

## SESSION 8 AVIAN AND FISH MEDICINE

### DESCRIPTION OF SESSION

These sessions will introduce Explorers to veterinary medicine specialties that are less familiar to most people, including avian and fish medicine.

### CATEGORY

- Health
- Veterinary Medicine

### ADVISOR NOTE:

This two-topic session is based on the similarity of management and medical care provided to a population of a particular species rather than to the individual animal.

Most avian medicine is concerned with flocks (usually chickens, turkeys, and ducks) that are generally raised commercially in groups of several thousand. Health care issues are generally aimed at the early detection and prevention of disease spread. Attention to proper nutritional management is another key element of avian medicine practices. Veterinarians who work with large commercial flocks are generally employed directly by the company that owns the flocks. Individual birds kept as pets, such as parakeets and parrots, generally receive medical care at either an exotic pet veterinary specialist or a general private practitioner. Subject matter experts (SMEs) to help with this session of activities can be focused on either commercial flock production or in companion animal medicine.

Fish medicine is similar to avian medicine. There are large fish hatcheries (commercial or governmental) with their own veterinary staff, and there are companion animal veterinarians who may take care of the expensive individual fish pets (e.g., Koi). SMEs to help with fish medicine can come from either source.

This session should probably be broken down into two individual sessions where a different meeting would highlight a separate topic. Because the availability of specific subject matter experts for either of these areas of study may not be available in all areas of the country, a post may decide to do all or none of these topics. Additionally most of these topics would probably be best highlighted as a tour with the SME at a facility housing the topic's animal population.

As you engage your post in activities each meeting, please include comments, discussions, and feedback for the group relating to **Character, Leadership, and Ethics**. These important attributes make a difference in the success of youth in the workplace and in life.

### OBJECTIVES

The stated objectives for these two different classes of animals (birds/fish) will vary depending on whether the post is studying a large population or only one individual. Use these OBJECTIVES as a guideline for what the SME feels is most practical to teach.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss the different aspects and concerns of avian and/or fish medicine. Identify the necessity for these specialized areas of veterinary medicine.
- Discuss the safety and public health concerns one must consider when working with animals in these groups.
- Discuss the very different health care needs of these groups of animals and how a veterinarian might provide services to these animals.
- Understand the most common health care issues of the animals in these two groups.
- Identify some of the equipment and instruments used in caring for these groups of animals.
- Understand the educational requirements for veterinarians entering this field including high school and college courses that would be beneficial.

#### **SUPPLIES**

- Laptop computer or equipment to view videos
- Appropriate footwear for wet environment (if appropriate)

#### **ACTIVITIES**

##### **ACTIVITY 1—AVIAN AND FISH MEDICINE**

###### **Speaker and Tour**

(Note: Speaker may be a private practitioner who provides care to individual animals or someone in industry or government. A tour of a commercial avian production facility might not be possible due to restrictions aimed at controlling outside contamination.)

Have the speaker address these topics:

- Which different species of this group are raised commercially?
- What representatives of this group would make the best pets?
- How do you safely handle these animals without doing them harm?
- What are the husbandry needs/requirements for this group of animals?
- Are there any ethical considerations in treating the health needs of these animals?
- What are the signs of overcrowding and stress?
- What are the requirements to become a veterinarian for avian species or fish?
- Provide a tour of your facility (if possible).

#### **ADVISOR NOTE**

Some sample questions are below. They are designed to help the participants apply what they have learned to their own interests. You are welcome to use these questions or develop your own questions that relate to your post or specific area of focus.

## **REFLECTION**

- *Which aspects of the avian/fish medicine session interested you the most?*
- *What ethical concerns might a veterinarian encounter in this type of veterinary health care?*
- *What did you learn during this session about the roles a veterinarian plays in avian and fish medicine?*
- *What can you do now, during your time as a student, to prepare yourself for a career in veterinary medicine? Why is this topic important?*

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