

I Love You Eyecon

A true story by Greta Jourdane

I've have had the unfortunate experience of finding out the hard way when it comes to taking a sick or injured reptile to a standard ordinary vet.

Four years ago I found a bearded dragon down the paddock with a nasty infected eye, obviously a bird had taken part of his eye out and it his it was in a very bad way. Straight away I knew this would be a vet case for this little guy. I took him to the Currumbin vet animal hospital.

When I arrived they saw how bad his eye was, full of puss and no sight left at all. They took him out for the vet to access him. The vet said it would be in his best interests to be put down right there and then, as he was suffering badly. I said "no other than his eye he's fine, he's eating and has lots of energy", but still he insisted on giving him the final jab.

I said I would take him somewhere else, and walked out with him, worrying that perhaps I'd get this treatment no matter where I took him, and he needed a vet and fast. One of the young vet assistants ran out behind me to my car and said, "I know of a good reptile vet, he's about an hour's drive from here." She even offered to phone him for me and make the appointment for the very next morning. I was over the moon.

The next morning I made him as comfy as I could and we set off. When we got there I was told "yes" he can be treated here, but we'll need to keep him in for at least three weeks, and the eye would need to be completely scraped out and the cavity packed in with special surgical gauze. I was given the condition that he never ever be returned to the wild blind in one eye. It cost me \$450 and worth every cent. I was happy to work longer hours just to get him well. It was great the day I went back to pick him up. Poor little chap he was quite traumatized by the anaesthetic, being out of his environment and also being handled by people.

When I reached down to pick him up he pooped all over me and boy it was everywhere, but it was great. I was excited about keeping him, but he had other ideas. I had decided to name him Eyecon. To me he was an icon-that name just seemed to fit everything he was about. For just under 1 month I nursed him back to full health, bathing his eye three to four times a day. I would sit outside with him on my lap and shoulder everyday too making sure he had his sun intake. I made him a little harness out of an old pair of pantyhose I had in my drawer. He just wanted to be outside the whole time. It was a funny sight.

I didn't know if I should try to keep him knowing that he wasn't happy in captivity, or if I should let him go down the paddock, despite what the vet had said to me about not releasing him back into the wild, after all he was a local lad. I looked up into the sky that day and said, "You decide." The next day the decision was made for me, as he all of a sudden broke the harness. I just stood there looking at him. He ran a few steps then he turned and looked back at me. It was kind of like he almost smiled and said, "I'll be okay". I just quietly said, "Take care Eyecon, I love you." I was very sad that day but I felt it was right. I hadn't seen him for at least six weeks and I really missed him. I wondered if I had done the right thing by just letting him go.

One day I came up the driveway in my car, and I saw a diamond shaped head sticking up out of the grass on the right side of the paddock. I stopped the car and immediately ran over...guess who? He looked in fabulous condition and his eye had completely healed. I was so pleased to see him looking like this. Eyecon continued to visit regularly until he moved territory. I would take him up to the house for cuddles and meal worms and then take him back down the paddock again. I hope he's still larking around somewhere, as he's still in my thoughts lots...I love you Eyecon!

Note: This is an exceptional story and had a happy ending but in general reptiles are not an easy animal to keep as a pet and it is best if reptiles are left in their natural habitat. As this story points out, many vets will not treat reptiles. In many places, it is not legal to keep reptiles as pets without a special permit.