

AAV Member Spotlight: Olivia Murray

What was the first bird job you ever had?

My first bird job was at Sarvey Wildlife Center in Arlington, Washington. I worked outdoors feeding, cleaning, enriching and medicating various kinds of rehabilitating wildlife: raptors, waterfowl, raccoons, fawns, coyotes, etc. My intention was simply to gain a breadth of experience to strengthen my vet school application, but it ended up being the catalyst to almost every veterinary job I have had since. I had never been close to a bird before and had to pretend like I knew what a raptor was during my interview (yikes)! I remember spending my first day weighing hissing barn owl fledglings and thinking this would be my first and last bird experience. A whole summer of outdoor work was the immersion experience I needed, though, because it's when I truly fell in love with the excitement and challenge that came with working with all kinds of avian wildlife. Since then, I have had some pretty great bird jobs!

What is your favorite avian species and why?

Backyard chickens of any variety! They are so tough and have such unique personalities, I cannot help but adore them.

Best benefits of AAV membership?

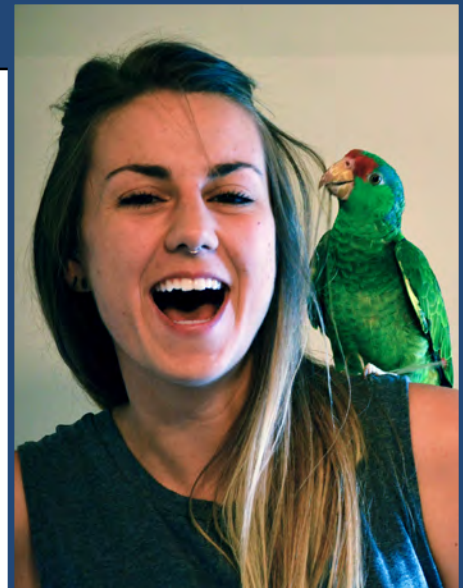
Sometimes in school it is easy to lose sight of my career goals as we focus so much on traditional species. Being an AAV member and attending the AAV conference in Washington D.C. last year was a great motivator for me. It also introduced to me to organized veterinary medicine, outside of school, which is a great feeling of community.

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

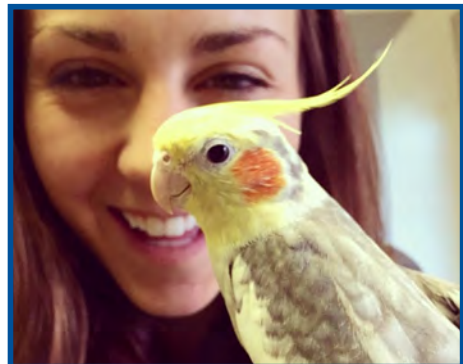
I lucked out at Texas A&M. We have very dedicated exotic animal clinicians who place a big emphasis on psitticine medicine as well as giving us hands-on experience through the core curriculum and electives. Whether they know it or not, they have made a very big impact on my decision to continue pursuing avian medicine. My absolute favorite class was a conservation elective held at the Tambopata Research Center in the Peruvian rainforest. We spent three weeks helping the research team collect data on wild macaw chicks and the behavior of their parents. It was so amazing to see them in the wild and I learned so much about conservation work abroad. It was truly the opportunity of a lifetime and I feel so lucky to have participated during vet school.

Describe an anecdote that would be of interest to your colleagues

I have taken up yoga in vet school. It is the absolute best way to wind down my mind after a long day of classes and labs and it helps keep me in shape. Appropriately, my favorite pose is eagle.



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