



EWDA Section Report July 2019-July 2020

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), Marco Vecchiato (Student Representative), Andrew Breed (Research Advisor), Gábor Czirják and Gorazd Vengust (Eastern Countries Communication Facilitators), Riccardo Orusa and Paul Tavernier (Members at Large). They had Board meetings on December 17th, 2019 and April 8th, 2020 (teleconferences).

As every second year, the Board 2020-2022 was elected by electronic voting in the spring 2020. Ninety-six out of 212 EWDA members took part in the vote and elected the suggested new Board members. By September 1st, 2020, three members will leave the Board (Andrew Breed, Sylvain Larrat, Paul Tavernier) and three will enter the Board (Becki Lawson, Paul Holmes, Alberto Casado Gómez). Four members were reelected in the same or another position. From September 1st, 2020, the EWDA officers will be Karin Lemberger (Chair), Becki Lawson (Vice Chair), Gudrun Wibbelt (Secretary) and Philippe Berny (Treasurer).

Due to the postponing of the joint EWDA/WDA conference 2020 in Cuenca, the traditional face-to-face Board meeting gathering the current and incoming Board members will be held by Zoom on August 18th, 2020.

Another consequence of the postponed conference is that the biennial EWDA Business Meeting will take place digitally at 5pm CET on August 31st (during daytime in Europe, as most EWDA members live on the European continent). During the April teleconference, the EWDA Board decided to keep the EWDA “business rhythm” of a Business Meeting and Board change every second year, but to hold the next stand-alone conference in 2024 to go back to the original schedule (business meeting face-to-face during EWDA conferences). This means that the Business Meeting and Board change in 2022 will also occur remotely and that an ECZM-EWDA joint conference in 2022 will not be possible, leaving another three year gap until the next EWDA conference after Cuenca.

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

Membership

The extended EWDA Bylaws approved in 2018 have clarified the relationship between EWDA and NWDA and offered, in agreement with the WDA Bylaws, the option of double membership. The EWDA Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary worked together with the WDA executive manager to obtain a clarified, complete EWDA members’ list. With the support of AllenPress, a checkbox was introduced in the membership renewal form to invite members to indicate their wishes as concerns section affiliation. However, this has not been a mandatory

step so far and to make sure not to exclude NWDA members, the EWDA Secretary collected wishes directly from NWDA members and additionally compiled information received by WDA to finally obtain three groups of EWDA members: 223 members by home address (Europe without Nordic countries), 36 members from Nordic countries who wished double NWDA-EWDA membership, and 54 members from overseas (USA, Canada, Jamaica, Japan, etc.), who also checked the box for double membership. Although some of them are clearly expatriated EWDA members, others are obviously not, and in the near future EWDA will try to understand their motivation for additional affiliation to the European section.

As of July 2020, there were 313 EWDA members, including European countries: Andorra (1), Austria (12), Belgium (9), Croatia (2), Cyprus (2), Estonia (1), France (21), Germany (28), Greece (2), Hungary (2), Ireland (3), Italy (15), Luxembourg (1) Netherlands (13), Poland (1), Portugal (3), Reunion(France) (1), Romania (2), Russian Federation (1), Serbia (1), Slovakia (1), Slovenia (1), Spain (31), Switzerland (18), United Kingdom (55); Nordic countries: 36; and overseas countries: 54. Thus, the major increase of EWDA members compared to last year is largely due to the new membership recording system. Taking only the European countries into account (Fennoscandia excluded), there has been an increase from 204 EDWA members (June 2019) by 12 members to 226 EWDA members by July 2020.

Student chapter

Currently, the European Student Chapter (SC) counts 48 members. The SC board of 2019-2021 consists of Marco Vecchiato (chair), Julian Keles (workshop coordinator), Tina Jansson (secretary), Stefania Tampach (communications' officer) and Anna Bauw (past chair). In October 2019, the SC, in collaboration with the Morris Animal Foundation, awarded three grants to country representatives (Ireland, Italy and Spain) which planned hands-on workshops in wildlife health and disease-related field in their own countries (postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The SC is now working on reinforcing its digital footprint through a stable social media presence and renovating its website which will be launched soon. The final intent is to implement the goals of the association providing an accessible platform, keeping students informed about career opportunities and promoting connection among student members. The biennial EWDA student workshop is planned for April 2021 at the University of Vienna, Austria. The suggested theme is "Europe's wilderness: ex-situ and in-situ conservation". A provisional programme includes a list of potential speakers, specialists in the vast field of conservation medicine. An online version is also being considered depending on the foreseen future as concerns the global health and economic situation.

Newsletter

Two Newsletters were produced, in December 2019 (Winter edition, 12 pages) and July 2020 (Summer edition, 14 pages). Articles considered of potential interest beyond EWDA Membership were provided to the WDA Newsletter editor for reproduction.

