding in the treatment group. Humidity and diet did not differ between treatment and control groups. The results of this research investigation indicate that growth rate and CSP appear to be directly related and both increase with excess nocturnal heat. The significance of the atypical carapace growth and subsequent consequences for naturally occurring tortoise populations, especially in the context of global climate change, is unknown but requires further investigation. Copyright 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**Key words:** Carapacial scute pyramiding; chelonian; deformity; pyramidal growth syndrome; shell; temperature

The order Chelonia is unique in the animal kingdom based on possession of an external shell composed of the dorsal carapace, the intermediate bridge, and the ventral plastron. Furthermore, chelonians are the only vertebrates whose limbs exist deep to their ribs. Shell growth is manifested via dynamics lacking in other vertebrates. Developmentally, the ribs become associated with carapacial dermis that eventually becomes the bony part of the shell. The vertebral neural arches are also incorporated in the shell at the carapacial midline. The dorsal scutes are formed long before ossification of the dermal layer of the shell. After ossification of the ribs begins embryologically, dermal plates of the carapace do not ossify until after hatch. Complete ossification of the carapace may take several years in captive-raised tortoises (Heinrich ML, unpublished data). Despite lack of a congruency between epidermal, cutaneous and dermal bony plates, the carapace is thought to play a major role in epidermal scute pyramiding.

Based on decades of knowledge accrued by and reproduced in captivity. Subsequently, many species are readily available to the general public through educational institutions, many species of turtles and tortoises have been successfully maintained.

From the Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM USA; and the Department of Biology, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, TX USA.  
Address correspondence to: Mark L. Heinrich, MS, DVM, Carlsbad Animal Clinic and Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, NM 88220. E-mail: carlsbadclinic@gmail.com.  
© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.  
1557-5063/15/2101-\$30.00  
http://dx.doi.org/10.1053/j.jepm.2015.12.005



can't take food ad libitum  
really the same humidity?





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

### Assessment of dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry for use in evaluating the effects of dietary and environmental management on Hermann’s tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*)

Matteo Gramanzini, DVM; Nicola Di Girolamo, DVM; Sara Gargiulo, DVM, PhD; Adelaide Greco, DVM, PhD; Natascia Cocchia, DVM, PhD; Mauro Delogu, DVM, PhD; Isabella Rosapane, DVM; Raffaele Liuzzi, PhD; Paolo Selleri, DVM, PhD; Arturo Brunetti, MD

**Objective**—To assess dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) for evaluating effects of diet and environment on bone mineral density in Hermann’s tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*).

**Animals**—26 Hermann’s tortoises within 1 month after hatching.

**Procedures**—Group 1 was housed in an artificial setting and fed naturally growing vegetation. Group 2 was housed in an artificial setting and fed vegetables grown for human consumption. Group 3 was maintained in an outside enclosure and fed naturally growing vegetation. After 10 months, pyramidal growth, body weight, and adverse conditions were assessed. Bone mineral density (BMD) of the axial and appendicular skeleton, shell, vertebral column, and pelvis was measured via DXA.

**Results**—Group 2 had the highest mean  $\pm$  SD body weight ( $65.42 \pm 30.85$  g), followed by group 1 ( $51.08 \pm 22.92$  g) and group 3 ( $35.74 \pm 7.13$  g). Mean BMD of the shell varied significantly among groups (group 1,  $0.05 \pm 0.03$  g/cm<sup>2</sup>·mm; group 2,  $0.09 \pm 0.15$  g/cm<sup>2</sup>·mm; and group 3, undetectable). The BMD of the axial and appendicular skeleton, vertebral column, and pelvis did not differ significantly among groups. Pyramidal growth was highest in group 1 and not evident in group 3.

**Conclusions and Clinical Relevance**—Tortoises raised in artificial conditions did not have deficits in BMD, compared with results for outdoor-housed hibernating tortoises. Supplemental calcium was apparently not necessary when an adequate photothermal habitat and plant-based diet were provided. Higher BMD of captive-raised tortoises was morphologically associated with a higher incidence of pyramidal growth in captive-raised groups. (*Am J Vet Res* 2013;74:918–924)

Mortality rates attributable to nutritional and housing-induced disorders historically have been ex-

Received September 7, 2012.

Accepted November 26, 2012.

From the Italian National Research Council, Institute of Biotechnology and Bioimaging, 80145 Naples, Italy (Gramanzini, Gargiulo, Liuzzi); CEINGE, Advanced Biotechnologies, Scarl, 80145 Naples, Italy (Gramanzini, Gargiulo, Greco); the Clinica per Animali Esotici, Centro Veterinario Specialistico, 00137 Rome, Italy (Di Girolamo, Selleri); the Department of Advanced Biomedical Sciences, School of Medicine, University Federico II, 80145 Naples, Italy (Greco, Brunetti); the Department of Clinical Veterinary Sciences and the Interdepartmental Center of Veterinary Radiology, School of Veterinary Medicine, University Federico II, 80137 Naples (Cocchia); the Department of Veterinary Medical Sciences, School of Veterinary Medicine, Bologna University, 40126 Ozzano Emilia, Italy (Delogu); and the Clinica Veterinaria del Bosco, 80055 Portici, Italy (Rosapane).

This manuscript represents a portion of a thesis submitted by Dr. Di Girolamo to the Department of Veterinary Sciences of Bologna University as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Science degree.

Presented in abstract form at the 18th Annual Conference of the Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians, Seattle, August 2011.

Address correspondence to Dr. Gramanzini (matteo.gramanzini@bb.cnr.it).

#### ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	Axial and appendicular skeleton
BMC	Bone mineral content
BMD	Bone mineral density
BSA	Body surface area
DXA	Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry

tremely high in captive tortoises.<sup>1–3</sup> Information in several reports<sup>4–9</sup> and the lack of evidence in necropsy surveys<sup>7,8</sup> suggest that nutritional disorders such as calcium deficiencies and subsequent metabolic bone diseases are rare in wild chelonians. Although a considerable amount of evidence-based information has been obtained on reptile physiology-biology<sup>8–11</sup> and management,<sup>12,13</sup> practitioners often offer a vast number of recommendations to reptile owners that are based on anecdotal information because of the lack of specific data. In juvenile chelonians, inadequate diets or inappropriate husbandry conditions often result in mineral deficiencies.<sup>14</sup> However, pathophysiologic processes are still unknown<sup>15,16</sup> and are usually extrapolated from information for other species.<sup>14,17</sup>



## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

### Assessment of dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry for use in evaluating the effects of dietary and environmental management on Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*)

Matteo Gramanzini, DVM; Nicola Di Girolamo, DVM; Sara Gargiulo, DVM, PhD; Adelaide Greco, DVM, PhD; Natascia Cocchia, DVM, PhD; Mauro Delogu, DVM, PhD; Isabella Rosapane, DVM; Raffaele Liuzzi, PhD; Paolo Selleri, DVM, PhD; Arturo Brunetti, MD

**Objective**—To assess dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) for evaluating effects of diet and environment on bone mineral density in Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*).

**Animals**—26 Hermann's tortoises within 1 month after hatching.

**Procedures**—Group 1 was housed in an artificial setting and fed naturally growing vegetation. Group 2 was housed in an artificial setting and fed vegetables grown for human consumption. Group 3 was maintained in an outside enclosure and fed naturally growing vegetation. After 10 months, pyramidal growth, body weight, and adverse conditions were assessed. Bone mineral density (BMD) of the axial and appendicular skeleton, shell, vertebral column, and pelvis was measured via DXA.

**Results**—Group 2 had the highest mean  $\pm$  SD body weight (65.42  $\pm$  30.85 g), followed by group 1 (51.08  $\pm$  22.92 g) and group 3 (35.74  $\pm$  7.13 g). Mean BMD of the shell varied significantly among groups (group 1, 0.05  $\pm$  0.03 g/cm<sup>2</sup>·mm; group 2, 0.09  $\pm$  0.15 g/cm<sup>2</sup>·mm; and group 3, undetectable). The BMD of the axial and appendicular skeleton, vertebral column, and pelvis did not differ significantly among groups. Pyramidal growth was highest in group 1 and not evident in group 3.

**Conclusions and Clinical Relevance**—Tortoises raised in artificial conditions did not have deficits in BMD, compared with results for outdoor-housed hibernating tortoises. Supplemental calcium was apparently not necessary when an adequate photothermal habitat and plant-based diet were provided. Higher BMD of captive-raised tortoises was morphologically associated with a higher incidence of pyramidal growth in captive-raised groups. (*Am J Vet Res* 2013;74:918–924)

Mortality rates attributable to nutritional and housing-induced disorders historically have been ex-

Received September 7, 2012.

Accepted November 26, 2012.

From the Italian National Research Council, Institute of Biotechnology and Bioimaging, 80145 Naples, Italy (Gramanzini, Gargiulo, Liuzzi); CEINGE, Advanced Biotechnologies, Scarl, 80145 Naples, Italy (Gramanzini, Gargiulo, Greco); the Clinica per Animali Esotici, Centro Veterinario Specialistico, 00137 Rome, Italy (Di Girolamo, Selleri); the Department of Advanced Biomedical Sciences, School of Medicine, University Federico II, 80145 Naples, Italy (Greco, Brunetti); the Department of Clinical Veterinary Sciences and the Interdepartmental Center of Veterinary Radiology, School of Veterinary Medicine, University Federico II, 80137 Naples (Cocchia); the Department of Veterinary Medical Sciences, School of Veterinary Medicine, Bologna University, 40126 Ozzano Emilia, Italy (Delogu); and the Clinica Veterinaria del Bosco, 80055 Portici, Italy (Rosapane).

This manuscript represents a portion of a thesis submitted by Dr. Di Girolamo to the Department of Veterinary Sciences of Bologna University as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Science degree.

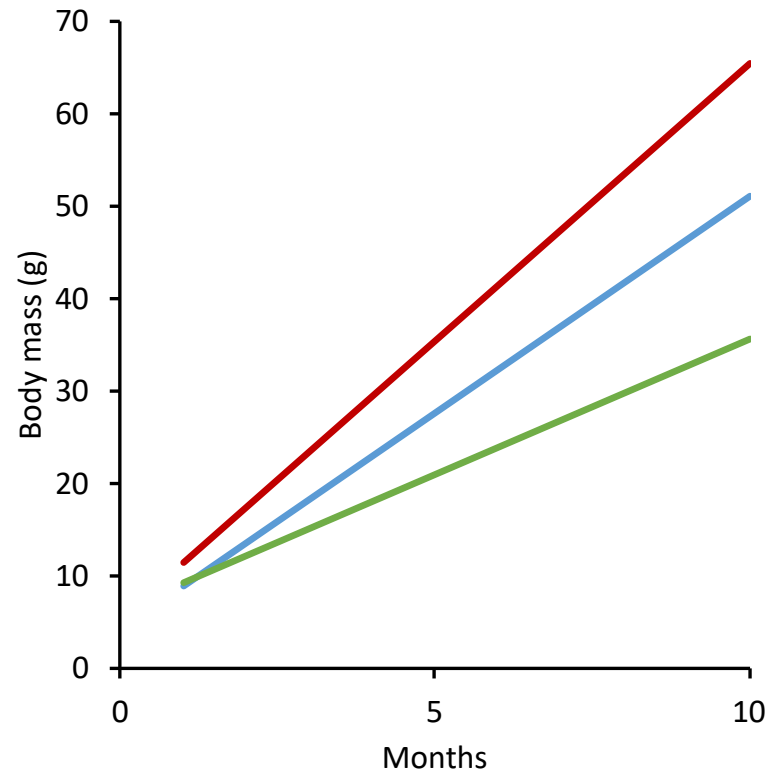
Presented in abstract form at the 18th Annual Conference of the Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians, Seattle, August 2011.

Address correspondence to Dr. Gramanzini (matteo.gramanzini@bbh.cnr.it).

#### ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	Axial and appendicular skeleton
BMC	Bone mineral content
BMD	Bone mineral density
BSA	Body surface area
DXA	Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry

tremely high in captive tortoises.<sup>1–3</sup> Information in several reports<sup>4–9</sup> and the lack of evidence in necropsy surveys<sup>7,8</sup> suggest that nutritional disorders such as calcium deficiencies and subsequent metabolic bone diseases are rare in wild chelonians. Although a considerable amount of evidence-based information has been obtained on reptile physiology-biology<sup>6–11</sup> and management,<sup>12,13</sup> practitioners often offer a vast number of recommendations to reptile owners that are based on anecdotal information because of the lack of specific data. In juvenile chelonians, inadequate diets or inappropriate husbandry conditions often result in mineral deficiencies.<sup>14</sup> However, pathophysiologic processes are still unknown<sup>15,16</sup> and are usually extrapolated from information for other species.<sup>14,17</sup>



n=9, Innengehege, Gemüse,  
2 Tiere mit Pyramiden

n=10, Innengehege, natürliches  
Futter,  
10 Tiere mit Pyramiden

n=7, Aussengehege, natürliches  
Futter, keine Pyramiden



## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

JOURNAL OF APPLIED ANIMAL WELFARE SCIENCE  
2018, VOL. 22, NO. 2, 159–170  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1088705.2018.1453814>

Routledge  
Taylor & Francis Group

ARTICLE

**Nutrition and husbandry conditions of Palearctic tortoises (*Testudo* spp.) in captivity**

Thomas Bauer, Sven Reese, and Petra Koelle

Department of Veterinary Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Munich, Germany

**ABSTRACT**  
Mediterranean and Russian tortoises (*Testudo* spp.) are popular companion animals (pets), despite ongoing controversy concerning privately keeping reptiles. The arguments used during these controversial discussions have often been based on outdated facts. Therefore, a survey was developed to evaluate the current population structure, husbandry conditions, diet regime, and health status of *Testudo* species in captivity. More than 75% of the 1075 respondents housed their tortoises in an outdoor enclosure containing a greenhouse or cold frame, which is considered the most species-appropriate way of husbandry. Of the respondents, 67.7% fed their tortoises with the optimum diet of more than 80% grasses and weeds during the summer vegetation period. Only 8.2% of respondents owned a tortoise with a diagnosed disease. According to the results, the likelihood of tortoises developing pyramidal growth syndrome, which can be used as an indicator of the quality of tortoise husbandry, was high in tortoises kept in a terrarium and/or fed a diet of less than 80% grasses and weeds in summer. This likelihood varied among species, with a higher incidence in Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*).

**KEYWORDS**  
Chelonian; diet; keeping; European tortoises; pyramidal growth syndrome

**Introduction**  
It has been estimated that 44% of households in Germany own companion animals (pets), and 1% (0.7 million) own a terrarium (Zentralverband-Zoologischer-Fachbetriebe-Deutschlands-e.V., 2017). Among reptiles, Palearctic tortoises of the genus *Testudo* are particularly popular. As stated in a survey on the husbandry of commonly kept reptiles, 38.7% of all evaluated reptiles belonged to this genus (Pees et al., 2014).  
According to Commission Regulation (EC) No. 318/200, all *Testudo* spp. are listed in Appendix A, with the exception of *T. horsfieldii*, which is listed in Appendix B (Commission Regulation (EC), 2008). Except for *T. horsfieldii*, the demand for these tortoises in Germany is completely met by tortoises who have been bred in captivity by German or other European Union (EU) breeders or who have been imported from other non-EU breeders and farms. Only *T. horsfieldii* can still be taken from populations in the wild (Bundesamt für Naturschutz, 2016).  
There is ongoing controversy among reptile caregivers (owners), reptile associations, government representatives, and nonhuman animal welfare groups concerning the acceptance of keeping reptiles as pets. Historically, the mortality rates of Palearctic tortoises in captivity were high, with annual mortality rates of 29% for *T. hermanni* and 23% for *T. graeca* in the United Kingdom during 1982 to 1986 (Lawrence, 1988). This issue of high mortality rates is still used as an argument against reptile keeping. However, recent studies have shown that annual reptile mortality rates are very low

**CONTACT** Thomas Bauer [p.koelle@medizinische-klinik.de](mailto:p.koelle@medizinische-klinik.de) Department of Veterinary Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Veterinärstr. 15, 80539, Munich, Germany  
Color versions of one or more of the figures in this article can be found online at [www.tandfonline.com/haaw](http://www.tandfonline.com/haaw).  
© 2018 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

JOURNAL OF APPLIED ANIMAL WELFARE SCIENCE  
2018, VOL. 22, NO. 2, 159–170  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1088705.2018.1453814>

**Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group

ARTICLE

**Nutrition and husbandry conditions of Palearctic tortoises (*Testudo* spp.) in captivity**

Thomas Bauer, Sven Reese, and Petra Koelle

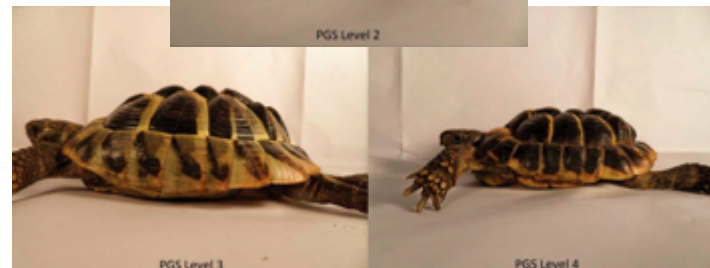
Department of Veterinary Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Munich, Germany

**ABSTRACT**  
Mediterranean and Russian tortoises (*Testudo* spp.) are popular companion animals (pets), despite ongoing controversy concerning privately keeping reptiles. The arguments used during these controversial discussions have often been based on outdated facts. Therefore, a survey was developed to evaluate the current population structure, husbandry conditions, diet regime, and health status of *Testudo* species in captivity. More than 75% of the 1075 respondents housed their tortoises in an outdoor enclosure containing a greenhouse or cold frame, which is considered the most species-appropriate way of husbandry. Of the respondents, 67.7% fed their tortoises with the optimum diet of more than 80% grasses and weeds during the summer vegetation period. Only 8.2% of respondents owned a tortoise with a diagnosed disease. According to the results, the likelihood of tortoises developing pyramidal growth syndrome, which can be used as an indicator of the quality of tortoise husbandry, was high in tortoises kept in a terrarium and/or fed a diet of less than 80% grasses and weeds in summer. This likelihood varied among species, with a higher incidence in Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*).

**KEYWORDS**  
Chelonian; diet; keeping; European tortoises; pyramidal growth syndrome

**Introduction**  
It has been estimated that 44% of households in Germany own companion animals (pets), and 1% (0.7 million) own a terrarium (Zentralverband-Zoologischer-Fachbetriebe-Deutschlands-e.V., 2017). Among reptiles, Palearctic tortoises of the genus *Testudo* are particularly popular. As stated in a survey on the husbandry of commonly kept reptiles, 38.7% of all evaluated reptiles belonged to this genus (Pees et al., 2014).  
According to Commission Regulation (EC) No. 318/200, all *Testudo* spp. are listed in Appendix A, with the exception of *T. horsfieldii*, which is listed in Appendix B (Commission Regulation (EC), 2008). Except for *T. horsfieldii*, the demand for these tortoises in Germany is completely met by tortoises who have been bred in captivity by German or other European Union (EU) breeders or who have been imported from other non-EU breeders and farms. Only *T. horsfieldii* can still be taken from populations in the wild (Bundesamt für Naturschutz, 2016).  
There is ongoing controversy among reptile caregivers (owners), reptile associations, government representatives, and nonhuman animal welfare groups concerning the acceptance of keeping reptiles as pets. Historically, the mortality rates of Palearctic tortoises in captivity were high, with annual mortality rates of 29% for *T. hermanni* and 23% for *T. graeca* in the United Kingdom during 1982 to 1986 (Lawrence, 1988). This issue of high mortality rates is still used as an argument against reptile keeping. However, recent studies have shown that annual reptile mortality rates are very low

**CONTACT** Thomas Bauer [p.koelle@medizinische-klm.uni-muenchen.de](mailto:p.koelle@medizinische-klm.uni-muenchen.de) Department of Veterinary Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Veterinärstr. 15, 80539, Munich, Germany  
Color versions of one or more of the figures in the article can be found online at [www.tandfonline.com/haaw](http://www.tandfonline.com/haaw).  
© 2018 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

JOURNAL OF APPLIED ANIMAL WELFARE SCIENCE  
2018, VOL. 22, NO. 2, 159–170  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1088705.2018.1453814>

**Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group

ARTICLE

**Nutrition and husbandry conditions of Palearctic tortoises (*Testudo* spp.) in captivity**

Thomas Bauer, Sven Reese, and Petra Koelle

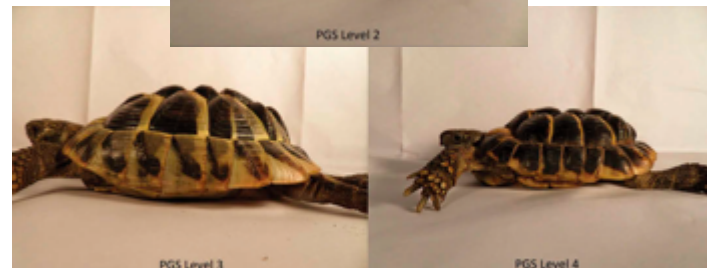
Department of Veterinary Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Munich, Germany

**ABSTRACT**  
Mediterranean and Russian tortoises (*Testudo* spp.) are popular companion animals (pets), despite ongoing controversy concerning privately keeping reptiles. The arguments used during these controversial discussions have often been based on outdated facts. Therefore, a survey was developed to evaluate the current population structure, husbandry conditions, diet regime, and health status of *Testudo* species in captivity. More than 75% of the 1075 respondents housed their tortoises in an outdoor enclosure containing a greenhouse or cold frame, which is considered the most species-appropriate way of husbandry. Of the respondents, 67.7% fed their tortoises with the optimum diet of more than 80% grasses and weeds during the summer vegetation period. Only 8.2% of respondents owned a tortoise with a diagnosed disease. According to the results, the likelihood of tortoises developing pyramidal growth syndrome, which can be used as an indicator of the quality of tortoise husbandry, was high in tortoises kept in a terrarium and/or fed a diet of less than 80% grasses and weeds in summer. This likelihood varied among species, with a higher incidence in Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*).

**KEYWORDS**  
Chelonian; diet; keeping; European tortoises; pyramidal growth syndrome

**Introduction**  
It has been estimated that 44% of households in Germany own companion animals (pets), and 1% (0.7 million) own a terrarium (Zentralverband-Zoologischer-Fachbetriebe-Deutschlands-e.V., 2017). Among reptiles, Palearctic tortoises of the genus *Testudo* are particularly popular. As stated in a survey on the husbandry of commonly kept reptiles, 38.7% of all evaluated reptiles belonged to this genus (Pees et al., 2014).  
According to Commission Regulation (EC) No. 318/200, all *Testudo* spp. are listed in Appendix A, with the exception of *T. horsfieldii*, which is listed in Appendix B (Commission Regulation (EC), 2008). Except for *T. horsfieldii*, the demand for these tortoises in Germany is completely met by tortoises who have been bred in captivity by German or other European Union (EU) breeders or who have been imported from other non-EU breeders and farms. Only *T. horsfieldii* can still be taken from populations in the wild (Bundesamt für Naturschutz, 2016).  
There is ongoing controversy among reptile caregivers (owners), reptile associations, government representatives, and nonhuman animal welfare groups concerning the acceptance of keeping reptiles as pets. Historically, the mortality rates of Palearctic tortoises in captivity were high, with annual mortality rates of 29% for *T. hermanni* and 23% for *T. graeca* in the United Kingdom during 1982 to 1986 (Lawrence, 1988). This issue of high mortality rates is still used as an argument against reptile keeping. However, recent studies have shown that annual reptile mortality rates are very low

**CONTACT** Thomas Bauer [p.koelle@medizinische-klm.uni-muenchen.de](mailto:p.koelle@medizinische-klm.uni-muenchen.de) Department of Veterinary Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Veterinärstr. 15, 80539, Munich, Germany  
Color versions of one or more of the figures in the article can be found online at [www.tandfonline.com/haaw](http://www.tandfonline.com/haaw).  
© 2018 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



### Risikofaktoren:

- weniger als 80% Grünfutter im Sommer
- Haltung im Terrarium



## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

### Zur Höckerbildung bei der Aufzucht von Landschildkröten

Dr. med. Ronald WESER  
mit 2 Abb. vom Verfasser

#### Abstract

The well known problem of development of carapace humps in captivity-bred European and tropical species of land-inhabiting turtles is discussed and analyzed extensively. An experiment with a carnivorous diet accompanied by moist climate conditions for juveniles resulted to full satisfaction and suggests a final solution.

