



# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2017



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**SAVE THE DATE:**  
2018 EWDA Conference in GREECE from  
August 27-31!  
More info on page 5!



# President's Corner



During the winter I spent a week in the mountains with my family and was unexpectedly called by a friend living close by to help a neighbour who had discovered an owl in his fireplace. Those who know me will maybe smile at this idea, considering that I am not exactly a bird specialist, but I went there and freed the bird, for the greatest pleasure of the fireplace owner and for sure also of the owl. The next day however, there was again a bird in the fireplace. And we repeated the same procedure, except that afterwards I was invited to take an aperitive with the house owner. The man originated from the French Pyrenees and complained about conservationists aiming at reintroducing brown bears in his region and about other weird plans of ecologists. I tried to explain him about all what humans destroy and how all things are interconnected and that some of us are just trying to restore a little bit of what has vanished by our fault. He listened with interest and seemed to be ready to revise his mind. He finally stated that it all sounded so relevant, but that it was a pity that the public was not better informed. And I thought that we, who know about these things, should maybe think more about how to be better heard.

Since then the spring has arrived, and I was told that the man has modified his chimney to prevent that owls enter it and that he supported the set up of a nest box for owls in the trees next to his house. Independently of this, most recently a brown bear was observed in the Swiss canton I live in, after no less than 190 of absence! This bear was not reintroduced by human's hand but has found his way back on its own. Among all these emerging diseases and other troubles affecting wildlife and the world in general, aren't they nicely positive things worth to be mentioned?

Back to the EWDA: I encourage you to read the exciting «News from the Board» drafted by our dynamic secretary! Rather than duplicating her text, I would like to acknowledge all of our colleagues who decided to contribute more actively to EWDA activities, for the benefit of our association, of our members, and of our common goals. I am grateful to our colleagues who agreed to take more work on their already well loaded shoulders by joining the new EWDA Small Grants Committee; the schedule has slightly changed but they are ready to receive your proposals. Many thanks also to all Board members for the work done in the past months, and congratulations to the students for remaining faithful to their principles even if this was at high costs. Thank you to our conference organizer 2018 who is working hard to prepare a memorable event not only at the scientific but also at the social and cultural level. Last but not least, I would like to express my admiration and gratitude to Vic Simpson for his impressive generosity and initiative. We all hope that our efforts and the funds involved will be able to make differences, even if they are small ones. Now the ball is in your hands!

What's next? Besides all the unknowns and the already on-going work, we are targeting the development of the EWDA Bylaws, which are currently quite rudimentary. A more complete document should help future Board members to better understand their roles and may contribute to a more solid profile of our association.

Time flies, and the summer is at our doors. Let's enjoy it before the autumn comes! I hope to see many of you at the WDA conference in Mexico and wish you all a very nice summer vacation!



*Marie-Pierre Ryser*

*EWDA Chair*

*FIWI, University of Bern*

# News from the Board



Summer is upon us, and what was only just in the works last winter is in full blossom thanks to the energy of your dedicated board members.

We have some exciting news to share, and the main focus in mind was how to best increase the benefits of EWDA membership while increasing the visibility of the EWDA, and putting some of the money in the bank to good use.

- ★ As of this year, the EWDA will be offering two small grants: a Grant for Wildlife Health Activities in Eastern Europe and Wildlife Conservation Research Grant, which will be awarded every second year and will have a maximum budget of 2000 euros each. This grants are described in detail by the EWDA small grants committee, composed of board members and EWDA members nominated by the EWDA Chair (Marie-Pierre Ryser) and Co Chair (Erik Agren)
- ★ Another new financial aid comes in the form of an EWDA conference attendance fund, which purpose is to encourage people of limited financial means and with no institutional support to attend EWDA conferences. This fund is the result of the immense generosity of long time EWDA member and former EWDA board member Doctor Vic Simpson, who feels very close to this cause. This fund will undoubtedly help numerous young and/or independent researchers attend conferences which may make a difference in their career. The hope is that this fund will grow with the contributions of others.
- ★ The EWDA Network is going strong, headed by a now permanent committee composed of three historical members, Thijs Kuiken (chair), Marie-Pierre Ryser and Paul Tavernier, which will soon be joined by three new members nominated by the EWDA Chair and Co Chair. A joint meeting between the COST Action ASF-STOP and the EWDA Network for Wildlife Health Surveillance in Europe will take place in Madrid on June 20-21, 2017.
- ★ The student chapter has had some hardship, having to cancel their famed EWDA workshop due to fundamental disagreements with one of their partners and sponsors. The board in its entirety, and most specifically their student advisor, Lineke Begman, have stood by them in this difficult decision and congratulated them on standing by their principles. They are working towards other options for the workshop, considering various possibilities including potentially organizing the event before or after the 2018 EWDA conference.
- ★ Towards the end of this year, the nomination committee, chaired by former EWDA chair Lisa Yon, will be unveiling possible candidates for the positions that will open within the board in 2018. Stay tuned for a call for additional candidates. To be a candidate to a board position, you must be an EWDA member in good standing and be sponsored by at least 3 EWDA members.
- ★ Last but not least, our Website coordinator, Rogier Bodewes, is working towards the migration of our website to a new and larger wordpress platform, which should allow for concurrent hosting of the wildlist of wildlife experts.