Website

The board and EWDA officers have been discussing some additions to the EWDA website (<http://www.ewda.org>). These include a new animated welcome page, featuring highlighted topics and EWDA member portraits, an updated document repository and several smaller points. These are still under development and are awaiting the arrival of the new Website manager. A Zoom meeting with the former manager, future manager and EWDA officers is

scheduled for August 12th, 2020.

EWDA Network for Wildlife Health Surveillance in Europe

Since its foundation in 2009, the Committee of the EWDA Network (<https://ewda.org/ewda-network/>) has worked to support development of wildlife health surveillance tools and communication networks over the past decade.

Committee members as of June 2020 comprise the following, each with particular roles:

- Antonio Lavazza (Italy) - Diagnosis Cards (2017-present)
- Becki Lawson (UK) - Secretary (2017-present)
- Jorge Ramon López Olvera (Spain) - Species Cards (2017-present)
- Thijs Kuiken (The Netherlands) - Chair (Founding member, 2009-present)
- Aleksija Neimanis (Sweden) - EWDA Google Group (2019-present)
- Paul Tavernier (Belgium) - EWDA WildList (2013- present)
- Marie-Pierre Ryser (Switzerland) - (Founding member, 2009-2019) *officially stepped down from the committee in 2019 but remains involved in discussion of outputs from 2018 activities until they are complete*

In February 2020, the committee updated the EWDA Network guidelines which summarise the various EWDA Network activities, roles and responsibilities, and shared these with the EWDA Board for approval.

Membership of the EWDA Google Group (<http://ewda.org/ewda-network/ewda-google-group/>) is open on application to those involved with wildlife disease surveillance and is a tool to facilitate rapid communication of recent findings and discussion of emerging topics with peers. At the end of June 2020, the EWDA Google Group had 215 members from at least 31 countries. During the past 12 months, circa 23 threads were shared on topics including emerging and re-emerging wildlife health issues (e.g. RHDV2 in rabbits and hares, CWD in moose, *Suttonella ornithocola* in blue tits, avian influenza H5N8 in wild birds and SARS-CoV2 in animals), mortality events, meeting announcements and diagnostic tools.

The EWDA WildList (<http://ewda.org/wildlist-2/>) is a communication tool which allows users to search for people active in the field of wildlife health with their specific expertise and organisational affiliation. Users can send emails to scientists identified on the list, although their email addresses are not disclosed. Whilst most wildlife health professionals registered on the WildList are from Europe, the list is not limited in geographic scope to ensure maximum international networking benefit. At the end of June 2020, there were 295 WildList members from 48 countries. The WildList can be used to share regular messages on topics of general interest on wildlife health including advertisements for vacant positions, courses and conferences to the registered members. During 2019-2020, Paul Tavernier, as the WildList moderator, circulated a digest of news, forthcoming events and job adverts on a monthly basis.

The existing library of 21 Diagnosis Cards (<https://ewda.org/diagnosis-cards/>), developed by the EWDA in collaboration with the APHAEA project, were reviewed this year and a priority list of titles to update, and new topics to cover, has been established along with an updated pro forma template for drafting these materials. Antonio Lavazza leads development of the library of Diagnosis Cards, with kind support from disease experts who assist with writing and review of these information resources. Two cards (Avian Influenza and Lagovirus diseases) are under review and two more (African Swine Fever and West Nile Disease) will soon be sent for expert review.

As with the above, the existing library of 10 Species Cards (<https://ewda.org/species-cards/> <https://www.aphaea.eu/cards/species>) were reviewed this year and a priority list to update, and species for new cards, was identified. Jorge Ramon López Olvera leads development of the library of Species Cards, with kind support from species ecology experts who assist with writing and review of these information resources. Two more Species Cards (Red fox and Ibex) are in the final review stage. Authors are being contacted to develop further Cards, open to suggestions from EWDA members (non-exclusively).

Additionally, the committee worked to finalise the report from the 8th EWDA Network meeting held on August 26th, 2018 in Larissa, Greece, entitled “How to start up a wildlife health surveillance programme”. Once ready, this will be posted on the EWDA website. Plans are underway to translate the challenges and recommendations identified during the meeting into a peer-reviewed publication.

In preparation for the WDA/EWDA Cuenca conference in August 2020 (<http://www.cuenca2020.com/>), the committee planned a meeting on the topic “Expanding the field network of wildlife health surveillance”. This has now been postponed until August 2021. The goal of this meeting will be to illustrate the opportunities that exist to expand surveillance through working in partnership with various communities (e.g. general public/citizen scientists, hunters, wildlife rehabilitators, conservation organisations, bird ringers, habitat managers, natural history museums, public health agencies and social scientists) and employing new approaches. The 2020 programme comprised eight presentations to be given by speakers from five countries in Europe and North America. Several of these speakers have already indicated that they will be willing to give their planned presentations in August 2021. These talks will highlight projects/schemes that have successfully employed novel networks and/or techniques. The panel discussion session will enable presenters to explore the benefits and limitations of these methods.

