

Exotic Companion Mammal 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 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 the 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, 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.

Myomorph/sciuromorph rodents: 15% of the exam is in these species

<i>Topics covered for this species on exam</i>	
Behavioral B	5%
Cardiovascular CV	1%
Endocrine E	Up to 1%
Gastrointestinal GI	15.0%
Genetic G	Up to 1%
Hemolymphatic HL	Up to 1%
Immunologic I	Up to 1%
Infectious IN	10%
Integument/Mammary IM	33.0%
Management/Environment ME	Up to 1%
Metabolic M	Up to 1%

Musculoskeletal MS	Up to 1%
Nervous NV	1%
Nutritional N	Up to 1%
Oral/Dentition/Beak O	5%
Neoplasia - concepts, multisystem NP	Up to 1%
Pharmacologic RX	Up to 1%
Regulatory RG	Up to 1%
Reproductive RP	6%
Respiratory RS	Up to 1%
Special senses SS	6%
Toxicologic T	4.0%
Urogenital UG	3%
Zoonotic Z	Up to 1%
	100.00%

Hystricomorph rodents (guinea pig, chinchilla, degu): 30% of the exam are in these species

Behavioral B	Up to 1%
Cardiovascular CV	3.0%
Endocrine E	2.0%
Gastrointestinal GI	15.0%
Genetic G	Up to 1%
Hemolymphatic HL	5.0%
Immunologic I	Up to 1%
Infectious IN	2.0%
Integument/Mammary IM	15.0%

Management/Environment ME	Up to 1%
Metabolic M	Up to 1%
Musculoskeletal MS	5.0%
Nervous NV	1.0%
Nutritional N	9.0%
Oral/Dentition/Beak O	5.0%
Neoplasia - concepts, multisystem NP	3.0%
Pharmacologic RX	Up to 1%
Regulatory RG	Up to 1%
Reproductive RP	11.0%
Respiratory RS	7.0%
Special senses SS	9.0%
Toxicologic T	Up to 1%
Urogenital UG	8.0%
Zoonotic Z	Up to 1%
	100.0%

Rabbit: 30% of exam is rabbit related

Behavioral B	3%
Cardiovascular CV	6
Endocrine E	Up to 1%
Gastrointestinal GI	20%
Genetic G	Up to 1%
Hemolymphatic HL	Up to 1%
Immunologic I	Up to 1%

Infectious IN	17%
Integument/Mammary IM	9%
Management/Environment ME	Up to 1%
Metabolic M	Up to 1%
Musculoskeletal MS	4%
Nervous NV	Up to 1%
Nutritional N	Up to 1%
Oral/Dentition/Beak O	4%
Neoplasia - concepts, multisystem NP	Up to 1%
Pharmacologic RX	Up to 1%
Regulatory RG	Up to 1%
Reproductive RP	21%
Respiratory RS	7%
Special senses SS	4%
Toxicologic T	1%
Urogenital UG	5%
Zoonotic Z	Up to 1%
	100.0%

Ferret: 20% of exam is ferret related

Behavioral B	Up to 1%
Cardiovascular CV	7%
Endocrine E	8%
Gastrointestinal GI	17%
Genetic G	Up to 1%

Hemolymphatic HL	2%
Immunologic I	Up to 1%
Infectious IN	16.0%
Integument/Mammary IM	4%
Management/Environment ME	Up to 1%
Metabolic M	2%
Musculoskeletal MS	1%
Nervous NV	7%
Nutritional N	Up to 1%
Oral/Dentition/Beak O	Up to 1%
Neoplasia - concepts, multisystem NP	8%
Pharmacologic RX	Up to 1%
Regulatory RG	Up to 1%
Reproductive RP	4%
Respiratory RS	Up to 1%
Special senses SS	2%
Toxicologic T	4%
Urogenital UG	20%
Zoonotic Z	Up to 1%
	100.0%

Miscellaneous ECM: Other (sugar gliders, hedgehogs, miniature pigs): 5% of exam is related to these species

Behavioral B	2%
Cardiovascular CV	5%
Endocrine E	3%

Gastrointestinal GI	16%
Genetic G	Up to 1%
Hemolymphatic HL	2%
Immunologic I	Up to 1%
Infectious IN	12%
Integument/Mammary IM	12%
Management/Environment ME	Up to 1%
Metabolic M	1%
Musculoskeletal MS	3.0%
Nervous NV	4%
Nutritional N	2%
Oral/Dentition/Beak O	3%
Neoplasia - concepts, multisystem NP	2%
Pharmacologic RX	Up to 1%
Regulatory RG	Up to 1%
Reproductive RP	10%
Respiratory RS	2%
Special senses SS	7%
Toxicologic T	2%
Urogenital UG	12%
Zoonotic Z	Up to 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

Ferret Exam Topics

Adrenal Disease and Complications
Anorexia
Ataxia
Benign Neoplasia
Canine Distemper Virus
Cardiomyopathy
Cataracts
Chordoma
Colitis
Eosinophilic Enteritis
Epizootic catarrhal enteritis (ECE)
Gastritis
Glomerulopathy
Helicobacter mustelae Infection
Hydronephrosis
Hyperestrogenism
Hyperthermia
Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy
Influenza
Insulinoma
Intervertebral Disc Disease
Liver Disease
Lymphoma
Pneumonia - infectious
Polycystic Kidneys
Posterior Paresis
Prostatic Diseases
Pyometra
Renal Calculi
Renal Cysts
Renal Disease
Sarcoptic Mange
Seasonal Alopecia
Splenomegaly
Urethral Obstruction
Urolithiasis
Vaccine Reactions
Valvular Heart Disease

