

AAV Member Spotlight: Nicole Eller, DVM

What was the first bird job you ever had?

I was hired by the Biology Department at the University of WI-Stevens Point when I was doing my pre-vet courses. We had a breeding program for the endangered Venezuelan Black-Hooded Red Siskin. I also started doing some wildlife rehab at this time. In vet school, I spent time with Dr. Pat Redig at The Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, MN.

What is your favorite avian species and why?

I am a raptor girl all the way, especially red-tailed hawks. It seems I am always “followed” by them. My father has been a bird fanatic all my life, and is an amazing bird photographer, so I have an appreciation for, and love of, many wild bird species. However, I have also become completely enamored with my poultry...took a few bantam gamefowl home from a case, and have been in love ever since! I now also have some cochins and guineafowl. I love their individual personalities!

What was the last interesting avian medical or surgical issue you dealt with in your work?

In my work, we deal primarily with cockfighting cases...it is always challenging. On our last seizure, we expected 150 or so birds, but arrived to find 850+, many of whom were injured or ill. We also routinely find cockfighting paraphernalia.

Best benefits of AAV membership?

I am brand-new to the AAV, and am excited to learn from my colleagues and make connections! The Field Investigations and Response team is always looking for help!

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

I was in solo equine practice for nearly 20 years. If I hadn't gone to work for the ASPCA, I would still be doing that. When I was still in vet school, I imagined having a mixed equine/avian practice, LOL!

Describe an anecdote that would be of interest to your colleagues

Once while working at The Raptor Center, we got a Harpy Eagle flown in for emergency surgery. There were news stations there, and it was so exciting for a vet student....Dr. Redig asked me to pull up some fluids in a syringe, and I proceeded to poke myself with the needle and bleed all over in front of the camera crews...



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AAV Member Since 2018

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