Regelmäßig findet man in der Literatur Hinweise, wie Landschildkröten aufzuziehen seien. Zusammenfassend kann man den einschlägigen Werken entnehmen, daß juvenile Schildkröten Wärme, UV-Strahlung, Kalk und Vitamin D, benötigen, um nicht höckerige Panzer auszubilden. Daran kann auch kein Zweifel mehr bestehen. Wenn man aber trotz Kenntnis und Befolgung dieser Ratschläge die Ergebnisse betrachtet, so findet man wohl bei nahezu allen Plegern eine mehr oder weniger ausgeprägte Höckerbildung bei juvenilen Tieren.

Mithin, diese Faktoren scheinen noch nicht ausreichend, um die allgemein als Rachitis bezeichnete Erscheinung zu vermeiden. Die Bezeichnung »Rachitis«, also eine Knochenwachstumsstörung infolge Vitamin D-Mangels, ist sicher für die Höckerbildung nicht ganz zutreffend. Die Veränderungen, die wir sehen, sind Störungen an den Wachstumszonen der Schilder – diese sind aber nicht identisch mit den Wachstumszonen des knöchernen Panzers. Gerade an den Wachstumszonen des Knochenpanzers müßten sich aber die rachitischen Veränderungen zeigen. Dies ist m.W. bisher kaum untersucht.

Was wissen wir aber über die natürlichen Bedingungen, in denen juvenile Schildkröten aufwachsen? Es liegen reichlich Berichte über die Lebensgewohnheiten von Schildkröten in ihren natürlichen Verbreitungsgebieten vor. Auffallend und übereinstimmend ist in ihnen, daß adulte und semiadulte Tiere gefunden und deren Verhalten beschrieben wird. Nirgendwo findet sich jedoch ein Hinweis auf sich sonnende »UV-hungrige« juvenile Schildkröten, ja in einigen Berichten wird ausdrücklich vermerkt, daß keine juvenilen Exemplare gefunden wurden (z.B. STRATHEMANN 1986). Wo aber halten sich diese Tiere auf und was können wir für die Aufzucht daraus lernen? Ich denke, wir können davon ausgehen, daß die Jungtiere eine sehr versteckte Lebensweise führen. Sie halten sich offensichtlich in Gebüsch, unter niedrigen Kräutern und in Laubablagerungen sehr verdeckt. Dies wäre ein Grund warum sie den Beobachtern vor Ort meist entgehen. Dieses Verhalten würde aber bedeuten, daß sich die Tie-

re in einem Mikroklima aufhalten, das wesentlich kühler und feuchter ist als wir die Aufzuchtterrarien einrichten, wenn wir an das Makroklima südlicher Länder denken.

Was werden die Tiere aber in ihrer Deckung fressen, und wie kommen sie mit den niedrigeren Temperaturen und der geringen UV-Exposition zurecht? Wenn man annimmt, daß sich die Tiere in hohem Maße von Insekten und deren Larven sowie von Würmern und Schnecken ernähren, die ja ebenso dieses Mikroklima bevorzugen, sind die obigen Fragen leicht beantwortet. Diese proteinreiche Nahrung ist auch mit niedrigerer Körpertemperatur verdaulich. Für die kohlehydratreiche Ernährung der adulten Tiere jedoch sind höhere »Betriebstemperaturen« erforderlich. Proteinabbau führt aber zu großen Mengen stickstoffhaltiger Abbauprodukte. Das feuchte Mikroklima erleichtert die Ausscheidung dieser harmpflichtigen Stickstoffverbindungen sicher erheblich und verhindert andererseits die Entwicklung z.B. der Gicht, die wir gelegentlich bei proteinreicher Ernährung adulter Tiere beobachten. Ein Nahrungsspektrum von Insekten, Würmern, etc. dürfte auch den Bedarf an Mineralien und, denkt man nur an Laub- und Regenwürmer, den Bedarf an aktiviertem Vitamin D abdecken.

Ausgehend von diesen Überlegungen setzte ich frisch erworbene *Testudo marginata*-Schlüpflinge in das Terrarium, in dem ich meine Nachzuchten von *Terrapene mexicana* aufziehe. Dabei handelt es sich um ein Glasbecken mit einer 6–10 cm dicken Schicht feuchten Sandes und feuchter Hobelspäne. Das Substrat ist teilweise mit Rindenstük-





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

Zur Höckerbildung bei der Aufzucht von  
Landschildkröten

Dr. med. Ronald WESER  
mit 2 Abb. vom Verfasser

Regelmäßig findet man in der Literatur Hinweise, wie Landschildkröten aufzuziehen seien. Zusammenfassend kann man den einschlägigen Werken entnehmen, daß juvenile Schildkröten Wärme, UV-Strahlung, Kalk und Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> benötigen, um nicht höckerige Panzer auszubilden. Daran kann auch kein Zweifel mehr bestehen. Wenn man aber trotz Kenntnis und Befolgung dieser Ratschläge die Ergebnisse betrachtet, so findet man wohl bei nahezu allen Pflegern eine mehr oder weniger ausgeprägte Höckerbildung bei juvenilen Tieren.

stumszonen des Knochenpanzers müßten sich aber die rachitischen Veränderungen zeigen. Dies ist m.W. bisher kaum untersucht.

Was wissen wir aber über die natürlichen Bedingungen, in denen juvenile Schildkröten aufwachsen? Es liegen reichlich Berichte über die Lebensgewohnheiten von Schildkröten in ihren natürlichen Verbreitungsgebieten vor. Auffallend und übereinstimmend ist in ihnen, daß adulte und semiadulte Tiere gefunden und deren Verhalten beschrieben wird. Nirgendwo findet sich jedoch ein Hinweis auf sich sonnende »UV-hungrige« juvenile Schildkröten, ja in einigen Berichten wird ausdrücklich vermerkt, daß keine juvenilen Exemplare gefunden wurden (z.B. STRATHEMANN 1986). Wo aber halten sich diese Tiere auf und was können wir für die Aufzucht daraus lernen? Ich denke, wir können davon ausgehen, daß die Jungtiere eine sehr versteckte Lebensweise führen. Sie halten sich offensichtlich in Gebüsch, unter niedrigen Kräutern und in Laubablagerungen sehr verdeckt. Dies wäre ein Grund warum sie den Beobachtern vor Ort meist entgehen. Dieses Verhalten würde aber bedeuten, daß sich die Tiere

ja ebenso dieses Mikroklima bevorzugen, sind die obigen Fragen leicht beantwortet. Diese proteinreiche Nahrung ist auch mit niedrigerer Körpertemperatur verdauulich. Für die kohlehydratreiche Ernährung der adulten Tiere jedoch sind höhere »Betriebstemperaturen« erforderlich. Proteinabbau führt aber zu großen Mengen stickstoffhaltiger Abbauprodukte. Das feuchte Mikroklima erleichtert die Ausscheidung dieser harmpflüchtigen Stickstoffverbindungen sicher erheblich und verhindert andererseits die Entwicklung z.B. der Gicht, die wir gelegentlich bei proteinreicher Ernährung adulter Tiere beobachten. Ein Nahrungsspektrum von Insekten, Würmern, etc. dürfte auch den Bedarf an Mineralien und, denkt man nur an Laub- und Regenwürmer, den Bedarf an aktiviertem Vitamin D abdecken.

Ausgehend von diesen Überlegungen setzte ich frisch erworbene *Testudo marginata*-Schlüpflinge in das Terrarium, in dem ich meine Nachzuchten von *Terrapene mexicana* aufziehe. Dabei handelt es sich um ein Glasbecken mit einer 6–10 cm dicken Schicht feuchten Sandes und feuchter Hobelspäne. Das Substrat ist teilweise mit Rindenstük-



*T. bermannii* aus Terrariennachzucht mit Höckerbildung trotz Kalk- und Vitaminfütterung sowie UV-Bestrahlung



## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

### Zur Höckerbildung bei der Aufzucht von Landschildkröten

Dr. med. Ronald WESER  
mit 2 Abb. vom Verfasser

#### Abstract

The well known problem of development of carapace humps in captivity-bred European and tropical species of land-inhabiting turtles is discussed and analyzed extensively. An experiment with a carnivorous diet accompanied by moist climate conditions for juveniles resulted to full satisfaction and suggests a final solution.

Regelmäßig findet man in der Literatur Hinweise, wie Landschildkröten aufzuziehen seien. Zusammenfassend kann man den einschlägigen Werken entnehmen, daß juvenile Schildkröten Wärme, UV-Strahlung, Kalk und Vitamin D, benötigen, um nicht höckerige Panzer auszubilden. Daran kann auch kein Zweifel mehr bestehen. Wenn man aber trotz Kenntnis und Befolgung dieser Ratschläge die Ergebnisse betrachtet, so findet man wohl bei nahezu allen Pilegern eine mehr oder weniger ausgeprägte Höckerbildung bei juvenilen Tieren.

Mithin, diese Faktoren scheinen noch nicht ausreichend, um die allgemein als Rachitis bezeichnete Erscheinung zu vermeiden. Die Bezeichnung »Rachitis«, also eine Knochenwachstumsstörung infolge Vitamin D-Mangels, ist sicher für die Höckerbildung nicht ganz zutreffend. Die Veränderungen, die wir sehen, sind Störungen an den Wachstumszonen der Schilder – diese sind aber nicht identisch mit den Wachstumszonen des knöchernen Panzers. Gerade an den Wachstumszonen des Knochenpanzers müßten sich aber die rachitischen Veränderungen zeigen. Dies ist m.W. bisher kaum untersucht.

Was wissen wir aber über die natürlichen Bedingungen, in denen juvenile Schildkröten aufwachsen? Es liegen reichlich Berichte über die Lebensgewohnheiten von Schildkröten in ihren natürlichen Verbreitungsgebieten vor. Auffallend und übereinstimmend ist in ihnen, daß adulte und semiadulte Tiere gefunden und deren Verhalten beschrieben wird. Nirgendwo findet sich jedoch ein Hinweis auf sich sonnende »UV-hungrige« juvenile Schildkröten, ja in einigen Berichten wird ausdrücklich vermerkt, daß keine juvenilen Exemplare gefunden wurden (z.B. STRATHEMANN 1986). Wo aber halten sich diese Tiere auf und was können wir für die Aufzucht daraus lernen? Ich denke, wir können davon ausgehen, daß die Jungtiere eine sehr versteckte Lebensweise führen. Sie halten sich offensichtlich in Gebüsch, unter niedrigen Kräutern und in Laubablagerungen sehr verdeckt. Dies wäre ein Grund warum sie den Beobachtern vor Ort meist entgehen. Dieses Verhalten würde aber bedeuten, daß sich die Tie-

re in einem Mikroklima aufhalten, das wesentlich kühler und feuchter ist als wir die Aufzuchtterrarien einrichten, wenn wir an das Makroklima südlicher Länder denken.

Was werden die Tiere aber in ihrer Deckung fressen, und wie kommen sie mit den niedrigeren Temperaturen und der geringen UV-Exposition zurecht? Wenn man annimmt, daß sich die Tiere in hohem Maße von Insekten und deren Larven sowie von Würmern und Schnecken ernähren, die ja ebenso dieses Mikroklima bevorzugen, sind die obigen Fragen leicht beantwortet. Diese proteinreiche Nahrung ist auch mit niedrigerer Körpertemperatur verdaulich. Für die kohlehydratreiche Ernährung der adulten Tiere jedoch sind höhere »Betriebstemperaturen« erforderlich. Proteinabbau führt aber zu großen Mengen stickstoffhaltiger Abbauprodukte. Das feuchte Mikroklima erleichtert die Ausscheidung dieser harmpflichtigen Stickstoffverbindungen sicher erheblich und verhindert andererseits die Entwicklung z.B. der Gicht, die wir gelegentlich bei proteinreicher Ernährung adulter Tiere beobachten. Ein Nahrungsspektrum von Insekten, Würmern, etc. dürfte auch den Bedarf an Mineralien und, denkt man nur an Laub- und Regenwürmer, den Bedarf an aktiviertem Vitamin D abdecken.

Ausgehend von diesen Überlegungen setzte ich frisch erworbene *Testudo marginata*-Schlüpflinge in das Terrarium, in dem ich meine Nachzuchten von *Terrapene mexicana* aufziehe. Dabei handelt es sich um ein Glasbecken mit einer 6–10 cm dicken Schicht feuchten Sandes und feuchter Hobelspäne. Das Substrat ist teilweise mit Rindenstük-

Breitrandschildkröten (*Testudo marginata*) aufgezogen mit Invertebraten-Nahrung und in feuchtem Milieu (Terrarium, feuchte Schicht Sand und Hobelspäne)





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

### Zur Höckerbildung bei der Aufzucht von Landschildkröten

Dr. med. Ronald WESER  
mit 2 Abb. vom Verfasser

#### Abstract

The well known problem of development of carapace humps in captivity-bred European and tropical species of land-inhabiting turtles is discussed and analyzed extensively. An experiment with a carnivorous diet accompanied by moist climate conditions for juveniles resulted to full satisfaction and suggests a final solution.

Regelmäßig findet man in der Literatur Hinweise, wie Landschildkröten aufzuziehen seien. Zusammenfassend kann man den einschlägigen Werken entnehmen, daß juvenile Schildkröten Wärme, UV-Strahlung, Kalk und Vitamin D, benötigen, um nicht höckerige Panzer auszubilden. Daran kann auch kein Zweifel mehr bestehen. Wenn man aber trotz Kenntnis und Befolgung dieser Ratschläge die Ergebnisse betrachtet, so findet man wohl bei nahezu allen Pflégern eine mehr oder weniger ausgeprägte Höckerbildung bei juvenilen Tieren.

Mithin, diese Faktoren scheinen noch nicht ausreichend, um die allgemein als Rachitis bezeichnete Erscheinung zu vermeiden. Die Bezeichnung »Rachitis«, also eine Knochenwachstumsstörung infolge Vitamin D-Mangels, ist sicher für die Höckerbildung nicht ganz zutreffend. Die Veränderungen, die wir sehen, sind Störungen an den Wachstumszonen der Schilder – diese sind aber nicht identisch mit den Wachstumszonen des knöchernen Panzers. Gerade an den Wachstumszonen des Knochenpanzers müßten sich aber die rachitischen Veränderungen zeigen. Dies ist m.W. bisher kaum untersucht.

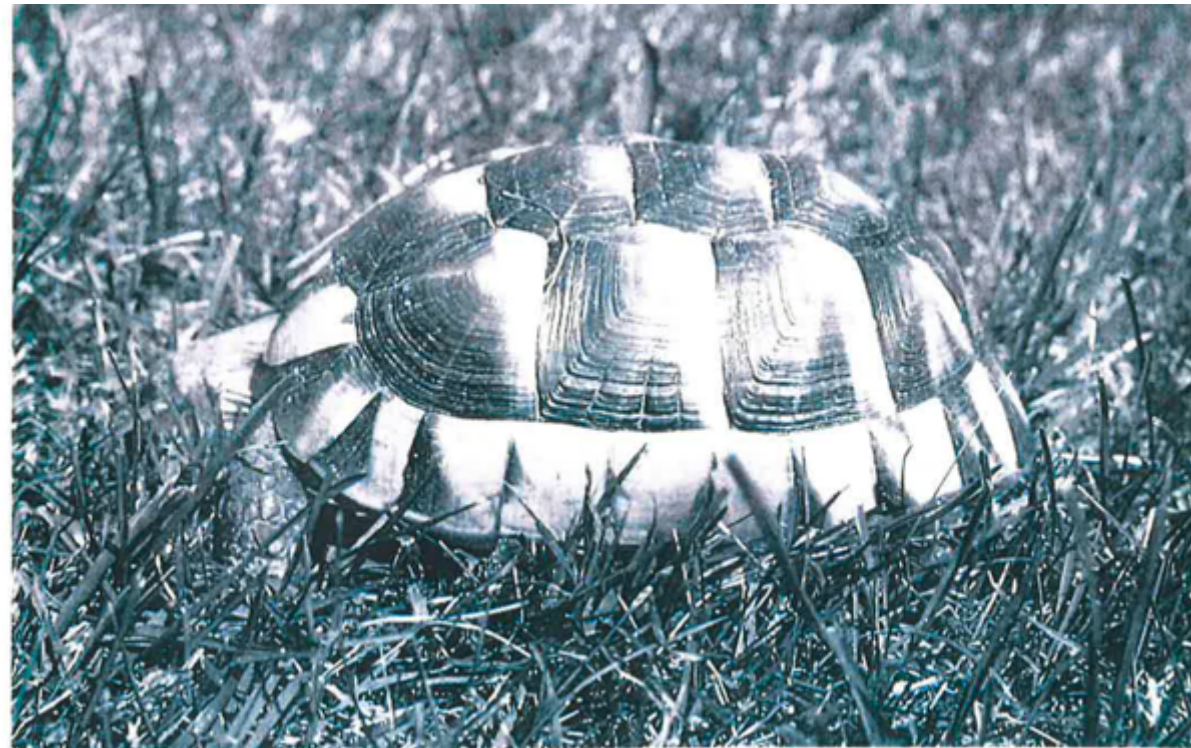
Was wissen wir aber über die natürlichen Bedingungen, in denen juvenile Schildkröten aufwachsen? Es liegen reichlich Berichte über die Lebensgewohnheiten von Schildkröten in ihren natürlichen Verbreitungsgebieten vor. Auffallend und übereinstimmend ist in ihnen, daß adulte und semiadulte Tiere gefunden und deren Verhalten beschrieben wird. Nirgendwo findet sich jedoch ein Hinweis auf sich sonnende »UV-hungrige« juvenile Schildkröten, ja in einigen Berichten wird ausdrücklich vermerkt, daß keine juvenilen Exemplare gefunden wurden (z.B. STRATHE-MANN 1986). Wo aber halten sich diese Tiere auf und was können wir für die Aufzucht daraus lernen? Ich denke, wir können davon ausgehen, daß die Jungtiere eine sehr versteckte Lebensweise führen. Sie halten sich offensichtlich in Gebüsch, unter niedrigen Kräutern und in Laubablagerungen sehr verdeckt. Dies wäre ein Grund warum sie den Beobachtern vor Ort meist entgehen. Dieses Verhalten würde aber bedeuten, daß sich die Tiere

in einem Mikroklima aufhalten, das wesentlich kühler und feuchter ist als wir die Aufzuchtterrarien einrichten, wenn wir an das Makroklima südlicher Länder denken.

Was werden die Tiere aber in ihrer Deckung fressen, und wie kommen sie mit den niedrigeren Temperaturen und der geringen UV-Exposition zurecht? Wenn man annimmt, daß sich die Tiere in hohem Maße von Insekten und deren Larven sowie von Würmern und Schnecken ernähren, die ja ebenso dieses Mikroklima bevorzugen, sind die obigen Fragen leicht beantwortet. Diese proteinreiche Nahrung ist auch mit niedrigerer Körpertemperatur verdaulich. Für die kohlehydratreiche Ernährung der adulten Tiere jedoch sind höhere »Betriebstemperaturen« erforderlich. Proteinabbau führt aber zu großen Mengen stickstoffhaltiger Abbauprodukte. Das feuchte Mikroklima erleichtert die Ausscheidung dieser harmpflüchtigen Stickstoffverbindungen sicher erheblich und verhindert andererseits die Entwicklung z.B. der Gicht, die wir gelegentlich bei proteinreicher Ernährung adulter Tiere beobachten. Ein Nahrungsspektrum von Insekten, Würmern, etc. dürfte auch den Bedarf an Mineralien und, denkt man nur an Laub- und Regenwürmer, den Bedarf an aktiviertem Vitamin D abdecken.

Ausgehend von diesen Überlegungen setzte ich frisch erworbene *Testudo marginata*-Schlüpflinge in das Terrarium, in dem ich meine Nachzuchten von *Terrapene mexicana* aufziehe. Dabei handelt es sich um ein Glasbecken mit einer 6–10 cm dicken Schicht feuchten Sandes und feuchter Hobelspäne. Das Substrat ist teilweise mit Rindenstük-

Breitrandsschildkröten (*Testudo marginata*) aufgezogen mit Invertebraten-Nahrung und in feuchtem Milieu (Terrarium, feuchte Schicht Sand und Hobelspäne)



*T. marginata* in der hier beschriebenen Weise gepflegt, 2 Jahre alt, Carapaxlänge 15 cm, Gewicht 600 g





# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

J. Anim. Physiol. a. Anim. Nutr. 87 (2003), 66–74  
© 2003 Blackwell Verlag, Berlin  
ISSN 0931–2439

Receipt of Ms.: 03. 06. 2002  
Accepted: 23. 10. 2002

Institute of Nutrition, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria

## Influence of environmental humidity and dietary protein on pyramidal growth of carapaces in African spurred tortoises (*Geochelone sulcata*)

By C. S. WIESNER and C. IBEN

### Summary

The carapaces of captive-raised tortoises (terrestrial chelonians of the zoological family *Testudinidae*, often develop pyramidal-shaped osseous growth centrally within the horny plates. With very few exceptions (e.g. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.), this conical growth pattern is considered to be pathologic. This very common defect is believed to be an important indicator of the quality of captive tortoise management. This study was designed to examine the effect of dietary protein level and environmental humidity on the degree of pyramidal growth in the carapaces. Fifty recently hatched African spurred tortoises (*G. sulcata*) were raised for 5 months under artificial conditions of varying environmental humidity and dietary protein content (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% crude protein in dry matter). Humps of the carapaces that developed and blood values of calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit were measured and compared among groups. Dry environmental conditions (24.3–57.8% and 30.6–74.8% relative humidity) produced taller humps than humid conditions (45–99% relative humidity). Hump formation differed significantly ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) between these three groups kept under different humidity conditions. Variable dietary protein had a minor, positive impact on this pathological formation of humps (pyramidal growth syndrome, PGS). Analysis of blood (calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit) offered no further explanation as to the development of the humps.

### Zusammenfassung

Bei in Gefangenschaft gehaltenen Schildkröten entwickelt sich häufig im Zentrum der Hornplatten des Rückenpanzers ein pyramidisch geformtes Knochenwachstum. Mit wenigen Ausnahmen (z.B. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.) wird dieses kegelförmige Wachstum als pathologisch angesehen und es besteht die Annahme, dass dieses Wachstumsverhalten ein Parameter zur Beurteilung der Haltungsbedingungen der Tiere ist. In vorliegendem Versuch sollte der Einfluß der relativen Luftfeuchtigkeit sowie des Rohproteingehaltes im Futter auf die Höckerbildung untersucht werden. Fünfzig Schlüpflinge von afrikanischen Sporenschildkröten (*G. sulcata*) wurden fünf Monate lang unter unterschiedlich feuchten Umweltbedingungen gehalten sowie mit Futtermitteln, welche sich durch ihren Eiweißgehalt unterschieden (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% Rohprotein in der Trockensubstanz), ernährt. Die während dieser Zeit gebildeten Panzerhöcker wurden anschließend vermessen und die Kalzium, Phosphor- und Hämatokritwerte im Blut untersucht und zwischen den Versuchsgruppen verglichen. Trockene Haltung (24.3–57.8% bzw. 30.6–74.8% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit) führte zu stärkerer Höckerbildung als feuchte Haltung (45–99% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit). Die Höckerbildung war zwischen den drei

U. S. Copyright Clearance Center Code Statement: 0931–2439/2003/8701–0066\$15.00/0 www.blackwell.de/synergy



# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

J. Anim. Physiol. a. Anim. Nutr. 87 (2003), 66–74  
© 2003 Blackwell Verlag, Berlin  
ISSN 0931–2439

Receipt of Ms.: 03. 06. 2002  
Accepted: 23. 10. 2002

Institute of Nutrition, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria

## Influence of environmental humidity and dietary protein on pyramidal growth of carapaces in African spurred tortoises (*Geochelone sulcata*)

By C. S. WIESNER and C. IBEN

### Summary

The carapaces of captive-raised tortoises (terrestrial chelonians of the zoological family *Testudinidae*, often develop pyramidal-shaped osseous growth centrally within the horny plates. With very few exceptions (e.g. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.), this conical growth pattern is considered to be pathologic. This very common defect is believed to be an important indicator of the quality of captive tortoise management. This study was designed to examine the effect of dietary protein level and environmental humidity on the degree of pyramidal growth in the carapaces. Fifty recently hatched African spurred tortoises (*G. sulcata*) were raised for 5 months under artificial conditions of varying environmental humidity and dietary protein content (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% crude protein in dry matter). Humps of the carapaces that developed and blood values of calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit were measured and compared among groups. Dry environmental conditions (24.3–57.8% and 30.6–74.8% relative humidity) produced taller humps than humid conditions (45–99% relative humidity). Hump formation differed significantly ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) between these three groups kept under different humidity conditions. Variable dietary protein had a minor, positive impact on this pathological formation of humps (pyramidal growth syndrome, PGS). Analysis of blood (calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit) offered no further explanation as to the development of the humps.