**Karin Lemberger**

*EWDA Secretary*

*Faupath and Vet Diagnostics,  
France*

We hope you will receive all these exciting news with the same enthusiasm with which we put them together.



**EWDA BULLETIN**

# EWDA Conference August 27<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> 2018 in Larissa, Thessaly, Greece



13th Conference of the European Wildlife Disease Association (EWDA)

Larissa, Thessaly, Greece  
August 2018



Dear Colleagues,

It is our greatest pleasure to invite you to the 13th European Wildlife Disease Association Conference in 2018. The conference will be held from August 27<sup>th</sup> -31<sup>st</sup> 2018 in Larissa, Thessaly, Greece together with the EWDA Wildlife Health Surveillance Network meeting (August 26<sup>th</sup>) and the annual meeting of ECZM (August 26<sup>th</sup> and August 27<sup>th</sup> 2018).

Thessaly is located in central Greece and it includes all the kind of ecosystems that exist in the country, from costal and seaside to alpine ones. Larissa is the capital and largest city of Thessaly. Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, worked and died in Larissa.

The biggest wetland restoration program in the wider Mediterranean area is taking place in Lake Karla which is an important wetland for different birds such as flamingo, egret, grey heron, wigeon etc.



Greater Flamingos in lake Karla

The scheduled afternoon excursion will bring you to a truly inspiring and sensational setting of overwhelming rock formations which are decorated with historical monasteries. Located one hour from Larissa, Meteora is an attractive destination, included in the World Heritage List of UNESCO. During the excursion you will have also the opportunity to visit the Museum of Natural History of Meteora & Mushrooms Museum and the area hosting the largest *Neophron percnopterus* population in Greece.

A post-conference tour will take place in September 1<sup>st</sup> in the biggest protected marine area in Europe (the National Park of Allonisos) where you could see monk seals and wild birds during their migration period.

We are expecting many interesting and quality scientific presentations of the most important topics that will make this conference a hot debating space for wildlife experts around the world. We are working hard to make this conference the one you will remember forever. Come to Greece, a small country measured in acres, but large in spirit and history.

The conference is hosted by the University of Thessaly (<http://www.uth.gr/en/>). For enquiries, please contact Charalambos Billinis at: [ewda2018@uth.gr](mailto:ewda2018@uth.gr) Further information will follow soon at the conference website: [www.EWDA2018.vet.uth.gr](http://www.EWDA2018.vet.uth.gr)



Prof. Charalambos Billinis

Faculty of Veterinary Medicine  
University of Thessaly, Greece

# EWDA Network News



Almost 7 years after the setting up of the EWDA Network for Wildlife Health Surveillance in Europe in Brussels in 2009, the EWDA Network Committee structure was changed from *ad hoc* to permanent following discussions at the 6<sup>th</sup> EWDA Network meeting in Berlin in August 2016 and approval by the EWDA Board.

A direct consequence of this status modification is that the EWDA Network Committee members will partly change. The new members will take over at the **7<sup>th</sup> EWDA Network meeting**, held jointly with the ASF-STOP Cost Action meeting in Madrid in June 2017.

Here we would like to acknowledge the outgoing committee members for their long commitment and major contributions to the creation and development of the EWDA Network: Prof. Dolores Gavier-Widén (SVA, Sweden), Prof. Christian Gortázar (IREC, Spain), and Prof. Ezio Ferroglio (University of Torino, Italy).

Some of their contributions include the lead of the APHAEA project (Christian) and of the ASF-STOP Cost Action (Dolores), and co-coordination of the EWDA/APHAEA Cards production (Ezio).



*Many thanks to Dolores, Christian and Ezio!*

We are happy to welcome Dr. Becki Lawson (ZSL, UK), Dr. Jorge Ramón López Olvera (University of Barcelona, Spain) and Dr. Antonio Lavazza (IZSLER, Italy) in the Network Committee. Remaining Committee members are Prof. Thijs Kuiken (Erasmus, The Netherlands; Committee Chair), Dr. Marie-Pierre Ryser (FIWI Bern, Switzerland), and Dr. Paul Tavernier (WILDPAD, Belgium).



*Welcome to Becki, Antonio and Jorge!*

*Thijs Kuiken  
(Committee Chair)*



*Paul Tavernier*

For more information on the EWDA Network (activities, how to join), see the EWDA Website: [www.ewda.org](http://www.ewda.org)

*Marie-Pierre Ryser  
FIWI Bern, Switzerland*

# Mentoring Programme launched!



Thanks to the efforts of Dave Jessup (WDA Executive Manager) and the WDA Student Activity Committee, a new and improved WDA Student Mentoring Programme has been launched.

This programme has been set up in collaboration with the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians (AAZV) and aims to promote shared knowledge and skills, and the development of a network between established zoological medicine & wildlife health researchers and students.



