

Main considerations

- Interest/Demand
 - Personal and community
- Training
 - Doctors and support staff
- Equipment
 - Medications

Defining your interests

- Species
 - Small mammals
 - Herbivores
 - Carnivores (Ferrets)
 - Marsupials
 - Reptiles/Amphibians
 - Birds
 - Psittacines
 - Poultry/waterfowl
 - Fish
 - Wildlife?

Defining your interests

- Level of medicine
 - Wellness
 - Sick/urgent care
 - Emergency

Defining your interests

- Surgery
 - Routine/elective surgery
 - Castration/Ovariectomy/Ovariohysterectomy
 - Dental trimming
 - Emergency surgery
 - Endoscopy

Determining the needs for your area

- Who else is seeing exotics?
 - 10-20 mile radius
 - Checking website for services
 - Cold calling
 - Asking other local veterinarians

Determining the needs for your area

- Species needed?
 - Check local pet stores
 - Common species sold
 - Common items in stock
 - Local exotics groups
 - Bird
 - Reptile
 - Rabbit/small mammal rescues
 - Fish groups

Determining the needs for your area

- Amount of time allocated
 - Routine appointment schedules
 - Emergency care

Determining the needs for your area

- Veterinary coverage
 - Number of days a week covering exotics
 - Where do they go when you aren't there?
 - Relation with local emergency clinic
 - Relation with another exotics vet
- Emergency hospitals
 - On call for exotics?

Training

- Doctor
 - Previous experience
 - Continuing education
 - Current books/literature
 - Professional organizations
 - Shadowing opportunities

Upping your exotics game

- Professional Organizations
 - AAV
 - AEMV
 - ARAV
 - AAWV
 - AAFV

Upping your exotics game

- Books and literature
 - Exotic Animal Formulary, 5th ed
 - Clinical Veterinary Advisor: Birds and Exotic Pets
 - Ferrets, Rabbits, and Rodents, 3rd ed
 - Manual of Exotic Pet Practice
 - Veterinary Clinics of North America: Exotic Animal Practice

Upping your exotics game

- <https://lafeber.com/vet/>

Training

- Technicians/assistants
 - Previous training
 - Do they need to be re-trained?
 - Professional organizations
 - Shadowing

Training

- CSR/reception
 - Basics of each species
 - Recognizing emergency situations
 - Processing history forms
 - Understanding scheduling needs
 - Triaging phone calls from non-clients

Training

- Kennel staff
 - Proper care of hospitalized patients
 - Proper cleaning for each species
 - No sprays for birds

Equipping your practice

- What's in your practice already
 - Waiting room
 - Exam room

Waiting room

- Ideal:
 - Separate area for exotics
 - Keep exotics restrained in carrier at all times
- Move from waiting room to exam room ASAP
- Immediately triage sick appointments

Exam room

- Safe for all species
 - Easy to disinfect surfaces
 - Tables
 - Watch for wires on hydraulic tables
 - Low ceilings
 - No open vents or holes in ceiling
 - No clearance above or below cabinets
 - No windows

Exam room

- Properly stocked
 - Gram scale
 - Towels
 - Bird net, if needed
 - Dental speculum
 - Light source +/- magnification
 - Nail trimmers of varying sizes

Equipping your practice

- What do you already have?
 - Incubator
 - Caging
 - Small mammals
 - Scales
 - Gram scale?

Equipping your practice

- Specialized food
 - Small mammals
 - Hay, pellets, greens
 - Critical care for herbivores

Equipping your practice

- Specialized food
 - Birds
 - High quality pellets, varying sizes
 - "Junk food" – seeds, millet
 - Hand feeding formula

Equipping your practice

- Specialized food
 - Reptiles
 - Greens for herbivores
 - Generally do not need to keep prey items

Equipping your practice

- Critical care/hospitalized patient diets
 - Herbivore
 - A MUST FOR SMALL MAMMALS, reptiles
 - Carnivore
 - Reptiles (snakes)
 - Omnivore
 - Birds, some reptiles
- Stock for in hospital use and for dispensing to clients

Equipping your practice

- Dremmel
 - Nail/beak trims
 - Can be used with dental attachments
 - Multi purpose tool for exotics care

Equipping your practice

- Small mammal dental supplies
 - Dental burs/files
 - Diamond disc for incisors
 - Dental instruments
- Do not clip incisors with nail trimmers
 - Uneven wear and fractured teeth
 - Get proper equipment

Equipping your practice

- Reptiles/Birds
 - Incubators for hospitalization
 - Completely escape proof for all species
 - Heat regulation
 - +/- oxygen

Equipping your practice

- Reptiles
 - Heat support options
 - Heat lamps
 - Heating pads
 - Lighting

Equipping your practice

- Surgical supplies
 - Insulin syringes for accurate dosing
 - Proper medications for anesthetic protocols
 - e.g. Midazolam

Equipping your practice

- Intubation?
 - 2.0-3.5 tubes for small mammals
 - Blind intubation
 - Endoscopic guided
 - Laryngeal masks
 - V-gel
 - Smaller tubes?
 - 18 or 16G catheters for smaller reptiles

Equipping your practice

- Non-rebreather for most species
- Small volume ventilator
- Doppler for heart rate
- Specialized monitoring equipment for elevated HR (>280)

Equipping your practice

- Tools for catheterization
 - 24G and 26G IV catheters
 - IO catheterization
- Syringe pumps for lower fluid rates

Equipping your practice

- Surgical supplies
 - Instrumentation
 - Fine point instruments
 - Lone Star retractor
 - Magnifying loupes
 - Hemostasis
 - Electrocautery
 - Ellman radiocautery tips
 - Small hemoclips
 - Smaller absorbable suture (3-0, 4-0, 5-0)

Equipping your practice

- Medications
 - Majority of medications are extra label use
 - Caution in "production" animals
 - Poultry, waterfowl, pigs

Equipping your practice

- Ceftazidime
 - Third generation cephalosporin
 - Stored in powder form
 - Reconstitute and freeze to maintain shelf life
 - Reptiles, amphibians, septic parrots

Equipping your practice

- Leuprolide acetate (Lupron)
 - GnRH agonist
 - Ferrets
 - Hormonal regulation of adrenal disease
 - Birds
 - Control of egg laying
 - Guinea pigs
 - Suppression of clinical signs with active ovarian cysts
- Can be compounded or reconstituted and frozen

Equipping your practice

- Deslorelin acetate (Superlorin-F)
 - GnRH agonist
 - Ferrets only in US
 - Implant for hormonal regulation of adrenal disease
 - Extra-label use is prohibited per insert

Equipping your practice

- Compounded medications
 - Check your local regulations for rules on compounding
 - Establish a relationship with a trusted compounding pharmacy

Equipping your practice

- Common compounded medications
 - Enrofloxacin
 - Doxycycline
 - Gabapentin
 - Tramadol
 - Chloramphenicol
 - Terbinafine

Feeling comfortable?

- Exotics care is always evolving
 - Current peer reviewed literature
 - Professional organizations
 - Conferences

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Summary

- Evaluating your:
 - Intent
 - Staff
 - Equipment
- Exotic animal medicine can be rewarding with the right preparation
- Never get comfortable, always keep learning and evolving
