REGENERATION OF THE FRONT LEG IN A RED-EARED SLIDER (*Trachemys scripta elegans*)

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ABSTRACT

An injured male red-slider turtle (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) was surrendered to the clinic. It had been attacked by a raccoon. On physical examination the left front leg had been amputated nearly to the shoulder and all toes on the other feet had been amputated. The left hind foot was swollen with multiple bites wounds. The tail tip was missing. Fluids, antibiotics, and analgesics were administered. The following day surgical amputation of the left front leg to the level of the shoulder joint was performed. The scapular joint surface was visualized, flushed with sterile saline, and the joint capsule sutured. The skin was sutured with a monofilament non-resorbable suture, with sutures being removed 3 weeks later. At 6 mo post surgery a small lump was found in the approximate position of the shoulder joint. This continued over 3 yr with extension resembling a leg, with a callus forming on the end that the turtle used to support itself. Radiographs were taken confirming no bone or calcified material. The faux leg at this writing is approximately the length a normal leg would be to the carpal joint. The limb is firm, and is movable at the shoulder. On palpation the limb firmness resembles cartilaginous formation. It responds to pinches by withdrawal. The turtle uses it like a leg, particularly out of the water. While the process of autotomy and regrowth of the tail has been well-studied in lizards and snakes, faux limb regrowth has not been reported in the literature.\(^1\) Nerve regeneration has been documented in turtles.\(^2,3\)

LITERATURE CITED