### Zusammenfassung

Bei in Gefangenschaft gehaltenen Schildkröten entwickelt sich häufig im Zentrum der Hornplatten des Rückenpanzers ein pyramidisch geformtes Knochenwachstum. Mit wenigen Ausnahmen (z.B. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.) wird dieses kegelförmige Wachstum als pathologisch angesehen und es besteht die Annahme, dass dieses Wachstumsverhalten ein Parameter zur Beurteilung der Haltungsbedingungen der Tiere ist. In vorliegendem Versuch sollte der Einfluß der relativen Luftfeuchtigkeit sowie des Rohproteingehaltes im Futter auf die Höckerbildung untersucht werden. Fünfzig Schlüpflinge von afrikanischen Sporenschildkröten (*G. sulcata*) wurden fünf Monate lang unter unterschiedlich feuchten Umweltbedingungen gehalten sowie mit Futtermitteln, welche sich durch ihren Eiweißgehalt unterschieden (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% Rohprotein in der Trockensubstanz), ernährt. Die während dieser Zeit gebildeten Panzerhöcker wurden anschließend vermessen und die Kalzium, Phosphor- und Hämatokritwerte im Blut untersucht und zwischen den Versuchsgruppen verglichen. Trockene Haltung (24.3–57.8% bzw. 30.6–74.8% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit) führte zu stärkerer Höckerbildung als feuchte Haltung (45–99% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit). Die Höckerbildung war zwischen den drei

U. S. Copyright Clearance Center Code Statement: 0931–2439/2003/8701–0066\$15.00/0 www.blackwell.de/synergy



## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

J. Anim. Physiol. a. Anim. Nutr. 87 (2003), 66–74  
© 2003 Blackwell Verlag, Berlin  
ISSN 0931–2439

Receipt of Ms.: 03. 06. 2002  
Accepted: 23. 10. 2002

Institute of Nutrition, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria

### Influence of environmental humidity and dietary protein on pyramidal growth of carapaces in African spurred tortoises (*Geochelone sulcata*)

By C. S. WIESNER and C. IBEN

#### Summary

The carapaces of captive-raised tortoises (terrestrial chelonians of the zoological family Testudinidae, often develop pyramidal-shaped osseous growth centrally within the horny plates. With very few exceptions (e.g. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.), this conical growth pattern is considered to be pathologic. This very common defect is believed to be an important indicator of the quality of captive tortoise management. This study was designed to examine the effect of dietary protein level and environmental humidity on the degree of pyramidal growth in the carapaces. Fifty recently hatched African spurred tortoises (*G. sulcata*) were raised for 5 months under artificial conditions of varying environmental humidity and dietary protein content (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% crude protein in dry matter). Humps of the carapaces that developed and blood values of calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit were measured and compared among groups. Dry environmental conditions (24.3–57.8% and 30.6–74.8% relative humidity) produced taller humps than humid conditions (45–99% relative humidity). Hump formation differed significantly ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) between these three groups kept under different humidity conditions. Variable dietary protein had a minor, positive impact on this pathological formation of humps (pyramidal growth syndrome, PGS). Analysis of blood (calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit) offered no further explanation as to the development of the humps.

#### Zusammenfassung

Bei in Gefangenschaft gehaltenen Schildkröten entwickelt sich häufig im Zentrum der Hornplatten des Rückenpanzers ein pyramidisch geformtes Knochenwachstum. Mit wenigen Ausnahmen (z.B. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.) wird dieses kegelförmige Wachstum als pathologisch angesehen und es besteht die Annahme, dass dieses Wachstumsverhalten ein Parameter zur Beurteilung der Haltungsbedingungen der Tiere ist. In vorliegendem Versuch sollte der Einfluß der relativen Luftfeuchtigkeit sowie des Rohproteingehaltes im Futter auf die Höckerbildung untersucht werden. Fünfzig Schlüpflinge von afrikanischen Sporenschildkröten (*G. sulcata*) wurden fünf Monate lang unter unterschiedlich feuchten Umweltbedingungen gehalten sowie mit Futtermitteln, welche sich durch ihren Eiweißgehalt unterschieden (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% Rohprotein in der Trockensubstanz), ernährt. Die während dieser Zeit gebildeten Panzerhöcker wurden anschließend vermessen und die Kalzium, Phosphor- und Hämatokritwerte im Blut untersucht und zwischen den Versuchsgruppen verglichen. Trockene Haltung (24.3–57.8% bzw. 30.6–74.8% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit) führte zu stärkerer Höckerbildung als feuchte Haltung (45–99% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit). Die Höckerbildung war zwischen den drei

U. S. Copyright Clearance Center Code Statement: 0931–2439/2003/8701–0066\$15.00/0 www.blackwell.de/synergy

Table 1. Environmental humidity and dietary protein concentrations for the five experimental

	Groups of <i>Geochelone sulcata</i>				
	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
Environmental humidity	24.3–57.8	27.4–55.5	30.6–74.8	47.9–99	45–99
Protein (%DM)	14	19	19	19	30
Environmental humidity: mean of eight weekly measured values of the maximum and minimum relative humidity in percentage					





# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

J. Anim. Physiol. a. Anim. Nutr. 87 (2003), 66–74  
© 2003 Blackwell Verlag, Berlin  
ISSN 0931–2439

Receipt of Ms.: 03. 06. 2002  
Accepted: 23. 10. 2002

Institute of Nutrition, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria

## Influence of environmental humidity and dietary protein on pyramidal growth of carapaces in African spurred tortoises (*Geochelone sulcata*)

By C. S. WIESNER and C. IBEN

### Summary

The carapaces of captive-raised tortoises (terrestrial chelonians of the zoological family Testudinidae, often develop pyramidal-shaped osseous growth centrally within the horny plates. With very few exceptions (e.g. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.), this conical growth pattern is considered to be pathologic. This very common defect is believed to be an important indicator of the quality of captive tortoise management. This study was designed to examine the effect of dietary protein level and environmental humidity on the degree of pyramidal growth in the carapaces. Fifty recently hatched African spurred tortoises (*G. sulcata*) were raised for 5 months under artificial conditions of varying environmental humidity and dietary protein content (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% crude protein in dry matter). Humps of the carapaces that developed and blood values of calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit were measured and compared among groups. Dry environmental conditions (24.3–57.8% and 30.6–74.8% relative humidity) produced taller humps than humid conditions (45–99% relative humidity). Hump formation differed significantly ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) between these three groups kept under different humidity conditions. Variable dietary protein had a minor, positive impact on this pathological formation of humps (pyramidal growth syndrome, PGS). Analysis of blood (calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit) offered no further explanation as to the development of the humps.

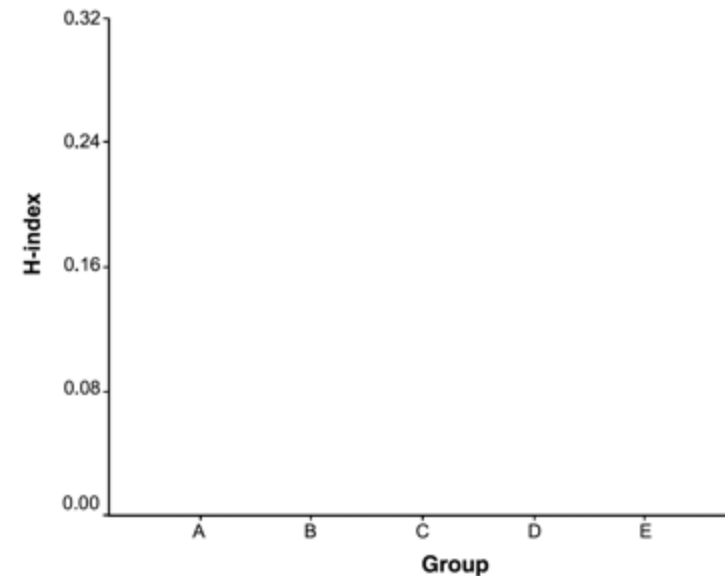
### Zusammenfassung

Bei in Gefangenschaft gehaltenen Schildkröten entwickelt sich häufig im Zentrum der Hornplatten des Rückenpanzers ein pyramidisch geformtes Knochenwachstum. Mit wenigen Ausnahmen (z.B. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.) wird dieses kegelförmige Wachstum als pathologisch angesehen und es besteht die Annahme, dass dieses Wachstumsverhalten ein Parameter zur Beurteilung der Haltungsbedingungen der Tiere ist. In vorliegendem Versuch sollte der Einfluß der relativen Luftfeuchtigkeit sowie des Rohproteingehaltes im Futter auf die Höckerbildung untersucht werden. Fünfzig Schlüpflinge von afrikanischen Sporenschildkröten (*G. sulcata*) wurden fünf Monate lang unter unterschiedlich feuchten Umweltbedingungen gehalten sowie mit Futtermitteln, welche sich durch ihren Eiweißgehalt unterschieden (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% Rohprotein in der Trockensubstanz), ernährt. Die während dieser Zeit gebildeten Panzerhöcker wurden anschließend vermessen und die Kalzium, Phosphor- und Hämatokritwerte im Blut untersucht und zwischen den Versuchsgruppen verglichen. Trockene Haltung (24.3–57.8% bzw. 30.6–74.8% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit) führte zu stärkerer Höckerbildung als feuchte Haltung (45–99% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit). Die Höckerbildung war zwischen den drei

U. S. Copyright Clearance Center Code Statement: 0931–2439/2003/8701–0066\$15.00/0 www.blackwell.de/synergy

Table 1. Environmental humidity and dietary protein concentrations for the five experimental

	Groups of <i>Geochelone sulcata</i>				
	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
Environmental humidity	24.3–57.8	27.4–55.5	30.6–74.8	47.9–99	45–99
Protein (%DM)	14	19	19	19	30
Environmental humidity: mean of eight weekly measured values of the maximum and minimum relative humidity in percentage					





# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

J. Anim. Physiol. a. Anim. Nutr. 87 (2003), 66–74  
© 2003 Blackwell Verlag, Berlin  
ISSN 0931–2439

Receipt of Ms.: 03. 06. 2002  
Accepted: 23. 10. 2002

Institute of Nutrition, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria

## Influence of environmental humidity and dietary protein on pyramidal growth of carapaces in African spurred tortoises (*Geochelone sulcata*)

By C. S. WIESNER and C. IBEN

### Summary

The carapaces of captive-raised tortoises (terrestrial chelonians of the zoological family Testudinidae, often develop pyramidal-shaped osseous growth centrally within the horny plates. With very few exceptions (e.g. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.), this conical growth pattern is considered to be pathologic. This very common defect is believed to be an important indicator of the quality of captive tortoise management. This study was designed to examine the effect of dietary protein level and environmental humidity on the degree of pyramidal growth in the carapaces. Fifty recently hatched African spurred tortoises (*G. sulcata*) were raised for 5 months under artificial conditions of varying environmental humidity and dietary protein content (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% crude protein in dry matter). Humps of the carapaces that developed and blood values of calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit were measured and compared among groups. Dry environmental conditions (24.3–57.8% and 30.6–74.8% relative humidity) produced taller humps than humid conditions (45–99% relative humidity). Hump formation differed significantly ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) between these three groups kept under different humidity conditions. Variable dietary protein had a minor, positive impact on this pathological formation of humps (pyramidal growth syndrome, PGS). Analysis of blood (calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit) offered no further explanation as to the development of the humps.

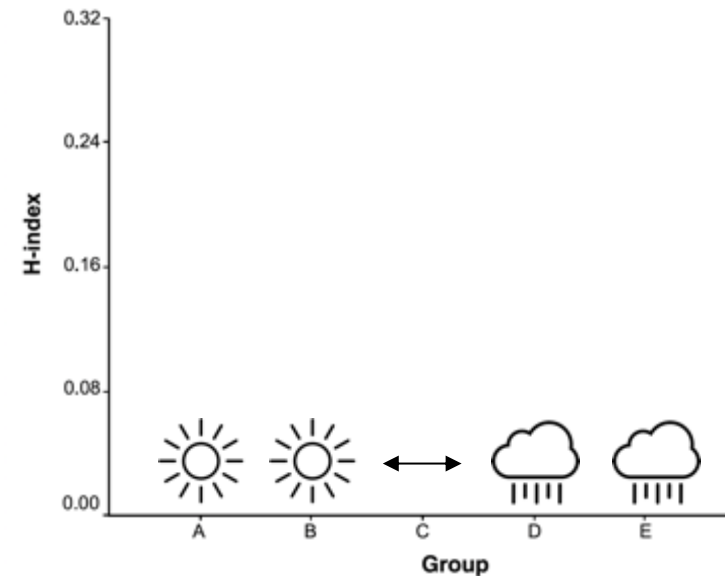
### Zusammenfassung

Bei in Gefangenschaft gehaltenen Schildkröten entwickelt sich häufig im Zentrum der Hornplatten des Rückenpanzers ein pyramidisch geformtes Knochenwachstum. Mit wenigen Ausnahmen (z.B. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.) wird dieses kegelförmige Wachstum als pathologisch angesehen und es besteht die Annahme, dass dieses Wachstumsverhalten ein Parameter zur Beurteilung der Haltungsbedingungen der Tiere ist. In vorliegendem Versuch sollte der Einfluß der relativen Luftfeuchtigkeit sowie des Rohproteingehaltes im Futter auf die Höckerbildung untersucht werden. Fünfzig Schlüpflinge von afrikanischen Sporenschildkröten (*G. sulcata*) wurden fünf Monate lang unter unterschiedlich feuchten Umweltbedingungen gehalten sowie mit Futtermitteln, welche sich durch ihren Eiweißgehalt unterschieden (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% Rohprotein in der Trockensubstanz), ernährt. Die während dieser Zeit gebildeten Panzerhöcker wurden anschließend vermessen und die Kalzium, Phosphor- und Hämatokritwerte im Blut untersucht und zwischen den Versuchsgruppen verglichen. Trockene Haltung (24.3–57.8% bzw. 30.6–74.8% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit) führte zu stärkerer Höckerbildung als feuchte Haltung (45–99% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit). Die Höckerbildung war zwischen den drei

U. S. Copyright Clearance Center Code Statement: 0931-2439/2003/8701-0066 \$15.00/0 www.blackwell.de/synergy

Table 1. Environmental humidity and dietary protein concentrations for the five experimental

	Groups of <i>Geochelone sulcata</i>				
	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
Environmental humidity	24.3–57.8	27.4–55.5	30.6–74.8	47.9–99	45–99
Protein (%DM)	14	19	19	19	30
Environmental humidity: mean of eight weekly measured values of the maximum and minimum relative humidity in percentage					





# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

J. Anim. Physiol. a. Anim. Nutr. 87 (2003), 66–74  
© 2003 Blackwell Verlag, Berlin  
ISSN 0931-2439

Receipt of Ms.: 03. 06. 2002  
Accepted: 23. 10. 2002

Institute of Nutrition, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria

## Influence of environmental humidity and dietary protein on pyramidal growth of carapaces in African spurred tortoises (*Geochelone sulcata*)

By C. S. WIESNER and C. IBEN

### Summary

The carapaces of captive-raised tortoises (terrestrial chelonians of the zoological family Testudinidae, often develop pyramidal-shaped osseous growth centrally within the horny plates. With very few exceptions (e.g. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.), this conical growth pattern is considered to be pathologic. This very common defect is believed to be an important indicator of the quality of captive tortoise management. This study was designed to examine the effect of dietary protein level and environmental humidity on the degree of pyramidal growth in the carapaces. Fifty recently hatched African spurred tortoises (*G. sulcata*) were raised for 5 months under artificial conditions of varying environmental humidity and dietary protein content (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% crude protein in dry matter). Humps of the carapaces that developed and blood values of calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit were measured and compared among groups. Dry environmental conditions (24.3–57.8% and 30.6–74.8% relative humidity) produced taller humps than humid conditions (45–99% relative humidity). Hump formation differed significantly ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) between these three groups kept under different humidity conditions. Variable dietary protein had a minor, positive impact on this pathological formation of humps (pyramidal growth syndrome, PGS). Analysis of blood (calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit) offered no further explanation as to the development of the humps.

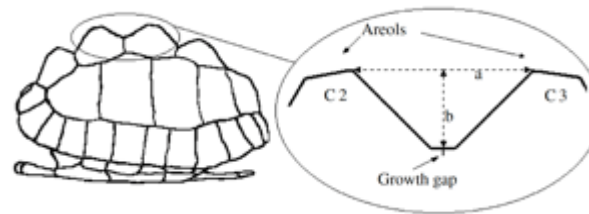
### Zusammenfassung

Bei in Gefangenschaft gehaltenen Schildkröten entwickelt sich häufig im Zentrum der Hornplatten des Rückenpanzers ein pyramidisch geformtes Knochenwachstum. Mit wenigen Ausnahmen (z.B. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.) wird dieses kegelförmige Wachstum als pathologisch angesehen und es besteht die Annahme, dass dieses Wachstumsverhalten ein Parameter zur Beurteilung der Haltungsbedingungen der Tiere ist. In vorliegendem Versuch sollte der Einfluß der relativen Luftfeuchtigkeit sowie des Rohproteingehaltes im Futter auf die Höckerbildung untersucht werden. Fünfzig Schlüpflinge von afrikanischen Sporenschildkröten (*G. sulcata*) wurden fünf Monate lang unter unterschiedlich feuchten Umweltbedingungen gehalten sowie mit Futtermitteln, welche sich durch ihren Eiweißgehalt unterschieden (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% Rohprotein in der Trockensubstanz), ernährt. Die während dieser Zeit gebildeten Panzerhöcker wurden anschließend vermessen und die Kalzium, Phosphor- und Hämatokritwerte im Blut untersucht und zwischen den Versuchsgruppen verglichen. Trockene Haltung (24.3–57.8% bzw. 30.6–74.8% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit) führte zu stärkerer Höckerbildung als feuchte Haltung (45–99% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit). Die Höckerbildung war zwischen den drei

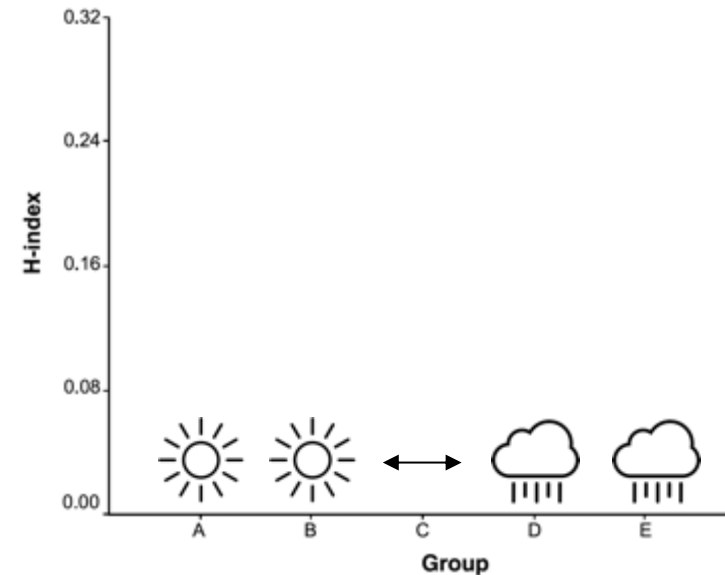
U. S. Copyright Clearance Center Code Statement: 0931-2439/2003/8701-0066\$15.00/0 www.blackwell.de/synergy

Table 1. Environmental humidity and dietary protein concentrations for the five experimental

	Groups of <i>Geochelone sulcata</i>				
	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
Environmental humidity	24.3–57.8	27.4–55.5	30.6–74.8	47.9–99	45–99
Protein (%DM)	14	19	19	19	30
Environmental humidity: mean of eight weekly measured values of the maximum and minimum relative humidity in percentage					



$$H\text{-value} = b/a$$







## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

J. Anim. Physiol. a. Anim. Nutr. 87 (2003), 66–74  
© 2003 Blackwell Verlag, Berlin  
ISSN 0931–2439

Receipt of Ms.: 03. 06. 2002  
Accepted: 23. 10. 2002

Institute of Nutrition, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria

### Influence of environmental humidity and dietary protein on pyramidal growth of carapaces in African spurred tortoises (*Geochelone sulcata*)

By C. S. WIESNER and C. IBEN

#### Summary

The carapaces of captive-raised tortoises (terrestrial chelonians of the zoological family Testudinidae, often develop pyramidal-shaped osseous growth centrally within the horny plates. With very few exceptions (e.g. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.), this conical growth pattern is considered to be pathologic. This very common defect is believed to be an important indicator of the quality of captive tortoise management. This study was designed to examine the effect of dietary protein level and environmental humidity on the degree of pyramidal growth in the carapaces. Fifty recently hatched African spurred tortoises (*G. sulcata*) were raised for 5 months under artificial conditions of varying environmental humidity and dietary protein content (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% crude protein in dry matter). Humps of the carapaces that developed and blood values of calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit were measured and compared among groups. Dry environmental conditions (24.3–57.8% and 30.6–74.8% relative humidity) produced taller humps than humid conditions (45–99% relative humidity). Hump formation differed significantly ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) between these three groups kept under different humidity conditions. Variable dietary protein had a minor, positive impact on this pathological formation of humps (pyramidal growth syndrome, PGS). Analysis of blood (calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit) offered no further explanation as to the development of the humps.

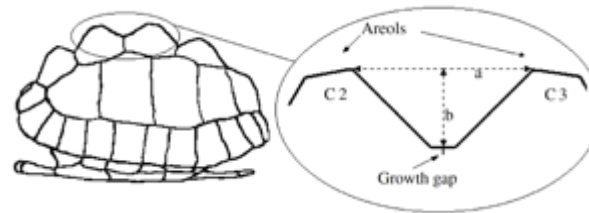
#### Zusammenfassung

Bei in Gefangenschaft gehaltenen Schildkröten entwickelt sich häufig im Zentrum der Hornplatten des Rückenpanzers ein pyramidisch geformtes Knochenwachstum. Mit wenigen Ausnahmen (z.B. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.) wird dieses kegelförmige Wachstum als pathologisch angesehen und es besteht die Annahme, dass dieses Wachstumsverhalten ein Parameter zur Beurteilung der Haltungsbedingungen der Tiere ist. In vorliegendem Versuch sollte der Einfluß der relativen Luftfeuchtigkeit sowie des Rohproteingehaltes im Futter auf die Höckerbildung untersucht werden. Fünfzig Schlüpflinge von afrikanischen Spornschildkröten (*G. sulcata*) wurden fünf Monate lang unter unterschiedlich feuchten Umweltbedingungen gehalten sowie mit Futtermitteln, welche sich durch ihren Eiweißgehalt unterschieden (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% Rohprotein in der Trockensubstanz), ernährt. Die während dieser Zeit gebildeten Panzerhöcker wurden anschließend vermessen und die Kalzium, Phosphor- und Hämatokritwerte im Blut untersucht und zwischen den Versuchsgruppen verglichen. Trockene Haltung (24.3–57.8% bzw. 30.6–74.8% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit) führte zu stärkerer Höckerbildung als feuchte Haltung (45–99% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit). Die Höckerbildung war zwischen den drei

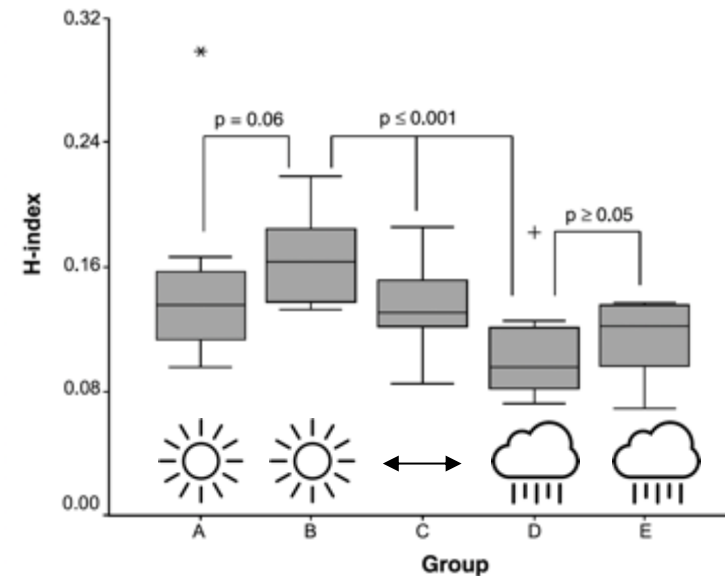
U. S. Copyright Clearance Center Code Statement: 0931-2439/2003/8701-0066\$15.00/0 www.blackwell.de/synergy

Table 1. Environmental humidity and dietary protein concentrations for the five experimental

	Groups of <i>Geochelone sulcata</i>				
	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
Environmental humidity	24.3–57.8	27.4–55.5	30.6–74.8	47.9–99	45–99
Protein (%DM)	14	19	19	19	30
Environmental humidity: mean of eight weekly measured values of the maximum and minimum relative humidity in percentage					



$$H\text{-value} = b/a$$





# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

J. Anim. Physiol. a. Anim. Nutr. 87 (2003), 66–74  
© 2003 Blackwell Verlag, Berlin  
ISSN 0931-2439

Receipt of Ms.: 03. 06. 2002  
Accepted: 23. 10. 2002

Institute of Nutrition, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria

## Influence of environmental humidity and dietary protein on pyramidal growth of carapaces in African spurred tortoises (*Geochelone sulcata*)

By C. S. WIESNER and C. IBEN

### Summary

The carapaces of captive-raised tortoises (terrestrial chelonians of the zoological family Testudinidae, often develop pyramidal-shaped osseous growth centrally within the horny plates. With very few exceptions (e.g. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.), this conical growth pattern is considered to be pathologic. This very common defect is believed to be an important indicator of the quality of captive tortoise management. This study was designed to examine the effect of dietary protein level and environmental humidity on the degree of pyramidal growth in the carapaces. Fifty recently hatched African spurred tortoises (*G. sulcata*) were raised for 5 months under artificial conditions of varying environmental humidity and dietary protein content (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% crude protein in dry matter). Humps of the carapaces that developed and blood values of calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit were measured and compared among groups. Dry environmental conditions (24.3–57.8% and 30.6–74.8% relative humidity) produced taller humps than humid conditions (45–99% relative humidity). Hump formation differed significantly ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) between these three groups kept under different humidity conditions. Variable dietary protein had a minor, positive impact on this pathological formation of humps (pyramidal growth syndrome, PGS). Analysis of blood (calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit) offered no further explanation as to the development of the humps.

