

Avian Veterinary Medicine in the U.S.

(Who are we and how do we do it!)

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The face of veterinary medicine in the United States is rapidly changing. Looking at the 1993 graduates, 61% are women, and 74% went into private practice with an average starting salary of \$30,000 at the tender age of 27.8 years. Veterinary medicine demands three to four years of undergraduate (college) training and four years in veterinary school. For avian types, we have few schools with trained staff to provide adequate experience. Only one veterinary school (North Carolina) offers a pet bird residency program.

The rest of us “wing it.”

My experience has been with pet bird medicine. The practice I was associated with is exclusively avian and exotic. I advised only a few small-time breeders, while the rest of my patients were the surrogate children of my clients. In general, my colleagues see dogs and cats with their avian patients. Among the exclusive avian and exotic practices, there exists an even smaller group who has specialized further, to see only ratites or bird breeders.

From my years in practice, I developed a few observations, which I will share in the presentation.

For a detailed look at the conditions and types of birds seen by California veterinarians, I recommend Drs. Walt Roskopf and Richard Woerpel article “Pet Avian Conditions and Syndromes of the Most Frequently Presented Species Seen in Practice” in *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice* 21(6):1189-1210, 1991.

References

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