

AAV Member Spotlight: Odette Doest, DVM

It is with great pleasure that we present the AAV newsletter: Member Spotlight. This special feature showcases the association's most valuable asset—our members—by highlighting our diverse backgrounds, professional activities, experience, and geographic locations.

If you would like to be featured in this section, or would like to suggest a fellow member to profile, please complete the [Member Spotlight Questionnaire](#) today.

What was the first bird job you ever had?

I was a technician at Utrecht University where there was a difficult rose-breasted cockatoo chick that got fed milled seeds with the handfeeding causing crop infection. Due to my avian rotations in the states, I was the only one able to massage the chunks out, and able to deal with the owners who weren't your ideal bird parents. I was offered to do outpatient treatment at home and got payed well for it. It was a win-win situation. A win for the clinic that could not offer the care they demanded within university settings, a win for the owner—he got the care he wanted, and I got payed, doing house visits and treatments on my bike, 3 months before I officially graduated.

Most memorable AAV experience or contribution.

My first talk at the AAV Conference in Portland Oregon, about "Macaw Conservation, Fact or Fiction." I was just overwhelmed with the amount of people that came in to the conservation room. People had to stand and sit on the floor because there was lack of space, I was soooo nervous and Andre Jackson was the hero that saved the day. That is when I learned that stuff that can seem plain and simple everyday stuff to me can be an amazing experience for others.

What is your favorite avian species and why?

That is a very difficult question. Can I just say birds? ☺ My bird Crockey, a yellow-shouldered Amazon (*Amazon barbadensis*), because she is the first bird that I got for my 10th birthday. Luckily she is still alive, and it was because of her that I got interested in bird conservation and becoming an avian vet at age 12, realizing my parents had bought a protected, wild-caught baby bird, in a pet shop. I figured as a teen I would become a vet and then work in conservation. Haha! It actually worked out, thank you Crockey!

What was the last interesting avian medical or surgical issue you dealt with in your work?

An ostrich with an abscess in its right eye. Funny how quick they go down when you give them IV sedation. It was out in a field. The caretaker just looked at me, looked at the passed out ostrich, and said, "Oooo, this vet is dangerous."

Best benefits of AAV membership?

Great contacts, gaining great friends that think alike and have the same degree of "craziness" as I may call it. Great access and networking with very knowledgeable people all around the world.

If you had not chosen your present career, what would you be doing?

Civil engineering.

Describe an anecdote that would be of interest to your colleagues.

Macaws, and for that matter a lot of other South American parrots, behave differently in the wild than what you might have learned from their behavior in captivity. It is an adapted behavior (in captivity) and these birds are smart cookies. Nest boxes, for example, don't need to be pitch dark.



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