

Conference Report

4th Meeting of the EWDA

20-23 September 2000,

Zaragoza, Spain



Introduction

The conference was attended by approximately 90 delegates from 12 European countries. Speakers also came from the USA (Aguirre: Wildlife Disease without frontiers) and Australia (Cooke: Epidemiology of RHD in Australia). Thirty-two presentations were given with 40 posters. The two main themes were diseases of game species and diseases of predators. Sessions however covered a wide range of subjects with an emphasis on the OIE (Office International des Epizooties) List A and B, zoonotic and notifiable, diseases

Background

This was the 4th meeting of the EWDA which is now the major forum for discussion on investigation of wildlife disease in Europe. The EWDA fosters good relationships with other organisations in the field notably the Wildlife Disease Association (WDA) and the OIE.

Conference

The beautiful 2000 year-old city of Zaragoza (Zaragoza = after Caesar Augustus, the founder) was an excellent venue for this conference which started in the oldest building of the historic university. The presentations were given in a large auditorium at the veterinary faculty and excellent public transport enabled delegates to re-assemble in the evenings for dinner in the city centre surrounded by architecture from three civilisations.

Scientific Programme

The opening lecture, given by Mariano Domingo, was a clear and well-illustrated account of the diseases of stranded cetaceans on the Spanish Mediterranean coast. The significant mortality caused in 1990-91 by **Dolphin Morbillivirus Virus** infection was described in addition to cases of toxoplasmosis, hepatic sarcocystosis and nocardiosis in dolphin species

Following this the presentations were grouped into sessions on **Brucellosis**, **Mycobacterial infections**, diseases of **lagomorphs**, **carnivores**, **ruminants** (two sessions) and **avian** diseases (two sessions). Poster sessions mirrored these topics

Brucellosis - A declining seroprevalence of *Brucella abortus* in Italian chamois was described while in France the sporadic incidence of *Brucella suis* in open-air pig farms was thought to be linked to infection in wild boar - keeping the domesticated pigs isolated from the boar is obviously essential. Several presentations described aspects of bovine tuberculosis in Spanish wildlife with boar possibly an endemically infected reservoir host.

Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease and wildlife **paratuberculosis** (and several others diseases) sessions were described by mixed teams of veterinarians and ecologists. Work in Scotland has shown that paratuberculosis organisms may be isolated from intestinal tissue from a range of wild species and this may have a bearing on the epidemiology of this important disease in domesticated stock.

Many of us like a mystery disease with an as-yet unknown cause to exercise our diagnostic skills and several examples were presented. **Roe deer mortality** has remained an unsolved problem in France since 1977 and still continues. **Balanoposthitis in bison** appears to be similar to digital dermatitis in cattle in that *Treponema*-like spirochaetes in conjunction with *Fusobacterium spp* were detected. **Oral ulceration in Scops Owls** was described and although trichomoniasis appears to have been excluded, a cause for this condition in Spanish owls has not yet been found.



EWDA AGM

The sessions ended with the EWDA AGM hosted by Torsten Morner, Sweden and Marc Artois, France. This was preceded by a successful auction to raise funds for student presentation awards. Saturday saw an early start at 7am for a trip to the Ordesa National Park in the Pyrenees.

The organising committee is to be congratulated for providing a well-organised, scientifically successful and socially enjoyable conference.

J P Duff, UK
