



## **EWDA Section Report August 2020-July 2021**

### Board

The current EWDA Board (2020-2022) is composed of Karin Lemberger (Chair), Becki Lawson (Vice-Chair), Gudrun Wibbelt (Secretary), Philippe Berny (Treasurer), Alberto Casado Gomez (Website Coordinator), Anne-Fleur Brand and Erik Ågren (Newsletter Editors), Jorge López Olvera (Student Activities Coordinator), Marco Vecchiato (Student Representative), Paul Holmes (Research Advisor), Gábor Czirják and Gorazd Vengust (Eastern Countries Communication Facilitators), Riccardo Orusa (Member at Large), Marie-Pierre Ryser (Past Chair). They had Board meetings on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (teleconferences).

Due to the virtual nature of the postponed joint EWDA/WDA 2020 conference, the traditional face-to-face Board meeting will be held by Zoom the week prior to the Cuenca conference (date TBD).

As a reminder, the EWDA Board decided to keep the EWDA “business rhythm” of a Business Meeting and Board change every second year and 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 no EWDA Business meeting will be held during the Cuenca conference and the Business Meeting and Board change in 2022 will occur remotely. An ECZM-EWDA joint conference in 2022 will not be possible. Therefore there will be a three-year gap until the next EWDA conference after Cuenca and a six-year gap since the last face-to-face conference in Greece.

A nomination committee, headed by Marie-Pierre Ryser and composed of Jolianne Rijks and Paul Duff will be identifying candidates for the next board elections in 2022.

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

### Membership

In September of 2020, the WDA officers held a meeting with all section chairs to streamline the renewal process in particular to harmonize section fees. The renewal process was determined to be as follows: no fee is charged to join your own geographic section. To join a different geographic section and the Wildlife Veterinary section, a \$10 charge is applied. Discussion between the EWDA and NWDA boards resulted in a decision that since there was a long history of dual memberships, no fee would be applied to join either of these sections (including for all other WDA members). Further discussions are to be held between both sections to determine how to further approach this issue in the coming years (date TBD).

The new renewal system separated the membership in two categories: members by geographic region and membership by choice, both lists are handled by Allen Press and forwarded to the EWDA chair and secretary.

As of July 2021, there were 368 EWDA members, including European countries: Andorra (1), Austria (18), Belgium (9), Croatia (2), Cyprus (1), Czech Republic (1), Estonia (1), France (27), Germany (37), Greece (3), Hungary (1), Ireland (2), Italy (21), Netherlands (15), Portugal (11), Reunion(France) (1), Romania (2), Russian Federation (1), Serbia (1), Slovakia (1), Slovenia (1), Spain (44), Switzerland (16), United Kingdom (64); Nordic countries: 35; and oversea countries: 52.. Taking only the European countries into account (Fennoscandia excluded), there has been an increase from 226 EWDA members (June 2020) by 55 members to 281 EWDA members (July 2021).

### Student chapter

Currently, the EWDA Student Chapter (SC) counts 103 members with an increase of 54% since the previous year (67). We have representatives in 15 different countries. The Student Chapter is coordinated by a board that consists of five students elected for 2 years, thus an election is held every other year. 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). A new board is in the process of being elected.

The biennial EWDA Student Workshop - "communicating science in wildlife conservation" was held for the first time online. The event was divided in three phases over March and April 2021 and comprised the participation of 23 international speakers working in different non-governmental and governmental organisations. A total of 81 participants attended the workshop, from across Europe and other continents.

Further details can be found in the attached full EWDA Student Chapter Report.

### Newsletter

Two Newsletters are in production. One was published in December 2020 (Winter edition, 21 pages). Another one is scheduled for July 2021 (Summer edition, pages TBD). Articles considered of potential interest beyond our EWDA Membership were provided to the WDA Newsletter editor for reproduction.

### Website

The EWDA decided to work on the renovation of the website to give it a fresher look, make it easier to use and update it for future website coordinators. A Website Working Group was created in September 2020, formed by Alberto Casado Gómez (EWDA Website Coordinator), Karin Lemberger (EWDA Chair), Gudrun Wibbelt (EWDA Secretary), Marco Vecchiato (EWDA Student Chapter Chair), Giulia Graziosi (EWDA Member) and Javier Sánchez Romano (EWDA Member). This group has been working very hard on identifying any problems in the current website and implementing solutions.