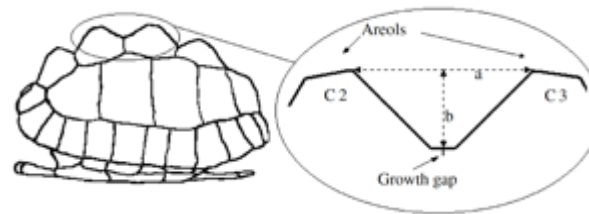
### Zusammenfassung

Bei in Gefangenschaft gehaltenen Schildkröten entwickelt sich häufig im Zentrum der Hornplatten des Rückenpanzers ein pyramidisch geformtes Knochenwachstum. Mit wenigen Ausnahmen (z.B. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.) wird dieses kegelförmige Wachstum als pathologisch angesehen und es besteht die Annahme, dass dieses Wachstumsverhalten ein Parameter zur Beurteilung der Haltungsbedingungen der Tiere ist. In vorliegendem Versuch sollte der Einfluß der relativen Luftfeuchtigkeit sowie des Rohproteingehaltes im Futter auf die Höckerbildung untersucht werden. Fünfzig Schlüpflinge von afrikanischen Spornschildkröten (*G. sulcata*) wurden fünf Monate lang unter unterschiedlich feuchten Umweltbedingungen gehalten sowie mit Futtermitteln, welche sich durch ihren Eiweißgehalt unterschieden (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% Rohprotein in der Trockensubstanz), ernährt. Die während dieser Zeit gebildeten Panzerhöcker wurden anschließend vermessen und die Kalzium, Phosphor- und Hämatokritwerte im Blut untersucht und zwischen den Versuchsgruppen verglichen. Trockene Haltung (24.3–57.8% bzw. 30.6–74.8% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit) führte zu stärkerer Höckerbildung als feuchte Haltung (45–99% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit). Die Höckerbildung war zwischen den drei

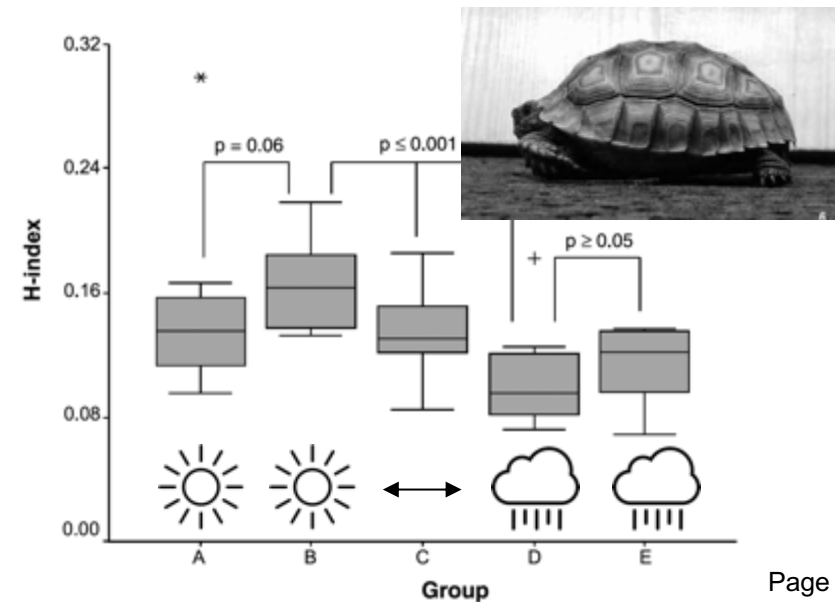
U. S. Copyright Clearance Center Code Statement: 0931-2439/2003/8701-0066\$15.00/0 www.blackwell.de/synergy

Table 1. Environmental humidity and dietary protein concentrations for the five experimental

	Groups of <i>Geochelone sulcata</i>				
	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
Environmental humidity	24.3–57.8	27.4–55.5	30.6–74.8	47.9–99	45–99
Protein (%DM)	14	19	19	19	30
Environmental humidity: mean of eight weekly measured values of the maximum and minimum relative humidity in percentage					



$$H\text{-value} = b/a$$





# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

J. Anim. Physiol. a. Anim. Nutr. 87 (2003), 66–74  
© 2003 Blackwell Verlag, Berlin  
ISSN 0931–2439

Receipt of Ms.: 03. 06. 2002  
Accepted: 23. 10. 2002

Institute of Nutrition, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria

## Influence of environmental humidity and dietary protein on pyramidal growth of carapaces in African spurred tortoises (*Geochelone sulcata*)

By C. S. WIESNER and C. IBEN

### Summary

The carapaces of captive-raised tortoises (terrestrial chelonians of the zoological family Testudinidae, often develop pyramidal-shaped osseous growth centrally within the horny plates. With very few exceptions (e.g. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.), this conical growth pattern is considered to be pathologic. This very common defect is believed to be an important indicator of the quality of captive tortoise management. This study was designed to examine the effect of dietary protein level and environmental humidity on the degree of pyramidal growth in the carapaces. Fifty recently hatched African spurred tortoises (*G. sulcata*) were raised for 5 months under artificial conditions of varying environmental humidity and dietary protein content (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% crude protein in dry matter). Humps of the carapaces that developed and blood values of calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit were measured and compared among groups. Dry environmental conditions (24.3–57.8% and 30.6–74.8% relative humidity) produced taller humps than humid conditions (45–99% relative humidity). Hump formation differed significantly ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) between these three groups kept under different humidity conditions. Variable dietary protein had a minor, positive impact on this pathological formation of humps (pyramidal growth syndrome, PGS). Analysis of blood (calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit) offered no further explanation as to the development of the humps.

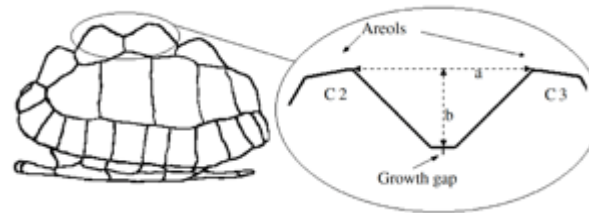
### Zusammenfassung

Bei in Gefangenschaft gehaltenen Schildkröten entwickelt sich häufig im Zentrum der Hornplatten des Rückenpanzers ein pyramidisch geformtes Knochenwachstum. Mit wenigen Ausnahmen (z.B. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.) wird dieses kegelförmige Wachstum als pathologisch angesehen und es besteht die Annahme, dass dieses Wachstumsverhalten ein Parameter zur Beurteilung der Haltungsbedingungen der Tiere ist. In vorliegendem Versuch sollte der Einfluß der relativen Luftfeuchtigkeit sowie des Rohproteingehaltes im Futter auf die Höckerbildung untersucht werden. Fünfzig Schlüpflinge von afrikanischen Spornschildkröten (*G. sulcata*) wurden fünf Monate lang unter unterschiedlich feuchten Umweltbedingungen gehalten sowie mit Futtermitteln, welche sich durch ihren Eiweißgehalt unterschieden (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% Rohprotein in der Trockensubstanz), ernährt. Die während dieser Zeit gebildeten Panzerhöcker wurden anschließend vermessen und die Kalzium, Phosphor- und Hämatokritwerte im Blut untersucht und zwischen den Versuchsgruppen verglichen. Trockene Haltung (24.3–57.8% bzw. 30.6–74.8% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit) führte zu stärkerer Höckerbildung als feuchte Haltung (45–99% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit). Die Höckerbildung war zwischen den drei

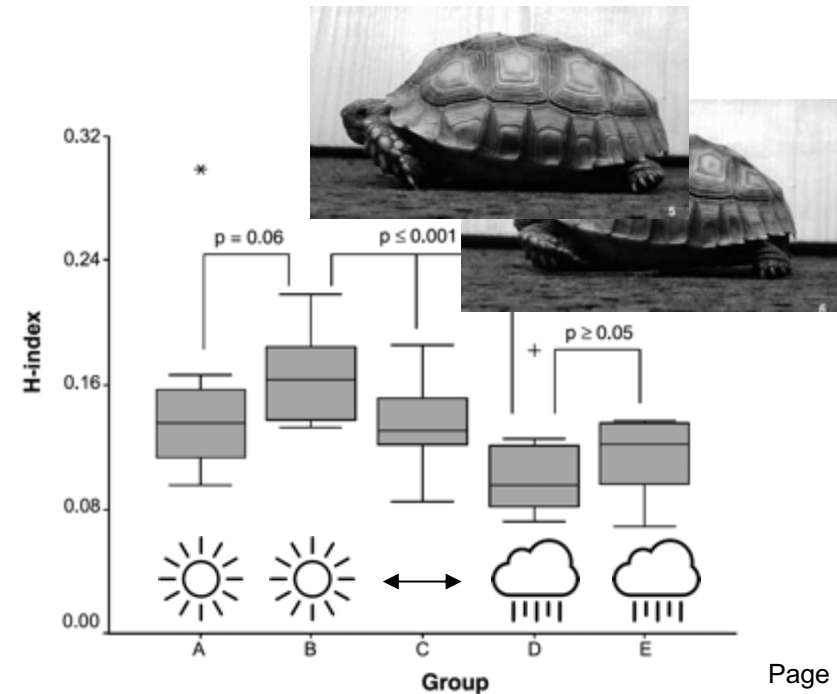
U. S. Copyright Clearance Center Code Statement: 0931-2439/2003/8701-0066\$15.00/0 www.blackwell.de/synergy

Table 1. Environmental humidity and dietary protein concentrations for the five experimental

	Groups of <i>Geochelone sulcata</i>				
	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
Environmental humidity	24.3–57.8	27.4–55.5	30.6–74.8	47.9–99	45–99
Protein (%DM)	14	19	19	19	30
Environmental humidity: mean of eight weekly measured values of the maximum and minimum relative humidity in percentage					



$$H\text{-value} = b/a$$







# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

J. Anim. Physiol. a. Anim. Nutr. 87 (2003), 66–74  
© 2003 Blackwell Verlag, Berlin  
ISSN 0931–2439

Receipt of Ms.: 03. 06. 2002  
Accepted: 23. 10. 2002

Institute of Nutrition, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria

## Influence of environmental humidity and dietary protein on pyramidal growth of carapaces in African spurred tortoises (*Geochelone sulcata*)

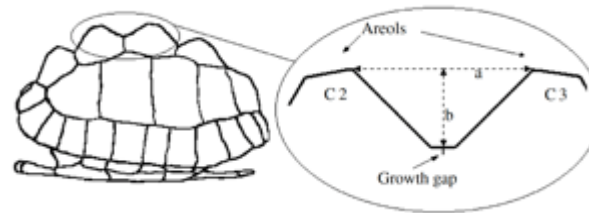
By C. S. WIESNER and C. IBEN

### Summary

The carapaces of captive-raised tortoises (terrestrial chelonians of the zoological family Testudinidae, often develop pyramidal-shaped osseous growth centrally within the horny plates. With very few exceptions (e.g. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.), this conical growth pattern is considered to be pathologic. This very common defect is believed to be an important indicator of the quality of captive tortoise management. This study was designed to examine the effect of dietary protein level and environmental humidity on the degree of pyramidal growth in the carapaces. Fifty recently hatched African spurred tortoises (*G. sulcata*) were raised for 5 months under artificial conditions of varying environmental humidity and dietary protein content (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% crude protein in dry matter). Humps of the carapaces that developed and blood values of calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit were measured and compared among groups. Dry environmental conditions (24.3–57.8% and 30.6–74.8% relative humidity) produced taller humps than humid conditions (45–99% relative humidity). Hump formation differed significantly ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) between these three groups kept under different humidity conditions. Variable dietary protein had a minor, positive impact on this pathological formation of humps (pyramidal growth syndrome, PGS). Analysis of blood (calcium, phosphorus and haematocrit) offered no further explanation as to the development of the humps.

### Zusammenfassung

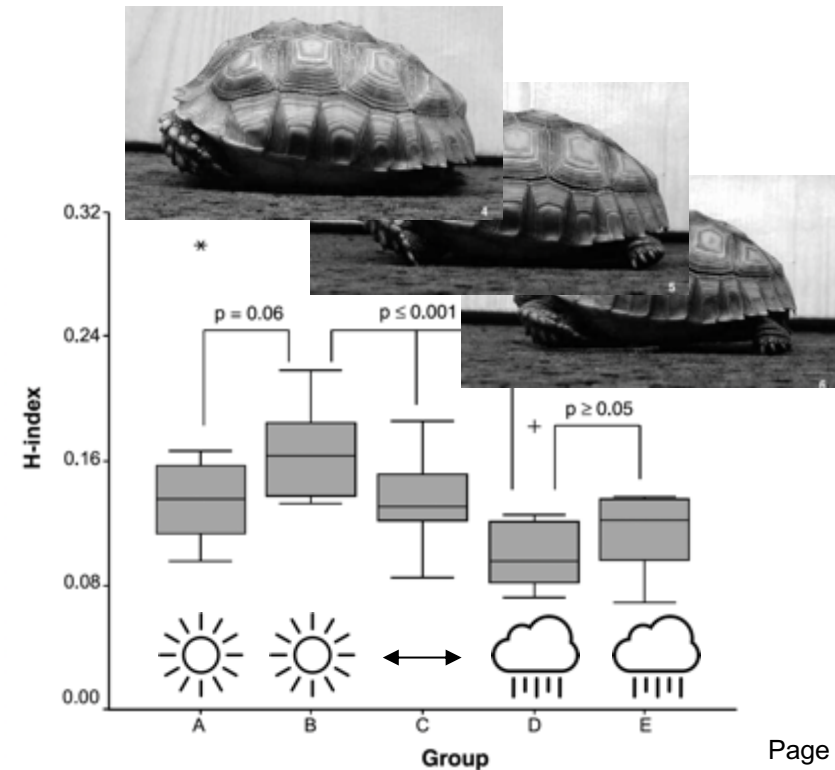
Bei in Gefangenschaft gehaltenen Schildkröten entwickelt sich häufig im Zentrum der Hornplatten des Rückenpanzers ein pyramidisch geformtes Knochenwachstum. Mit wenigen Ausnahmen (z.B. *Geochelone elegans*, *Psammobates* sp.) wird dieses kegelförmige Wachstum als pathologisch angesehen und es besteht die Annahme, dass dieses Wachstumsverhalten ein Parameter zur Beurteilung der Haltungsbedingungen der Tiere ist. In vorliegendem Versuch sollte der Einfluß der relativen Luftfeuchtigkeit sowie des Rohproteingehaltes im Futter auf die Höckerbildung untersucht werden. Fünfzig Schlüpflinge von afrikanischen Spornschildkröten (*G. sulcata*) wurden fünf Monate lang unter unterschiedlich feuchten Umweltbedingungen gehalten sowie mit Futtermitteln, welche sich durch ihren Eiweißgehalt unterschieden (14% vs. 19% vs. 30% Rohprotein in der Trockensubstanz), ernährt. Die während dieser Zeit gebildeten Panzerhöcker wurden anschließend vermessen und die Kalzium, Phosphor- und Hämatokritwerte im Blut untersucht und zwischen den Versuchsgruppen verglichen. Trockene Haltung (24.3–57.8% bzw. 30.6–74.8% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit) führte zu stärkerer Höckerbildung als feuchte Haltung (45–99% relative Luftfeuchtigkeit). Die Höckerbildung war zwischen den drei



$$H\text{-value} = b/a$$

Table 1. Environmental humidity and dietary protein concentrations for the five experimental

	Groups of <i>Geochelone sulcata</i>				
	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
Environmental humidity	24.3–57.8	27.4–55.5	30.6–74.8	47.9–99	45–99
Protein (%DM)	14	19	19	19	30
Environmental humidity: mean of eight weekly measured values of the maximum and minimum relative humidity in percentage					





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

<https://reptilesmagazine.com/pyramiding-in-tortoises/>

# Pyramiding in Tortoises

✍ Richard Fife ⌚ January 23, 2014 1:24 pm

### Is Humidity Causing Pyramiding?

Over the years I have tried all kinds of tortoise diets only to become more confused when there were no consistent results in eliminating pyramiding. I understood that the diet was extremely important in raising a healthy tortoise, but it didn't seem to have a whole lot of affect on reducing pyramiding. About five or six years ago, my wife decided to try a new method for rearing hatching tortoises.

She set up two groups of new hatching red-foot tortoises for her experiment. The first group was set up in a plastic shoebox with dry paper towels (low humidity). The second group was set up in a plastic shoebox with moist paper towels (high humidity). The two groups were kept side by side and fed identically.

Within a few months the difference was astounding. The tortoises in the dry setup had the typical pyramiding we see in captive-hatched tortoises. The second group had no pyramiding whatsoever and looked identical to wild-caught tortoises. We began to try increasing the humidity on several other species of tortoises with the same positive results.

In January 2001 I presented my work at the International Turtle and Tortoise Symposium held in Vienna, Austria. I was excited to learn that many European tortoise breeders had come to the same conclusion and were beginning to raise hatchlings in an environment with more moisture.



# ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

Zoo Biology 31: 705–717 (2012)

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Variation in Growth and Potentially Associated Health Status in Hermann’s and Spur-Thighed Tortoise (*Testudo hermanni* and *Testudo graeca*)

Julia Ritz,<sup>1</sup> Marcus Clauss,<sup>1\*</sup> W. Jürgen Streich,<sup>2</sup> and Jean-Michel Hatt<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse, Zurich, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup> Leibniz Institute of Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW), Berlin, Germany

Captive reptiles often show higher growth rates than in the wild, possibly due to higher feeding intensity. Although health problems are usually linked to inappropriate diets, fast growth itself, such as triggered by appropriate diets fed in high amounts, has traditionally also been considered unfavorable for tortoises. We document growth rates (based on age and mass) from private *Testudo hermanni* and *T. graeca* breeders, which are generally higher than those reported for free-ranging specimens, but show enormous variation. Tortoise patients presented to an exotics clinic also covered the whole growth rate spectrum. To test whether fast growth was associated with diseases, the age–body mass relationship of these patients was tested, in a retrospective evaluation, for additional influence factors, such as dietary history and occurrence of certain diet and growth-related diseases. No indication was found that animals particularly heavy for their age were more prone to diet/growth-related disorders. In general, tortoises fed diets with meat/grain were heavier for their age than tortoises fed more appropriate diets; dietary history was not related to a particular disease. The results suggest the age–body mass relationship may not be suitable for testing effects of fast growth; an age–body length relationship would be more appropriate. Animals presented for a diet/growth-related disorder were younger than animals presented for other reasons; there was a significant negative correlation between the severity of pyramiding and age, suggesting that growth-related

\*Correspondence to: Marcus Clauss, Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse 260, CH-8057, Zurich, Switzerland. E-mail: mclauss@vetclinics.uzh.ch

Received 28 September 2011; Revised 22 November 2011; Accepted 30 November 2011

DOI 10.1002/zoo.21002

Published online 30 January 2012 in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com).





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

Zoo Biology 31: 705–717 (2012)

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### Variation in Growth and Potentially Associated Health Status in Hermann’s and Spur-Thighed Tortoise (*Testudo hermanni* and *Testudo graeca*)

Julia Ritz,<sup>1</sup> Marcus Clauss,<sup>1\*</sup> W. Jürgen Streich,<sup>2</sup> and Jean-Michel Hatt<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse, Zurich, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup>Leibniz Institute of Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW), Berlin, Germany

Captive reptiles often show higher growth rates than in the wild, possibly due to higher feeding intensity. Although health problems are usually linked to inappropriate diets, fast growth itself, such as triggered by appropriate diets fed in high amounts, has traditionally also been considered unfavorable for tortoises. We document growth rates (based on age and mass) from private *Testudo hermanni* and *T. graeca* breeders, which are generally higher than those reported for free-ranging specimens, but show enormous variation. Tortoise patients presented to an exotics clinic also covered the whole growth rate spectrum. To test whether fast growth was associated with diseases, the age–body mass relationship of these patients was tested, in a retrospective evaluation, for additional influence factors, such as dietary history and occurrence of certain diet and growth-related diseases. No indication was found that animals particularly heavy for their age were more prone to diet/growth-related disorders. In general, tortoises fed diets with meat/grain were heavier for their age than tortoises fed more appropriate diets; dietary history was not related to a particular disease. The results suggest the age–body mass relationship may not be suitable for testing effects of fast growth; an age–body length relationship would be more appropriate. Animals presented for a diet/growth-related disorder were younger than animals presented for other reasons; there was a significant negative correlation between the severity of pyramiding and age, suggesting that growth-related

\*Correspondence to: Marcus Clauss, Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse 260, CH-8057, Zurich, Switzerland. E-mail: mclauss@vetclinics.uzh.ch

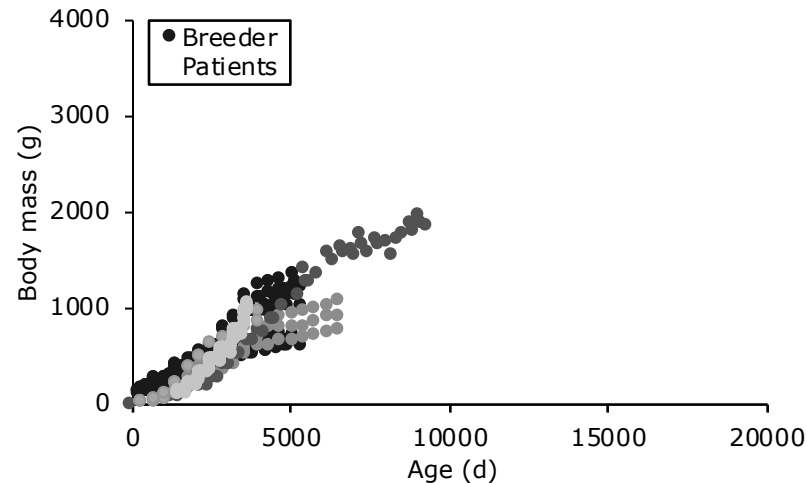
Received 28 September 2011; Revised 22 November 2011; Accepted 30 November 2011

DOI 10.1002/zoo.21002

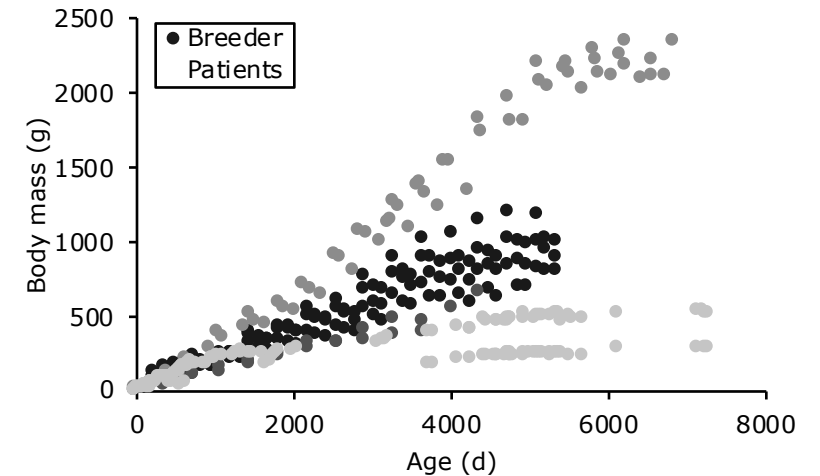
Published online 30 January 2012 in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com).

