



EWDA Section Report July 2018-July 2019

Board

The current EWDA Board (2016-2018) is composed of Marie-Pierre Ryser (Chair), Karin Lemberger (Vice-Chair), Gudrun Wibbelt (Secretary), Philippe Berny (Treasurer), Sylvain Larrat (Website Coordinator), Anne-Fleur Brand and Erik Ågren (Newsletter Editors), Jorge López Olvera (Student Activities Coordinator), Anna Baauw (Student Representative), Andrew Breed (Research Advisor), Gábor Cziráj and Gorazd Vengust (Eastern Countries Communication Facilitators), Riccardo Orusa and Paul Tavernier (Members at Large). They had board meetings on August 28th 2018 (face-to-face meeting at the EWDA conference), on January 22nd and July 5th 2019 (teleconference). The next teleconference will be scheduled late summer 2019.

Marc Artois is the EWDA Account Officer, a position that is separate from the Board.

Membership

As of June 2019, there were 204 members from Europe, not including 51 from Nordic countries: Austria (11), Belgium (9), Croatia (1), Cyprus (1), Estonia (1), France (22), Germany (27), Greece (3), Hungary (3), Ireland (2), Israel (1), Italy (13), Netherlands (13), Poland (1), Portugal (3), Reunion(France) (1), Romania (3), Russian Federation (1), Serbia (1), Slovakia (1), Slovenia (1), Spain (21), Switzerland (13), United Kingdom (51). This is a decrease of 16 EWDA members and a gain of 1 NWDA member compared to last year.

Student chapter

Currently, the European Student Chapter (SC) counts 70 members. The SC board of 2017-2019 consists of Anna Baauw (chair), Manon Moullec (workshop coordinator), Rebecca Dorph Berg (secretary), Eirini Kamenaki (communications officer) and Anne-Fleur Brand (past chair). In 2018 a pre-conference student day was organized preceding the biennial EWDA Conference in Larissa, Greece. From April 13th to April 17th 2019, a student symposium, combined with the 7th EWDA student workshop was held in Lyon, France. The event was themed “Conflict or Coexistence - Facing the Human-Wildlife Interface” and brought together specialists from different fields: veterinary medicine, biology, anthropology, sociology and policy, all striving for interdisciplinary solutions. About 120 students from 20 different countries attended the symposium, including a subgroup of students who also joined the workshop. In order to reduce the environmental impact of the event, students were encouraged to travel by non-plane modes of transportation through a “transportation challenge”. The Student Chapter now aims to organize more “practical” workshops or courses in the coming years, as well as brainstorming opportunities on further sustainability actions.

Bulletin

Issues 17 and 18 of the EWDA Bulletin were produced in December 2017 (28 pages) and July 2018 (20 pages).

Website

The EWDA website (<http://www.ewda.org>) has been continuously updated. Like in previous years, the website provides information 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. It also provides Diagnosis Cards for wildlife disease diagnostics, and Species Cards on techniques for wild population monitoring.

The migration of the website to a new server is complete. A document repository is under development. The website is now able to host the WildList.

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. Until June 2019 Committee members were Antonio Lavazza (Italy), Becki Lawson (UK), Jorge Ramon López Olvera (Spain), Thijs Kuiken (The Netherlands; Chair), Paul Tavernier (Belgium), and Marie-Pierre Ryser (Switzerland). In July 2019 Aleksija Neismani joined the committee, with the aim of replacing Marie-Pierre Ryser, who will step down as soon as previously started work will be closed.

By June 2019, the EWDA Network Surveillance Platform (e-mail discussion list on European wildlife health surveillance: <http://groups.google.com/group/ewda-network>) had 198 members. During 2018-2019, 118 messages were posted by/to members of this group. Topics included the first case of chronic wasting disease in Sweden, African swine fever in wild boar, copper deficiency in European bison, and tularemia in brown hares.

The EWDA WildList, consultable via the EWDA website and managed by Paul Tavernier, allows to search people active in the field of wildlife health in Europe with their specific expertise and contact information. Currently, the list count 289 members who can be traced with key words, based on their name or field of expertise (animal species, diseases, field of education). It is also possible to send messages to all members of the WildList. The aim of this list is to facilitate collaborations among people with similar interests and to widely circulate messages of general interest beyond EWDA membership. During 2018-2019, members received messages with announcements (open positions, meetings...) on average once a month.

The 8th EWDA Network meeting was held as a one-day pre-conference event on August 26th 2018 in Larissa, Greece. The topic was “How to start up a wildlife health surveillance programme”. After a few introductory speeches, the development of such programmes was presented by representatives of 5 countries with an established surveillance programme in at least part of the country (The Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Switzerland) and the efforts to develop such a programme and current situation was depicted by 4 countries (Germany, Serbia, Greece; a report was also expected from Bulgaria but the Bulgarian representative had to decline his participation in last minute for personal reasons). Each session was followed by a panel discussion (“What worked, what didn’t?” and “How to get started?”, respectively). In addition to the talks, all speakers were request to submit an abstract for the meeting booklet. 57 participants had registered for the meeting, including the 6 Network Committee members.