Among the changes being made are the re-organisation of the tabs (in accordance with the future new WDA website), the change of the aesthetics of the website, the updating of its text and the inclusion of interactive galleries. In order to apply these changes, a new wordpress theme 'blocksy' will be purchased with an unlimited licence for five websites. These extra licences may be used in the future for sister association websites (e.g. Nordic Section, Student Chapter, Conference...).

These changes are being applied in a new version of the website that is to be published shortly before the Cuenca conference. The validation of the new website and the purchase of the lifetime license for 5 blocksy websites of 199 USD will be put to vote by the EWDA board in late July/early August. After that, the webmaster will work on adding new features to the website such as member area and direct donation options. Social media options will also be explored.

EWDA Network for Wildlife Health Surveillance in Europe - <https://ewda.org/ewda-network/>

The EWDA Network was set up in 2009. The Network committee has worked to support development of wildlife health surveillance tools and communication networks over the past decade.

**Committee members** as of June 2021 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)

**EWDA Google Group** <http://ewda.org/ewda-network/ewda-google-group/>

Membership of the 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 2021, the EWDA Google Group had 240 members from at least 33 countries. During the past 12 months, circa 33 threads were shared on topics including emerging and re-emerging wildlife health issues (e.g. highly pathogenic avian influenza H5NX in wild birds and mammals, African Swine Fever in wild boar, Chronic Wasting Disease in moose, canine distemper in wild carnivores and Usutu virus in songbirds), meeting and position announcements, calls for publications and funding proposals related to wildlife health and information on a variety of wildlife health resources

**EWDA WildList** <http://ewda.org/wildlist-2/>

The WildList 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 2021, there are 307 WildList members from 47 countries.

The WildList can be used to share regular messages on topics of general interest on wildlife health to the registered members. During 2020-2021, Paul Tavernier, as the WildList moderator, circulated a digest of news, forthcoming events and job adverts on a regular (typically monthly) basis.

**Diagnosis Cards** <https://ewda.org/diagnosis-cards/>

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. 22 Diagnosis cards are currently available: with assistance from the EWDA webmaster, the format of the webpage has been edited to improve clarity and ease of resource access. In the past year, two cards (Avian Influenza and Lagovirus diseases) have been reviewed and published. A new one

(Encephalomyocarditis virus infection -EMCV) has been published and four more new cards (Distemper, Marine Morbilliviruses Diseases, Covid-19 and Salamander chytridiomycosis) have been drafted and are under review. Two more cards (African Swine Fever and West Nile Disease) are being updated and will soon be sent for expert review. The preparation of a further seven disease cards is planned for which the Authors have already been identified. For three of them (Neosporosis, Leptospirosis and Salmonellosis) an earlier draft is available and is now in the process of completion. The other four cards are new (Sarcoptic mange, Chronic Wasting Disease, Keratoconjunctivitis-Mycoplasmosis and Leishmaniosis) and an invitation to Authors is in progress.

The opportunity to prepare new cards will be discussed in the future and we are open to suggestions from EWDA members.

### **Species Cards** <https://ewda.org/species-cards/> <https://www.aphaea.eu/cards/species>

Jorge Ramon López Olvera leads development of the library of Species Cards. The current list of 10 cards is under review and plans are underway for development of new cards on red fox and Ibex. As above, we are open to suggestions from EWDA members for the creation of new Species Cards.

### **Network Meetings**

#### **2018 meeting - How to start up a wildlife health surveillance programme**

The report from the 8th EWDA Network meeting held on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in Larissa, Greece, is available on the EWDA website <https://ewda.org/ewda-network/>. A collaborative manuscript developed from the Challenges and Recommendations identified during this meeting has been submitted for peer-review in an open access journal.

#### **2021 meeting - Expanding the field network of wildlife health surveillance**

The 9th EWDA Network meeting will be held on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 via a Zooms meeting format. The programme and details for registration are available at <https://cuenca2020.com/cuenca2020/ewda-meeting>. Attendance is free of charge.

The goal of this meeting is 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 programme comprises eight presentations by speakers from five countries in Europe and North America. 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** <https://www.cuenca2020.com/CUENCA2020>

The 14<sup>th</sup> biennial EWDA conference which was initially planned to occur in 2020 in Cuenca, Spain was postponed to a 2021 and will now take place in a virtual format between 31<sup>th</sup> August-3rd September 2021. It is held jointly with the 69<sup>th</sup> WDA conference and hosted by the Institute for Game and Wildlife Research (IREC), Ciudad Real, Spain.