*Established wildlife professionals interacting with students during the EWDA Conference in Berlin*

The role and responsibilities of the mentor include empowering mentees to identify their own goals and advising them about career development (e.g. writing efforts such as award applications).

Communication between mentors and mentees may take place via email and conference calls, but the organisation of in-person meetings (e.g. during a national conference) is strongly encouraged.

During the first application round, we already received more than 90 mentee applications.

The matching of mentors and mentees is coordinated by the WDA Student Activity Committee and will be based on similar career goals and interests. Matches of the first application round will be announced around Mid-July. This gives mentors and mentees who will be attending the 66th WDA Annual International Conference in Mexico the opportunity to meet in person.

Are you interested in becoming a wildlife health mentor or a mentee? Please keep an eye out for the opening of the second application round.

You have to be a member of AAZV or WDA to be eligible as a mentee.

More information about the programme can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions, suggestions or comments about the programme, please email to [vwvet@yahoo.com](mailto:vwvet@yahoo.com).



**Anne-Fleur Brand**  
Chair of the EWDA  
Student Chapter

# First Experiences as an ECZM Resident in Wildlife Population Health

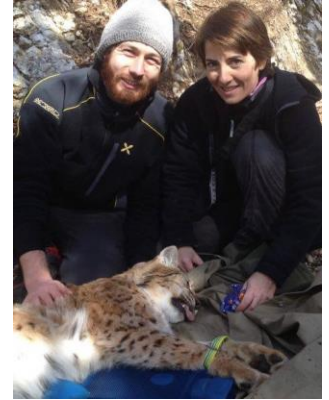


I have been a resident in the Wildlife Population Health (WPH) specialty at the Centre for Fish and Wildlife Health of the University of Bern for six months. The residency is one of the six programs accredited by the European College of Zoological Medicine (ECZM). The ECZM-WPH residency program aims to train graduate veterinarians until their graduation as a ECZM-Diplomate and to further scientific progress in the realms of wildlife.

Coming from a clinical background in small animal medicine, I first had to learn how to connect the individual' conception of health to a population and on an ecosystem level. Secondly, the replacement of the contact persons from the pet owners to hunters, gamekeepers and federal institutions required a substantial adjustment of my communication skills.



During this period, I was mainly implicated in captures, pathological examinations and research projects on free-ranging wild animals in Switzerland, which allowed me to gain experience with a plethora of different aspects of wildlife health.



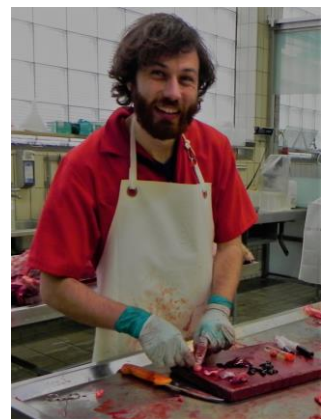
I understood that the success in wildlife captures doesn't only result by the correct handling and the species-specific anesthesia peculiarities and the challenges of the field work but also by an efficient collaboration between veterinarians, biologists and gamekeepers. Within the framework of an international translocation program for Eurasian lynx I was able to appreciate the challenges in its planning, the collaboration between partners from different countries and its practical actuation.

At the institute, I regularly perform pathological investigations. This allowed me to gain further knowledge of diseases of the Swiss fauna and fund the basis for my research projects.

Currently, I am working on a retrospective research project on fox diseases using the necropsy findings collected at our institute over the past 60 years.

Another advantage of this program is the weekly continuous education. Since pathologists, anesthetists and biologists participate in these activities, they actively contribute to my education with their specific expertise. Moreover, the seven ECZM-WPH residents discuss scientific articles on skype on a regular basis.

I consider the ECZM-WPH residents as sailors which have to learn how to efficiently connect the various islands spread out in the Wildlife Health Ocean. These first months have been intense and amazing and I am looking forward to sail the next routes during the rest of my residency !



*Simone Pisano*

ECZM-WPH Resident  
FIWI Bern



# 8<sup>th</sup> Course in Capture and Immobilization of Wild Animals in Portugal



This year, from the 29<sup>th</sup> of April until the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, the **8th Course in Capture and Immobilization of Wild Animals** took place in *Tapada de Marfa*, a 1187 ha Portuguese national park at 45min from Lisbon (Portugal). Eight students, 6 Portuguese and both of us (Belgian and French students), followed this course under **Dr Jorge Francisco Soares's** supervision.

The first day, we attended an **8-hour-theoretical part** dealing with anaesthesia in wildlife and the tools used for captures. Also, we had a little training session to learn how to prepare darts and to shoot with anaesthesia gun and rifle. Only in one day, we had already learned a lot!



*Wild boar capture*

Early in the morning, we took the pick-up and started to “track” the animals: mainly **wild boars and cervids** like red deers and follow deers.

