



EWDA Section Report July 2016-June 2017

Board

The current EWDA board (2016-2018) is Marie-Pierre Ryser (President), Lisa Yon (Past President), Erik Ågren (Vice President), Karin Lemberger (Secretary), Philippe Berny (Treasurer), Marc Artois (Account Officer), Rogier Bodewes (Website Coordinator), Lidewij Wiersma (Newsletter Editor), Lineke Begeman (Student Activities), Anne-Fleur Brand (Student Representative), Andrew Breed (Research Advisor), Károly Erdélyi and Gábor Czirják (Eastern Countries Communications), and Miriam Maas (Member at Large). There were board meetings on 26 August 2016 (at the EWDA conference), 18 November 2016 and 10 March 2017 (teleconferences).

Membership

As of June 2017, there were 199 members from Europe, not including 49 from Nordic countries (NWDA members): Andorra (1), Austria (8), Belgium (9), Croatia (2), Cyprus (1), Estonia (1), France (20), Germany (24), Greece (2), Hungary (2), Ireland (4), Italy (13), Latvia (1), Netherlands (16), Portugal (1), Romania (3), Russian Federation (2), Slovakia (1), Slovenia (1), Spain (24), Switzerland (10), United Kingdom (54). This is an increase of 8 members compared with June 2015.

Student chapter

The European Student Chapter has 78 student members. The current board (2015-2017) members are Anne-Fleur Brand (Chair), Sofia Mlala (Workshop coordinator), Miguel Vendes Meiga (Communication officer) and Catharina Vendl (Past-Workshop coordinator/Advisor). As usual, students have been very active and organized numerous activities, which were either side events at the EWDA conference or independent events organized by country representatives (e.g. lectures, field trips, workshops, conferences). Unfortunately, the traditional biannual EWDA Student Workshop that was scheduled for April 2017 had to be cancelled due to a combination of circumstances; it may take place jointly with the next EWDA Conference in 2018.

The full 2017 Progress Report of the European (EWDA) Student Chapter can be found at: <http://www.wildlifedisease.org/wda/Portals/0/StudentChapters/2017%20update/EWDA%20Student%20Board%20Progress%20Report%202017.pdf>

Bulletin

Issues 15 and 16 of the EWDA Bulletin were produced in December 2016 (13 pages) and June 2017 (20 pages). They are available from the EWDA website.

Website

The EWDA website (<http://www.ewda.org>) has been continuously updated and further developed. In addition to Diagnosis Cards for wildlife disease diagnostics, Species Cards on techniques for wild population monitoring are now also available. During the outbreak of

highly pathogenic avian influenza A (H5N8) virus in Europe, an overview of the wild bird species in which the virus was detected was posted on the website. This list was regularly updated and resulted in a peak in the number of visitors of the website. Like in previous years, information was provided such as announcements of upcoming events, proceedings of past EWDA conferences, links to websites of research groups and associations related to wildlife diseases, job offers, training programs, and CVs of candidates looking for an opportunity in the field of wildlife health.

The website will be soon moved to another server, in order to permit further developments, such as the creation of a document repository and the hosting the WildList (see Network activities below).

EWDA Network for Wildlife Health Surveillance in Europe

The EWDA Network was set up in the fall of 2009 and has shown a continuous development since then. The long-term goals of this network are to improve exchange of information among wildlife health surveillance programmes in Europe; to develop standard operating procedures for diagnostic investigation of wildlife; to develop common criteria for diagnosis of wildlife disease; to share specialist expertise; and to provide training opportunities in wildlife health surveillance. In August 2016 the Committee status was changed from *ad hoc* to permanent. Committee members until mid-June 2017 were Ezio Ferroglio (Italy), Dolores Gavier-Widén (Sweden), Christian Gortázar (Spain), Thijs Kuiken (The Netherlands; Chair), Marie-Pierre Ryser (Switzerland), and Paul Tavernier (Belgium). The Committee composition was recently partly changed, and the new Committee comprises Thijs Kuiken (The Netherlands; Chair), Antonio Lavazza (Italy), Becki Lawson (UK), Jorge Ramón López (Spain), Marie-Pierre Ryser (Switzerland), and Paul Tavernier (Belgium).

