

Cats Ingest the Strangest Things

X-Ray contest radiographs feature odd items pets swallow.

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An X-ray revealed that Stoli the cat swallowed a needle and thread, which surgeons removed. A snake that swallowed a rabbit and an electric blanket takes the top prize of a radiograph contest this year, but the X-ray submissions featuring odd items consumed by cats and dogs made for some stiff competition.

Entries to Veterinary Practice News' annual "They ate WHAT?" contest included a cat that ate a needle and thread as well as a dog that ingested a stuffed toy dog.

Brittany Shaw, a technician at Atwood Animal Hospital in Cranston, R.I., sent in a skull radiograph for a 7-year-old female cat named Stoli. The owner originally took Stoli to the hospital for a decreased appetite and gagging.

The owner reported that she had seen a string in the cat's mouth two days before taking her in. An exploratory surgery was performed by a veterinarian and nothing abnormal was found.

Stoli went home after a day on IV fluids. Two days later, her owner took the cat back to the clinic because the cat was still gagging. The veterinarian recommended a skull X-ray.

Stoli was anesthetized the next day, and the needle with string attached was found under the tongue and was removed.

The dog, a 2-year-old Labrador Retriever named Murphy, had a history of eating socks. He usually was able to pass them on his own. This time, he was in trouble.

An acute onset of vomiting and a decreased appetite were the first signs that something was wrong with Murphy. Veterinarians noted his abdomen was tense during a physical examination.

Radiographs revealed a cloth foreign object in his stomach, and "tailing" into the first part of the small intestine. A small stuffed toy dog was taken out endoscopically.

The radiographs of Murphy, submitted by Elizabeth Boland, North Carolina State University Class of 2008, were named the winners in the student category. The grand prize winner in the professional category was Gregory Rich, DVM, West Esplanade Veterinary Clinic in Metairie, La.

Both win single-lens reflex digital cameras. The annual contest is sponsored by Eklin Medical Systems of Santa Clara, Calif.

The snake, a 12-foot-long, 65-pound Burmese python, was taken to surgery to remove the heating blanket that it ate. Honorable mentions include Bella, an 8-month-old pug with a belly full of rocks and gravel; Riley, an orange cat that swallowed 12 hair ties and Maya, a 10-year-old Spaniel that swallowed her chain collar.

"Even though a snake radiograph won for a third time, we always marvel at the wide variety of species represented in the entries we receive each year," said Gary Cantu, president and chief executive officer of Eklin.

X-ray contest slideshow

