

Public Health Alert for all Veterinarians in the Champaign-Urbana-Savoy Area

Three cats from two households in Savoy, Illinois were diagnosed with culture-confirmed tularemia at the University of Illinois, College of Veterinary Medicine in Urbana, Illinois in July and September. This may indicate an increased concern for this disease in the area. Humans and many animals can become infected with this bacterium. In the wild, rabbits and rodents can carry the organism and may die from infection with this organism.

Cats may prey on rabbits and rodents and become infected or they may become infected through tick exposure. Cats may develop a variety of symptoms including high fever, mouth ulcers, depression, enlarged lymph nodes and anorexia. Cats have transmitted this disease to people so caution should be used when handling an animal suspected of having tularemia. Culture can be used to diagnose tularemia in cats. Care should be taken when collecting specimens for culture to avoid exposure.

The tularemia bacteria can easily be transmitted to people working in laboratories if proper precautions are not taken so if tularemia is suspected this should be noted in **BOLD** on the laboratory submission form.

People may also develop fever, headaches, diarrhea, joint pain, cough and weakness if they become infected with tularemia. People can become infected by handling pets or wild animals with tularemia, being bitten by ticks or by inhaling the organism. If you develop symptoms of tularemia after handling an animal with suspect tularemia (within three to 14 days of exposure) see your health care provider promptly.

Please notify local animal control of any unexplained large die-offs of rabbits and rodents.

Tularemia in animals is a reportable disease and as such must be promptly reported to the Illinois Department of Agriculture Bureau of Animal Health and Welfare at 217-782-4944.

For questions or concerns relative to clinical presentation please contact Dr. Brendan McKeirnan at the University of Illinois Veterinary Teaching Hospital at 217-333-5300.

Transfusion-Associated Babesiosis in the United States: A Description of Cases

Babesiosis is a potentially life-threatening disease caused by intraerythrocytic parasites, which usually are tickborne but also are transmissible by transfusion. Tickborne transmission of *Babesia microti* mainly occurs in 7 states in the Northeast and the upper Midwest of the United States. No *Babesia* test for screening blood donors has been licensed.

While the [linked article](#) is about human babesiosis, it is important to note that dogs are also susceptible to this tick-borne disease. Canine blood donors are typically screened for this parasite, so the risk of spread via transfusion is low. However, dogs that fight seriously enough to draw blood can spread the *Babesia* parasite and is another reason to use regular tick prevention.

Three Human Rabies Deaths in the U.S. Last Year

Three people have died of rabies in the United States in the past year, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and media reports, though only one case is suspected to have originated in this country.

[Read the full article.](#)

AAHA-AVMA Preventive Healthcare Guidelines

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) have collaborated on the publication of [new health guidelines for dogs and cats](#). Developed in response to startling statistics that indicate visits to veterinarians are declining while preventable diseases in pets are increasing, these guidelines are designed to provide the foundation for the

veterinary practice team to promote preventive veterinary medicine.

The guidelines are a tool to help ensure complete checkups by providing a springboard for veterinarians to explain to their clients the importance of each step in the preventive care checkup, without being overly prescriptive.

ISVMA Offers Sponsored Benefit Programs to Increase Your Practice Income

The ISVMA Membership Services Committee reviews options for sponsored benefit programs designed to help veterinary practices operate more efficiently and increase profits! Programs include discount merchant services (credit card processing), bulk energy purchasing and debt collection. The ISVMA Membership Services Committee is exploring other reputable companies that can provide additional benefits to our members. ***These programs save our members money AND provide a valuable non-dues income stream for ISVMA.***

Please check out the approved ISVMA sponsored benefit programs:



TransFirst Health Services: ISVMA members can save money on processing credit card transactions in clinic by participating in this program. For more information, please contact Rene' Buzicky at TransFirst Health Services, (800) 577-8573 ext. 160, rbuzicky@transfirst.com.



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Diversified Services Group

Specializing in Fee Recovery for the Veterinary Medical Profession since 1978

Diversified Services: Many ISVMA members have already utilized this service to help recover delinquent payments on client accounts. For more information, contact Jerry Kane at Diversified Services Group, (888) 494-7900, jmk@divservgrp.com.

