

Reptile and Amphibian RVS Exam Study Guide - 2025

This guide will help you prepare for your ABVP Recognized Veterinary Specialty (RVS) examination this November.

The 350 item Combined RVS Exam is given in two parts on the same day. The exams are mostly to exclusively multiple-choice. There is the possibility of fill in the blank, short answer, essay, or matching for some exam items. The AVMA best practices is that examination items align with a Job Task Analysis (JTA) of current RVS Diplomates. The 2018 JTA identified tasks, diseases, etc. that Diplomates either saw frequently or expected a Specialist to have immediate knowledge of the subject.

Additionally, it has been decided that some exam items can come from current journals and a small percentage can be at your Exam Committee's discretion. Please note that items drawn from current journals (with a 5 year look back period) are 1) from a journal on the RVS Reading List, 2) the question is drawn from the abstract only, and 3) the journal abstract must be inexpensively obtained. The exception to this is Veterinary Clinics of North America (if applicable), where the exam taker is responsible for the whole article.

Exam Blueprint

For topics that are systems (such as Cardiovascular, etc.), questions can include anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, diseases (Including neoplasia), etiologies, diagnosis, and therapy.

Crocodylian	3% of the exam will be on these species	% within this group
	Behavioral B	4%
	Cardiovascular CV	2%
	Endocrine E	up to 1%
	Gastrointestinal GI	16%
	Genetic G	up to 1%
	Hemolymphatic HL	up to 1%
	Immunologic I	up to 1%
	Infectious IN	13%
	Integument/Mammary IM	18%
	Management/Environment ME	9%
	Metabolic M	up to 1%
	Musculoskeletal MS	7%

	Nervous NV	2%
	Nutritional N	2%
	Oral/Dentition/Beak O	9%
	Neoplasia - concepts, multisystem NP	up to 1%
	Pharmacologic RX	up to 1%
	Regulatory RG	2%
	Reproductive RP	4%
	Respiratory RS	2%
	Special senses SS	2%
	Toxicologic T	2%
	Urogenital GU	2%
	Zoonotic Z	2%
		100.00%

Squamata 67% of the exam will be on these species		
	Behavioral B	5%
	Cardiovascular CV	2%
	Endocrine E	up to 1%
	Gastrointestinal GI	15%
	Genetic G	up to 1%
	Hemolymphatic HL	up to 1%
	Immunologic I	up to 1%
	Infectious IN	12%
	Integument/Mammary IM	12%
	Management/Environment ME	9%
	Metabolic M	12%

	Musculoskeletal MS	5%
	Nervous NV	2%
	Nutritional N	up to 1%
	Oral/Dentition/Beak O	5%
	Neoplasia - concepts, multisystem NP	1%
	Pharmacologic RX	up to 1%
	Regulatory RG	up to 1%
	Reproductive RP	6%
	Respiratory RS	5%
	Special senses SS	5%
	Toxicologic T	1%
	Urogenital UG	2%
	Zoonotic Z	1%
		100.00%

Chelonian	24% of the exam will be on these species	
	Behavioral B	4%
	Cardiovascular CV	2%
	Endocrine E	up to 1%
	Gastrointestinal GI	12%
	Genetic G	up to 1%
	Hemolymphatic HL	up to 1%
	Immunologic I	up to 1%
	Infectious IN	12%
	Integument/Mammary IM	13%
	Management/Environment ME	12%

	Metabolic M	17%
	Musculoskeletal MS	3%
	Nervous NV	3%
	Nutritional N	0.00%
	Oral/Dentition/Beak O	3%
	Neoplasia - concepts, multisystem NP	1%
	Pharmacologic RX	up to 1%
	Regulatory RG	1%
	Reproductive RP	4%
	Respiratory RS	4%
	Special senses SS	5%
	Toxicologic T	2%
	Urogenital GU	1%
	Zoonotic Z	1%
		100.00%

Amphibian	6% of the exam will be on these species	
	Behavioral B	4%
	Cardiovascular CV	1%
	Endocrine E	0.00%
	Gastrointestinal GI	12%
	Genetic G	up to 1%
	Hemolymphatic HL	up to 1%
	Immunologic I	up to 1%
	Infectious IN	11%
	Integument/Mammary IM	13%

	Management/Environment ME	13%
	Metabolic M	19%
	Musculoskeletal MS	6%
	Nervous NV	4%
	Nutritional N	up to 1%
	Oral/Dentition/Beak O	up to 1%
	Neoplasia - concepts, multisystem NP	2%
	Pharmacologic RX	up to 1%
	Regulatory RG	1%
	Reproductive RP	3%
	Respiratory RS	4%
	Special senses SS	2%
	Toxicologic T	2%
	Urogenital UG	2%
	Zoonotic Z	1%
		100.00%

Specific conditions

Certain conditions were identified as important to Diplomates in your RVS. This list is meant to help guide your study and not meant to be an all-inclusive list. Conditions not on this list may be present on the exam.

