

### **State Investigates Reports of Distemper in Dogs**

The Illinois Department of Agriculture is investigating reports of distemper in dogs, including two sold at suburban pet stores, officials said Tuesday.

There is one confirmed case of the disease that can be deadly for dogs, said state veterinarian Dr. Mark Ernst of the Illinois Department of Agriculture. That case was in the Chicago area, but state officials would not confirm the exact location. The dog has not died from the disease, state officials said. ([Read More](#))

### **DEA Makes Carisoprodol (Soma) a Schedule IV Controlled Substance**

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) made carisoprodol (Soma) a Schedule IV drug effective January 11, 2012. As of January 11, 2012, carisoprodol may only be dispensed in accordance with the federal Controlled Substances Act. The DEA has officially issued a Guidance Statement regarding carisoprodol prescriptions that is now available on its [Web site](#).

### **AVMA Animal Welfare Policies Open for Comment**

AVMA relies on quality input from its members to shape its policies and actions and is encouraging AVMA members to provide comments on animal welfare-related policies that are under review and/or development. [Comments will be accepted](#) through March 1, 2012.

### **New NIH Guidelines for Lab Rodent Cage Sizes has Lab Animal Experts Worried**

Scientists do experiments with millions of rats and mice each year, to study everything from heart disease to cancer to diabetes. Recently, some new recommendations about how to house female lab rodents and their babies caused an uproar, with experts at major research institutions now saying they're unsure of what they'll have to do to keep their government funding. ([Read More](#))

### **FDA Webinar on Unapproved Drugs is Tomorrow (January 26)**

The FDA webinar on unapproved drugs is tomorrow! It will be held on January 26 from 11 a.m. to noon EST, and will help inform veterinarians about the agency's activities to address the issue. ([Read More from the AVMA](#))

### **Bill Would Remove Downer Animals from Food Supply**

U.S. Rep. Gary Ackerman, D-N.Y., has reintroduced the Downed Animal and Food Safety Protection Act to permanently prohibit all downed livestock from entering the nation's food chain.

The act (H.R. 3704) would require all unhealthy livestock unable to walk because of disease to be humanely euthanized, according to a news release from the congressman.

Ackerman said the legislation would protect the U.S. food supply from illnesses such as mad cow disease. ([Read more](#))

### **AVMA Volunteer Opportunities Available**

Are there any AVMA members out there interested in volunteer opportunities on committees or councils? If so, make note of the openings and deadlines so you don't have to scramble. ([Read more](#))

### **About the Photo**

One of the smallest of the "white-headed" gulls, the [Mew Gull](#) (*Larus Canus*) is common along Pacific Coast beaches in winter. It also occurs in Eurasia, where it is known as the "Common Gull."

The Mew Gull is commonly described as having a 'gentle' or 'dove-headed' look. The Mew Gull has

typical gull-like plumage--slate-gray back and wings, a white head, tail, and body, and black wingtips with white spots. The beak and legs are yellow. In breeding plumage, the Mew Gull has a clean white head, a dark eye, and a solid yellow bill without markings. In non-breeding plumage, its head is smudged with brown, the red eye-ring is absent, and the bill is partially dark. Juveniles are varying degrees of mottled brown interspersed with white and gray.

Inland breeders, Mew Gulls migrate directly to the coast, and disperse south from there. They first start appearing along the coast in late July, and numbers increase gradually through the fall. The height of the migration in the Northwest is from October to December. Migration back to the breeding grounds in the spring begins in March and continues through May.

About a week ago, a Mew Gull was seen and photographed in Chicago, IL. This sighting had birders from all over the Midwest racing to the Windy City to see this rare visitor.

I photographed this Mew Gull at Golden Gate State Park in San Francisco in 2001.

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