Achievements of the EWDA Network include initiatives for three projects: the past EMIDA-EraNet project “APHAEA” (“harmonized Approaches in monitoring wildlife Population Health, And Ecology and Abundance”; www.aphaea.eu, 2012-2015, under the lead of C. Gortázar), the on-going COST Action “ASF-STOP” (www.asf-stop.com, 2016-2020, under the lead of D. Gavier-Widén), and the recently started EFSA project “ENETWILD” (2017-2023, under the lead of Ramon Soriguer). When APHAEA came to an end, the EWDA Network Committee decided to continue efforts towards the harmonization of methods and networking, to improve wildlife health surveillance in Europe and integrate wildlife population monitoring in wildlife disease investigations. All existing EWDA/APHAEA Species Cards and Diagnosis Cards are now available from the EWDA website (see above), and more cards are in the pipeline, with the EWDA Network Committee coordinating this work. Furthermore, a list of wildlife experts (WildList) including a short personal profile is currently being set up. This list will aim at fostering contacts, sample exchange and collaborations among European experts. Furthermore, the ENETWILD project, which will focus at collecting data on the occurrence and abundance of wildlife species in a harmonized way, is expected to play an important role in further developments of the EWDA Network.

By June 2017, the EWDA e-mail discussion list on European wildlife health surveillance (<http://groups.google.com/group/ewda-network>), had 184 members. From July 2016 to June 2017, about 90 messages were posted in this group; topics included Chronic Wasting Disease in reindeer and moose in Norway, restrictions on lead gunshot in wetlands, Rabies in Daubenton’s bat in Finland, FIV in Eurasian lynx in Switzerland, mortality in Mongolian antelopes, H5N8 in wild birds, meeting reports and announcements.

Two meetings were organized by the EWDA Network during this year:

- 6th EWDA Network meeting, held in Berlin (Germany) on 26 August 2016 before the 12th EWDA Conference; the Proceedings of this meeting can be found on the EWDA website.
- 7th EWDA Network meeting, held in Madrid (Spain) on 20-21 June 2017 jointly with the ASF-STOP meeting.

Conferences

The 12th biennial EWDA conference was held in Berlin, Germany, from August 27th - 31st and hosted by the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW). There were 213 participants from 34 countries. The conference's stimulating program was preceded by the "EWDA Wildlife Health Surveillance Network Meeting" (see above) and a further day of workshops on wildlife forensics, modelling approaches on wildlife populations and diseases, tools for studying diseases transmission at the wildlife/livestock interface as well as wildlife histopathology.

Three distinguished international plenary speakers introduced the respective session themes: Dr. Woutrina Smith, UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, California, USA, discussed Planetary Health and approaches to investigate the dynamics of zoonotic pathogens as a lead into the "Wildlife Health" session. Prof. Dr. Daniel Martineau from the Montreal University, Canada, talked about "Causes and consequences of anthropogenic environmental changes" exemplified at the situation of Beluga whales. While "Wildlife conservation and management" was addressed by Prof. Dr. Chris Walzer from the University of Veterinary Medicine and the Research Institute of Wildlife Ecology, Vienna, Austria. With the latest discovery of CWD in reindeer and moose in Norway an open panel forum with speakers from the USA and Scandinavia was initiated to discuss this urgent matter.

Over 180 abstracts were submitted for oral and poster presentations, while participants from 39 different nations registered for the conference. The combination of an enjoyable social evening and discussing posters at the same time seemed successfully achieved at the "Poster&Pasta Party". Followed by next day's conference excursion to the UNESCO biosphere reserve "Spree Forest", where Dave Jessup - supported by Paul Duff and Marc Artois - auctioneered his 60th auction!!

The student-mentor-mixer was well attended buzzing with questions and answers. For those who wanted to see more of Germany's landscape treasures, a post-conference tour took them to the National Park of Saxon Switzerland closely located to Dresden famous for hundreds of sandstone formations, small ravines and pillars rising between dark green pine forests.

At the conference, the WDA Emeritus Award was given to Dr. Vic Simpson, in recognition of his substantial work in furthering the aims of the WDA through his teaching, research and other activities.

The next conference will be held 27-31 August 2018 and hosted by the University of Thessaly in Larissa, Greece. The local organiser is Charalambos Billinis.

Small Grants

The EWDA Board has decided to offer two small grants (of maximum 2'000 Euros each) every second year, one to foster research on health topics relevant to wildlife conservation, the other to promote wildlife health activities in Eastern European countries. Furthermore, a Conference Attendance Fund aimed at supporting the attendance of non-student members who do not benefit from institutional support was created thanks to the very generous donation of Vic Simpson. Guidelines were drafted for all three grants (using WDA Small Grants Guidelines as a basis) and can be found on the EWDA website. A Small Grants Committee was selected to evaluate proposals. This Committee comprises Andrew Breed

(Australia), Marco Chiari (Italy), Gábor Czirják (Germany), Károly Erdélyi (Hungary), Emmanuelle Gilot-Fromont (France), Jacques Godfroid (Norway; chair), Ignasi Marco (Spain), and Tony Sainsbury (UK). The first call for proposals has been send out early June, and the deadline for submission is 15 September 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie-Pierre Ryser

(with contributions of EWDA Board members and the 2016 conference organizer)