Amphibian

Abrasions
Abscesses
Animal Community health
Bacterial infections
Dysecdysis
Ectoparasites
Emergency intervention/medicine
Fractures

Management/environmental related diseases

Squamata (snakes and lizards)

Abscesses
Anorexia
Bacterial infections
Behavioral issues
Burns
Diseases of pharynx/larynx/trachea
Dysecdysis
Ectoparasites
Endoparasites
Foreign Body obstruction
Fungal infections
Gastrointestinal disease
Hypercalcemia
Hyperglycemia
Management/environmental related diseases
Ocular disease
Otitis
Reproductive disorders
Respiratory diseases
Rhinitis/sinusitis
Stomatitis
Trauma/abrasions
Zoonoses

Chelonians

Aggression
Algae growth on shell
Anorexia
Bacterial infections
Burns
Ectoparasites
Endoparasites
Foreign Body obstruction
Hypoglycemia
Management/environmental related diseases
Metabolic bone disease
Otitis
Reproductive disorders

Rhinitis/sinusitis
Swimming/floating disorders

Crocodilian

Abscesses
Bacterial infections
Burns
Dysecdysis
Emergency intervention/medicine
Foreign Body obstruction
Fractures
Fungal infections
Gastrointestinal disease
Hepatic disease
Herd Health
Stomatitis
Trauma/abrasions/bite wounds

Reptile and Amphibian Reading List

Essential Monographs

- Divers SJ and SJ Stahl. 2019. *Mader's Reptile and Amphibian Medicine and Surgery*, 3rd ed. Elsevier, St. Louis, MO. 1511 pages.
- Jacobson ER and MM Garner. 2021. *Infectious Diseases and Pathology of Reptiles: Color atlas and text*, 2nd ed. In *Diseases and Pathology of Reptiles*, Vol 1. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL. 1013 pages.
- Garner MM and ER Jacobson. 2021. *Noninfectious Diseases and Pathology of Reptiles: Color atlas and text. In Diseases and Pathology of Reptiles*, Vol 2. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL. 517 pages.
- Wright KM and BR Whitaker. 2001. *Amphibian Medicine and Captive Husbandry*. Krieger Publishing Company, Malabar, Florida. (Chapters 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, and 12 ONLY)

Supplemental Monographs

- Mader DR and Divers SJ. 2014. *Current Therapy in Reptile Medicine and Surgery*. Saunders Elsevier, St. Louis, MO. 462 pages.
- Miller RE, Fowler ME (eds). 2014. *Zoo and Wild Animal Medicine*, 8th ed. Saunders Elsevier, St. Louis, MO. (Reptile and Amphibian pertinent sections)
- Miller, RE, Lamberski N, Calle P (eds). 2018. *Fowler's Zoo & Wild Animal Medicine*, 9th. Saunders Elsevier, St. Louis, MO. (Reptile and Amphibian pertinent sections)
- Miller, RE, Lamberski N, Calle P (eds). 2023. *Fowler's Zoo & Wild Animal Medicine*, 10th. Saunders Elsevier, St. Louis, MO. (Reptile and Amphibian Pertinent sections)

- Heatley JJ and KE Russell. 2020. *Exotic Animal Laboratory Diagnosis*. Wiley Blackwell, Hoboken, NJ. 630 pages. (Reptile and Amphibian pertinent sections)
- Manire C, et al. 2017. *Sea Turtle Health and Rehabilitation*. J Ross Publishing. 1045 pages.
- Doneley B, Monks D, et al. 2018 *Reptile Medicine and Surgery in Clinical Practice*. Wiley Blackwell, Hoboken, NJ. 500 pages.

Essential Periodicals: Only those articles published that relate directly to clinical reptile and amphibian medicine

- *Journal of Herpetological Medicine and Surgery*
- *Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine*
- *Journal of Exotic Pet Medicine*
- *Journal of Wildlife Diseases*
- *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*
- *American Journal of Veterinary Research*
- *Journal of Veterinary Diagnostic Investigation*
- *Journal of Veterinary Pharmacology and Therapeutics*
- *Veterinary Record: Journal of the British Veterinary Association*

Supplemental Periodicals: Only those articles published that relate directly to clinical reptile and amphibian medicine

- *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Exotic Animal Practice*
- *Veterinary Clinical Pathology*
- *Veterinary Pathology*
- *Veterinary Radiology and Ultrasound*
- *Veterinary Ophthalmology*