© 2012 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

### *T. hermanni*



### *T. graeca*





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

Zoo Biology 31: 705–717 (2012)

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### Variation in Growth and Potentially Associated Health Status in Hermann’s and Spur-Thighed Tortoise (*Testudo hermanni* and *Testudo graeca*)

Julia Ritz,<sup>1</sup> Marcus Clauss,<sup>1\*</sup> W. Jürgen Streich,<sup>2</sup> and Jean-Michel Hatt<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse, Zurich, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup>Leibniz Institute of Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW), Berlin, Germany

Captive reptiles often show higher growth rates than in the wild, possibly due to higher feeding intensity. Although health problems are usually linked to inappropriate diets, fast growth itself, such as triggered by appropriate diets fed in high amounts, has traditionally also been considered unfavorable for tortoises. We document growth rates (based on age and mass) from private *Testudo hermanni* and *T. graeca* breeders, which are generally higher than those reported for free-ranging specimens, but show enormous variation. Tortoise patients presented to an exotics clinic also covered the whole growth rate spectrum. To test whether fast growth was associated with diseases, the age–body mass relationship of these patients was tested, in a retrospective evaluation, for additional influence factors, such as dietary history and occurrence of certain diet and growth-related diseases. No indication was found that animals particularly heavy for their age were more prone to diet/growth-related disorders. In general, tortoises fed diets with meat/grain were heavier for their age than tortoises fed more appropriate diets; dietary history was not related to a particular disease. The results suggest the age–body mass relationship may not be suitable for testing effects of fast growth; an age–body length relationship would be more appropriate. Animals presented for a diet/growth-related disorder were younger than animals presented for other reasons; there was a significant negative correlation between the severity of pyramiding and age, suggesting that growth-related

\*Correspondence to: Marcus Clauss, Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse 260, CH-8057, Zurich, Switzerland. E-mail: mclauss@vetclinics.uzh.ch

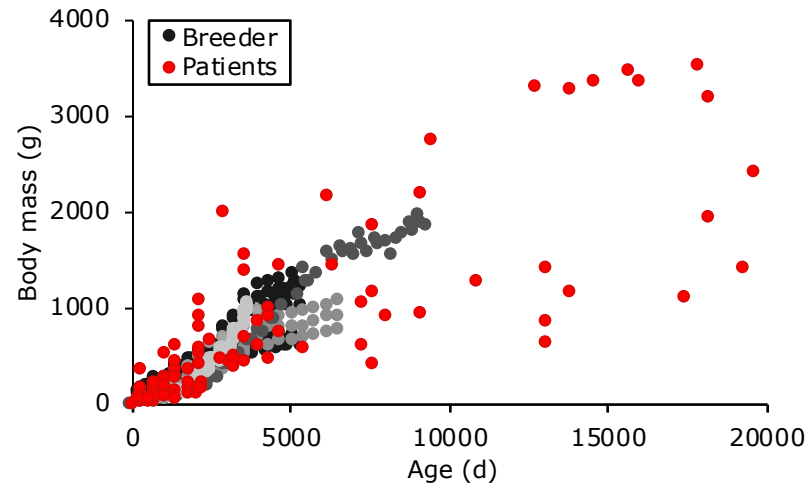
Received 28 September 2011; Revised 22 November 2011; Accepted 30 November 2011

DOI 10.1002/zoo.21002

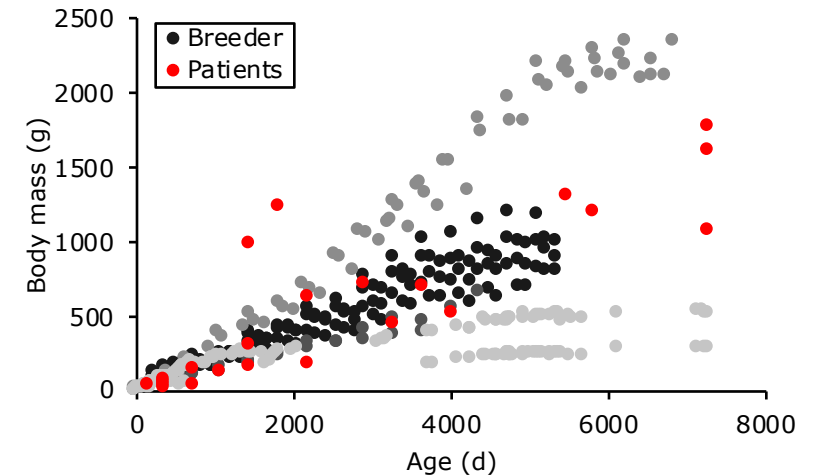
Published online 30 January 2012 in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com).

© 2012 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

### *T. hermanni*



### *T. graeca*





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

Zoo Biology 31: 705–717 (2012)

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### Variation in Growth and Potentially Associated Health Status in Hermann’s and Spur-Thighed Tortoise (*Testudo hermanni* and *Testudo graeca*)

Julia Ritz,<sup>1</sup> Marcus Clauss,<sup>1\*</sup> W. Jürgen Streich,<sup>2</sup> and Jean-Michel Hatt<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse, Zurich, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup> Leibniz Institute of Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW), Berlin, Germany

Captive reptiles often show higher growth rates than in the wild, possibly due to higher feeding intensity. Although health problems are usually linked to inappropriate diets, fast growth itself, such as triggered by appropriate diets fed in high amounts, has traditionally also been considered unfavorable for tortoises. We document growth rates (based on age and mass) from private *Testudo hermanni* and *T. graeca* breeders, which are generally higher than those reported for free-ranging specimens, but show enormous variation. Tortoise patients presented to an exotics clinic also covered the whole growth rate spectrum. To test whether fast growth was associated with diseases, the age–body mass relationship of these patients was tested, in a retrospective evaluation, for additional influence factors, such as dietary history and occurrence of certain diet and growth-related diseases. No indication was found that animals particularly heavy for their age were more prone to diet/growth-related disorders. In general, tortoises fed diets with meat/grain were heavier for their age than tortoises fed more appropriate diets; dietary history was not related to a particular disease. The results suggest the age–body mass relationship may not be suitable for testing effects of fast growth; an age–body length relationship would be more appropriate. Animals presented for a diet/growth-related disorder were younger than animals presented for other reasons; there was a significant negative correlation between the severity of pyramiding and age, suggesting that growth-related

\*Correspondence to: Marcus Clauss, Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse 260, CH-8057, Zurich, Switzerland. E-mail: mclauss@vetclinics.uzh.ch

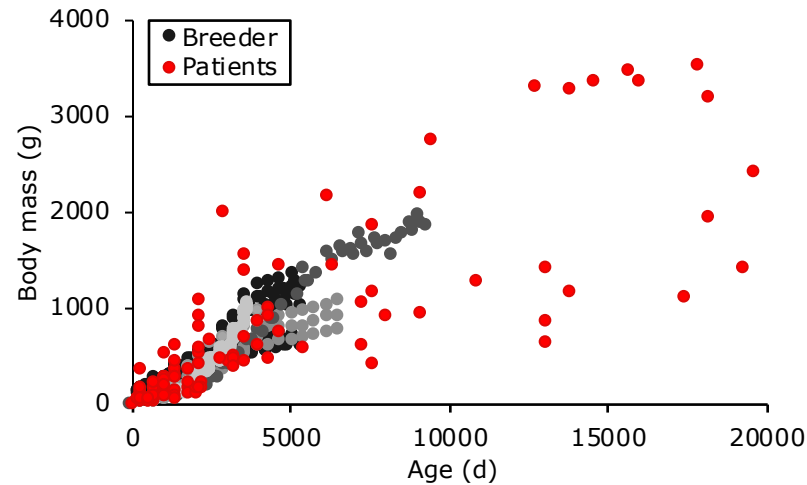
Received 28 September 2011; Revised 22 November 2011; Accepted 30 November 2011

DOI 10.1002/zoo.21002

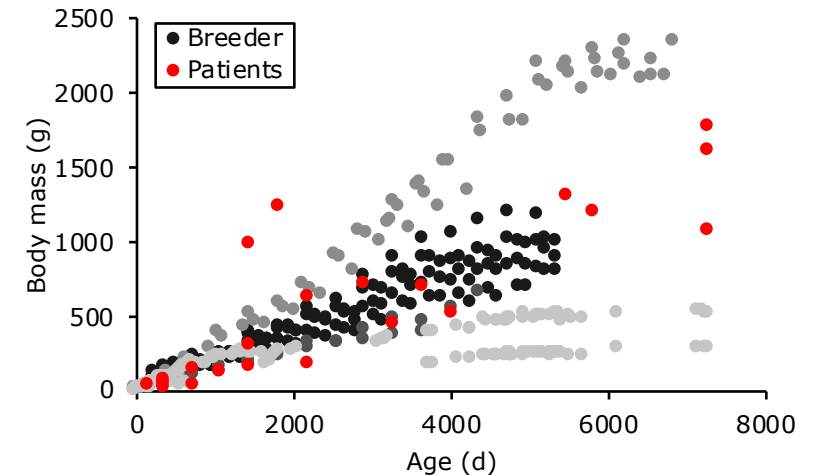
Published online 30 January 2012 in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com).

© 2012 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

### *T. hermanni*



### *T. graeca*



effect on age-mass relationship:  
- diet





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

Zoo Biology 31: 705–717 (2012)

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### Variation in Growth and Potentially Associated Health Status in Hermann’s and Spur-Thighed Tortoise (*Testudo hermanni* and *Testudo graeca*)

Julia Ritz,<sup>1</sup> Marcus Clauss,<sup>1\*</sup> W. Jürgen Streich,<sup>2</sup> and Jean-Michel Hatt<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse, Zurich, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup> Leibniz Institute of Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW), Berlin, Germany

Captive reptiles often show higher growth rates than in the wild, possibly due to higher feeding intensity. Although health problems are usually linked to inappropriate diets, fast growth itself, such as triggered by appropriate diets fed in high amounts, has traditionally also been considered unfavorable for tortoises. We document growth rates (based on age and mass) from private *Testudo hermanni* and *T. graeca* breeders, which are generally higher than those reported for free-ranging specimens, but show enormous variation. Tortoise patients presented to an exotics clinic also covered the whole growth rate spectrum. To test whether fast growth was associated with diseases, the age–body mass relationship of these patients was tested, in a retrospective evaluation, for additional influence factors, such as dietary history and occurrence of certain diet and growth-related diseases. No indication was found that animals particularly heavy for their age were more prone to diet/growth-related disorders. In general, tortoises fed diets with meat/grain were heavier for their age than tortoises fed more appropriate diets; dietary history was not related to a particular disease. The results suggest the age–body mass relationship may not be suitable for testing effects of fast growth; an age–body length relationship would be more appropriate. Animals presented for a diet/growth-related disorder were younger than animals presented for other reasons; there was a significant negative correlation between the severity of pyramiding and age, suggesting that growth-related

\*Correspondence to: Marcus Clauss, Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse 260, CH-8057, Zurich, Switzerland. E-mail: mclauss@vetclinics.uzh.ch

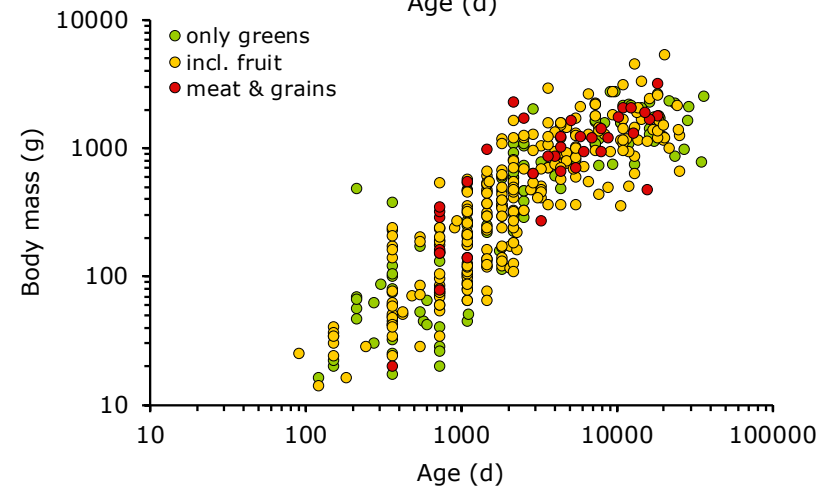
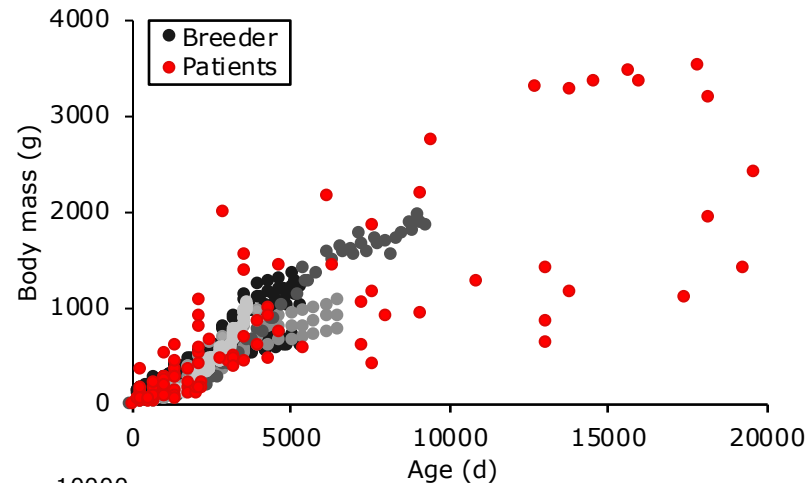
Received 28 September 2011; Revised 22 November 2011; Accepted 30 November 2011

DOI 10.1002/zoo.21002

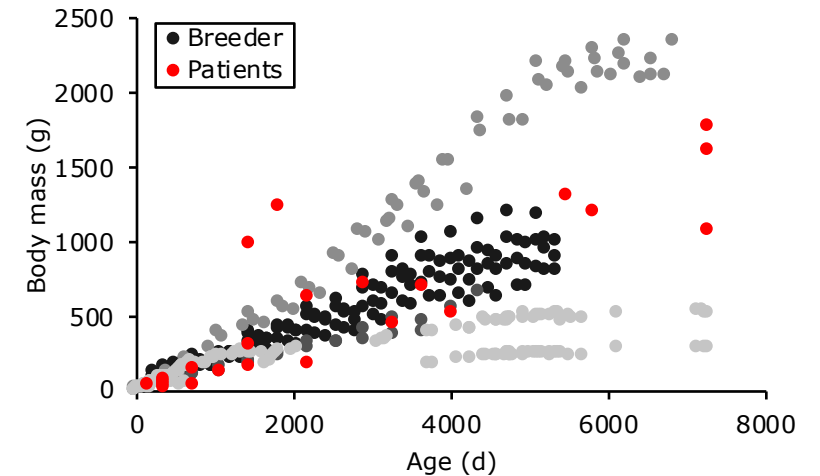
Published online 30 January 2012 in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com).

© 2012 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

### *T. hermanni*



### *T. graeca*



effect on age-mass relationship:  
- diet



## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

Zoo Biology 31: 705–717 (2012)

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### Variation in Growth and Potentially Associated Health Status in Hermann’s and Spur-Thighed Tortoise (*Testudo hermanni* and *Testudo graeca*)

Julia Ritz,<sup>1</sup> Marcus Clauss,<sup>1\*</sup> W. Jürgen Streich,<sup>2</sup> and Jean-Michel Hatt<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse, Zurich, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup> Leibniz Institute of Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW), Berlin, Germany

Captive reptiles often show higher growth rates than in the wild, possibly due to higher feeding intensity. Although health problems are usually linked to inappropriate diets, fast growth itself, such as triggered by appropriate diets fed in high amounts, has traditionally also been considered unfavorable for tortoises. We document growth rates (based on age and mass) from private *Testudo hermanni* and *T. graeca* breeders, which are generally higher than those reported for free-ranging specimens, but show enormous variation. Tortoise patients presented to an exotics clinic also covered the whole growth rate spectrum. To test whether fast growth was associated with diseases, the age–body mass relationship of these patients was tested, in a retrospective evaluation, for additional influence factors, such as dietary history and occurrence of certain diet and growth-related diseases. No indication was found that animals particularly heavy for their age were more prone to diet/growth-related disorders. In general, tortoises fed diets with meat/grain were heavier for their age than tortoises fed more appropriate diets; dietary history was not related to a particular disease. The results suggest the age–body mass relationship may not be suitable for testing effects of fast growth; an age–body length relationship would be more appropriate. Animals presented for a diet/growth-related disorder were younger than animals presented for other reasons; there was a significant negative correlation between the severity of pyramiding and age, suggesting that growth-related

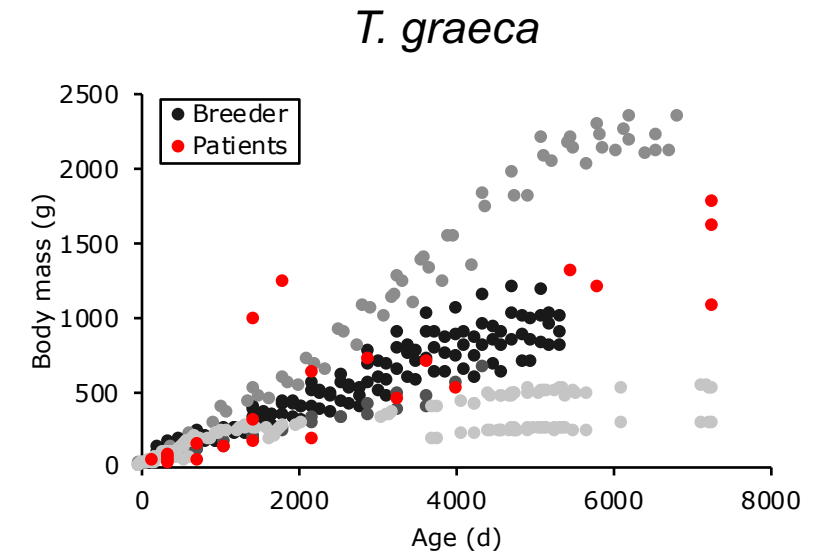
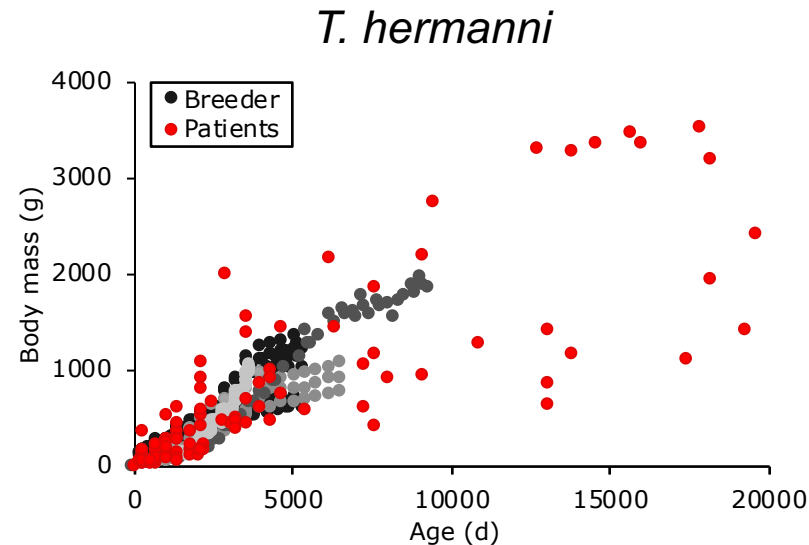
\*Correspondence to: Marcus Clauss, Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse 260, CH-8057, Zurich, Switzerland. E-mail: mclauss@vetclinics.uzh.ch

Received 28 September 2011; Revised 22 November 2011; Accepted 30 November 2011

DOI 10.1002/zoo.21002

Published online 30 January 2012 in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com).

© 2012 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.



effect on age-mass relationship:

- diet
- parasites



## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

Zoo Biology 31: 705–717 (2012)

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### Variation in Growth and Potentially Associated Health Status in Hermann’s and Spur-Thighed Tortoise (*Testudo hermanni* and *Testudo graeca*)

Julia Ritz,<sup>1</sup> Marcus Clauss,<sup>1\*</sup> W. Jürgen Streich,<sup>2</sup> and Jean-Michel Hatt<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse, Zurich, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup> Leibniz Institute of Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW), Berlin, Germany

Captive reptiles often show higher growth rates than in the wild, possibly due to higher feeding intensity. Although health problems are usually linked to inappropriate diets, fast growth itself, such as triggered by appropriate diets fed in high amounts, has traditionally also been considered unfavorable for tortoises. We document growth rates (based on age and mass) from private *Testudo hermanni* and *T. graeca* breeders, which are generally higher than those reported for free-ranging specimens, but show enormous variation. Tortoise patients presented to an exotics clinic also covered the whole growth rate spectrum. To test whether fast growth was associated with diseases, the age–body mass relationship of these patients was tested, in a retrospective evaluation, for additional influence factors, such as dietary history and occurrence of certain diet and growth-related diseases. No indication was found that animals particularly heavy for their age were more prone to diet/growth-related disorders. In general, tortoises fed diets with meat/grain were heavier for their age than tortoises fed more appropriate diets; dietary history was not related to a particular disease. The results suggest the age–body mass relationship may not be suitable for testing effects of fast growth; an age–body length relationship would be more appropriate. Animals presented for a diet/growth-related disorder were younger than animals presented for other reasons; there was a significant negative correlation between the severity of pyramiding and age, suggesting that growth-related

\*Correspondence to: Marcus Clauss, Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse 260, CH-8057, Zurich, Switzerland. E-mail: mclauss@vetclinics.uzh.ch

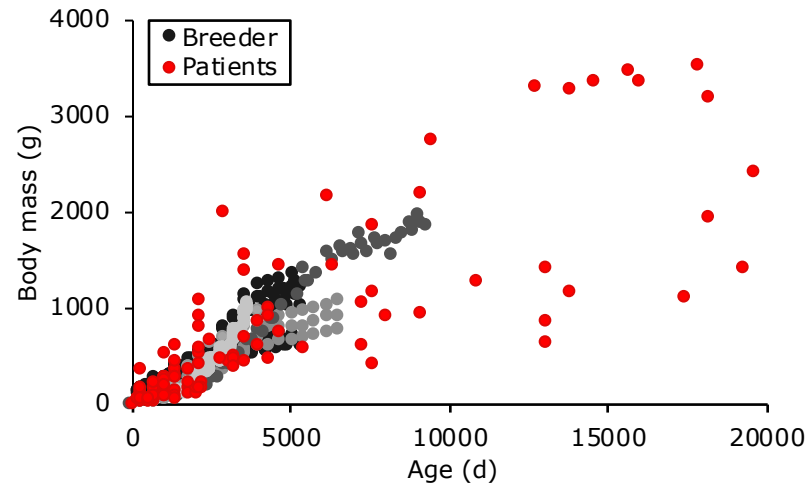
Received 28 September 2011; Revised 22 November 2011; Accepted 30 November 2011

DOI 10.1002/zoo.21002

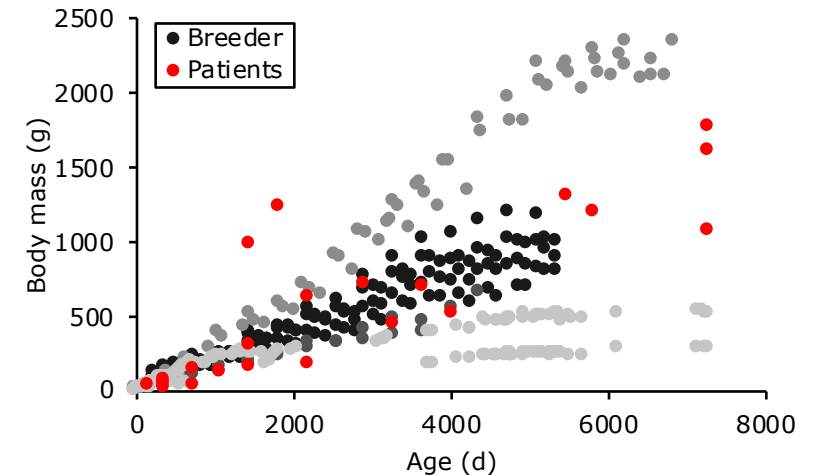
Published online 30 January 2012 in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com).

