

## Preface



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*Guest Editor*

For many veterinarians treating avian and exotic pets, diseases of the endocrine system make for challenging subject matter. The inclusion of an endocrine disorder on the differential diagnosis list can be intimidating and the diagnostic approach and treatment options even more daunting. A myriad of testing protocols, therapeutic options, and reference ranges are either anecdotal or extrapolated from canine and feline medicine—or simply do not exist at this time. There are few rules “carved in stone” regarding diagnosis and treatment of endocrine disease in the entire field of veterinary endocrinology and, in many cases, even less information about companion birds and exotic pets.

Another way to look at this dilemma is to simply accept that much remains to be learned. Endocrine physiology can differ greatly among species, especially when comparing veterinary to human medicine. This means the field of avian and exotic pet endocrinology offers great potential for research, investigation, case studies, protocol development, and therapeutic options for a given patient. As clinicians continue to medically work up difficult cases and apply sound medical skills, we all benefit and gain knowledge of diseases of the endocrine system.

I am privileged to be guest editor for this issue of *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Exotic Animal Practice* devoted to endocrinology. The field of endocrinology is complex and unique, and knowledge of endocrine disease is significant and thought-provoking. Although there are some well-known endocrine disorders seen in clinical practice, much is still unknown about the exact pathophysiology and subsequent treatment of these conditions. In

some cases we still do not even know if our patients can develop certain disorders or if current methods of diagnostic testing are useful. We are also lacking normal reference ranges for many species. My goal with this issue is to provide a mix of information, including new developments, detailed physiology, and clinically relevant material for the practitioner.

The talented contributors to this issue were asked to update the most current information on their topics and also to include anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry when relevant to broaden our understanding of the endocrine systems. This allows readers to become better informed and make rational clinical decisions when attempting to diagnose and treat endocrine disease.

I offer my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the contributors to this issue. I also thank John Vassallo for giving so much time and assistance to the publication of this issue. The topics were challenging and everyone put much time and effort into presenting an excellent review of endocrinology of avian and exotic pets.

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