On each animal, we monitored the anaesthesia, did a quick check up of the clinical state, took blood and ticks samples, gave a wormer and an antibiotic and finally reversed the anaesthesia. Maybe you are wondering: *Why had they done that?*



*Follow deer capture*

Actually, each sample and each data collected are used for **research** (e.g. tick-borne diseases) and to monitor **the park's wildlife health status** focusing on diseases as Tuberculosis. So, participating to this course is not only a way of **gaining exciting veterinary wildlife skills** but also a way of **getting involved in a public health project**.

And that's what we particularly liked in this course: *learning a lot in the field and helping a research and One Health project!*

But the course was not only serious moments! We also had **a lot of fun** by meeting other wildlife passionate students (it was a great coincidence to be 2 country rep'!) getting a big breath of fresh air in a wonderful European reserve and as well tasting delicious Portuguese pastries. Finally, at the end of the course, you get **an official certificate**.



*Official certificates obtained*

So, if you're interested by learning a lot and getting involved in wildlife research, contact **BeWild association** without any hesitation! The next courses are taking place on the **4-7 November 2017** and **28 April - 1 May 2018**.



*Best regards and carry on,*  
**Marianthi Ioannidis** (Belgian French part EWDA rep')  
& **Manon Moullec** (French EWDA rep')

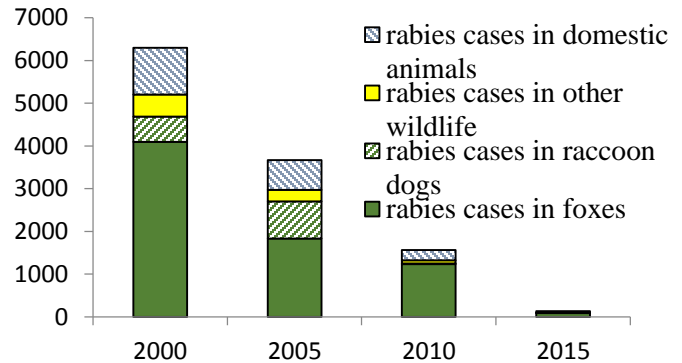
Contact: [bewild.courses@gmail.com](mailto:bewild.courses@gmail.com),  
BeWild (FB page)



# Rabies eradication in the EU



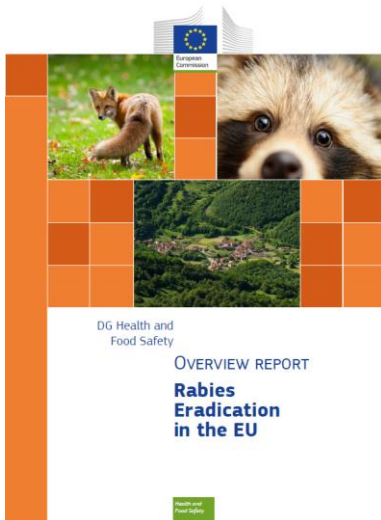
The European Commission has set a target to eliminate wildlife rabies from the EU Member States by the year 2020. The purpose is to protect humans and domestic animals from wildlife-mediated rabies. Whilst dog-mediated rabies is a huge global problem, the main rabies reservoir in the EU is the red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*). Many national programs for oral vaccination of foxes are co-financed by the EU, following a review and approval procedure.



EU co-funded oral vaccination campaigns have contributed towards elimination of rabies from the EU. The infection has been gradually pushed eastwards and wildlife rabies now remains only in certain areas close to our external borders. The EU also finances oral vaccination zones in neighbouring countries. The cases in domestic animals mirror the wildlife cases.

Over the past fifteen years, the Commission services have carried out 21 audits to evaluate the implementation of approved rabies eradication programmes. A recently published overview report covers audits and fact-finding missions carried out between 2012 and 2016 by veterinary auditors in DG Health and Food Safety. The report identifies common challenges as well as points to good practices. The complete report can be accessed here:

[http://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/overview\\_reports/details.cfm?rep\\_id=103](http://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/overview_reports/details.cfm?rep_id=103)



Overview report  
DG(SANTE) 2016-8980

The approved programmes include monitoring of vaccine bait uptake and sero-conversion in foxes shot during hunting to evaluate the effectiveness of the vaccination. These sampling targets are most likely met when there is good cooperation between veterinary authorities and hunters, and when the central authority is actively involved throughout the year.

Of particular interest for wildlife specialists, is the challenge to maintain public awareness and cooperation, and to test sufficient indicator animals under the passive rabies surveillance program (not only suspect cases) to support a final declaration of rabies freedom, while at the same time informing the public that the rabies vaccination program has been successful.



