

# Making the Difference in Exotic Animal Practice

## The Value of Endoscopy

Stephen J. Divers, BVetMed, DZooMed, DECZM (Herpetology),  
DECZM (Zoo Health Management), DACZM, FRCVS

### KEYWORDS

• Definitive diagnosis • Endoscopy • Biopsy

### KEY POINTS

- A definitive diagnosis requires demonstration of a pathologic change and identification of the causative agent.
- Endoscopic biopsy represents a noninvasive to minimally invasive technique that facilitates internal evaluation and biopsy.
- Training is required, but basic clinical competency is quickly achieved.

### INTRODUCTION

Zoologic medicine has been plagued with numerous problems, many of which our domestic animal counterparts do not have to face. As exotic animal veterinarians, we have to deal with a variety of diverse species, general lack of pathognomonic clinical signs, limited serologic tests, and few tried and tested therapeutic modalities. I myself used to be frequently frustrated with many of my reptile, avian, and small mammal cases. My inability to reach a definitive diagnosis often adversely affected the accuracy of my prognoses, and the effectiveness of my treatments. In 1994, I took the Harris and Taylor avian endoscopy laboratory at the North American Veterinary Conference, and that forever changed the way I practiced zoological medicine. During the last two decades, my research and clinical experiences have only strengthened my belief that endoscopy is a diagnostic cornerstone of zoological medicine, and offers major benefits to exotic pet practitioners. From the outset it is important to state that my interests in endoscopy are solely clinical. I am not a paid consultant for any endoscopy company, and all equipment used in my clinical service (**Table 1**) at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, University of Georgia, has been purchased (not

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The author has nothing to disclose.

Department of Small Animal Medicine and Surgery, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Georgia, 2200 College Station Road, Athens, GA 30602, USA

*E-mail address:* [sdivers@uga.edu](mailto:sdivers@uga.edu)

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**Table 1**  
**Endoscopy equipment frequently used in exotic animal procedures**

<b>Equipment Description</b>	<b>Primary Indications</b>
<i>Telescopes and Endoscopes</i>	
1 mm × 20 cm semirigid miniscope, 0°	Stomatoscopy, otoscopy, rhinoscopy, tracheoscopy in animals up to 1 kg
1.9 mm × 18.5 cm telescope, 30° oblique, with integrated 3.3-mm operating sheath	Stomatoscopy, otoscopy, rhinoscopy, tracheoscopy, gastroscopy, colonoscopy, cloacoscopy, and coelioscopy in animals up to 3–4 kg
2.7 mm × 18 cm telescope, 30° oblique (wide angle) 4.8-mm operating sheath	Stomatoscopy, otoscopy, rhinoscopy, tracheoscopy, gastroscopy, colonoscopy, cloacoscopy, and coelioscopy in animals between 100 g and 10 kg
5 mm × 8.5 cm otoendoscope, 0°, with integrated operating sheath	Stomatoscopy and otoscopy in animals between 1 and 100 kg
Mechanical holding arm (VITOM)	Enables the telescope to be held in place by a table-clamped mechanical arm
3-mm, 100-cm fiberoptic bronchoscope with 1.2-mm channel	Two-way deflection and biopsy channel for flexible gastrointestinal and respiratory endoscopy
2.8-mm, 60-cm video bronchoscope with 1.2-mm channel	Two-way deflection and biopsy channel for flexible gastrointestinal and respiratory endoscopy
5.9-mm, 110-cm videogastroscope with 2-mm channel	Four-way deflection, irrigation, suction, and biopsy channel for flexible gastrointestinal
<i>Visualization and Documentation</i>	
Endovideo camera and monitor	Required for all endoscopy procedures
Xenon light source and light guide cable	
Digital capture device (eg, AIDA-DVD)	
<i>Flexible Instruments for Use with Operating Sheaths</i>	
1-mm biopsy forceps	For use with 1.9-mm telescope and integrated sheath
1-mm grasping forceps	
1.7-mm biopsy forceps	For use with 2.7-mm telescope and 4.8-mm operating sheath, and 5-mm otoendoscope
1.7-mm single-action scissors	
1.7-mm remote injection needle	
1.7-mm grasping/retrieval forceps	
1.7-mm wire basket retrieval	
1.7-mm needle end radiosurgery electrode	
1.7-mm polypectomy snare	
<i>Insufflation</i>	
CO <sub>2</sub> insufflator with silicone tubing	Used for insufflation during reptile coelioscopy
Sterile saline suspended above endoscopy table with intravenous drip line to a port on the operating sheath	Used for sterile saline infusion for otoscopy, rhinoscopy, cystoscopy, cloacoscopy, reptile (especially of small and/or aquatic species), or fish coelioscopy

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