

### 2009 H1N1 Flu Update - Chinese Dogs, VA Turkeys & CA Cheetah

**From the AVMA:** The USDA has confirmed 2009 H1N1 influenza virus in a [turkey breeder flock in Virginia](#). This is the first detection of the virus H1N1 in U.S. turkeys. Canada and Chile have already had cases in domestic turkeys. A worker at the Virginia farm had been sent home with flu-like symptoms, and has been identified as the possible source of infection.

Also on the USDA's updated list is a cheetah in California that has tested presumptive positive for 2009 H1N1. The AVMA is currently communicating with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians (AAZV) to obtain more information and develop resources for veterinarians and the public.

On November 28, Xinhua (Chinese press) reported that two (2) dogs in Beijing tested positive for the 2009 H1N1 virus. The AVMA has not been able to confirm this report. They have contacted sources in China, requesting additional information about the history, signalment, clinical signs, diagnosis, treatment and outcome of these cases, but have not yet received the information.

At this time, the messages to clients remain largely the same:

- This is not cause for panic, but underscores the importance of taking pets to a veterinarian if they are showing signs of illness.
- This is especially important if someone in the household has recently been ill with flu-like symptoms. Ferret and cat owners should remain vigilant.
- To date, all of the sick pets became ill after a person in the household was ill with flu-like symptoms. There is no evidence to suggest that pets have or will spread the virus to humans or other animals.
- Proper hygiene and sanitation measures should be followed to limit the spread of the influenza virus.

As they receive and verify more information about these cases, the AVMA will update their [online 2009 H1N1 resources](#).

### SIVMA December Meeting Cancelled

The Southern Illinois Veterinary Medical Association (SIVMA) has cancelled their meeting scheduled for December 3, 2009 in Centralia. The next SIVMA meetings are scheduled for:

April 1 2010 Fairview Heights--Parasitology  
August 5 2010 Centralia--Practice Management and Dairy Herd Health

### ISVMA Legislative Committee Reviewing Practice Act Amendments

The ISVMA Legislative Committee is reviewing important and necessary changes to the Veterinary Medicine and surgery Practice Act which will be introduced in January for consideration by the Illinois General Assembly. The Practice Act is the single most important law affecting the veterinary profession. Important portions of this law include:

- **Establishes the veterinary profession** - "The practice of veterinary medicine in the State of Illinois is declared to affect the public health, safety and welfare and to be subject to State regulation and control in the public interest. It is further declared to be a matter of public interest and concern that the veterinary profession merit and receive the confidence of the public and that only qualified and licensed persons be permitted to practice veterinary medicine." (225 ILCS 15/1)
- **Defines the veterinary profession** - the meaning of practice of veterinary medicine (limitations and qualifications), veterinarian-client-patient-relationship (VCPR), veterinarian, veterinary technician, abandoned animal, supervision, consultation, and many other important terms are established.
- **Qualifications for licensure** - the requirements for veterinarian and certified veterinary technician licensure are included in the Practice Act and the regulations promulgated to enforce it.
- **Specific exemptions from licensure requirements** - the "scope of practice" has become the battle ground for Veterinary Practice Acts across the nation. It is where special interest groups have fought to be exempted from licensure so that they can provide care and treatment to animals that used to be limited to licensed veterinarians.
- **Veterinary licensing & disciplinary procedures** - establishes the Illinois Veterinary Licensing & Disciplinary Board, standards of veterinary practice, discipline of licensees and unlicensed practice, hearing procedures, appeals, licensure procedures, etc.

- **Sets forth requirements** - client confidentiality, medical records, continuing education, animal abuse reporting, abandoned animal procedures, etc.

The Illinois Constitution requires that all professional practice acts must be renewed at least once every ten years. The legislature sets the expiration (sunset) dates. The Veterinary Medicine and Surgery Practice Act is not scheduled to sunset until January 1, 2014.

Typically (but not because of any law or by rule), a professional practice act is not "opened" for amendment without the involvement of the state association representing the profession. The state associations are considered the "guardians" of their practice acts.

There is considerable risk associated with opening a practice act - individuals and organizations excluded from the professional practice will often seize the opportunity to offer "hostile" amendments intended to limit the scope of the profession or suggest changes that are disadvantageous for the profession.

The last time the Practice Act was "opened" for significant amendments was in 2003 (with a January 1, 2004 sunset date looming). There was a considerable lobbying effort from several non-veterinary groups in the last days of the legislative session that put the renewal of the Practice Act in jeopardy. The ISVMA opposed the changes, but there were not enough legislators willing to vote to renew the Practice Act without the changes included.

In order to obtain a vote to extend the Practice Act, the ISVMA reluctantly accepted the changes to our Practice Act.

For the past seven years, ISVMA has worked to build a strong grassroots advocacy network comprised of member veterinarians, students and technicians. We have organized "key contacts" for most legislators (ISVMA members that have personal or professional relationships with legislators). We have been much more engaged in legislative advocacy and have augmented our credibility with legislators by providing accurate, science-based information to help them make the proper decisions on issues related to the health and welfare of animals and the public. In short, ISVMA has become a much stronger voice for the veterinary profession in Illinois.

Now is the time to put the increased strength and credibility to the test! Without the threat of a looming sunset (currently January 1, 2014), we will be suggesting important changes to the Practice Act in an effort to fulfill our mission of advancing the well-being of the veterinary profession, animals, the public and the environment.

Our success is dependent upon the continued involvement and growth of our grassroots advocacy network. You can participate by responding to ISVMA Legislative Calls to Action, getting to know your local legislators so that you can be an information resource for them, and attending the ISVMA Lobby Day (not yet scheduled). Please commit yourself to be involved in the ISVMA legislative efforts in 2010!

### About the Photo

The [Bonaparte's Gull](#) (*Larus philadelphia*) is a small (12-14") delicate gull that is silvery gray above with conspicuous white, wedge-shaped patches on leading edge of outer wing. In breeding adults, the head is black. In winter, the head is white with a dark spot behind the eye. The bill is black. Young birds have dark markings on upper surface of wing and black tail band. The common Black-headed Gull is similar but larger, with a red bill and dark wing linings.

Because they breed in the far North, these beautiful gulls are most often seen in the United States on lakes and rivers during migration or along the coast in winter. They keep to themselves, seldom joining the larger gulls. They feed in tidal inlets and at sewage outlets, picking scraps of food from the water. During spring migration, they may often be seen flying northward along large rivers such as the Hudson and the Mississippi. The species is named after a nephew of Napoleon, Charles Lucien Bonaparte, who was a leading ornithologist in the 1800s in America and Europe.

I photographed this basic-plumaged Bonaparte's Gull in Springfield, IL in November 2008.

### Contact Us

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