© 2012 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

### *T. hermanni*



### *T. graeca*



effect on age-mass relationship:

- diet
- parasites

no effect on age-mass relationship:

- hibernation or not





## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

Zoo Biology 31: 705–717 (2012)

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

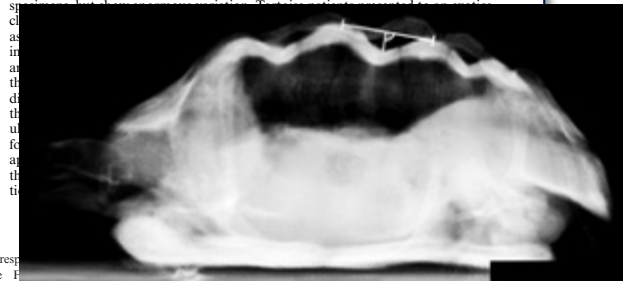
#### Variation in Growth and Potentially Associated Health Status in Hermann's and Spur-Thighed Tortoise (*Testudo hermanni* and *Testudo graeca*)

Julia Ritz,<sup>1</sup> Marcus Clauss,<sup>1\*</sup> W. Jürgen Streich,<sup>2</sup> and Jean-Michel Hatt<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse, Zurich, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup>Leibniz Institute of Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW), Berlin, Germany

Captive reptiles often show higher growth rates than in the wild, possibly due to higher feeding intensity. Although health problems are usually linked to inappropriate diets, fast growth itself, such as triggered by appropriate diets fed in high amounts, has traditionally also been considered unfavorable for tortoises. We document growth rates (based on age and mass) from private *Testudo hermanni* and *T. graeca* breeders, which are generally higher than those reported for free-ranging



\*Correspondence:  
E-mail: mclauss@vetclinics.uzh.ch

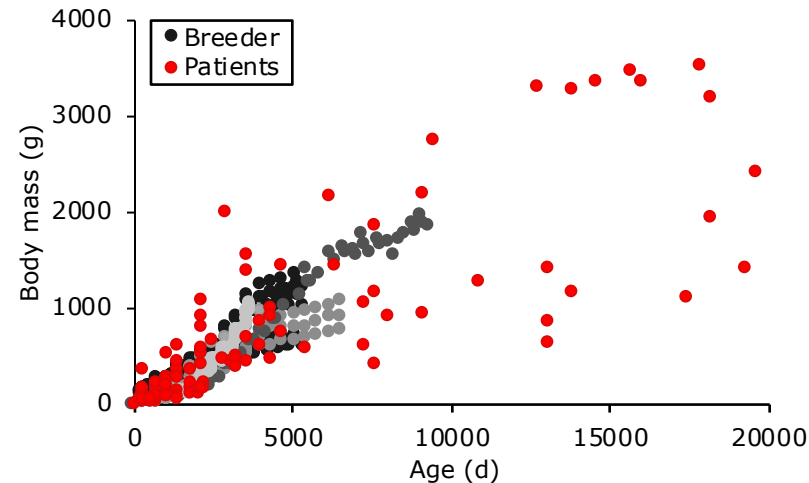
Received 28 September 2011; Revised 22 November 2011; Accepted 30 November 2011

DOI: 10.1002/zoo.21002

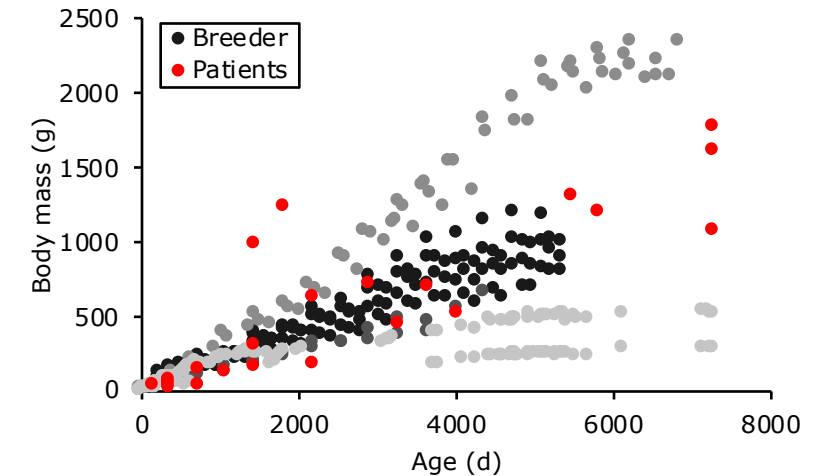
Published online 30 January 2012 in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com).

© 2012 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

### *T. hermanni*



### *T. graeca*



effect on age-mass relationship:

- diet
- parasites

no effect on age-mass relationship:

- hibernation or not
- pyramiding / growth disorder



## ‘Pyramidenwachstum’

Zoo Biology 31: 705–717 (2012)

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

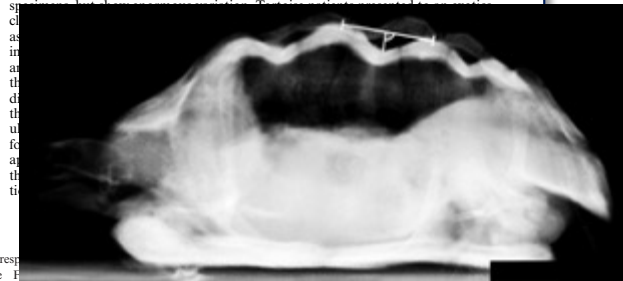
#### Variation in Growth and Potentially Associated Health Status in Hermann's and Spur-Thighed Tortoise (*Testudo hermanni* and *Testudo graeca*)

Julia Ritz,<sup>1</sup> Marcus Clauss,<sup>1\*</sup> W. Jürgen Streich,<sup>2</sup> and Jean-Michel Hatt<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse, Zurich, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup> Leibniz Institute of Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW), Berlin, Germany

Captive reptiles often show higher growth rates than in the wild, possibly due to higher feeding intensity. Although health problems are usually linked to inappropriate diets, fast growth itself, such as triggered by appropriate diets fed in high amounts, has traditionally also been considered unfavorable for tortoises. We document growth rates (based on age and mass) from private *Testudo hermanni* and *T. graeca* breeders, which are generally higher than those reported for free-ranging



\*Correspondence:  
E-mail: mclauss@vetclinics.uzh.ch

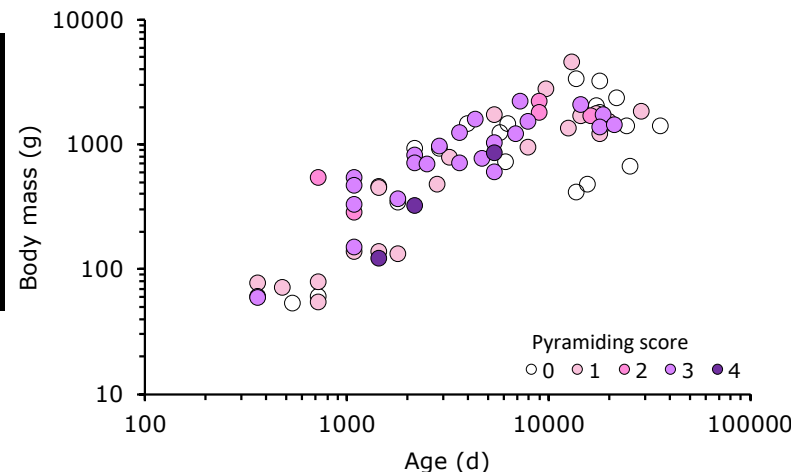
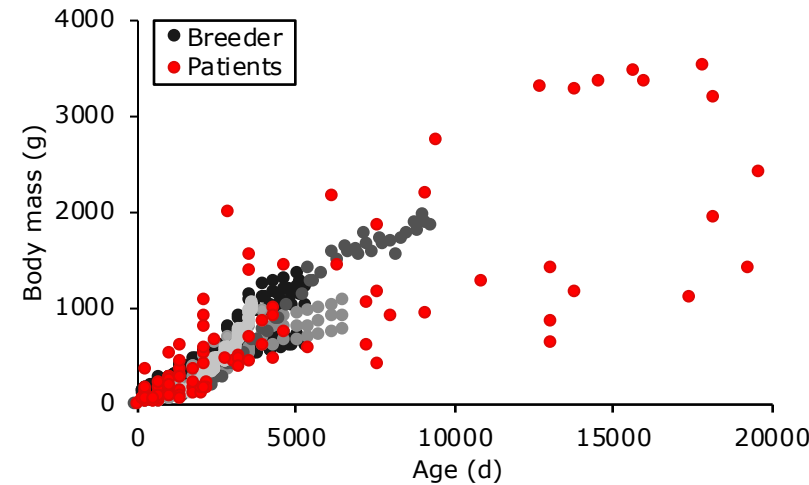
Received 28 September 2011; Revised 22 November 2011; Accepted 30 November 2011

DOI: 10.1002/zoo.21002

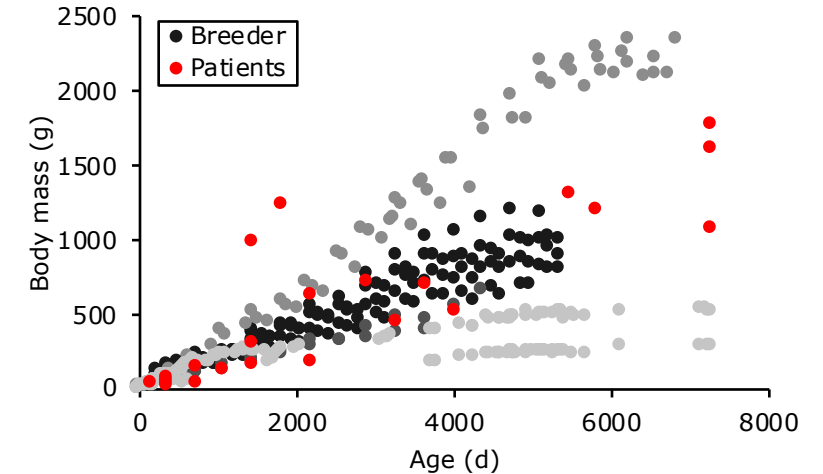
Published online 30 January 2012 in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com).

© 2012 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

### *T. hermanni*



### *T. graeca*



effect on age-mass relationship:

- diet
- parasites

no effect on age-mass relationship:

- hibernation or not
- pyramiding / growth disorder



## **Fazit:**

# **Flexibles Wachstum und 'Pyramidenwachstum'**





## Fazit:

### Flexibles Wachstum und 'Pyramidenwachstum'

- gute Gesundheit vermutlich bei verschiedenen Wachstumsraten möglich (biologisch sinnvoll), Geschlechtsreife variabel



## Fazit:

### Flexibles Wachstum und 'Pyramidenwachstum'

- gute Gesundheit vermutlich bei verschiedenen Wachstumsraten möglich (biologisch sinnvoll), Geschlechtsreife variabel
- reines Pyramiding wahrscheinlich ausgelöst durch 'trockene' Haltung (geringe Luftfeuchtigkeit); solche Haltung hat oft auch andere Mängel



## Fazit:

### Flexibles Wachstum und 'Pyramidenwachstum'

- gute Gesundheit vermutlich bei verschiedenen Wachstumsraten möglich (biologisch sinnvoll), Geschlechtsreife variabel
- reines Pyramiding wahrscheinlich ausgelöst durch 'trockene' Haltung (geringe Luftfeuchtigkeit); solche Haltung hat oft auch andere Mängel; evtl. geringere Lebenserwartung



## Fazit:

### Flexibles Wachstum und 'Pyramidenwachstum'

- gute Gesundheit vermutlich bei verschiedenen Wachstumsraten möglich (biologisch sinnvoll), Geschlechtsreife variabel
- reines Pyramiding wahrscheinlich ausgelöst durch 'trockene' Haltung (geringe Luftfeuchtigkeit); solche Haltung hat oft auch andere Mängel; evtl. geringere Lebenserwartung
- Mischformen bei gleichzeitigem Auftreten von Calcium-Mangel (metabolic bone disease)







**University of  
Zurich** UZH

**Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife**

# Reptilien & Ziervögel - Calcium-Mangel



## Calcium- / (UVB-) Mangel







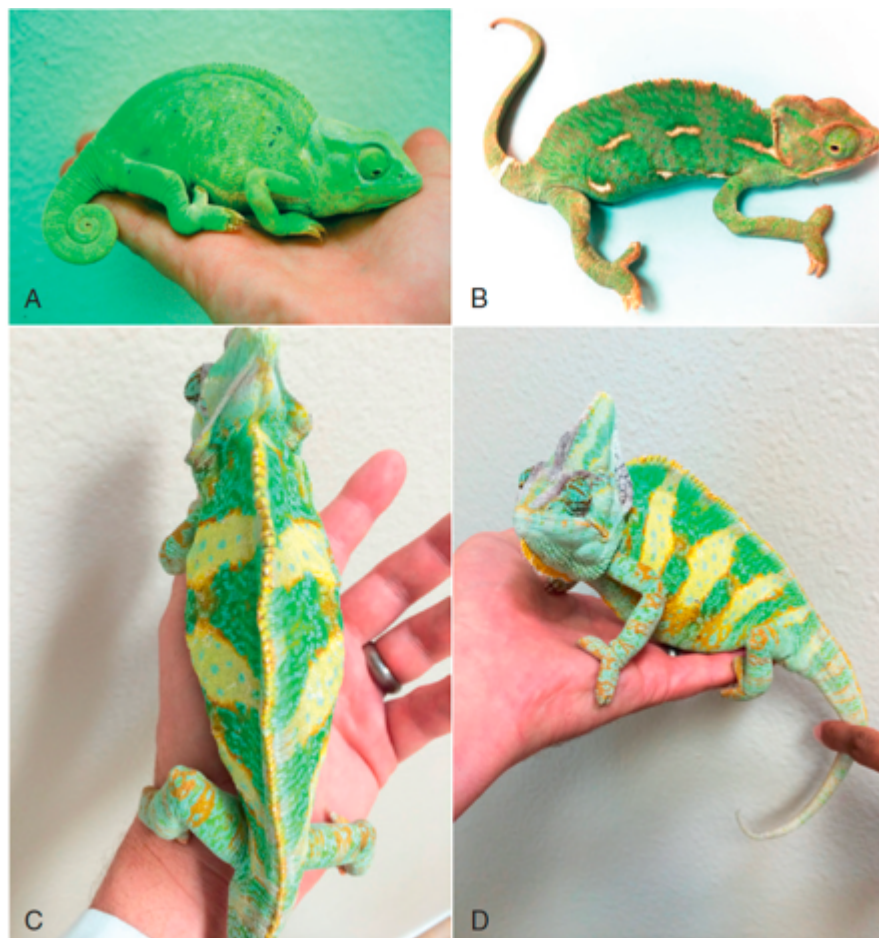
## Calcium- / (UVB-) Mangel



**FIG 84.2** Sprawl (A–C) and lack of truncan (A and B) or shell lifting (D) are common signs of nutritional secondary hyperparathyroidism in lizards and chelonians. (Courtesy of Thomas H. Boyer.)



## Calcium- / (UVB-) Mangel

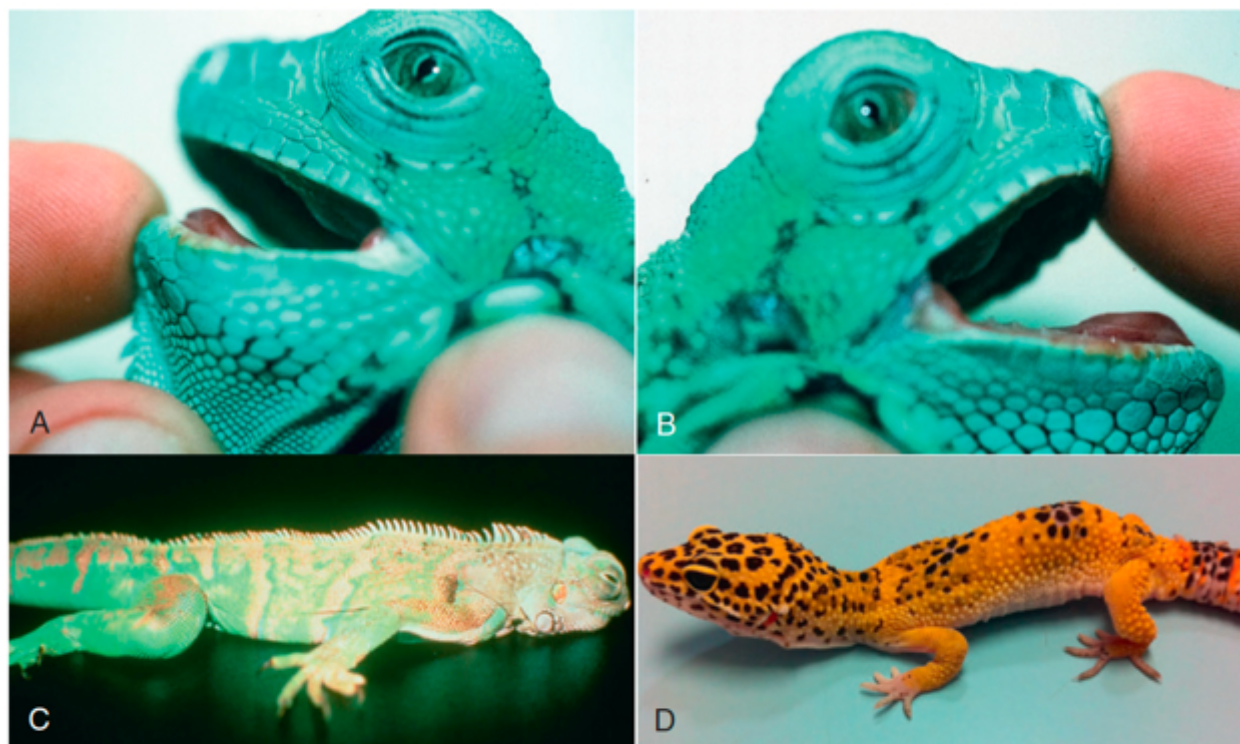


**FIG 84.5** Chameleons with nutritional secondary hyperparathyroidism have a weakened grip; fall repeatedly; have bowed, fractured, or grossly distorted long bones (A and B); spinal kyphoscoliosis (C), lordosis (B), or rhoeosis; and tail weakness (D). A healthy chameleon would normally wrap its tail around the finger. (Courtesy of Thomas H. Boyer.)





## Calcium- / (UVB-) Mangel



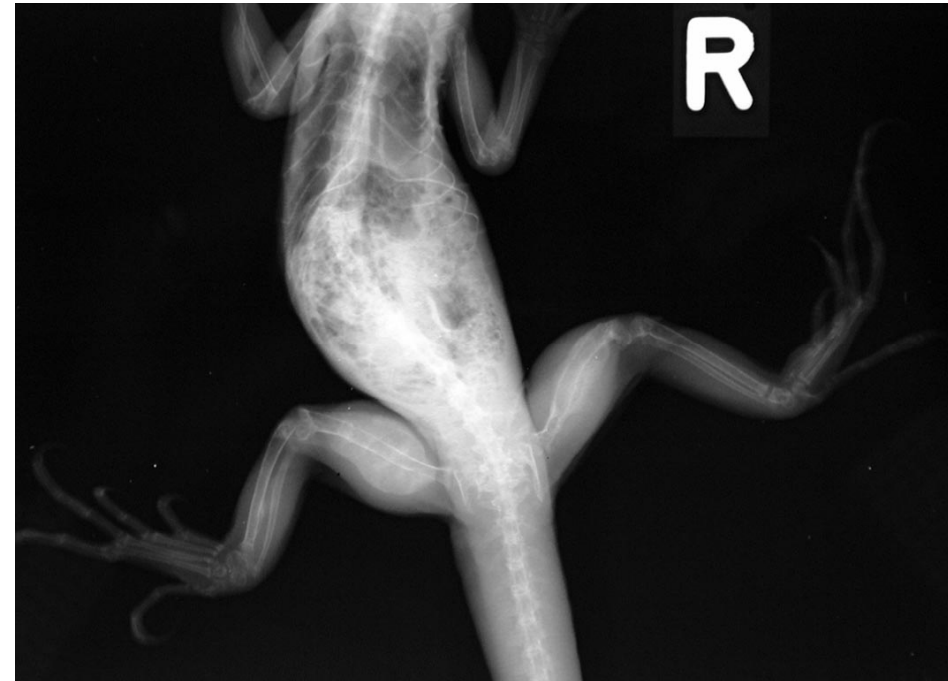
**FIG 84.3** Iguanas (*Iguana iguana*) and leopard geckos (*Eublepharis macularius*) have similar clinical signs of nutritional secondary hyperparathyroidism, including pliable mandibles and maxillae (A and B); kyphoscoliosis, lordosis, or rhoecosis (C and D); bowed long bones (especially the radius and ulna, D); and walking on the antebrachium (not plantigrade, D). (Courtesy of Thomas H. Boyer.)



## Calcium- / (UVB-) Mangel



**FIG 84.4** Fibrous osteodystrophy (in the left femur and right tibia/fibula of this iguana [*Iguana iguana*]) is common in lizards with nutritional secondary hyperparathyroidism but is not seen in chelonians. (Courtesy of Thomas H. Boyer.)







## Calcium- / (UVB-) Mangel





## Calcium- / (UVB-) Mangel







## Calcium- / (UVB-) Mangel

Calcium-arme Nahrungsmittel:

- Obst / buntes Gemüse
- Samen / Körner / Getreide
- reines Fleisch
- Insekten



## Calcium- / (UVB-) Mangel

Calcium-arme Nahrungsmittel:

- Obst / bunte Gemüse
- Samen / Körner / Getreide
- reines Fleisch
- Insekten

Lösungen:

- Grünfutter / nur wenig zu Alleinfutter
- meiden
- ganze Beutetiere / Alleinfutter
- gut loading / dusting





## Calcium- / (UVB-) Mangel





**University of  
Zurich** UZH

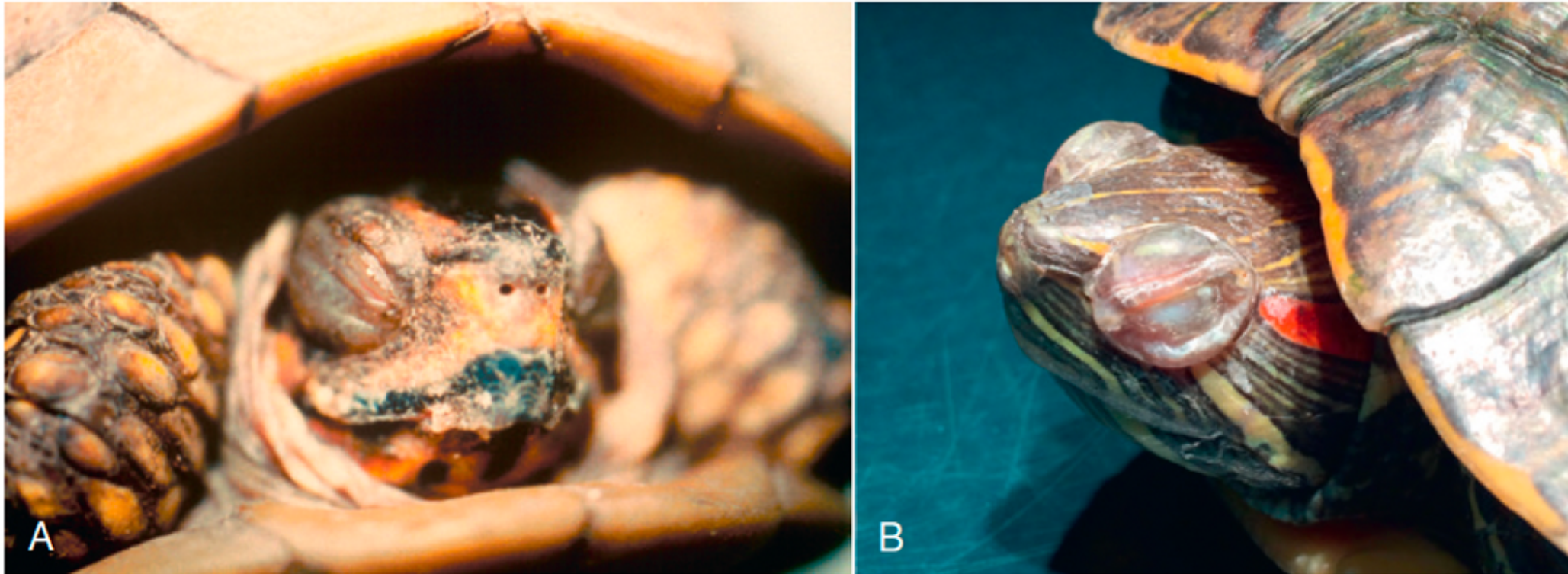
**Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife**

# Reptilien & Ziervögel – Vitamin A





## Vitamin A Mangel



**FIG 84.12** (A) Hypovitaminosis A in a three-toed box turtle (*Terrapene carolina triunguis*) and (B) a red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*); note the blepharedema. (Courtesy of Thomas H. Boyer.)



