

Avian 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 RVS examinations.

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.

Topic	Percent on Exam
Behavioral B	4%
Cardiovascular CV	2%
Endocrine E	Up to 1%
Gastrointestinal GI	10%
Genetic G	Up to 1%
Hemolymphatic HL	Up to 1%
Immunologic I	Up to 1%
Infectious IN	27%
Integument/Mammary IM	12%
Management/Environment ME	Up to 1%
Metabolic M	Up to 1%
Musculoskeletal MS	7%
Nervous NV	1%
Nutritional N	12%
Oral/Dentition/Beak O	6%
Neoplasia NP	1%
Pharmacologic RX	Up to 1%
Regulatory RG	Up to 1%
Reproductive RP	2%
Respiratory RS	4%
Special senses SS	3%

Toxicologic T	2%
Urogenital GU	6%
Zoonotic Z	Up to 1%

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.

Abscesses
Aggression
Air sac mites
Air sacculitis
Arrhythmia
Arthritis
Aspergillosis
Atherosclerosis
Avipoxvirus
Bacterial infections
Beak avulsion
Beak malocclusion
Beak overgrowth
Blindness
Cestodes
Chlamydophila
Circovirus infection
Congestive heart failure
Conjunctivitis
Constricted toe syndrome
Crop burn
Crop stasis
Dehydration
Dermatitis
Diarrhea
Dyspnea
Dystocia
Fatty liver syndrome
Feather destructive behavior
Feather mites
Fracture, beak
Fracture, digit

Fracture, long bone
Fungal infections
Gastrointestinal foreign body
Gastrointestinal impaction
Gout
Heavy metal toxicity
Hepatitis
Herpesvirus infection
Hypocalcemia
Hypovitaminosis A
Hypovitaminosis D
Iodine deficiency
Kidney dysfunction
Knemidokoptes infection
Leg deformities
Macrorhabdus ornithogaster infection
Malnutrition
Marek's disease
Mycoplasma infection
Obesity
Papilloma, cloacal
Parasites, blood
Parasites, intestinal
Parasites, skin
Pasteurella infection
Peritonitis, egg related
Pododermatitis
Polyomavirus infection
Polyuria
Poor molt
Prolapse, cloacal
Prolapse, oviduct
Proventricular dilatation syndrome
Psittacine Feather and Beak Disease
Regurgitation
Salpingitis
Sinusitis/rhinitis
Thermal burns
Trauma, beak
Trauma, wounds
Trichomonas infection
Uropygial gland disease

Avian Reading List

JOURNALS

American Journal of Veterinary Research
Avian Diseases
Avian Pathology
Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association
Journal of Avian Medicine and Surgery
Journal of Exotic Pet Medicine
Journal of Wildlife Diseases
Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine
Veterinary Clinics of North America, Exotic Animal Practice.

TEXTS

Avian Medicine and Surgery in Practice (Companion and Aviary Birds) Doneley, 2016.
Avian Medicine. 3rd ed. Samour. 2016.
Avian Medicine. Ritchie, Harrison, and Harrison. 1995.
Avian Medicine and Surgery. Forbes and Guzman. 2017.
Backyard Poultry Medicine and Surgery, 2nd ed. Greenacre and Morishita. 2021.
Birds, Their Structure and Function. King and McLelland. 1984.
Clinical Avian Medicine Volumes 1 and 2. Lightfoot and Harrison, 2005
Current Therapy in Avian Medicine and Surgery. Speer (ed). 2016.
Current Therapy in Exotic Pet Practice. Mitchell and Tully. 2016.
Diagnostic Imaging of Exotic Pets. Krautwald-Junghanns, et al. 2011.
Diseases of Poultry. 14th ed. Swayne (ed). 2020.
Exotic Animal Hematology and Cytology. 4th ed. Campbell. 2015.
Pathology of Pet and Aviary Birds. 2nd ed. Schmidt, Reavill, and Phalen. 2015.
Radiology of Birds. Silverman and Tell. 2009.
Ratite Management, Medicine and Surgery. Tully. 1996.
Sturkie's Avian Physiology. 6th ed. 2014. (older editions also good)
Veterinary Clinics of North America, Exotic Animal Practice.