WILDLIFE STUDIES

MASTER OF PREVENTIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE

Graham Crawford’s passion for wildlife studies led him to enter the school’s Master of Preventive Medicine degree program.

The MPVM program prepares veterinarians to maintain health in animal populations, including food animal flocks or herds as well as wildlife populations or entire ecosystems. Flexible coursework accommodates diverse interests—herd health, food safety or public health—in an array of species—wildlife, livestock, poultry, laboratory animals, companion animals (e.g. shelter animal medicine) or horses. Candidates use the tools of epidemiology and data analysis to design, evaluate and implement disease control strategies or other veterinary services programs within their specialty.

Director David Hird says, “The MPVM program opens students’ eyes to the multitude of veterinary career paths outside typical small animal medicine practice—food animal practice, public health service or research, and wildlife health management, an area of growing concern to veterinary scientists around the world.”

Dr. Crawford began his MPVM degree studies in a makeshift trailer camp on Grizzly Island. He is conducting a two-year research project on wildlife health: surveillance of the tule elk herd for early evidence of Johne’s disease.

Volunteers from the California Department of Fish and Game, San Francisco Zoo, UC Davis Wildlife Health Center and his family helped Dr. Crawford obtain tissue samples from 37 animal carcasses during the annual controlled elk hunt in protected Suisun Bay Estuary.

The resulting data will be used to document the presence or absence in the Grizzly Island herd of Avium paratuberculosis, the microbacterium responsible for Johne’s disease in tule elk.

The Wildlife Health Center provided initial funding for the Grizzly Island study, and Dr. Crawford received additional grants from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Granite Bay and San Francisco chapters of Safari Club International.

After earning his DVM degree at UC Davis in 1982, Dr. Crawford entered a private mixed practice in the Napa area. A position in small animal emergency medicine in San Jose later put him in close proximity to the San Francisco Zoo, where he spent many volunteer hours as a consulting veterinarian. He eventually became a full-time zoo veterinarian.

His interest in wildlife issues began with the zoo’s involvement in the Madagascar Fauna Group—a field consortium of 30 international zoos focused on wildlife conservation—in an effort to preserve the 32 species of lemurs that inhabit Madagascar, where deforestation and erosion threaten habitat. In 1997 and 1998, Dr. Crawford helped release captive-bred lemurs into Madagascar’s Betampona Natural Reserve.

Dr. Crawford will present the tule elk study this summer—he completes the rigorous MPVM curriculum in August. He says, “I feel really excited to be able to use the skills I’ve learned to analyze the data I already have.” He is also involved in an ongoing study of lemur nutrition.

Kevin Mallory, DVM, received an award for his study of an ultrasonography technique for treatment of hyperthyroidism in cats, presented at House Officer Seminar Day 2002.

The Bulletin Board Series—of “pull out and display” posters—is designed to help inform clients of veterinary practitioners about the signs and risks of animal diseases and other health problems, and how their animals may be diagnosed and treated.