UC Davis Ophthalmology Service Helping to Improve Veterinary Vision  
by Rob Warren

With only about 20 veterinary ophthalmologists in Northern California, resources are limited if owners need to find vision care for their animals. Thanks to the extensive residency program at the UC Davis Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH), though, more veterinarians are training to be ophthalmology specialists every year. Led by Drs. Steve Hollingsworth and David Maggs, the ophthalmology residency is a popular one at the VMTH. Residents and students alike have great reviews of the program, and clients are continually praising the treatment their pets receive.

The Ophthalmology Service offers many treatment and procedure options, including basic examinations and diagnostic testing, as well as emergency medical and surgical care to patients with a variety of ocular disorders. Keratoconjunctivitis sicca ("dry eye"), cataracts, glaucoma, ocular neoplasia (cancer), eye injuries, and infections are among the more common conditions treated. Animals seen include dogs, cats, horses, birds, and exotic species.

Some recent ophthalmology cases at the VMTH include:

- Hank, a five-year-old German shorthaired pointer, was brought to the VMTH by the NorCal GSP Rescue for cataract surgery. With the exception of seeing some lights and shadows, Hank was almost completely blind due to cataracts in both eyes. The VMTH Ophthalmology Service performed successful cataract surgery on both of Hank’s eyes and restored his vision. Following his surgery, Hank was adopted into a permanent home. “The entire car ride home from UC Davis, Hank just stared out the window,” Cheryl Warner, foster and volunteer coordinator for NorCal GSP Rescue said. “He was, no doubt, amazed at all the sights he hadn’t been able to see in years.”

- Toots, an English bulldog from Reno, was born with eye problems that required surgery, but like many bulldogs, she had a history of difficulties under anesthesia. It was also discovered that Toots had eaten a magnet and had a hernia. Luckily for her, all of these issues were no problem for the collaborative nature of care at UC Davis. All the necessary specialists from the appropriate services worked together to get Toots as healthy as possible prior to surgery. When it came time for surgery, the VMTH’s board-certified anesthesiologists monitored her special needs, surgeons removed the magnet and repaired her hernia, and ophthalmologists performed corrective surgery on her eyes. Toots recovered wonderfully and continues to live a happy and healthy life in Reno, visiting the Ophthalmology Service for regular care of her eye conditions.