## Vitamin A Mangel

Pflanzenfresser können in der Regel  $\beta$ -Carotin in Vitamin A umwandeln

Viele Faunivoren können dies nicht und benötigen direkt Vitamin A

Insekten: wenig  $\beta$ -Carotin / Vitamin A

viele (v.a. fettreiche) Samen: wenig  $\beta$ -Carotin





## Vitamin A Mangel

### The Ocular Disease of Young Terrapins Caused by Vitamin A Deficiency

E. ELKAN and P. ZWART

Path. vet. 4: 201-222 (1967)







## Vitamin A Mangel

### The Ocular Disease of Young Terrapins Caused by Vitamin A Deficiency

E. ELKAN and P. ZWART

Path. vet. 4: 201-222 (1967)

In vain do the textbooks on herpetology mention the exacting dietary requirements of juvenile terrapins, in vain their advice on how to meet these requirements. Neither the sellers nor the buyers read these books, presuming that a plastic bowl and some 'ant's eggs' suffice to keep a juvenile terrapin alive. The annual holocaust among the imported terrapins proves the error of this assumption.







## Vitamin A Mangel

### The Ocular Disease of Young Terrapins Caused by Vitamin A Deficiency

E. ELKAN and P. ZWART

Path. vet. 4: 201-222 (1967)

In vain do the textbooks on herpetology mention the exacting dietary requirements of juvenile terrapins, in vain their advice on how to meet these requirements. Neither the sellers nor the buyers read these books, presuming that a plastic bowl and some 'ant's eggs' suffice to keep a juvenile terrapin alive. The annual holocaust among the imported terrapins proves the error of this assumption.

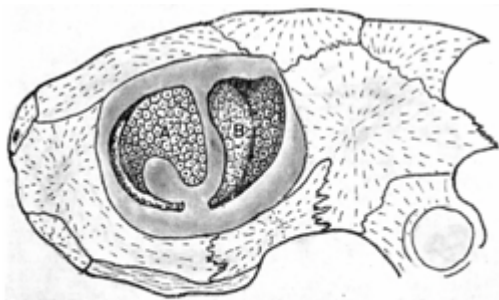


Fig. 1. Topography of the ophthalmic glands in the terrapin (diagrammatic). The Harderian gland (A) is anteromedial or rostral. The lachrymal gland (B) is posterolateral or temporal. The globe fits into the cup formed by the two glands.





## Vitamin A Mangel

### The Ocular Disease of Young Terrapins Caused by Vitamin A Deficiency

E. ELKAN and P. ZWART

Path. vet. 4: 201-222 (1967)

In vain do the textbooks on herpetology mention the exacting dietary requirements of juvenile terrapins, in vain their advice on how to meet these requirements. Neither the sellers nor the buyers read these books, presuming that a plastic bowl and some 'ant's eggs' suffice to keep a juvenile terrapin alive. The annual holocaust among the imported terrapins proves the error of this assumption.

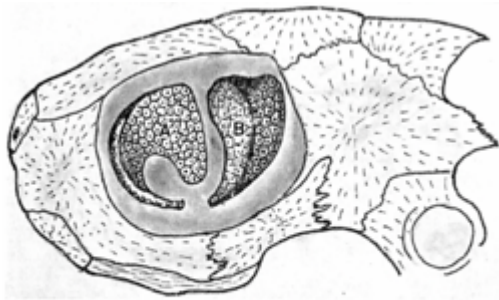
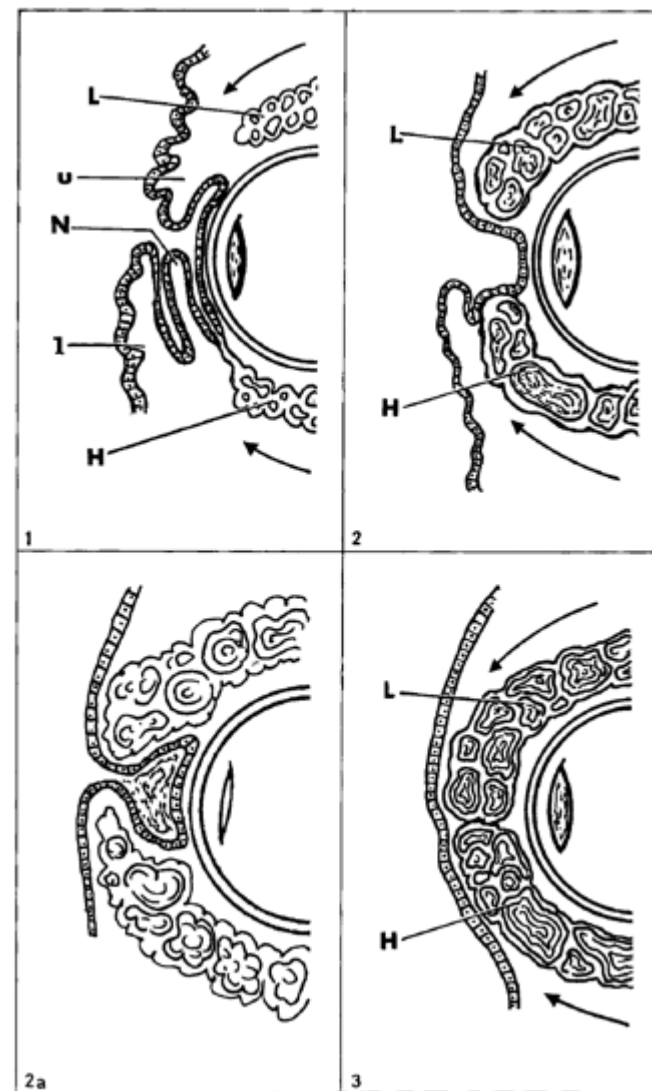


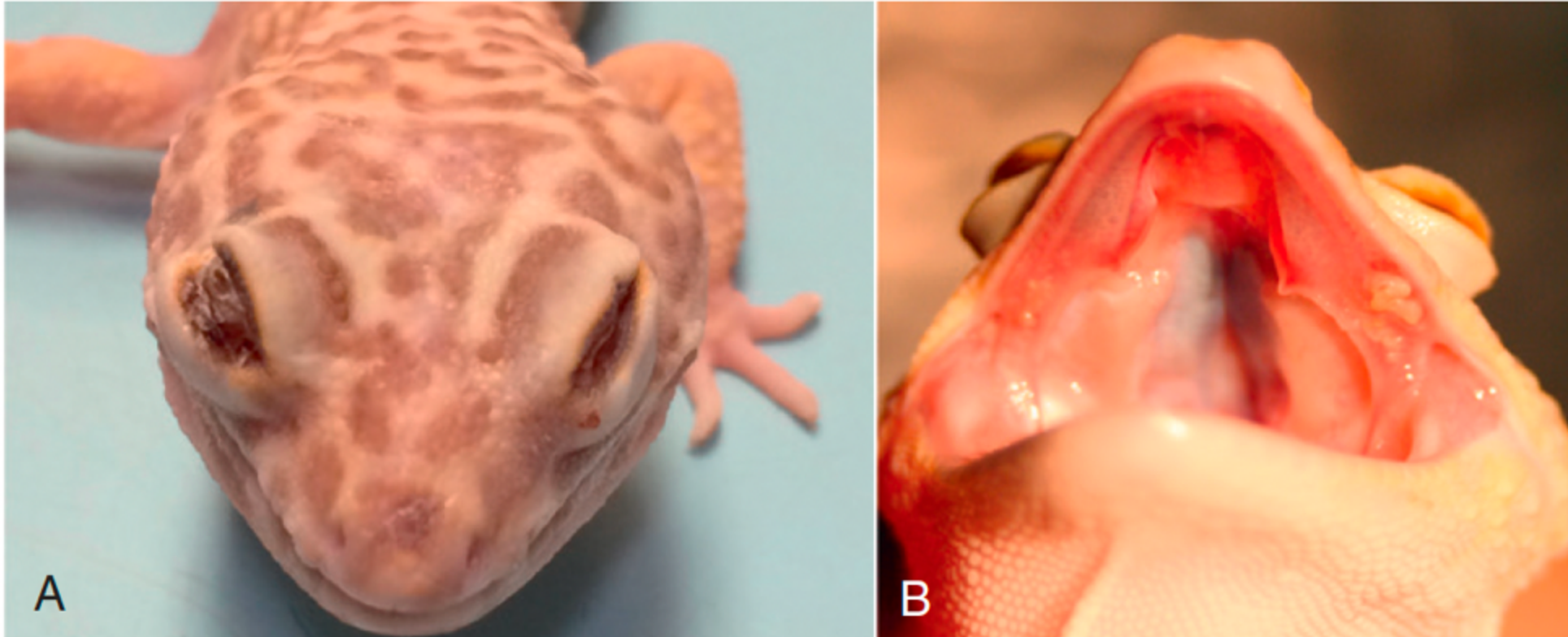
Fig. 1. Topography of the ophthalmic glands in the terrapin (diagrammatic). The Harderian gland (A) is anteromedial or rostral. The lachrymal gland (B) is posterolateral or temporal. The globe fits into the cup formed by the two glands.







## Vitamin A Mangel



**FIG 84.13** Hypovitaminosis A in a leopard gecko (*Eublepharus macularius*) with blepharedema (A), buildup of oral solid cellular debris, which is one of the few causes of stomatitis (B). (Courtesy of Thomas H. Boyer.)



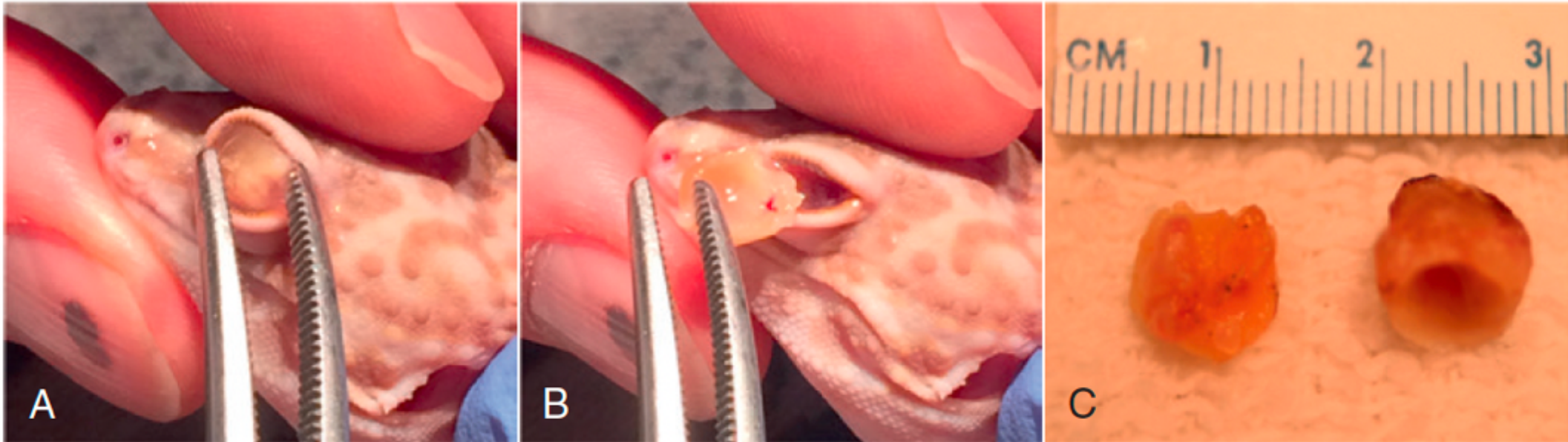
## Vitamin A Mangel



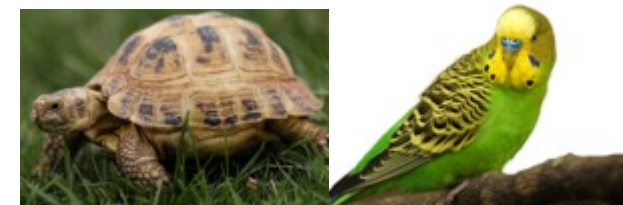




## Vitamin A Mangel



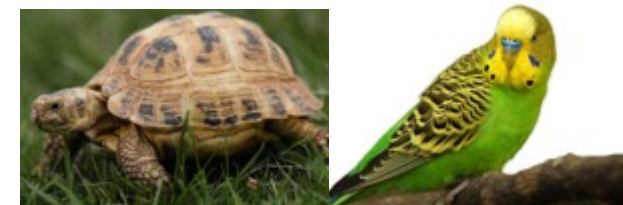
**FIG 84.17** (A) Leopard gecko (*Eublepharis macularius*) with solid cellular debris under the palpebrae from chronic vitamin A deficiency. (B) The debris is gently removed after moisturizing with saline and grasping with hemostats or blunt probe, while applying digital ocular pressure. (C) The solid cellular debris can be larger than the patient's eye. (Courtesy of Thomas H. Boyer.)



## Vitamin A Mangel







## Vitamin A Mangel







## Vitamin A Mangel





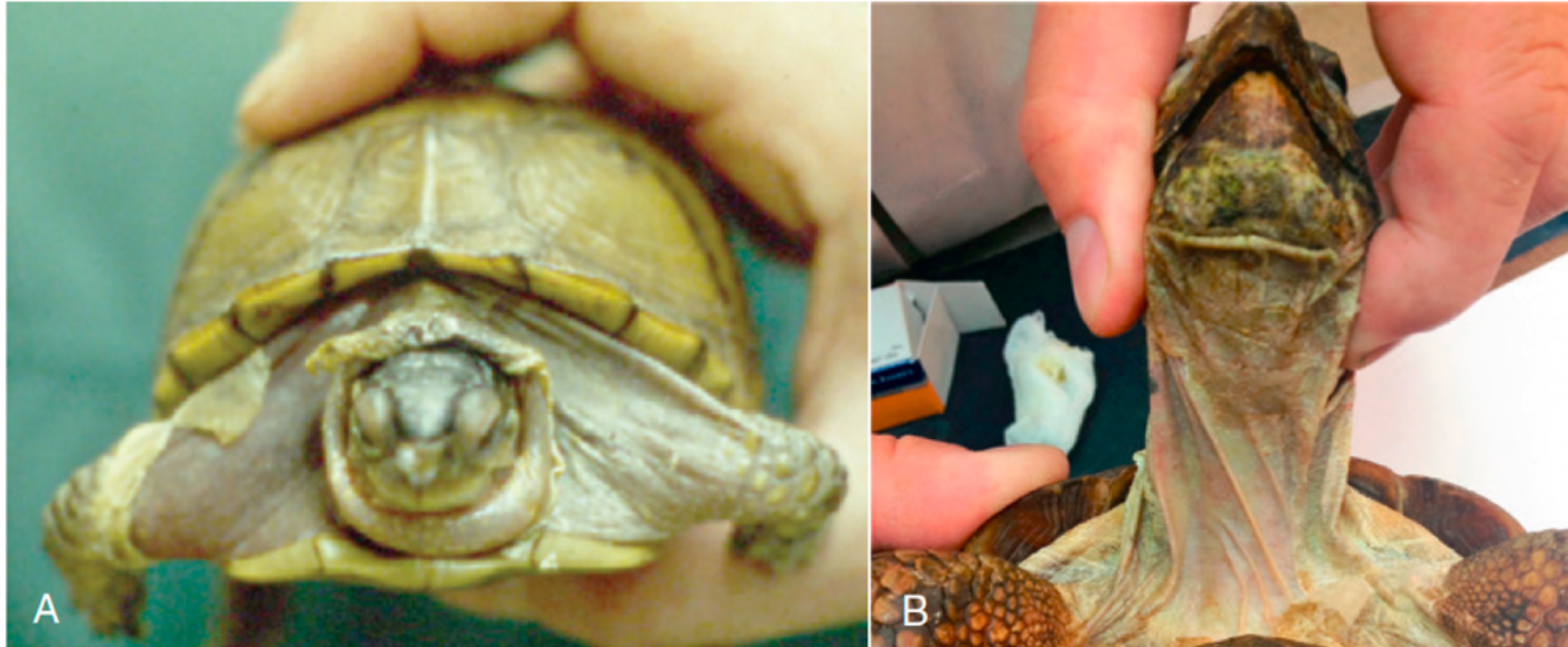
## Vitamin A Mangel







## Hypervitaminose A



**FIG 84.19** Epidermal sloughing in a three-toed box turtle (*Terrapene carolina triunguis*), caused by overdosage with water-soluble vitamin A (A), and in a tortoise (B), caused by fat-soluble vitamin A. Tortoises rarely, if ever, develop hypovitaminosis A and do not require vitamin A injections. (Courtesy of Thomas H. Boyer.)





**University of  
Zurich** UZH

**Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife**

# Reptilien & Ziervögel – andere Mangelerkrankungen



## Vitamin B Mangel – Fischfütterung (Thiaminasen)



**FIG 84.23** Neurological deficits and mydriasis in a mole kingsnake (*Lampropeltis calligaster*) fed goldfish (*Carassius auratus*). The clinical signs resolved within 24 hours of an injection of 100 mg/kg thiamin B1 and were prevented by converting to a rodent diet. (Courtesy of Stephen J. Divers.)



# Jodmangel

Full Scientific Report



# An outbreak of thyroid hyperplasia (goiter) with high mortality in budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*)

Journal of Veterinary Diagnostic Investigation  
2015, Vol. 27(1) 18–24  
© 2014 The Author(s)  
Reprints and permissions:  
[sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav](http://sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav)  
DOI: 10.1177/1040638714559025  
[jvdi.sagepub.com](http://jvdi.sagepub.com)

**Panayiotis Loukopoulos, Adrienne C. Bautista, Birgit Puschner, Brian Murphy, Beate M. Crossley, Ian Holser, Lucy Gomes, H. L. Shivaprasad, Francisco A. Uzal<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract.** An outbreak of gitter with high morbidity and mortality in a flock of budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) in California is described. Forty-five out of 400 adult birds exhibited signs of illness, weight loss, and enlargement in the crop area; 15 of the 45 birds died over a 2–3-month period. Diet consisted of a commercial mixture with the addition of broccoli, whole oats, and carrots, but no minerals or supplements. Six budgerigars were subjected to necropsy; all 6 birds had severely enlarged thyroid glands. Thyroid follicular hyperplasia was histologically observed in all birds examined, while granulomatous thyroiditis and microfollicular adenoma were observed in 2 birds, respectively. Virological, bacteriological, parasitological, and heavy metal analyses were negative or within normal limits. The total iodine in the thyroid glands of affected birds was measured by inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry. Following iodine supplementation and removal of broccoli from the diet, the owner reported weight gain and a reduced death rate among clinically affected birds; no additional birds became sick. The presence of broccoli with its iodine-binding ability and the complete lack of added minerals in the diet of these animals were thought to be the predisposing factors for the outbreak in the present study. Outbreaks of gitter accompanied by high mortality are rare in any species and, to the best of the authors' knowledge, have not been described previously in any avian species. Recognition of this condition may help improve medical, welfare, and trade standards concerning this species.

**Key words:** Budgerigars; goiter; iodine deficiency; outbreak; psittacine; thyroid hyperplasia.

## Introduction

Goiter (follicular thyroid hyperplasia) has been reported in its congenital and acquired forms, in human beings and in most domestic<sup>6</sup> and some wild mammalian and avian species,<sup>17</sup> with widely varying interspecies frequency. Goiter is often the result of dietary iodine deficiency<sup>17</sup> but has also been attributed to consumption of goitrogenic substances,<sup>13</sup> toxicity by iodine and other substances,<sup>11</sup> and to hereditary factors, including autosomal recessive inheritance in goats.<sup>20</sup> It remains endemic in some areas because of a lack of, or despite, iodine supplementation.<sup>21</sup>

Goiter outbreaks have been reported in human beings,<sup>10</sup> albeit with decreasing frequency, but are infrequently reported in other species. Such reports include outbreaks in cattle in Japan<sup>22</sup> and in sheep in Slovakia<sup>23</sup> and Australia.<sup>24</sup> Outbreaks accompanied by high mortality are rare in any species and, to the best of the authors' knowledge, outbreaks of goiter have not been described previously in any avian species. Goiter has been reported in psittacines (budgerigars and cockatiels) in the form of individual cases,<sup>25,26,30</sup> and anecdotal evidence suggests that psittacines are more susceptible to goiter<sup>27,28,29</sup> than other avian species, with a few reports suggesting that the prevalence of goiter in these birds

is higher than for other avian species.<sup>3,4,12</sup> However, these reports lack epidemiologic analysis and/or interspecies prevalence comparisons. For example, a 1963 study on 129 bird-submission submissions reported that 23.8% of the birds died as a result of thyroid dysplasia attributed to iodine deficiency in the seed mixtures; however, these birds were exclusively individual pet submissions examined in one center over time and no data on other avian species was provided.<sup>4</sup> In another analysis of 257 individual budgerigar postmortem examinations, the most common disease reported was neoplasia of the gonads, kidneys, and fat, while hepatitis and focal hepatic necrosis, thyroid dysplasia, and septicemia were also common<sup>3</sup> but less frequent. A Berlin Zoo study of 3,314 postmortem examinations of zoo birds from 18 avian orders allowed

From the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory System, San Bernardino (Loukopoulos, Uzal), Davis (Bautista, Puschner, Crossley, Holsner), and Tulare (Gomes, Shivaprasad) branches, and the Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology (Murphy), School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, CA.

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding Author: Francisco A. Uzal, California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, 105 W Central Avenue, San Bernardino, CA 92408. [fuzal@cahfs.ucdavis.edu](mailto:fuzal@cahfs.ucdavis.edu)





## Jodmangel

Check for updates

Full Scientific Report

### An outbreak of thyroid hyperplasia (goiter) with high mortality in budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*)

Panayiotis Loukopoulos, Adrienne C. Bautista, Birgit Puschner, Brian Murphy, Beate M. Crossley, Ian Holser, Lucy Gomes, H. L. Shivaprasad, Francisco A. Uzal<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract.** An outbreak of goiter with high morbidity and mortality in a flock of budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) in California is described. Forty-five out of 400 adult birds exhibited signs of illness, weight loss, and enlargement in the crop area; 15 of the 45 birds died over a 2–3-month period. Diet consisted of a commercial mixture with the addition of broccoli, whole oats, and carrots, but no minerals or supplements. Six budgerigars were subjected to necropsy; all 6 birds had severely enlarged thyroid glands. Thyroid follicular hyperplasia was histologically observed in all birds examined, while granulomatous thyroiditis and microfollicular adenoma were observed in 2 birds, respectively. Virological, bacteriological, parasitological, and heavy metal analyses were negative or within normal limits. The total iodine in the thyroid glands of affected birds was measured by inductively coupled plasma–mass spectrometry. Following iodine supplementation and removal of broccoli from the diet, the owner reported weight gain and a reduced death rate among clinically affected birds; no additional birds became sick. The presence of broccoli with its iodine-binding ability and the complete lack of added minerals in the diet of these animals were thought to be the predisposing factors for the outbreak in the present study. Outbreaks of goiter accompanied by high mortality are rare in any species and, to the best of the authors' knowledge, have not been described previously in any avian species. Recognition of this condition may help improve medical, welfare, and trade standards concerning this species.

**Key words:** Budgerigars; goiter; iodine deficiency; outbreak; psittacine; thyroid hyperplasia.

### Introduction

Goiter (follicular thyroid hyperplasia) has been reported in its congenital and acquired forms, in human beings and in most domestic<sup>6</sup> and some wild mammalian and avian species,<sup>17</sup> with widely varying interspecies frequency. Goiter is often the result of dietary iodine deficiency<sup>7</sup> but has also been attributed to consumption of goitrogenic substances,<sup>13</sup> toxicity by iodine and other substances,<sup>11</sup> and to hereditary factors, including autosomal recessive inheritance in goats.<sup>20</sup> It remains endemic in some areas because of a lack of, or despite, iodine supplementation.<sup>21</sup>

Goiter outbreaks have been reported in human beings,<sup>10</sup> albeit with decreasing frequency, but are infrequently reported in other species. Such reports include outbreaks in cattle in Japan<sup>12</sup> and in sheep in Slovakia<sup>19</sup> and Australia.<sup>8</sup> Outbreaks accompanied by high mortality are rare in any species and, to the best of the authors' knowledge, outbreaks of goiter have not been described previously in any avian species. Goiter has been reported in psittacines (budgerigars and cockatiels) in the form of individual cases,<sup>25,26,30</sup> and anecdotal evidence suggests that psittacines are more susceptible to goiter<sup>22,23,27</sup> than other avian species, with a few reports suggesting that the prevalence of goiter in these birds

Journal of Veterinary Diagnostic Investigation  
2015, Vol. 27(1) 18–24  
© 2014 The Author(s)  
Reprints and permissions:  
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/1040638714559025  
jvdi.sagepub.com

From the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory System, San Bernardino (Loukopoulos, Uzal), Davis (Bautista, Puschner, Crossley, Holser), and Tulare (Gomes, Shivaprasad) branches, and the Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology (Murphy), School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, CA.

