

Preface



Laurie Hess, DVM, DABVP-Avian Natalie Antinoff, DVM, DABVP-Avian
Guest Editors

“Of course, Mrs. Smith, the doctor can see your lemur when you bring your kinkajou and Patagonian cavy in next week for their check-ups,” said the receptionist to the client on the telephone. As exotic animal veterinarians, we welcome telephone calls like this one that bring in new business; however, sometimes keeping up to date with all the unusual exotic animal species people now keep as pets can be daunting. It is hard enough to stay current with new treatments for the traditionally kept exotic pets, such as birds, rabbits, and guinea pigs, but it is even more challenging to stay on top of all the information out there on the exotic pets “du jour,” such as small marsupials, primates, and invertebrates. There is little published information on many of these species, and most exotic animal practitioners have had little or no formal education on any of these species. Now, with the mass of information available on the Internet, exotic animal practitioners can search for information on the care of unusual exotic pets, but our results may be based on anecdotal information from breeders or hobbyists, without scientific foundation. Similarly, there is a wealth of information in zoos and accredited breeding and research facilities that is not readily available to veterinarians outside of these facilities, mainly because veterinarians, in general, do not know how to access this information. Practitioners attend conferences and read proceedings to try to amass a small file on these pets for reference, yet no single comprehensive volume has been printed that provides an overview of basic care (including nutrition, behavior, and common diseases) of these unusual animals.

The purpose of this issue was to put together a reference text containing information on many commonly kept unusual species an exotic animal veterinarian might encounter in practice. To do this, we sought the help of several experts, many of whom are not veterinarians but biologists, zoologists, and researchers who have spent significant portions of their careers studying these specific species. The emphasis is on nutrition and nutritional diseases, because so many of the problems we see are a result of inappropriate diet or feeding practices; however, additional information is provided for some species. By providing this text, we are not condoning ownership of these species; rather, we realize our obligation to provide proper and accurate care for these animals already in captive environments. We hope that by reading this issue, not only exotic pet practitioners but caretakers at zoos, wildlife facilities, rehabilitation centers,

and even captive breeding programs now have a basic database from which they can draw when Mrs. Smith brings in her lemur, kinkajou, Patagonian cavy, or other unusual exotic pet for a check-up.

Laurie Hess, DVM, DABVP–Avian
Advanced Avian and Exotics Vet, P.C
c/o Fine Animal Hospital
701 Bedford Road
Bedford Hills, NY 10507, USA

Natalie Antinoff, DVM, DABVP–Avian
Gulf Coast Avian and Exotics
Gulf Coast Veterinary Specialists
1111 West Loop South, Suite 110
Houston, TX 77027, USA

E-mail addresses:
lhess@avianexoticsvet.com (L. Hess)
drantinoff@gcvsv.com (N. Antinoff)