THYMIC HYPERPLASIA IN SUBADULT GALAPAGOS TORTOISES (Geochelone nigra)

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ABSTRACT

A group of five, related captive-born juvenile Galapagos tortoises (Geochelone nigra) presented with cervical neck swellings (6-20 cm) of greater than 1 yr duration. Thyroid hormones, plasma triiodothyronine (T3) and thyroxine (T4) were normal range or slightly elevated. Surgical biopsy and histologic and immunohistochemical evaluation of the masses revealed thymic hyperplasia. Seasonal changes in the size of the reptile thymus has been reported, however, this enlargement is related to hormonal activity.1,2,4 Thymic neoplasia has also been reported in a Loggerhead sea turtle (Caretta caretta).3 Thymic hyperplasia should be included as a differential diagnosis, in addition to thyroid hyperplasia (goiter), for neck swelling in tortoises.

LITERATURE CITED