### **Small Grants Committee**

The current Small Grants Committee (SGC) comprises Paul Holmes (UK, chair), Gábor Czirják (Germany/Romania), Gorazd Vengušt (Slovenia), Emmanuelle Gilot-Fromont (France), Ignasi Marco (Spain), Helle Hydeskov (UK/Denmark) and Alessandra Gaffuri (Italy).

All the reports from the previous grant cycle have been received and we were encouraged by the standard of outputs.

This year we are pleased to offer an extra grant for wildlife research projects (in addition to the two existing grants) after the EWDA received a generous donation from the estate of Amanda Hawkswood (see EWDA Summer Newsletter 2020, page 14). The EWDA Board and Small Grants Committee have modified the grant guidelines accordingly and the details have been updated on the website <http://ewda.org/ewda-small-grants/>

The successful recipient of the new 'Amanda Hawkswood Wildlife Health and Welfare Research Grant' will need to demonstrate that their research will further our understanding of and/or improve wildlife welfare.

A grant application form has also been created for use by all applicants which it is hoped will make the application process clearer. It will also aide the assessment and comparison of the grants by the committee members.

The committee has met several times (virtually) during the year and are looking forward to receiving and reviewing the next cycle of grant applications. Some preliminary enquiries have already been received. We will also consider for the future including in the application form a section on how sustainability was taken into account by the applicant.

### Sustainability Committee

This relatively 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.

The current Committee members are Thijs Kuiken (Chair; The Netherlands), Lineke Begeman (The Netherlands), Graham Smith (United Kingdom), Barbara Vogler (Switzerland), Ana Vale (Ireland), Jorge Ramon Lopez Olvera (Spain, liaison between Conference Organizing Committee and the Sustainability Committee) and Beatriz Rubio Alonso (student member, Czech Republic).

There were two changes in the committee since 2020. Emmanuelle Gilot-Fromont (France) and Alexia Coles (student member, France) both left the committee because of other obligations. Alexia was replaced by Beatriz Rubio Alonso as a student member.

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 committee started in 2018 with calculating estimates of the environmental impact for the last five EWDA biennial conferences. The main outcomes from this exercise were a user friendly spreadsheet that could be used by others that aim to make similar estimations, and the finding that the air transport to the conference country was the source for the greatest part of CO2 emissions (87-97%). This means that by reducing the overall travel distance to the conference, i.e. conference location near the membership geocentre, considerable reductions can be made in CO2 emissions. A manuscript describing this exercise was prepared, and is now being adapted to fit to the current situation that arose during the pandemic, where people have

become more adjusted to virtual meetings, though also are looking forward to meeting each other again. After these adjustments are made, the manuscript will be offered for publication.

Last year our committee started with a new action. This is to assess the environmental impact of wildlife health research, so that we can provide advice to researchers on how to best reduce this impact. First we are trying to get a better insight in what the main negative impact factors are, mainly by literature review, but also by a questionnaire (see below). We have divided wildlife health research into several categories: 1. Field work (including ecological balance), 2. Computer work and data storage, 3. In vitro laboratory work, 4. In vivo laboratory work, 5. Overhead. For each of the categories we are trying to identify the top three factors that are the source for a negative effect on the environment, that can also be reduced by actions, preferably by the researchers themselves. We aim to estimate the reductions that can be achieved by several potential solutions.

We prepared a newsletter item about this action for the next EWDA newsletter, entitled 'Assessing the ecological footprint of a typical EWDA member's wildlife health research'.

To encourage the attention of the EWDA membership for sustainability, we aim to write a newsletter item for each newsletter. In addition, we have requested the newsletter editors to publish our e-mail address in each edition, with a remark that we welcome any input or questions from the members on sustainability.

At the upcoming Cuenca conference, we will ask the attendees to fill in a questionnaire regarding sustainability aspects of their wildlife health-related work. We would like to present the preliminary results of the questionnaire at the conference. This will help us to provide appropriate advice and give an impression of the current state of affairs for comparison with the future situation, e.g. in 6 years time. We are grateful to the conference organizers for facilitating this action.

Upon invitation by the EWDA chair and WDA Strategic Committee chair (WDA vice-president), the sustainability committee was contacted to contribute to the strategic committee goals and efforts to reduce the environmental impact of our society and our members. A report was produced, submitted to the Strategic Committee and some of the suggestions were incorporated into the final report by the Strategic Committee to Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Karin Lemberger, EWDA Chair

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