

In Memoriam: Dr. Irving S. Rossoff



SPRINGFIELD - Dr. Irving S. Rossoff, DVM, 85, of Springfield, formerly of Taylorville, died Friday, March 16, 2007, at Memorial Medical Center.

He was born June 24, 1921, in Bronx County, N.Y., the son of Samuel J. and Ethel Rolnick Rossoff. He married Ethel M. Oberman on Aug. 16, 1947, in Springfield. He was preceded in death by his brother, Milton.

Dr. Rossoff was a graduate of Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. During World War II, he trained and served in field artillery, medical administration and the Veterinary Corps. He also headed a project to protect bombardiers from the frigid weather in Europe. He earned the rank of captain in the U.S. Army Veterinary Reserves.

He was in general veterinary practice for approximately 60 years. He also served as a worldwide consultant in new drug development, medico-legal cases, criminology, pharmacology and toxicology. He held drug patents and worked on both Canadian and NATO gas warfare problems during the Cold War.

Dr. Rossoff also worked in police training and was a police officer for more than 30 years. He was an active board member of the West Central Illinois Criminal Justice Council, bringing police training to officers in 10 Illinois counties.

He taught night classes in anatomy and physiology at an area college. He lectured and taught antibiotic design in the Middle East and at an international meeting in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Rossoff co-authored a book on cattle and sole authored several books on drugs and chemicals, including his magnum opus "Encyclopedia of Clinical Toxicology," affecting humans and animals. He was a member of numerous professional societies and Temple Israel of Springfield.

Surviving are his wife, Ethel; daughter, Merrycarol (husband, Ron) Belfiglio of New York City; another daughter and granddaughter, both of New York; and sister, Roslyn Katz, also of New York. There are several nieces, nephews and cousins.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to Temple Israel or the World Wildlife Fund, 1250 24th St. NW, Washington, DC 20037.

SPCA Sheds Light on Toxin Identified as Part of Tests on Tainted Food

NEW YORK— Based on new reports issued by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets that rodent poison was found in laboratory testing of the tainted pet food recalled last week, the ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®), through its Animal Poison Control Center (APCC), has released the following information to the public:

Aminopterin, a toxin found in some rodenticides available outside the USA, is a folic acid antagonist, i.e. it disrupts the body's ability to utilize folic acid. In animals, this can result in loss of appetite, diarrhea and weight loss. It may also cause leucopenia, which is a reduction in white blood cells, as well as birth defects.

Aminopterin is closely related in chemical structure and mechanism to a drug called methotrexate, which is used to treat some cancers, both in humans and animals. Renal failure has been reported in human patients receiving methotrexate. We do not know if aminopterin can cause renal failure in pets.

Based on these findings, the ASPCA does not recommend any change in treatment of animals affected; animals currently being treated for kidney failure suspected to be related to the ingestion of the contaminated food should stay on such treatment. Please follow your veterinarian's advice.

The American Veterinary Medical Association has some excellent advice and information for both pet owners and veterinarians at <http://www.avma.org/aa/menufoodsrecall/default.asp>.

Remember ISVMA Lobby Day is April 18

The ISVMA will hold its Lobby Day on April 18, 2007 in Springfield. We invite all veterinarians to come to Springfield to get a briefing from the ISVMA lobbyists on the key issues impacting veterinary medicine and instructions on how to communicate our positions to your state legislators.

We hope to have at least one veterinarian from each of the 118 state legislative districts participate this year.

Please email info@isvma.org and let us know if you would like to participate in this important grassroots lobbying program. If you plan to join our advocacy force, we will send you more detailed information regarding our issues and meeting information as we get closer to the event.

About the Photo in This Issue...

The Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*) is the least well known of North America's blackbirds. It breeds north to the tree line in wet forests of Alaska, Canada, and the northeastern United States. No other North American blackbird breeds as far north. Although detailed studies of its breeding biology are few, this species nests most frequently along bogs, muskeg swamps, beaver (*Castor canadensis*) ponds, and streams, and its robust, arboreal nests are often reused by other species such as the Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*).

As the name suggests, the Rusty Blackbird is mostly black. This species is not distinctively marked except for brown, rust-colored edgings on its upper body feathers in fall and winter. It has yellow eyes, a bill that is shorter than its head, and long, narrow wings. During the breeding season, adult males have a blue-green sheen to their black feathers above. Females, in contrast, appear slate gray with a similar gloss. Immature birds look like adults, but with more rust-coloration. Both sexes sing. Males have two songs. One sounds like a rusty gate, but the other is a more melodic "koo-a-lee."

An opportunistic feeder, it eats mostly invertebrates during the breeding season, generally taking them by probing in mud and vegetation along the edges of wetlands. In winter and on migration, it joins mixed-species roosts and feeding flocks, but also occurs apart from other species, favoring woodlands more than other blackbirds do. In winter, it will also eat acorn mast, pine seeds, and fruit. It likes to eat along the edges of wetlands and sometimes within agricultural fields. The bird will pick apart submerged sticks or plunge its head under water for a tasty insect. During food shortages, it will even eat other birds.

Rusty Blackbirds migrate north starting in March and going through May. They usually settle in mixed forests from the edge of the tundra down to the beginning of deciduous forests and grasslands. The blackbirds nest in trees that are near breaks in mature woodland. They can be found along streams, fens, beaver ponds, bogs, and muskeg swamps. Small-scale disturbance caused by fires or beavers may benefit these birds.

Come September, birders in the northern United States will start to see rusty blackbirds migrating south.

Because of its remote breeding habitat, inconspicuous behavior, and lack of economic impact, this species has received little study, and its population status and trends remain poorly known. Populations are not immediately threatened thanks to the inhospitable nature of their breeding habitat. But the density of Rusty Blackbirds is low even in the center of their breeding range and, as a result, the species is on the Audubon Watch List.

I photographed this Rusty Blackbird in a field near Rochester, IL in March 2007.

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