Pet Owners Push Back on Prices

National survey gauges DVM, pet owner attitudes on economy, pricing, wellness

Nearly 40 percent of appointments are unfilled at most veterinary practices, according to a [recent survey](#).

About the Photo

The Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) is a small sand-colored, sparrow-sized shorebird that nests and feeds along coastal sand and gravel beaches in North America. The adult has yellow-orange legs, a black band across the forehead from eye to eye, and a black ring around the neck. This chest band is usually thicker in males during the breeding season, and it's the only reliable way to tell the sexes apart. It is difficult to see when standing still as it blends well with open, sandy beach habitats. It typically runs in short starts and stops.

There are 2 subspecies of Piping Plovers: the eastern population is known as *Charadrius melodus melodus* and the mid-west population is known as *Charadrius melodus circumcinctus*. The bird's name is derived from its plaintive bell-like whistles which are often heard before the bird is visible.

Total population is currently estimated at only about 6,410 individuals. A preliminary estimate showed 3,350 birds in 2003 on the Atlantic Coast alone, 52% of the total. The population has been increasing since 1991.

Their breeding habitat includes beaches or sand flats on the Atlantic coast, the shores of the Great Lakes, and in the mid-west of Canada and the United States. They nest on sandy or gravel beaches or shoals. These shorebirds forage for food on beaches, usually by sight, moving across the beaches in short bursts. Generally, Piping Plovers will forage for food around the high tide wrack zone and along the waters edge. They mainly eat insects, marine worms, and crustaceans.

Scattered nesting populations of this shorebird formerly occurred on shoreline areas of much of the Great Lakes. Historical declines in the populations have been caused by shoreline habitat alteration, and disturbances caused by human activities. Less than a few dozen breeding pairs are known to persist in the Great Lakes, and the last nesting pair documented in Illinois was 2009 (the first nesting pair in Illinois since 1973). Because of very low population size, this species is extremely vulnerable to human-caused or natural events. It was listed as a federally endangered species in 1985, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated critical habitat for the Great Lakes population in 2001.

In the 19th century and early 20th century the Piping Plover was utilized for its feathers, as were many other birds at the time, as decoration in women's hats. These decorations, called plumes, became a symbol of high society, especially those from larger rare birds. This led to its initial population decline. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 helped the population recover through the 1930s. The second decline in the Piping Plover's population and range has been attributed to increased development, shoreline stabilization efforts,[10] habitat loss and human activity near nesting sites in the decades following World War II. The Great Lakes populations eventually shrank to only a couple dozen.

Critical nesting habitats are now being protected to help the population during its breeding season. Populations have significantly increased since the protection programs began, but the species remains in serious danger. Current conservation strategies include identification and preservation of known nesting sites, public education, limiting or preventing pedestrian and/or off-road vehicle traffic near nests and hatched chicks, limiting predation of free-ranging cats, dogs and other pets on breeding pairs, eggs and chicks, and removal of foxes, raccoons, skunks, and other predators. Roughly \$3 million a year is being spent for the U.S. Atlantic Coast population alone.

In coastal areas such as Plymouth, Cape Cod, Long Island, North Manitou Island in Lake Michigan, and most recently, Cape Hatteras National Seashore on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, beach access to pedestrians and Off Road Vehicles (ORVs) has been limited or even sometimes prohibited near nesting Piping Plovers as a result of management plans and lawsuits filed by environmental organizations such as the National Audubon Society and the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC). As with any other threatened species, conflicts arise and compromises have to be made between those protecting the species and those who use the habitat.

Increased temporary restrictions to areas near Hatteras Village, Ocracoke Island, and other areas within the Cape Hatteras National Seashore during the period when Piping Plovers and other protected species are nesting have been viewed as excessive by some residents, visitors, businesses, and activist groups. The Plovers, however, have seen their highest nesting success since 1988 in the years since the temporary beach closures were put into effect.

I photographed this Piping Plover near Cape May, New Jersey in 2005.

Contact Us

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