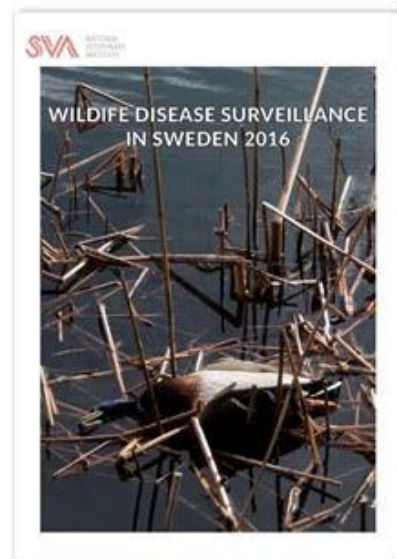
**Lena Englund**  
Veterinary auditor  
European Commission

# 70 years of wildlife surveillance in Sweden



The General wildlife disease surveillance in Sweden celebrates its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year! A long history with a valuable time series of wildlife diagnoses of the Nordic fauna is available for epidemiologic studies, as well as a biobank of about 35 years of wildlife tissue samples. A summary of the Swedish wildlife disease surveillance for 2016 is available in English from the National Veterinary Institute (SVA) webpage [SVA Wildlife Disease Surveillance 2016](http://www.sva.se/en/animal-health/wildlife) , and the previous annual reports in English are found on the webpage

<http://www.sva.se/en/animal-health/wildlife>.



*The 2016 annual wildlife disease surveillance report from Sweden*

Highlights for 2016 and the first quarter of 2017 include avian influenza H5N8 outbreaks in both wild birds and a few domestic fowl farms, similar to many other European countries, as well as the finding of rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus type 2 in both wild and domestic rabbits, as well as the first cases of RHDV2 in mountain hare (*Lepus timidus*) on an island on the southwest coast of Sweden. A PhD-project on Lagoviruses in lagomorphs is presently done by Aleksija Neimanis at SVA. Another ongoing PhD-project at SVA concerns pathology of tularemia in wildlife, by Gete Hestvik. Research on the threat and possible introduction and spread of African Swine Fever in wild boar is done in Sweden and the COST action ASF-STOP is running to share knowledge with several other European countries.



*Erik Ågren*

*DVM, Dip. ECVP, Dip. ECZM  
National Veterinary Institute,  
Uppsala, Sweden*

# *Suttonella ornithocola* infection associated with mortality in Finnish tits (*Paridae*)



In March-April 2017 three isolated mortality events of tits (*Paridae*) in feeding places in South and Central Finland were reported and samples submitted to the Finnish Food Safety Authority (Evira). Additionally, one outbreak involving several sick blue tits (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) was reported by phone. Material for pathological examination included three blue tits and one coal tit (*Periparus ater*). All had similar findings: oedematic, dark lungs, poor condition and empty gizzard. Histology of the lungs revealed multifocal pulmonary necroses with masses of bacteria. In bacteriological cultures, *Suttonella ornithocola* (*Cardiobacteriaceae*) was found in lung, and variably in other organs (liver, heart, kidney) but not in the intestine.



*Finnish tits have been found to be infected with *Suttonella ornithocola**

This was the first time we have isolated *S. ornithocola* from Finnish birds. It is a beta-haemolytic, gram-negative rod or coccobacillus found in the Paridae family. Outbreaks involving *S. ornithocola* have been previously reported in the UK where infections have been found in blue tits, coal tits, great tits (*Parus major*) and long-tailed tits (*Aegithalos caudatus*). As in Finland, the UK cases were found in spring, suggesting a possible role for migrating birds in the spread of the disease.

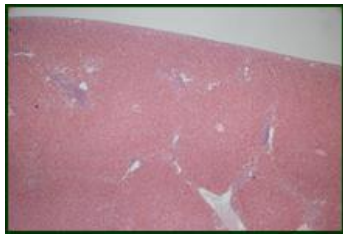


*Staff at the  
Finnish Food Safety Authority  
(EVIRA)*

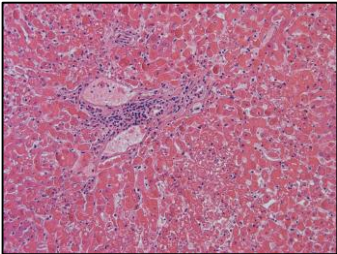
# Occurrence of the new pathogenic variant of rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus (RHDV2) in wild populations of rabbits in Southern Belgium



Rabbit haemorrhagic disease (RHD) is a highly infectious and fatal disease of the European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), responsible for important economic losses in the rabbit industry. The aetiological agent of the disease is a RNA virus (RHDV, *Lagovirus*, *Caliciviridae*) first detected in China in 1984. Currently RHDV is endemic in most parts of Europe, Asia and North Africa. Phylogenetic analyses of RHDV strains have identified 3 distinct groups : the classic RHDV, the variant RHDVa and RHDV2. This latter has been detected in France for the first time in 2010 in domestic and wild rabbits (Le Gall-Reculé *et al.*, 2013) and since then has spread throughout Europe, replacing the circulating RHDV/RHDVa strains in most European countries. RHDV2 has already been detected in Belgium in rabbitries (Marlier *et al.*, 2014). Here, we report for the first time the presence of RHDV2 in wild rabbits in Southern Belgium.



Liver, x100, HE: inflammatory cells in portal spaces



Liver, x400, HE: hepatocytes necrosis and inflammatory cells

In November 2015, the Surveillance Network of Wildlife Diseases received seven dead wild rabbits for necropsy. The discovery of 7 fresh carcasses found at the same time in a same area (Hainaut province) emphasised the infectious or intoxication hypothesis as cause of death.

