

## ONLY 3 DAYS REMAIN FOR EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION!

### Register Now for ISVMA 130th Annual Convention



The 130th ISVMA Annual Convention will be held at the Westin Lombard Yorktown Center Hotel in Lombard, IL on November 2-4, 2012. A copy of the [program and registration brochure](#) can be downloaded from this website. [Online registration](#) is also now available for this meeting. Please plan to join us in Lombard for another outstanding convention! **Register early to get a seat in the 8 wet labs or in the USDA Accreditation Modules.**

### ISVMA Monthly Legislative Report

In an effort to keep ISVMA members more aware of Illinois politics and legislative and regulatory actions that impact their practices, ISVMA publishes a monthly legislative report. Please read the [October Legislative Report](#).

### Canine Peanut Butter Treat Recalled

As part of a widespread recall of human food products containing peanut butter, Dog for Dog CEO Rocky Keever said the company is joining the recall out of caution and asking owners to return the company's Dogsbutter, a canine peanut butter. "While no Dogsbutter products have tested positive for salmonella, our No. 1 focus is ensuring the health, safety and well-being of dogs," Keever said. Twenty-nine people across 18 states contracted salmonella in an outbreak linked to a number of Sunland products. [PetProductNews.com](#) (9/28)

### ISVMA On Brink of Hitting a Membership Milestone as National Veterinary Technician Week is Celebrated October 14-20, 2012

Earlier today, ISVMA received an application for membership from the 199th CVT member. We expect that we will hit the milestone number of 200 by the end of the week. CVT members of ISVMA now receive a hard-copy of the Epitome magazine, benefit from special programming at the ISVMA Annual Convention and at regional workshops and participated in the development of the CVT Roles & Responsibilities template that is in the process of review for adoption as a state regulation.

ISVMA is proud to have been the first state veterinary medical association to welcome CVTs as full members! The profession is grateful to the CVTs for all they provide to their practices and to supporting the health and welfare of animals and the public.

### Join ISVMA and the Ovarian Cancer Symptom Awareness Organization for a Special Luncheon Presentation on Sunday, November 4 at the 130th ISVMA Annual Convention - And Earn An Additional Hour of CE

"Saving Lives...And Not Just Animal Lives" will be the topic discussed by Julian Schink, MD and Kurt Klepitsch, DVM. We are anxious for you to participate and learn from this example of human and veterinary medicine working together to save lives.

When pets are sick, you care for them. But when you are sick, do you care for yourself? Do you listen to your body or ignore its innate, intuitive nature? So often, we take care of animals and neglect to take care of ourselves. In this presentation, the presenters will be talking about the power that veterinarians have to not only impact animal health, but also owner/client health. Our speakers, through from different fields, have a shared interest: the Ovarian Cancer Symptom Awareness Organization (OCSA). OCSA's mission is to spread awareness about the silent symptoms of ovarian cancer, and one of the ways in which they do so is through their human/animal bond campaign. Learn about this organization - and how it can impact your business practices - from the perspectives of a medical doctor and a veterinarian.

### About the Photo

Singing from a concealed perch, the [Gray Catbird](#) truly enjoys its comfortable position. With its tail held down, body feathers fluffed, and wings drooping at its sides, the catbird exuberantly sings a series of musical whistles and catlike meows, interspersed with imitations of other birds' songs.

It may start singing before dawn, while it is still dark, and can continue until after dusk, being one of the last birds to settle in for the night.

The catbird is well-suited to crepuscular activity as its body is uniformly dark gray with the exception of a chestnut brown patch under the tail and a black crown, tail, bill, eyes and legs.

The catbird is fairly large for a songbird, almost 8 inches long, and has much to sing about. For unlike almost all neotropical migratory songbirds, the catbird has adapted well to the widespread urban and suburban habitats created by people.

In natural areas, catbirds are fond of wet, densely-vegetated, shrubby habitats such as bogs, streamsides, and tree fall gaps. These small, ephemeral, fragmented patches occur sporadically across the landscape and are frequently situated between other habitats. Although these areas have abundant food, cover, and water, competition for resources is fierce and predators are abundant.

To thrive in these habitats birds must have special adaptations such as the ability to respond to frequent nest predation and parasitism and to forage on a wide variety of seasonally available foods. Armed with these adaptations, catbirds are well prepared for the disturbed habitats of the 21st century's fragmented landscape.

Many songbirds put all their eggs in one basket in that they build only one nest each year. If a predator eats the eggs or young, the parents may have to wait until the following year to try again.

But catbirds are not like most other songbirds. They will attempt two or more nests in a season. This gives them a much better chance to fledge young in a season than other migratory songbirds.

Another defense catbirds have against predators is they hide their nests extremely well, often in extremely dense shrubbery with the rough exterior of twigs and leaves camouflaging the colorful bluish-green eggs inside.

Another problem songbirds must deal with is nest parasites. Brown-headed Cowbirds are the bane of many songbirds and are increasingly common in agricultural and disturbed areas. They do not build nests of their own but lay their eggs in the nests of unsuspecting songbirds. The cowbird's eggs are brooded just like the mother's own eggs, and the young are raised to adulthood.

Frequently, the survival of the cowbird's offspring comes at the expense of the host species' young —there is only so much food for the baby birds and cowbird babies grow more quickly than their stepsiblings and are more aggressive in begging for food.

Most songbirds are unable to differentiate cowbird eggs from their own but catbirds can. Gray Catbirds can identify cowbird eggs and will eject them from the nest. By not raising cowbird young, the catbird is able to give all of its gathered food to its own babies.

Many songbirds rely heavily on insects for food but catbirds find food from a variety of sources. Even in the breeding season, when most songbirds exclusively eat insects, catbirds get as much as 20 percent of their diet from fruit. The fragmented habitats that the catbird lives in provide a seasonal succession of berries and fruit.

Most catbirds winter in the tropics of Mexico and Central America where fruit is quite abundant. About 80% of the catbird's winter diet is composed of fruit.

To find insects, necessary for the growth of baby catbirds, foraging is done in a range of niches. While many songbirds are restricted to a particular foraging area (for example, Black-throated

Green Warblers feed at the ends of conifer branches and Ovenbirds feed on the forest floor), catbirds will forage on the ground, on lawn edges, in shrubs, and even in the treetops to find ants, beetles, caterpillars, grasshoppers, and spiders.

By eating a variety of food from a variety of places, catbirds are not as specialized as many other songbirds, and are better suited to finding food in habitats that have been disturbed by people.

In addition, catbirds are one of the few neotropical migratory songbirds that will use bird feeders. Although their bills are too thin to crack open seeds, they will eat halved oranges, raisins, peanut butter, and fruit-flavored suet. They are also quite fond of bird baths and whole families will communally bathe.

Although it is hardly among the most colorful of our songbirds, the Gray Catbird deserves our admiration for being one of the most adaptable. Its presence in our own backyards helps us connect with the natural world and reminds us that for most songbirds, the loss of natural habitats imperils them. The catbird's adaptability is the exception not the rule.

*(Courtesy Greg Gough)*

### **Contact Us**

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