Conferences

The 13th biennial EWDA conference was held from 27th - 31st August 2018 in Larissa, Greece, hosted by the University of Thessaly in Larissa). There were 203 attendees, some of whom came from as far away as Australia. For the first time, the annual general assembly of the European College of Zoological Medicine (ECZM) was held jointly with the EWDA conference. While the ECZM meeting preceded the EWDA conference, the organizers had offered ECZM members the possibility to register for either just one day or for the full conference, and efforts were made to offer session topics that may be of wide interest (e.g., disease transmission at the wildlife/zoo animal interface).

The next conference will be held 31rd August – 5th September 2020 in Cuenca, Spain, organized jointly with the annual international WDA conference and hosted by the Institute for Game and Wildlife Research (IREC), Ciudad Real, Spain. The local organiser is Francisco Ruiz-Fons.

Small Grants Committees

Late 2016 the EWDA Board decided to offer two small grants (of maximum 2'000 Euros each) every second year, the one to foster research on health topics relevant to wildlife conservation, the other one to promote wildlife health activities in Eastern European countries (ECC).

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. After Dr. Simpson sadly passed away in August 2018, the travel grant was renamed “Vic Simpson Grant”.

The current Small Grants Committee comprises Jacques Godfroid (Norway; chair), Andrew Breed (Australia), Gábor Czirják (Germany/Romania), Károly Erdélyi (Hungary), Marco Chiari (Italy), Emmanuelle Gilot-Fromont (France) and Tony Sainsbury (UK). The first call for proposals was sent out early June 2018. No ECC grant proposal fulfilled the selection criteria and instead the three best proposals for research in wildlife conservation were attributed (2000 Euros for the first, 1000 Euros for the second and third each).

In 2018/2019 the EWDA Board updated the Small Grants guidelines. They now offer mentorship for members who wish it, starting prior proposal submission. Therefore, eligible ECC members have been informed about the upcoming call earlier than other members to give them increased chances to submit a successful proposal. In case this would not happen, the equivalent of the EEC grant could be used by the two Eastern Country Communication Facilitators to organise an event to promote wildlife health activities in EEC countries.

The requested feedback of the first grant holders indicated that the projects are running well. At least in one case, the pilot project supported by the EWDA grant will allow the project team to apply for a larger grant elsewhere.

Two EWDA members benefited from the Vic Simpson grant to join the EWDA biennial meeting 2018 in Greece.

The deadline for application for the next Small Grants cycle is September 15th 2019. The call for applications for the Vic Simpson Grant will be sent early 2020.

Sustainability Committee

This new EWDA Committee was set up at the biennial EWDA conference in August 2018 and approved by the EWDA Board by means of an email exchange in November 2018). Current Committee members are Thijs Kuiken (Chair; The Netherlands), Lineke Begeman (The Netherlands), Emmanuelle Gilot-Fromont (France), Graham Smith (United Kingdom), Barbara Vogler (Switzerland), and Ana Vale.

The goal of this Committee is to reduce the environmental impact of the EWDA as far as possible, while maintaining EWDA's overall mission, and so to contribute to the transition to a more sustainable human society. In agreement with this goal, planned activities include: (1) the estimation of the environmental impact (i.e. ecological and carbon footprints) of the EWDA every two years, and making these reports publicly available; (2) the exchange of information with EWDA members about the level of environmental impact of different EWDA activities, and about possible actions to reduce them; (3) proposing to the EWDA Board targets for the reduction of EWDA's environmental impact and actions to reach these targets (accounting for personal and cultural differences).

By June 2019, the Committee Chair submitted a 4-pages report to the EWDA Vice-Chair entitled “A report on the carbon footprint of previous EWDA conferences” by Smith et al. In this report, the Committee roughly estimated carbon emission for the last 5 EWDA biennial conferences based on the number of participants, their country of origin, travel options, commuting methods, accommodation, meals and printing. The data suggest high variations from one conference to the other but the compiled information indicates that about 90% and even more come from flying to the conference place, with an apparent two-fold increase of the distance flown from 2010 to 2018. The committee list a number of other targets to reduce carbon emissions and calls for inputs from the EWDA membership. For this purpose they created an email address: ewda.sustainability@gmail.com. The EWDA Board will send a compilation of comments after examining the report in detail.

EWDA Bylaws

The EWDA Bylaws drafted by the Board in 2017/2018 were officially accepted at the EWDA general meeting at the 2018 biennial conference in Larissa, Greece. Guidelines for the Network Committee and the Small Grants Committee were drafted as appendices. The Board will produce an updated version of the Bylaws until the next biennial conference to be held in Spain in 2020 and is currently working on Guidelines for: the Student Chapter, the Student Presentation Award, the Nomination Committee, and EWDA conference organisation, planned to be finalized until the conference 2020 at the latest.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie-Pierre Ryser

(with contributions of EWDA Board and Committees' members)