*Postmortem* examinations were performed following a systematic protocol at the Surveillance Network of Wildlife Diseases (Faculty of Veterinary Medicine – University of Liege, Belgium).

At necropsy, animals (5 adults: 3 males/2 females and 2 juveniles: 1 male/1 female) were in good condition. Examinations of the carcasses showed congestion of lungs/kidneys and livers were macroscopically normal. Histopathological examination revealed haemorrhagic lung lesions in one animal while 5 of them presented severe necrotic hepatitis, sometimes associated with peri-angiocholitis. Only one animal presented an abnormal high rate of coccidia in feces. Samples of livers were sent to Scanelis Laboratory for RHDV RT-qPCR diagnostic. The results were positive for the new variant RHDV2 in 5 out of the 7 rabbit livers. All the samples were negative for the classic RHDV.

To determine if RHDV2 was already present before 2015 in wild rabbits in the region, we tested a series of livers that had been collected in 2013 and 2014 for a retrospective study. Among the 25 rabbit livers checked, 12 presented necrotic hepatitis and were sent for analysis. Ten were confirmed positive by RT-qPCR for RHDV2.

**In conclusion, this is the first report which confirms the presence of RHDV2 in wild populations of rabbits in Southern Belgium. Additional data are needed to strengthen the epidemiological picture and to determine how RHDV2 is spread in other provinces in Southern Belgium.**



**Volpe Rosario**  
DMV, PhD in progress  
Surveillance Network of  
Wildlife Diseases in  
Southern Belgium,  
Faculty of Veterinary  
Medicine, University of  
Liege, Belgium  
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# EWDA Small Grants: Call for Proposals



The new EWDA Small Grants Programme aims to promote selected activities hampered by a lack of funding, to increase the benefits of EWDA membership, to increase the visibility of the EWDA, and to provide the EWDA with a new means

to accomplish the general WDA mission ("to acquire, disseminate and apply knowledge of the health and diseases of wild animals in relation to their biology, conservation, and interactions with humans and domestic animals"). Grant recipients will receive funding to accomplish a project that has defined and measurable goals that are in line with the WDA mission. Two grants are offered: (1) Wildlife Conservation Research Grant and (2) Grant for Wildlife Health Activities in Eastern Europe.

**Wildlife Conservation Research Grant:** The proposal must involve research. Methods can include laboratory or field studies, questionnaire surveys, citizen science, etc. Analysis of pre-existing samples or data is also eligible. The proposal must be directly related to wildlife health and in line with the WDA mission. Expected results must be relevant to wildlife conservation. The requested budget can be meant to cover consumables, contribute to sample collection or to salaries (e.g. to encourage the analysis and publication of pre-collected raw data).

**Grant for Wildlife Health Activities in Eastern Europe:** The following countries are considered as Eastern European countries: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, European Russia, Georgia, Turkey, as well as Greece and Cyprus. These applicants should provide evidence of citizenship, and/or residency in one of these countries. Furthermore, the work needs to be conducted in one of these countries. Any kind of activity related to wildlife health and in line with the WDA mission may be eligible.

**Criteria for proposals:** The main applicant and project leader must be an EWDA member, with membership duration of more than two consecutive years (e.g. membership renewed at least twice) including the years immediately preceding the grant application. The proposed project must have measurable objectives which are achievable within 24 months (including reporting to the EWDA board). The budget requested from EWDA cannot exceed 2'000 Euros per project. Project proposals calculating with a higher total budget than that requested from EWDA can be considered as long the applicants provide evidence that the rest of the budget has been secured from other funding sources.

**Deadline for applications:** September 15, 2017. The full guidelines can be found on the EWDA website.

**Small Grants Committee Members:** Andrew Breed, Marco Chiari, Gábor Czirják, Károly Erdélyi, Emmanuelle Gilot-Fromont, Jacques Godfroid (chair), Ignasi Marco, Tony Sainsbury



**Andrew Breed**

University of Adelaide  
Australia



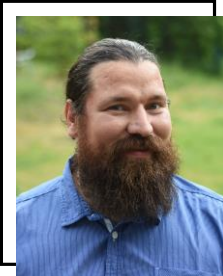
**Jacques Godfroid**

Norwegian Vet. Inst.



**Marie-Pierre Ryser**

FIWI Bern



**Gábor Czirják**

IZW, Germany



**Károly Erdélyi**

Central Vet. Inst.  
Hungary

# Norway prepares to fight CWD



## Three cases that changed the game and set the agenda

It has now been more than a year since researchers collaring reindeer discovered a sick, young adult female reindeer in Nordfjella, which was later diagnosed as Europe's first case of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). It has also been a year since the two old moose cows in Selbu, 300 km away from the positive reindeer, were found and diagnosed with the same disease. During that year, governmental agencies, the government itself, local politicians, wildlife researchers, managers, stakeholders and landowners have engaged in gaining knowledge about the disease and the situation and have begun to plot the course for the country's management of the disease.