Biennial conference

The 14th biennial EWDA conference was planned to be held from 31st August-5th September 2020 in Cuenca, Spain, jointly with the 69th WDA conference and hosted by the Institute for Game and Wildlife Research (IREC), Ciudad Real, Spain. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the joint meeting was postponed to 2021. Final meeting dates will be known soon.

Small Grants Committee

The current Small Grants Committee (SGC) comprises Jacques Godfroid (Norway; chair), Andrew Breed (Australia), Gábor Czirják (Germany/Romania), Gorazd Vengušt (Slovenia), Emmanuelle Gilot-Fromont (France), Ignasi Marco (Italy) and Helle Hydeskov (Denmark).

In 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). The due reports from the 2018 grant holders are still pending and grant holders were asked to publish a brief summary of their achievement in the Winter Newsletter 2020 and to give a short presentation at the upcoming Business Meeting.

In 2018/2019 the EWDA Board updated the Small Grants guidelines. They now offer mentorship for members who wish it, starting prior proposal submission. Eligible ECC members have been informed about the upcoming call earlier than other members to give them increased chances to submit a successful proposal. Unfortunately, nobody took advantage of this offer. Applications were even fewer and of lower quality in 2020 than in the previous

round. Nevertheless, an ECC grant and a Conservation Research grant were attributed to the best proposals but the Board plan to re-assess the situation when the new Board will be in place. A change that will be implemented is that the Research Advisor on the EWDA Board will chair the SGC to ensure a good communication between the two.

Similarly, applications for the Vic Simpson Travel Grant to join the EWDA biennial meeting 2020 in Spain were very few despite repeated calls and several deadline extensions. Given the postponement of the conference, the few applications received were not evaluated.

Sustainability Committee

The EWDA Sustainability 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. 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. After the student workshop in Lyon in April 2019 a student joined the committee, Alexia Coles. In the summer Jorge Ramón López Olvera joined the Committee as liaison between the Conference Organizing Committee and the Sustainability Committee (SuCo). The SC has an e-mail address: ewda.sustainability@gmail.com.

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).

The first action of the SuCo was to get a better insight in the main carbon emissions of our society. It can be assumed that highest carbon emissions are made during our biennial conferences, and therefore the SuCo set out to estimate carbon emissions 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. In order to make these estimations, a user-friendly spreadsheet was developed, which could be used by others that aim to make similar estimations. The main conclusions from these estimations were: Air transport to the conference country was the source for the greatest part of CO₂ emissions (87-97%), and the average distance flown per person increased from 1000 km (2010) to over 2000 km (2018), because in these years the conference location moved away from the 'geocentre' of our membership. The biggest reduction in carbon emissions from flying (up to 100 tons CO₂) could therefore be achieved by decreasing air travel. This could be brought about by reducing the overall travel distance to the conference, i.e. choosing a conference location near the membership geocentre. Further reductions in carbon emissions from flying could be made by locating conferences near good public travel hubs (thus encouraging travel to conference by train or bus) and by encouraging virtual attendance. Minor but yet substantial savings could be made elsewhere (2-6 tons CO₂), including providing accommodation in greener hotels located closer to the conference venue and offering vegan/local food as the default option.

A summary of the results of the estimations were published in the EWDA summer Newsletter of 2019.

A manuscript describing this exercise was recently (end of July 2020) submitted for publication to Environmental Research Letters. During summer and autumn 2019 the SuCo aimed to assist the 2020 conference organization in greening the event. The SuCo provided information /calculations on the expected carbon emission costs and helped in calculating proposed reductions. The main expected carbon emission costs are the transport of attendees. Options were discussed to motivate attendees to use other modes of transport than planes. Other potential ways of carbon emission reduction that were considered were food and accomodation selection. The conference organizers were very enthusiastic to green their conference, as could be read in the winter EWDA Newsletter. The conference organizers came up with the idea to partly offset the carbon emissions by planting trees locally.

Because flying produces such high carbon emissions, and flying is frequently a necessity for (wildlife) researchers, the SC examined different ways for carbon offsets for airtravel. In the winter EWDA Newsletter a short report was published on this topic.

In the spring of 2020, the SuCo brainstormed on the best ways to proceed. It was considered that most of the EWDA members are involved in wildlife research. The SuCo is currently performing a literature review on estimations of environmental impacts of wildlife research and reviewing literature on methods to reduce environmental impacts of wildlife research. Depending on the information that will be found, a more specific angle/approach will be chosen.

EWDA Bylaws

The EWDA Bylaws accepted at the EWDA general meeting at the 2018 biennial conference in Larissa, Greece, were updated and accepted by anonymous vote by the Board and subsequently put to vote by the Membership in June 2020. At the end of the poll, July 2nd 2020, 64 out of 212 EWDA members unanimously approved the changes to the Bylaws. Guidelines for the Network Committee and the Small Grants Committee were updated and a new set of guidelines were produced for: the Student Chapter, the Student Presentation Award, the Nomination Committee, the Secretary duties, and EWDA conference organisation.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie-Pierre Ryser, EWDA Chair

(with contributions of Board members and of the Network and Sustainability Committees)