

AAV Member Spotlight: JC Burcham, DVM

It is with great pleasure that we present the AAV newsletter: Member Spotlight. This special feature showcases the association's most valuable asset—our members—by highlighting our diverse backgrounds, professional activities, experience, and geographic locations.

If you would like to be featured in this section, or would like to suggest a fellow member to profile, please complete the [Member Spotlight Questionnaire](#) today.

What was the first bird job you ever had?

I was a summer extern at the Minnesota Zoo Bird Show in 1999. Not only did this affirm that my career must involve birds, it introduced me to the fascinating field of animal behavior and training.

What is your favorite avian species and why?

The New Zealand Brown Teal holds a very special place in my heart. I spent three months in New Zealand studying them in the wild and captivity. I also fell in love with the kokako, a wattlebird. They are striking to look at, and their call gives me chills, it's so beautiful.

Best benefits of AAV membership?

I'm proud to belong to an organization that shares my passion for avian medicine. Its members are beacons of knowledge and compassion. I enjoy the opportunity to network and learn from others' experiences. I'm especially excited about some of the new educational opportunities, like the [Golden Egg](#)!

If you had not chosen your present career, what would you be doing?

My backup plan was to get a master's degree in ethology—the study of the evolution of behavior in a certain species of bird. I was so relieved when I got into vet school because I was dreading how hard graduate school would be!!

What was your favorite class or activity in vet school/vet tech school/college?

Ornithology, taught at the University of Minnesota by Dr. Bob Zink, was one of my favorite college-level courses. I have an odd but strong affinity for taxonomy, and understanding how different species of birds are related is super exciting for me. Just for fun, I made a huge poster with all the different orders and families of the living Class Aves. Yes, I know I'm weird!



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AAV Member Since 2001