*A CWD-positive reindeer bull shot in the rugged and high alpine Nordfjella mountains in 2016 (Photo courtesy: Jan Vidar Akselberg)*

## Screening, targeted surveillance and knowledge building

As soon as the diagnosis was confirmed, agencies and wildlife researchers established a program to determine the prevalence and distribution of CWD in the Nordfjella and Selbu areas. Over the year following the index case, 8770 wild cervids (moose, red deer, roe deer and reindeer) and 2494 semi-domesticated reindeer were tested, and only two more positive cases have been found – both of them reindeer from Nordfjella.

Concurrently, the risk assessment organization, VKM (National Scientific Committee on Food Safety), was given the task of establishing first one and then a second multidisciplinary project group. The first delivered its [report](#) already in June '16 and discussed the origin of the disease, risk of zoonotic transmission and risk of transmission to/from livestock. The second released a report called "[CWD in Norway – a state of emergency for the future of cervids](#)" March '17 and focused on risk factors important for the spread of CWD in Norway. This report concluded that contagious CWD in a confineable population should be managed by eradication, while contagious CWD in a continuous population should be controlled by targeted culling. In addition, the report stated that CWD in reindeer seemed to be similar to "North-American CWD", but the disease in moose might be somewhat different.

## Reaching a decision – forming a plan

The Minister of Agriculture and Food, Jon Georg Dale, responded by instructing the Food Safety Authority and Environmental Agency to establish a plan for eradicating the affected subpopulation of the Nordfjella reindeer metapopulation, quarantining the area (with respect to cervids) for a number of years, and reintroducing CWD-free reindeer. These agencies has now established [seven working groups](#) consisting of managers, scientists, stakeholders and [people with local knowledge](#). These groups will organize reports on the different aspects of the eradication process in Nordfjella. The reports will be summarized in one implementation plan by the 15<sup>th</sup> of June. As the nature of the disease in moose is not yet clarified, the situation in that species and area will, for now, be followed up by increased surveillance and monitoring.



*Bjørnar Ytrehus/Jørn Våge*

*Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA)/Norwegian Veterinary Institute*

# ENETWILD



**Collecting and sharing data on wildlife populations, transmitting animal disease agents throughout Europe**

A consortium composed by leading Institutions on wildlife health and ecology is running a European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) project whose main objective is to collect information on the geographical distribution, abundance and structure of selected wildlife species populations which are relevant to pathogens they transmit to animals.



*ENETWILD consists of 14 groups from 9 European countries, with potential to involve many research organizations from European countries and their borders*

Most current European wildlife pathogen surveillance schemes lack integration with appropriate population monitoring. Determining species distribution range and population abundance is necessary since these patterns represent key information for risk analysis and decision-making processes. This project attempts to improve the European capacities for wildlife population and disease monitoring, developing standards for data collection, validation and subsequent used for risk analysis. This will contribute to improve the European professional network of wildlife health and population ecology, and will be fundamental for assessing the risks of shared diseases.

The granting of this project is a milestone for an institution such as EFSA, whose main objective is to provide risk assessments to ensure safety throughout the food chain. The project will run during the next six years and it is expected an intense agenda of the participating European researchers together with a wide network of participants/collaborators to coordinate efforts and implement sharing data on wildlife populations.



*Members of the Management Committee of ENETWILD during the kick-off meeting hold at EFSA facilities*

The species and species groups that may be the focus of activities under this project are red fox, raccoon dog, wild boar, European badger, red deer, roe deer, ibex, chamois, fallow deer, lagomorphs and rodents. Beyond the listed species, this project will settle protocols for developing standards at the European level that will last for long and will be able to extend to other species. Citizen Science and Open Data approaches are in the DNA of this project.

A website will be set soon to inform on the specific objectives and activities to researchers and networkers interested in contributing and benefiting from a harmonized approach to data collection activities.



**Joaquín Vicente**  
Senior Researcher  
IREC-UCLM

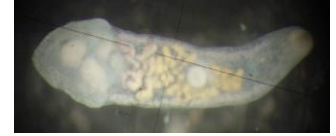


# Gall or Nothing

## A Placement Training Year (PTY) Student's Involvement With Cardiff University Otter Project and Researching the Risk Factors Associated with Parasitic Infection in Eurasian Otters

### What is a PTY?

In the UK we have the option to do an additional year of undergraduate study as a PTY student. This is the option to work and research with an organization you're passionate about between years two and three of study. As someone who has always had a love for British wildlife (coupled with a fascination for parasites) a PTY studying the parasites of a native UK apex species was the ideal way to spend a year of university. The Cardiff University Otter Project (CUOP) took me under their wing and I got straight to work.



