

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) about WDA Sections**

The WDA Constitution and Bylaws state that formation of a Section can be proposed by a group of no less than 10 WDA members. Sections must have a unifying common interest or geography, be open to all WDA members who share that interest or geography, have popularly elected officers, regular sectional meetings, and abide by the WDA Constitution and Bylaws. WDA Council has the ultimate authority to review applications and grant Section status.

Currently WDA has four geographic based sections, Australasian (WDA-A), European (EWDA), Latin/South American (WDA-LSA), and Nordic (NWDA), and one interest based section, Wildlife Veterinary (WVS). The approximate respective numbers of years in existence are 34, 22, 1, 27 and 30. An African section was formed in the late 1980's and reformed as an Africa/Mid-East Section in 2001-02, but is currently not active. Prior to rise of the current Sections in 1980-90's, they were based on species management interests like waterfowl and big game.

**How is it determined what Section a member is in ?** It depends. For the geographic sections, membership is determined by your address and email location in the WDA membership directory. For the Wildlife Veterinary Section (WVS), members with those interests may join, but no one is automatically assigned to it.

**Do I have to be a member of my geographic Section ?** Although geographic section membership occurs by default at no cost to you based on your WDA membership address, you can opt to not be a member of your geographic Section by notifying that Section's chair and/or unsubscribing to any electronic newsletter provided by the Section.

**If I belong to a geographic Section, does that Section benefit ?** Yes. Currently, WDA provides a \$15.00 rebate to each Section for all classes of membership. These funds can be used for the benefit of its members and in support of Section activities. **Note:** The Australasian Section has a voluntary donation check off that is included in the renewal materials that also provides some additional Section revenue.

**Can a member belong to more than one Section ?** Yes, under some circumstances. But only the geographic Section in which the member resides will receive the rebate for that member. By the actions of Council and from a practical standpoint, membership in geographic sections is defined by residence as it is listed in the WDA directory, and individually directing a members rebate to another section can not be accommodated.

For example, currently, if an EWDA member, or a WDA-WVS member in Canada or the USA wanted to also be a member of the Australasian Section, maybe to get their newsletter and keep up contacts, if they asked for and were granted permission, and paid the WDA-A voluntary dues (on the membership renewal check off form), they could become an Australasian Section member. Several people

outside Australasia have chosen to do this. Other Sections have not yet defined how they might handle requests for membership from outside their geographic area.

**What about the Wildlife Veterinary Section (WVS) ?** This Section is defined by professional interest rather than geography. It does not get rebates for its members from WDA. It is in the process of reforming and may choose to have a voluntary check off fee or another way of raising Section funds. Currently many members of the WVS are members of geographic Sections too.

### **Reform of the Wildlife Veterinary Section (WVS) of the Wildlife Disease Association (WDA)**

When the WVS was formed about 30 years ago there were only 4 WDA Sections including Big Game, Waterfowl, Upland Game, and the newly formed Australasian Section. The American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians (AAWV), established in 1979 under the auspices of AVMA, was alone in representing the interests of veterinarians working on free-ranging wildlife (comprising only a few dozen individuals in North America at the time). There were no European or Canadian Association(s) of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians, no World Association of Wildlife Veterinarians, and the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians didn't interact with WDA, or have a significant wildlife component. Thus, the AAWV asked to be allowed to form and run a WVS within WDA, Council approved, and AAWV modified its Constitution to include management of the WVS. AAWV provided the funding for WVS activities.

Much has changed in 3 decades. Species and management based Sections have disappeared, and more wildlife veterinarians comprise a higher percentage of WDA's membership. WDA has also grown from a predominantly 90% North American association to one that now has about 40% of its members originating from Australasia, Europe, Latin America, and Asia reflected by several newer geographic WDA Sections (Nordic, European, and Latin/South American).

The WDA Constitution and Bylaws state that sections must have a unifying common interest or geography, be open to all WDA members who share that interest or geography, and have popularly elected officers. Having a WVS section governed by AAWV officers is not in line with WDA's governing documents nor does it reflect WDA's international membership, hence the need to reform the WVS.

A joint WDA and AAWV committee of 8 members worked on this issue for several years and came up with a mutually agreed upon set of solutions. Veterinary medicine and its application to free-ranging wildlife will remain the common interest of the WVS, and all WDA members sharing this interest can help organize and run this Section. All WDA members, who are veterinarians or involved in the application of veterinary science to wildlife, regardless of nationality, will be encouraged to join and participate in the Section, and run for leadership posts, should they wish. Elections should result in an independent slate of officers reflective of the membership WVS of WDA, and will allow it to operate in accordance with WDA bylaws. These reforms will take place during the first 9 months of 2012.

