

## ***AVMA Releases Guidelines on Canine Influenza***

The AVMA today released management guidelines for canine influenza that are available at:

[http://www.avma.org/public\\_health/influenza/canine\\_guidelines.asp](http://www.avma.org/public_health/influenza/canine_guidelines.asp)

As indicated in the document, this was a cooperative venture between the AVMA, CDC, and researchers at Florida and Cornell and therefore represents the most up-to-date information available at this time. We will continue to update the document as information comes in.

AVMA also expects to have a backgrounder that is similar to the other backgrounders they have produced ready to go within the next few days.



## ***Looking for an Employee?***

### ***Sign up for the ISVMA Job Fair***

**Space is limited so reserve your table early!**

The Job Fair (Linking Employees and Employers at the ISVMA Convention) has expanded this year! The Job Fair will now be open throughout convention.

The Job Fair allows prospective employees at every level of veterinary care to visit your table and pass along a resume to you. Private interview space has been set up away from the crowd if you want to find out more about a candidate right onsite.

Get more details and reserve a table at the Job Fair by contacting [dana@isvma.org](mailto:dana@isvma.org).



## ***About the Photo in This Issue...***

In the northern coniferous forests, the Gray Jay is a bird of considerable renown. Until recently, its official name was Canada jay, as its range is predominantly Canadian. Certain races of this non-migratory bird inhabit forested areas in the United States, especially at altitudes where the vegetation and the climate correspond to those of the Canadian coniferous forests.

The Gray Jay's fearless and venturesome behavior towards people living and working in the forest has earned it many informal names. "Whiskey-Jack" is the best known, said to come from the mispronunciation of the Indian name "wiss-ka-tjon" or "wis-ka-chon" turned into "whiskey-John." The bird is also known by half a dozen other names, such as "venison-hawk," "grease-bird," "lumberjack," "meat-bird," all of which allude to the bird's habits and its taste for carrion.

Fir trees and the Gray Jay belong together. Wherever the black spruces grow around bogs and muskegs, or there are dense stands of white spruce and balsam fir, the inquisitive Gray Jay may emerge to greet a visitor.

On the ground the Gray Jay hops. Its movements are bouncy. Among the trees its flight is soft and soundless. It floats to the ground, flipping its long tail over its back to regain lost balance. Deftly banking around tree trunks and other obstacles, the jay sails on set wings. Often with peculiar buoyancy the bird hops from one branch to the other upwards in spirals to the top of the tree. The jay rarely crosses large open spaces but when it does, its flight is flapping and direct.

Wherever found, the Gray Jay is resident the year round. It is most often encountered singly or in pairs. After

nesting, it is sometimes seen in flocks composed of families. The jay's wintering range is much larger than its nesting territory. During the fall and winter it may cover quite extensive areas in search of adequate support. On rare occasions these travels may turn into notable southward migrations. At this time primarily the Gray Jay, in search of food, appears at the camps of lumber crews, fur trappers and hunters within its winter range. Bold and hungry, the jay investigates the premises and steals meat from caches, or hiding places, and stores. The hunter, bending over his kill, may hear a soft note, look up and find the jay sitting there, waiting to gorge upon the warm internal organs. A farmer may see the jay fly in through an open barn door and help itself to meat and fat from a newly slaughtered carcass. And the jay may spring the trap the fur trapper just set, in its effort to pilfer the bait in the trap.

These practices have earned the jay a name for petty thievery. Yet few wild birds are as safe from human persecution. Some native people regard the Gray Jay with such deep respect that they will not give away the secret of a nest; much less harm the bird itself. Trusting and easily tamed, the Gray Jay is good company for people in lonely places.

The Gray Jay stores much of its food. Holes pecked by woodpeckers have been found crammed with bread and other items. The hollow at the top of a broken-off stump is another favorite hoarding place. Mouthfuls of food it does not want to eat at once are turned over until well coated with saliva. The jay then stores these sticky packages on ledges, in crevices or among the needles of evergreens, where they remain well preserved. Sometimes the jay buries them.

I photographed this Gray Jay in Lake County, Minnesota in February 2003.



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