*M. bilis*. Photo credit Ellie Sherrard-Smith



Engaging with public at an open day. Photo credit @CUBiosciences

### My Research Thus Far

Preliminary results suggest that otter age is an important factor, with opposite effects in gall bladder parasites and ticks. It appears that nidicolous (nest dwelling) *Ixodes hexagonus* is the most common tick to infect the Eurasian otter, and is more likely to infect juvenile otters. This may be because juveniles spend more time in the holt, and are less effective at grooming. Two species of trematode infect the Eurasian otter: *Pseudamphistomum truncatum*, and *Metorchis bilis*. Adult otters are more commonly infected with these trophically transmitted trematodes, probably due to cumulative probability of eating the intermediate fish hosts. Further examination of data will include spatial and temporal analysis. Sex, weight, length and state of otter decomposition will also be investigated in order to determine if they effect tick and trematode prevalence.

### The CUOP and Keeping me busy...

The CUOP was established in 1992 with the aim of using otter tissues to monitor aquatic contamination. Since 1992 we have performed post-mortems on over 3000 otters from across England and Wales (and Scotland since 2014), with ~90% of these otter carcasses being road kill. As a member of the CUOP tasks ranged from engaging with the public at the Eisteddfod (Welsh cultural festival), communicating with environmental agencies, and arranging the collection of otter carcasses. On the more biological end of the spectrum I have learnt to perform post mortems on otters to examine and retain samples, learnt to identify tick species found on otters at Public Health England, and have screened hundreds of otter gall bladders for biliary trematodes. The project I chose to focus on was analysing how certain biotic and abiotic factors affect presence and intensity of tick and biliary parasite infections on the Eurasian otter. Other topics explored within CUOP are diverse, and include population structure using DNA from muscle samples, toxicology work on liver, and screening stomach contents for microplastics. The 25 year time period and high quality biological data allows for unique analyses including tracking change over time.

### Scope

Increased understanding of otters as a species will aid us in promoting otter survival. Plus using the otter as a sentinel species gives us a unique insight into changes within freshwater ecosystems. <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/otter-project>  
<https://www.facebook.com/otterprojectuk>



Gareth Davies  
Undergrad biology student. Cardiff University



# African Swine fever surveillance in Finland



African swine fever (ASF) has spread in eastern Europe in the 2010's affecting both wild and domestic swine. Wild boar has become the key factor in the epidemiology of ASF in Baltic countries where the disease can persist in the wild boar population irrespective of domestic swine or vectors. Finland has remained free of ASF in spite of the closeness of the infected Baltic countries, situated south of Finland. This is largely due to the small population of wild boar and climatic factors but the situation is now changing.



*Finland is intensifying the hunt for ASF in wild boar*

The wild boar population has recently started to grow as winters have been milder and supplemental feeding of wild boar has become more popular. The population estimate in 2016 was 2,000 individuals, a record high. Active surveillance in close cooperation with hunting organizations and swine industry has been going on since 2010, but sampling increased notably in 2014 when the Finnish Food Safety Authority (Evira) started to pay rewards (40 € in 2017) for samples of hunted wild boar. Materials for sampling are distributed from Evira to hunters via the Finnish Wildlife Agency's local offices. Sample includes spleen, kidney and blood. An extra 60 € is paid for a female.

Since April 2017, the swine farmers' union has paid 90 € per sampled animal to the local hunters' association. Nowadays, rewards (100 €) are also paid for reporting a dead wild boar found in nature. Examining all wild boar carcasses found in nature is the most efficient way to find the disease. Preventive measures to be implemented are reduction of the wild boar population, restriction of winterfeeding and restrictions to free-ranging practices of pigs and farmed wild boar. Before rewards, the annual sample size of hunted wild boar remained around 10 per year, partly because the population was so small and hunting limited. In 2014, 138 samples were received and the number increased to 171 in 2015 and 366 in 2016. All samples have been negative for ASF virus



*Staff at the*

*Finnish Food Safety Authority  
(EVIRA)*

# British Veterinary Zoological Society (BVZS) annual conference



## DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES!

British Veterinary Zoological Society (BVZS) annual conference, **13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> October 2017**, at the Zoological Society of London

Featuring a **wildlife health day** on **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2017**:

- Keynote talks on **UK wildlife health surveillance** and **Brexit, wildlife conservation and the veterinary profession**
- Talk and poster titles should be submitted to [stephanie.jayson@zsl.org](mailto:stephanie.jayson@zsl.org) by **2<sup>nd</sup> June 2017**
- Attendance open to all
- Evening drinks and 3-course dinner
- Access to ZSL London Zoo for all delegates



Don't forget to look into the **small grants** and **mentorship programmes!**



Now available on YouTube  
<https://youtu.be/57P3joNMGvA>  
an **Educational Video** by Vic Simpson of  
a **Necropsy on a Wild Bird.**

## Disclaimer

The editors have tried to put this non-citable bulletin together as carefully as possible, we apologize for any errors or omissions that we may have committed.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the contributors for their articles and their enthusiasm.

# Winter Newsletter Deadline 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2017



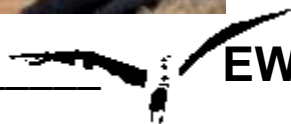
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**EWDA BULLETIN**

