

The Eye Inside

Endoscopy opens new doors for reptile health and husbandry.

By Stephen Hernandez-Divers

Unlike some advanced veterinary technologies or procedures, the concept of endoscopy may be familiar to many of you. It uses small-diameter endoscopes and cameras to look inside the body. Some of you may even have experienced endoscopy, either personally, or through close friends or family members. Common procedures include examination of the stomach (gastroscopy), joints (arthroscopy), and inside the abdomen (laparoscopy) or chest (thoracoscopy). In most cases, your experiences are probably similar to those published in the human medical journals — endoscopy is less invasive, less painful and provides accurate diagnosis with faster recovery.

Wouldn't it be great if such minimally invasive procedures were available for reptiles? Can you imagine a veterinarian performing a lung endoscopy in a snake to collect tissue samples for accurate diagnosis without having to make any incision? Or a vet performing a kidney or liver biopsy in a lizard that took just a few minutes to complete and required just a single skin suture? Or an endoscopic castration in male lizards, or sterilization in female turtles and tortoises? Well, all these procedures are actually a reality, and for many specialist veterinarians, endoscopy has become a primary tool when working with reptiles.

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