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding Author: Francisco A. Uzal, California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, 105 W Central Avenue, San Bernardino, CA 92408. fuzal@cahfs.ucdavis.edu

Budgerigars are anecdotally considered to be particularly susceptible to developing goiter; however, the published literature and a search of the laboratory archives do not seem to support this assumption.



## Jodmangel

Check for updates

Full Scientific Report

**An outbreak of thyroid hyperplasia (goiter) with high mortality in budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*)**

Panayiotis Loukopoulos, Adrienne C. Bautista, Birgit Puschner, Brian Murphy, Beate M. Crossley, Ian Holser, Lucy Gomes, H. L. Shivaprasad, Francisco A. Uzal<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract.** An outbreak of goiter with high morbidity and mortality in a flock of budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) in California is described. Forty-five out of 400 adult birds exhibited signs of illness, weight loss, and enlargement in the crop area; 15 of the 45 birds died over a 2–3-month period. Diet consisted of a commercial mixture with the addition of broccoli, whole oats, and carrots, but no minerals or supplements. Six budgerigars were subjected to necropsy; all 6 birds had severely enlarged thyroid glands. Thyroid follicular hyperplasia was histologically observed in all birds examined, while granulomatous thyroiditis and microfollicular adenoma were observed in 2 birds, respectively. Virological, bacteriological, parasitological, and heavy metal analyses were negative or within normal limits. The total iodine in the thyroid glands of affected birds was measured by inductively coupled plasma–mass spectrometry. Following iodine supplementation and removal of broccoli from

**Journal of Veterinary Diagnostic Investigation**  
2015, Vol. 27(1) 18–24  
© 2014 The Author(s)  
Reprints and permissions:  
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/1040638714559025  
jvdi.sagepub.com

Budgerigars are anecdotally considered to be particularly susceptible to developing goiter; however, the published literature and a search of the laboratory archives do not seem to support this assumption.

**Table 1.** Signalment, pathology, and total iodine concentrations (mg/kg wet weight) in the thyroid gland of budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) with goiter and in control birds.\*

Bird	Group	Species	Iodine	Pathology	Signalment
1	Goiter	Budgerigar	780	Goiter	1 year old, sex not recorded
3	Goiter	Budgerigar	660	Goiter	1 year old, sex not recorded
23	Control	Budgerigar	1,000	Pulmonary hemorrhage	Adult, male
24	Control	Budgerigar	4,200	Pulmonary hemorrhage	Adult, male

anecdotal evidence suggests that psittacines are more susceptible to goiter<sup>22,23,27</sup> than other avian species, with a few reports suggesting that the prevalence of goiter in these birds

\*Corresponding author: FRANCISCO A. UZAL, California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, 105 W Central Avenue, San Bernardino, CA 92408. fuzal@cahfs.ucdavis.edu



## Jodmangel

Check for updates

Full Scientific Report

### An outbreak of thyroid hyperplasia (goiter) with high mortality in budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*)

Panayiotis Loukopoulos, Adrienne C. Bautista, Birgit Puschner, Brian Murphy, Beate M. Crossley, Ian Holser, Lucy Gomes, H. L. Shivaprasad, Francisco A. Uzal<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract.** An outbreak of goiter with high morbidity and mortality in a flock of budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) in California is described. Forty-five out of 400 adult birds exhibited signs of illness, weight loss, and enlargement in the crop area; 15 of the 45 birds died over a 2–3-month period. Diet consisted of a commercial mixture with the addition of broccoli, whole oats, and carrots, but no minerals or supplements. Six budgerigars were subjected to necropsy; all 6 birds had severely enlarged thyroid glands. Thyroid follicular hyperplasia was histologically observed in all birds examined, while granulomatous thyroiditis and microfollicular adenoma were observed in 2 birds, respectively. Virological, bacteriological, parasitological, and heavy metal analyses were negative or within normal limits. The total iodine in the thyroid glands of affected birds was measured by inductively coupled plasma–mass spectrometry. Following iodine supplementation and removal of broccoli from the diet, the owner reported weight gain and a reduced death rate among clinically affected birds; no additional birds became sick. The presence of broccoli with its iodine-binding ability and the complete lack of added minerals in the diet of these animals were thought to be the predisposing factors for the outbreak in the present study. Outbreaks of goiter accompanied by high mortality are rare in any species and, to the best of the authors' knowledge, have not been described previously in any avian species. Recognition of this condition may help improve medical, welfare, and trade standards concerning this species.

**Key words:** Budgerigars; goiter; iodine deficiency; outbreak; psittacine; thyroid hyperplasia.

### Introduction

Goiter (follicular thyroid hyperplasia) has been reported in its congenital and acquired forms, in human beings and in most domestic<sup>6</sup> and some wild mammalian and avian species,<sup>17</sup> with widely varying interspecies frequency. Goiter is often the result of dietary iodine deficiency<sup>7</sup> but has also been attributed to consumption of goitrogenic substances,<sup>13</sup> toxicity by iodine and other substances,<sup>11</sup> and to hereditary factors, including autosomal recessive inheritance in goats.<sup>20</sup> It remains endemic in some areas because of a lack of, or despite, iodine supplementation.<sup>21</sup>

Goiter outbreaks have been reported in human beings,<sup>10</sup> albeit with decreasing frequency, but are infrequently reported in other species. Such reports include outbreaks in cattle in Japan<sup>12</sup> and in sheep in Slovakia<sup>19</sup> and Australia.<sup>8</sup> Outbreaks accompanied by high mortality are rare in any species and, to the best of the authors' knowledge, outbreaks of goiter have not been described previously in any avian species. Goiter has been reported in psittacines (budgerigars and cockatiels) in the form of individual cases,<sup>25,26,30</sup> and anecdotal evidence suggests that psittacines are more susceptible to goiter<sup>22,23,27</sup> than other avian species, with a few reports suggesting that the prevalence of goiter in these birds

Journal of Veterinary Diagnostic Investigation  
2015, Vol. 27(1) 18–24  
© 2014 The Author(s)  
Reprints and permissions:  
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/1040638714559025  
jvdi.sagepub.com

From the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory System, San Bernardino (Loukopoulos, Uzal), Davis (Bautista, Puschner, Crossley, Holser), and Tulare (Gomes, Shivaprasad) branches, and the Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology (Murphy), School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, CA.

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding Author: Francisco A. Uzal, California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, 105 W Central Avenue, San Bernardino, CA 92408. fuzal@cahfs.ucdavis.edu

Broccoli, as well as other members of the *Brassicaceae* family, contains goitrogenic compounds, which can interfere with the uptake and organification of iodine, and subsequently lead to the inability to form active thyroid hormones.





## Jodmangel

Check for updates

Full Scientific Report

### An outbreak of thyroid hyperplasia (goiter) with high mortality in budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*)

Panayiotis Loukopoulos, Adrienne C. Bautista, Birgit Puschner, Brian Murphy, Beate M. Crossley, Ian Holser, Lucy Gomes, H. L. Shivaprasad, Francisco A. Uzal<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract.** An outbreak of goiter with high morbidity and mortality in a flock of budgerigars (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) in California is described. Forty-five out of 400 adult birds exhibited signs of illness, weight loss, and enlargement in the crop area; 15 of the 45 birds died over a 2–3-month period. Diet consisted of a commercial mixture with the addition of broccoli, whole oats, and carrots, but no minerals or supplements. Six budgerigars were subjected to necropsy; all 6 birds had severely enlarged thyroid glands. Thyroid follicular hyperplasia was histologically observed in all birds examined, while granulomatous thyroiditis and microfollicular adenoma were observed in 2 birds, respectively. Virological, bacteriological, parasitological, and heavy metal analyses were negative or within normal limits. The total iodine in the thyroid glands of affected birds was measured by inductively coupled plasma–mass spectrometry. Following iodine supplementation and removal of broccoli from the diet, the owner reported weight gain and a reduced death rate among clinically affected birds; no additional birds became sick. The presence of broccoli with its iodine-binding ability and the complete lack of added minerals in the diet of these animals were thought to be the predisposing factors for the outbreak in the present study. Outbreaks of goiter accompanied by high mortality are rare in any species and, to the best of the authors' knowledge, have not been described previously in any avian species. Recognition of this condition may help improve medical, welfare, and trade standards concerning this species.

**Key words:** Budgerigars; goiter; iodine deficiency; outbreak; psittacine; thyroid hyperplasia.

#### Introduction

Goiter (follicular thyroid hyperplasia) has been reported in its congenital and acquired forms, in human beings and in most domestic<sup>6</sup> and some wild mammalian and avian species,<sup>17</sup> with widely varying interspecies frequency. Goiter is often the result of dietary iodine deficiency<sup>7</sup> but has also been attributed to consumption of goitrogenic substances,<sup>13</sup> toxicity by iodine and other substances,<sup>11</sup> and to hereditary factors, including autosomal recessive inheritance in goats.<sup>20</sup> It remains endemic in some areas because of a lack of, or despite, iodine supplementation.<sup>21</sup>

Goiter outbreaks have been reported in human beings,<sup>10</sup> albeit with decreasing frequency, but are infrequently reported in other species. Such reports include outbreaks in cattle in Japan<sup>12</sup> and in sheep in Slovakia<sup>16</sup> and Australia.<sup>8</sup> Outbreaks accompanied by high mortality are rare in any species and, to the best of the authors' knowledge, outbreaks of goiter have not been described previously in any avian species. Goiter has been reported in psittacines (budgerigars and cockatiels) in the form of individual cases,<sup>25,26,30</sup> and anecdotal evidence suggests that psittacines are more susceptible to goiter<sup>22,23,27</sup> than other avian species, with a few reports suggesting that the prevalence of goiter in these birds



Journal of Veterinary Diagnostic Investigation  
2015, Vol. 27(1) 18–24  
© 2014 The Author(s)  
Reprints and permissions:  
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/1040638714559025  
jvdi.sagepub.com

is higher than in other avian species.<sup>3,4,12</sup> However, these reports lack epidemiologic analysis and/or interspecies prevalence comparisons. For example, a 1963 study on 129 budgerigar submissions reported that 23.8% of the birds died as a result of thyroid dysplasia attributed to iodine deficiency in the seed mixtures; however, these birds were exclusively individual pet submissions examined in one center over time and no data on other avian species was provided.<sup>9</sup> In another analysis of 257 individual budgerigar postmortem examinations, the most common disease reported was neoplasia of the gonads, kidneys, and fat, while hepatitis and focal hepatic necrosis, thyroid dysplasia, and septicemia were also common<sup>7</sup> but less frequent. A Berlin Zoo study of 3,314 postmortem examinations of zoo birds from 18 avian orders allowed

From the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory System, San Bernardino (Loukopoulos, Uzal), Davis (Bautista, Puschner, Crossley, Holser), and Tulare (Gomes, Shivaprasad) branches, and the Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology (Murphy), School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, CA.

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding Author: Francisco A. Uzal, California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, 105 W Central Avenue, San Bernardino, CA 92408. fuzal@cahfs.ucdavis.edu





## Jodmangel

Um die Tierhalter für die neue Ernährung ihrer Lieblinge zu begeistern, griff die Werbung mitunter zu recht drastischen Mitteln. Da wurde im Fernsehen auch schon mal ein Wellensittich gezeigt, der wegen fehlender Jod-S-11-Körnchen tot auf dem Boden seines Käfigs lag. Wetzlar offenbarte seinen Zuhörern sogar, was hinter dieser geheimnisvollen Formel steckt. S-11 ist einfach eine Abkürzung für „Sonnenschein-Körnchen“. Nach dem „S“ folgen noch 11 Buchstaben.





# Einzelhaltung vs. Zucht

## Nutrition of Caged Birds

### Formulated Diets Versus Seed Mixtures for Psittacines<sup>1,2</sup>

DIANE E. ULLREY,<sup>3</sup> MARY E. ALLEN<sup>4</sup> AND DAVID J. BAER<sup>5</sup>

Comparative Nutrition Group, Department of Animal Science,  
Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824

**ABSTRACT** Psittacines are often classified as seed eaters despite studies that have established great diversity in food habits in the wild. While seeds are consumed, so are flowers, buds, leaves, fruits and cambium. Some psittacines consume parts of >80 species of grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees. In addition, insects may be important. Although there are few controlled studies of the requirements of psittacines, it is probable that most nutrient needs are comparable to those of domesticated precocial birds that have been thoroughly studied. Commercial seed mixes for psittacines commonly contain corn, sunflower, safflower, pumpkin and squash seeds, wheat, peanuts, millet, oat groats and buckwheat, although other seeds may be present. Because hulls/shells comprise 18–69% of these seeds and they are removed before swallowing, a significant proportion of typical seed mixtures is waste. Some of the seeds also are very high in fat and promote obesity. Common nutrient deficiencies of decorticated seeds include lysine, calcium, available phosphorus, sodium, manganese, zinc, iron, iodine, selenium, vitamins A, D, E and K, riboflavin, pantothenic acid, available niacin, vitamin B-12 and choline. Attempts to correct these deficiencies by incorporating pellets into seed mixes are usually thwarted by rejection of the pellets and disproportionate consumption of items that are more highly favored. An extruded diet formulated to meet the projected nutrient needs of psittacines was fed with fruits and vegetables to eight species of psittacines for 1 y. Fledging percentage was increased to 90% from 66% observed during the previous 2 y when these psittacines were fed seeds, fruits and vegetables. Although this extruded diet was well accepted in a mixture of fruits and vegetables and met nutrient needs, analyses have shown that not all commercial formulated diets are of equal merit. *J. Nutr.* 121: S193–S205, 1991.

#### INDEXING KEY WORDS:

• symposium • birds • psittacines • seed composition • nutrient requirements • formulated diet • gout

Aviculturists often classify caged birds on the basis of their apparent food preferences in captivity (1). The Psittacidae comprise a family of birds with stout,

hooked bills commonly called seed eaters despite field studies (2–5) establishing great diversity in food habits in the wild. Psittacines are widespread in tropical and south temperate areas of the world, with major populations in the neotropics and Australia. These regions vary widely in rainfall and temperature and in the food plants that the environment will support (6). Since indigenous psittacines coevolved with their food supply, their food choices in an undegraded habitat represent a nutritional wisdom built on generations of experience. However, studies of caged psittacines suggest that the nutritional wisdom of wild birds does not transfer to captive birds offered cultivated seeds as their principal food. In fact, specific instances of failed dietary husbandry based on seed mixtures have led to this review of natural dietary habits of certain psittacines, the nutritional limitations of seeds and the development of diets formulated to be nutritionally complete.

#### FOOD SELECTION BY CERTAIN WILD PSITTACINES

Biologists with significant field experience will testify how difficult it is to gather quantitative food intake data on free-living birds. Even qualitative information is difficult to gather. Nevertheless, the follow-

<sup>1</sup> Presented as part of the Waltham International Symposium on Nutrition of Small Companion Animals, at University of California, Davis, CA 95616, on September 4–8, 1990. Guest editors for the symposium were James G. Morris, D'Ann C. Finley and Quinton R. Rogers.

<sup>2</sup> Journal paper from the Michigan Agricultural Experimental Station, East Lansing, MI 48824.

<sup>3</sup> To whom correspondence should be addressed: Department of Animal Science, Michigan State University, 205 Anthony Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

<sup>4</sup> Present address: Allen and Baer Associates, 5320 Olney-Laytonville Road, Olney, MD 20832.

<sup>5</sup> Present address: Energy and Protein Laboratory, Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center, United States Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, MD 20705.





# Einzelhaltung vs. Zucht

## Nutrition of Caged Birds

### Formulated Diets Versus Seed Mixtures for Psittacines<sup>1,2</sup>

DUANE E. ULLREY,<sup>3</sup> MARY E. ALLEN<sup>4</sup> AND DAVID J. BAER<sup>5</sup>

Comparative Nutrition Group, Department of Animal Science,  
Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824

**ABSTRACT** Psittacines are often classified as seed eaters despite studies that have established great diversity in food habits in the wild. While seeds are consumed, so are flowers, buds, leaves, fruits and cambium. Some psittacines consume parts of >80 species of grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees. In addition, insects may be important. Although there are few controlled studies of the requirements of psittacines, it is probable that most nutrient needs are comparable to those of domesticated precocial birds that have been thoroughly studied. Commercial seed mixes for psittacines commonly contain corn, sunflower, safflower, pumpkin and squash seeds, wheat, peanuts, millet, oat groats and buckwheat, although other seeds may be present. Because hulls/shells comprise 18–69% of these seeds and they are removed before swallowing, a significant proportion of typical seed mixtures is waste. Some of the seeds also are very high in fat and promote obesity. Common nutrient deficiencies of decorticated seeds include lysine, calcium, available phosphorus, sodium, manganese, zinc, iron, iodine, selenium, vitamins A, D, E and K, riboflavin, pantothenic acid, available niacin, vitamin B-12 and choline. Attempts to correct these deficiencies by incorporating pellets into seed mixes are usually thwarted by rejection of the pellets and disproportionate consumption of items that are more highly favored. An extruded diet formulated to meet the projected nutrient needs of psittacines was fed with fruits and vegetables to eight species of psittacines for 1 y. Fledgling percentage was increased to 90% from 66% observed during the previous 2 y when these psittacines were fed seeds, fruits and vegetables. Although this extruded diet was well accepted in a mixture of fruits and vegetables and met nutrient needs, analyses have shown that not all commercial formulated diets are of equal merit. *J. Nutr.* 121: S193–S205, 1991.

#### INDEXING KEY WORDS:

• symposium • birds • psittacines • seed composition • nutrient requirements • formulated diet • gout

Aviculturists often classify caged birds on the basis of their apparent food preferences in captivity (1). The Psittacidae comprise a family of birds with stout,

hooked bills commonly called seed eaters despite field studies (2–5) establishing great diversity in food habits in the wild. Psittacines are widespread in tropical and south temperate areas of the world, with major populations in the neotropics and Australia. These regions vary widely in rainfall and temperature and in the food plants that the environment will support (6). Since indigenous psittacines coevolved with their food supply, their food choices in an undegraded habitat represent a nutritional wisdom built on generations of experience. However, studies of caged psittacines suggest that the nutritional wisdom of wild birds does not transfer to captive birds offered cultivated seeds as their principal food. In fact, specific instances of failed dietary husbandry based on seed mixtures have led to this review of natural dietary habits of certain psittacines, the nutritional limitations of seeds and the development of diets formulated to be nutritionally complete.

#### FOOD SELECTION BY CERTAIN WILD PSITTACINES

Biologists with significant field experience will testify how difficult it is to gather quantitative food intake data on free-living birds. Even qualitative information is difficult to gather. Nevertheless, the follow-

<sup>1</sup> Presented as part of the Waltham International Symposium on Nutrition of Small Companion Animals, at University of California, Davis, CA 95616, on September 4–8, 1990. Guest editors for the symposium were James G. Morris, D'Ann C. Finley and Quinton R. Rogers.

<sup>2</sup> Journal paper from the Michigan Agricultural Experimental Station, East Lansing, MI 48824.

<sup>3</sup> To whom correspondence should be addressed: Department of Animal Science, Michigan State University, 205 Anthony Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

<sup>4</sup> Present address: Allen and Baer Associates, 5320 Olney-Laytonville Road, Olney, MD 20832.

<sup>5</sup> Present address: Energy and Protein Laboratory, Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center, United States Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, MD 20705.





# Einzelhaltung vs. Zucht

## Nutrition of Caged Birds

### Formulated Diets Versus Seed Mixtures for Psittacines<sup>1,2</sup>

DIANE E. ULLREY,<sup>3</sup> MARY E. ALLEN<sup>4</sup> AND DAVID J. BAER<sup>5</sup>

Comparative Nutrition Group, Department of Animal Science,  
Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824

**ABSTRACT** Psittacines are often classified as seed eaters despite studies that have established great diversity in food habits in the wild. While seeds are consumed, so are flowers, buds, leaves, fruits and cambium. Some psittacines consume parts of >80 species of grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees. In addition, insects may be important. Although there are few controlled studies of the requirements of psittacines, it is probable that most nutrient needs are comparable to those of domesticated precocial birds that have been thoroughly studied. Commercial seed mixes for psittacines commonly contain corn, sunflower, safflower, pumpkin and squash seeds, wheat, peanuts, millet, oat groats and buckwheat, although other seeds may be present. Because hulls/shells comprise 18–69% of these seeds and they are removed before swallowing, a significant proportion of typical seed mixtures is waste. Some of the seeds also are very high in fat and promote obesity. Common nutrient deficiencies of decorticated seeds include lysine, calcium, available phosphorus, sodium, manganese, zinc, iron, iodine, selenium, vitamins A, D, E and K, riboflavin, pantothenic acid, available niacin, vitamin B-12 and choline. Attempts to correct these deficiencies by incorporating pellets into seed mixes are usually thwarted by rejection of the pellets and disproportionate consumption of items that are more highly favored. An extruded diet formulated to meet the projected nutrient needs of psittacines was fed with fruits and vegetables to eight species of psittacines for 1 yr. Fledging percentage was increased to 90% from 66% observed during the previous 2 yr when these psittacines were fed seeds, fruits and vegetables. Although this extruded diet was well accepted in a mixture of fruits and vegetables and met nutrient needs, analyses have shown that not all commercial formulated diets are of equal merit. *J. Nutr.* 121: S193–S205, 1991.

#### INDEXING KEY WORDS:

• symposium • birds • psittacines • seed composition • nutrient requirements • formulated diet • gout

Aviculturists often classify caged birds on the basis of their apparent food preferences in captivity (1). The Psittacidae comprise a family of birds with stout,

hooked bills commonly called seed eaters despite field studies (2–5) establishing great diversity in food habits in the wild. Psittacines are widespread in tropical and south temperate areas of the world, with major populations in the neotropics and Australia. These regions vary widely in rainfall and temperature and in the food plants that the environment will support (6). Since indigenous psittacines coevolved with their food supply, their food choices in an undegraded habitat represent a nutritional wisdom built on generations of experience. However, studies of caged psittacines suggest that the nutritional wisdom of wild birds does not transfer to captive birds offered cultivated seeds as their principal food. In fact, specific instances of failed dietary husbandry based on seed mixtures have led to this review of natural dietary habits of certain psittacines, the nutritional limitations of seeds and the development of diets formulated to be nutritionally complete.

#### FOOD SELECTION BY CERTAIN WILD PSITTACINES

Biologists with significant field experience will testify how difficult it is to gather quantitative food intake data on free-living birds. Even qualitative information is difficult to gather. Nevertheless, the follow-

<sup>1</sup> Presented as part of the Waltham International Symposium on Nutrition of Small Companion Animals, at University of California, Davis, CA 95616, on September 4–8, 1990. Guest editors for the symposium were James G. Morris, D'Ann C. Finley and Quinton R. Rogers.

<sup>2</sup> Journal paper from the Michigan Agricultural Experimental Station, East Lansing, MI 48824.

<sup>3</sup> To whom correspondence should be addressed: Department of Animal Science, Michigan State University, 205 Anthony Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

<sup>4</sup> Present address: Allen and Baer Associates, 5320 Olney-Laytonville Road, Olney, MD 20832.

<sup>5</sup> Present address: Energy and Protein Laboratory, Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center, United States Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, MD 20705.



Fledging percentage associated with feeding of seeds, fruit and vegetables or an extrusion, fruit and vegetables to 8 species of psittacines

Food item	Diet strategy	
	Seeds, fruit, veg <sup>3</sup>	Extrusion, fruit, veg <sup>4</sup>
	%	
Yellow-headed Amazon ( <i>Amazona ochrocephala oratrix</i> )	75	100
Forsten's Lorikeet ( <i>Trichoglossus haematodus forsteni</i> )	62	100
Goldie's Lorikeet ( <i>Trichoglossus goldiei</i> )	45	83
Blue and Gold Macaw ( <i>Ara ararauna</i> )	62	80
Scarlet Macaw ( <i>Ara macao</i> )	62	100
Ring-necked Parakeet ( <i>Psittacula krameri manillensis</i> )	80	100
Rock Peplar Parakeet ( <i>Polytelis anthopeplus</i> )	88	80
Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot ( <i>Loriculus galgulus</i> )	50	75
Total	66	90 <sup>5</sup>





University of  
Zurich <sup>UZH</sup>

Clinic for Zoo Animals, Exotic Pets and Wildlife

**Vielen Dank für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit!**