Rabbit Exam Topics

Abscess

Barbering/ self mutilation
Chronic rhinitis
Dental disease - acquired
Dermatitis
Dermatophytosis
Dysbiosis
Ectoparasites
Encephalitozoonosis
Endometrial Venous Aneurysms
Gastrointestinal disease
Inguinal herniation
Liver torsion
Otitis
Pneumonia
Spinal/vertebral diseases
Treponema
Urolithiasis
Uterine adenocarcinoma

Guinea Pig Exam Topics

Alopecia
Cervical lymphadenitis
Dental disease - acquired
Dysbiosis
Endoparasites
Enteritis
Gastrointestinal disease
Hypovitaminosis C
Malnutrition
Mammary gland tumors
Osteoarthritis
Otitis
Ovarian cysts
Pneumonia
Pododermatitis
Renal disease
Scrotal plugs
Urolithiasis
Vestibular disease

Rodent Exam Topics

Alopecia
Barbering
Chromodacryorrhea
Conjunctivitis
Dental disease - acquired
Dermatophytosis
Ectoparasites
Exophthalmos
Fur ring and paraphimosis
Fur slip
Intestinal torsion and impaction
Lead poisoning
Mammary tumors
Proliferative ileitis
Rectal prolapse

Exotic Companion Mammal Reading List

Texts

- *Behavior of Exotic Pets*. First Edition. Tynes VV, ed. Wiley-Blackwell; 2010.
- *Biology and Diseases of the Ferret*. Third Edition. Fox JG, Marini RP, eds. John Wiley and Sons, Inc; 2014. doi: 10.1002/9781118782699
- *Clinical Radiology of Exotic Companion Mammals*. First edition. Capello V, Lennox AM, Widmer WR. Wiley-Blackwell; 2008
- *Clinical Veterinary Advisor: Birds and Exotic Pets*. First Edition. Mayer J, Donnelly [™], eds. Saunders Elsevier; 2013. doi: 10.1016/B978-1-4160-3969-3.00425-X
- *Dentistry in Rabbits and Rodents*. First Edition. Böhmer E. John Wiley and Sons, Ltd.; 2015. doi: 10.1002/9781118802557
- *Exotic Animal Emergency and Critical Care Medicine*. First edition. Graham J.E, Doss G.A, Beaufrère H, eds. John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; 2021. doi: 10.1002/9781119149262
- *Exotic Animal Laboratory Diagnosis*. First edition. Heatley JJ, Russell K, eds. John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; 2020
- *Ferrets, Rabbits, and Rodents: Clinical Medicine and Surgery*. Fourth edition. KE, Orcutt CJ, Mans C, Carpenter JW, eds. Elsevier, 2020. doi: 10.1016/C2015-0-05982-2
- *Pathology of Laboratory Rodents and Rabbits*. Fourth edition. Barthold SW, Griffey SM, Percy DH, eds. John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; 2016. doi: 10.1002/9781118924051
- *Pathology of Small Mammal Pets*. First edition. Turner PV, Brash ML, Smith DA. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; 2017. doi: 10.1002/9781118969601
- *Rabbit and Rodent Dentistry Handbook*. First edition. Capello V, Gracis M, Lennox AM. Zoological Education Network; 2005.
- *Surgery of Exotic Animals*. First edition. Bennett RA, Pye GW, eds. John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; 2022. doi:10.1002/9781119139614
- *Textbook of Rabbit Medicine*. Third edition. Smith MV. Elsevier; 2022. doi: 10.1016/C2020-0-01089-3

Supplementary Reading (questions do not come from these books)

- *BSAVA Manual of Rabbit Medicine. Third edition. Meredith A, Lord B, eds. British Small Animal Veterinary Association; 2014.*
- *Radiology of Rodents, Rabbits and Ferrets: An Atlas of Normal Anatomy and Positioning. First edition. Silverman S, Tell LA. Elsevier Saunders; 2005.*

Journals (Concentrate on 5 years immediately prior to the year of testing, and only articles related to the species specialty)

- *American Journal of Veterinary Research.* Publisher: American Veterinary Medicine Association.
- *Canadian Veterinary Journal.* Publisher: Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
- *Journal of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science.* Publisher: Association of Laboratory Animal Science.
- *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association.* Publisher: American Veterinary Medical Association, Chicago, IL. ISSN: 0003-1488
- *Journal of Exotic Pet Medicine,* Publisher: Elsevier, New York, NY. ISSN: 1557-5063.
- *Journal of Small Animal Practice.* Publisher: BSAVA. ISSN: 1748-5827
- *Journal of Veterinary Cardiology.* Publisher: Elsevier. ISSN: 1760-2734
- *Journal of Veterinary Diagnostic Investigation.* Publisher: Sage Publications
- *Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia.* Publisher: Association of Veterinary Anaesthetists
- *Veterinary Clinical Pathology.* Publisher: American Society for Veterinary Clinical Pathology
- *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Exotic Animal Practice.* Publisher: WB Saunders, Philadelphia, PA.
- *Veterinary Ophthalmology* Publisher: Wiley ISSN: 1463-5223
- *Veterinary Radiology and Ultrasound.* Publisher: Wiley ISSN: 1740-8261
- *Veterinary Record: Case Reports.* Publisher: John Wiley & Sons Inc
- *Veterinary Surgery .* Publisher: American College of Veterinary Surgeons, ISSN: 1532-950X