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Veterinarian brings a regular column to Watchbird readers concerned with health of pets and breeding birds.



Dr. Svedeen specializes in birds and is a licensed falconer.

We are happy to introduce to you Kendal P. Svedeen, DVM, of Mission Viejo, California. Dr. Svedeen received his degree from the University of California, Davis campus in 1962 and has been practicing veterinary medicine for nearly 18 years. The last nine years, he has been

specializing in the treatment and care of all types of birds, and is a licensed master falconer.

We welcome Dr. Svedeen to Watchbird and encourage you to address your questions on birds to him, in care of this magazine.

Bird Purchasing Guidelines

*by Kendal P. Svedeen, D.V.M.
Mission Viejo, California*

What should I check for when purchasing new birds?

In my opinion, there are three major criteria to check for when purchasing new birds — particularly the larger parrot-type or psitticine birds. To the average owner, this type of bird usually represents a major investment, and deserves some extra attention at purchase time. The three criteria are: Health, appearance and temperament.

Here is a health checklist to follow.

1. Fluffed feathers — When a bird is awake, its feathers should not be fluffed as they often are when they are asleep. It indicates that the bird has a chill or a fever and is using air between the feathers as insulation.

2. Eyes — Check for any discharge or

irritation. Certain birds can be aged or sexed by eye coloration such as the African Grey Parrot and most cockatoos.

3. Nostrils — If there has been a discharge, the feathers above the nostrils are usually matted and discolored. The nares can also be “plugged” with dried discharge.

4. Breast — The breast or pectoral muscles should be nearly “even” with the keel. If you can grasp the keel bone with your fingers, the bird is underweight.

5. Abdomen — If there is any distention or “bloating” of the abdomen, choose another bird. Whatever the cause, it's apt to be serious.

6. Vent — Examine the feathers around the cloaca. They should be clean and dry. If they are soiled and/or wet,

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the bird is likely to have diarrhea or a urinary problem. The droppings should have a formed dark green fecal mass surrounded by the chalk-like white semi-liquid urinary waste (uric acid). Deviations from the normal for more than a day or two should be discussed with your veterinarian.

7. Feet — Check for excessive scaliness (an indication of mites), missing or injured toes and nails. Long nails can mean that the bird is older.

8. Skin — Any growths or eruptions other than obvious injuries should arouse suspicions of possible tumors, avian pox or cutaneous tuberculosis.

9. Respiration — Observe the bird for signs of open-mouthed breathing or "flicking" of the tail with each breath.

10. Activity — A bright and active bird is usually healthy. Don't confuse sleep with lethargy.

The reason I regard a bird's appearance so highly is that it is a direct reflection of the bird's general state of health and nutrition. The feathers should be rather glossy and smooth, the colors vivid, and the shafts straight. Appearance is also a direct reflection of the kind of care, housing, and nutrition the bird received previously. One wouldn't expect a bird out of quarantine to look as good as one from a private breeder, but there are a few things to check carefully.

If a bird has many broken or bent feathers, examine unbroken feathers for any "stress" lines. These are lines where one or two barbs were not properly formed during the feather's growth period and the shaft is weak at that point. The cause is usually stress and/or nutritional deficiency. A magnifying glass can be very helpful in examining feathers and skin for lice and their nits. Feathers must be examined microscopically for mites.

Most Amazon parrots smell "musty" if they have not had regular baths. This is due to the normal secretion of oil by the uropygial or oil gland at the base of the tail. They are used to daily baths in the wild and we should try to duplicate that, being cautious that they aren't chilled after the bath.

If Amazons are misted with an indoor plant mister two to three times weekly, it will stimulate them to preen themselves and keep their feather coat in good condition. Cockatoos and cockatiels require less frequent baths because they take dust baths in the wild. A light misting once every week or two is sufficient.

Temperament is a wide-open subject. Generally speaking, the more aggressive birds train more readily •

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Association of Avian Veterinarians

The Association of Avian Veterinarians (AAV) is a new, rapidly growing organization made up of private practitioners, zoo veterinarians, University faculty, and industry veterinarians as well as allied personnel and aviculturists.

The purpose of the AAV is to advance the study of avian diseases and nutrition as well as the practice of avian medicine and surgery. The AAV will provide a forum for the presentation and publication of practical and scientific information as it pertains to avian species.

Membership is by the calendar year, renewable on January 1st each year.

Active Members: \$25.00 — An active member shall be a graduate of an accredited veterinary school and a member of the AVMA (if living in the U.S.A.). Active members must have a minimum of three years experience in avian medicine.

Associate Members: \$25.00 — An associate member shall be any individual who has an interest in avian medicine. Associate members shall have all rights and privileges of an active member except voting.

New Active & Associate Members: \$5.00 additional listing fee. This is a one time charge to cover costs of adding to the mailing list.

Student Members: \$10.00 — A student member must currently be enrolled in an accredited school of veterinary medicine. A student member has all rights and privileges of an associate member.

Honorary Membership: Honorary membership may be offered by the Executive Board to any person making a significant contribution to the field of aviculture or avian medicine.

The AAV will hold an annual conference in conjunction with the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) at the site of its national convention. Additional meetings will be held in association with the AVMA and

Intermountain Veterinary Conference. All members will receive a quarterly newsletter. Case reports and practice tips as well as current news items and conference programs are included. All members are encouraged to contribute to the Newsletter.

The AAV, founded in 1979, has already organized two educational seminars for 1981.

Meeting in conjunction with A.A.H.A. Annual Meeting. April 8, 1981, 1:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.; April 9, 1981, 8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon. Atlanta, Georgia — Convention Center.

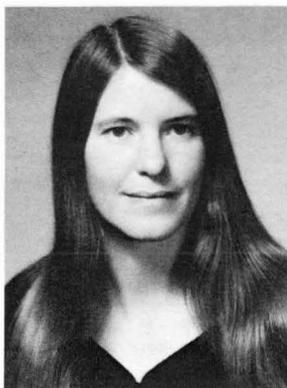
Meeting in conjunction with A.V.M.A. Annual Meeting July 20, 1981, 8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon, St. Louis, Missouri.

All members receive a newsletter full of practice tips, case reports, and timely news items. Future plans include a journal, workshops, speakers bureau, research projects, and student chapters.

If your veterinarian is not a member, please show this to him (her). Interested aviculturists may also subscribe.

For additional information write to:
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