Publications Links

WDA Publications

Publications For Purchase

Journal of Wildlife Diseases

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Reports from the Field - Open Access

Newsletter

July 2014

WDA's facebook group now has 500+ members and our membership continues to grow on a daily basis!

WDA is now on twitter and has 45 followers and growing!

Thanks to the efforts of Peri Wolff and AAWV and the ACZM the 2014 WDA Conference has been approved for up to 25.5 hours of continuing education (CE) (more with workshops).

EWDA Conference 2014, Edinburgh, Scotland, 25th – 29th August 2014 – REGISTER NOW!

Professor Anna Meredith, Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies,
Anna.Meredith@ed.ac.uk

The next EWDA conference is being held in the Edinburgh, the Scottish capital, hosted by the University of Edinburgh, with the organizing committee led by Professor Anna Meredith of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and Professor Michael Hutchings, Head of Disease Systems at SRUC (Scotland's Rural College). Registration has been open since February 2014 and closes on August 17th 2014. Early registration/booking rate ends on 30th June and you are strongly advised to register early and book your accommodation as this is limited and in high demand in Edinburgh in August, due to the International Festival held in the city.

Abstract submission has now closed and the Scientific Program has been finalized. Sessions are: Host-Pathogen Dynamics, One Health, Control, Current Outbreaks, Disease and Conservation, Mycobacteria, Small Mammals, Screening and Surveillance, and Student and Open Sessions. There will be pre-conference workshops on wildlife disease surveillance and wildlife pathology on Monday 25th August 2014.

All Conference information, including the scientific program, can be found at http://www.apps.vet.ed.ac.uk/EWDA2014/

The conference will be held at the world class John McIntyre Conference Centre in the heart of Edinburgh. Accommodation is available on site and the conference venue is within easy walking distance of Edinburgh city center. If you haven't already registered please do so soon and come to Scotland to enjoy our beautiful city, Scottish culture, Scottish wildlife and even some Scottish whisky. We look forward to welcoming you, and having a fantastic conference.

Australasian Section of the WDA annual conference, 28 September – 2 October, 2014, Australian Capital Territory, Australia

The annual conference of the Australasian Section of the WDA will this year be held in the foothills of the Brindabella Range, a northern extension of the Snowy Mountains and home to diverse habitats and iconic wildlife of south-eastern Australia. Birrigai at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve (www.tidbinbilla.act.gov.au), the venue for the conference, is home to a sanctuary protected by predator-proof fencing which provides a refuge for threatened species of mammals. The landscape surrounding the venue is beautiful and representative of the fascinating mountain ecosystems of Australia.

A workshop in comparative pathology of Australian wildlife organized by the Australian Registry of Wildlife Health (www.arwh.org) will be held on Sunday 28th September 2014 and the conference will kick off the following morning (Monday 29th September) and run until the Thursday afternoon.

The Australasian Section conference is the leading annual forum for discussion of wildlife health in Australasia and an opportunity to become familiar with many of the more significant wildlife diseases that occur in the region. It is a relaxed event characterized by the presence of families and delicious meals provided by our long-time caterer Shirley and her crew. Accommodation in dormitories is available on site, Canberra is near for other options, and the event has the usual social functions where you can get up close and personal with our very friendly (and quirky) Australasian contingent.

Registration for the event is before September 14th and abstracts need to be submitted to wdaa.birrigai2014@gmail.com by the 31st August. See the Section website (www.wildlifedisease.org/wda/SECTIONS/Australasian) for more information.

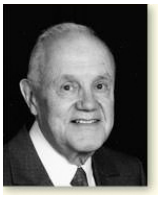
International Wildlife Disease Association annual conference, July 26-30, 2015, Queensland, Australia

The theme of the meeting is “Wildlife disease driving evolution”. Please visit the website www.WDA2015.org for more information!

Passing of Two Notable Wildlife Health Researchers

Dr. Murray Fowler was one of the fathers of zoological medicine. His pioneering work at University of California Davis allowed the first formal training in zoo and wildlife veterinary medicine at a veterinary school in the USA. He published widely and was for many years Editor of what became Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine and a series of texts on this same subject. He trained and nurtured the careers of a number of prominent wildlife veterinarians and wildlife health

researchers, including the current and immediate past Presidents of WDA. He was an enthusiastic and unflappable man who cared about wild critters and the people who work on them.



Dr. Denny Constantine was one of the nation's foremost experts on bat biology, ecology, and wildlife rabies. Trained as a veterinarian, he subsequently got a Master's degree in Public Health and worked for the U.S. Health Service. His work in Texas bat caves proved that rabies could be transmitted by inhalation of aerosolized bat urine and feces. For almost 20 years following retirement, Denny continued to work on bat rabies on his own. Knowing that he was very ill, he entrusted WDA with his capstone work on use of artificial sound to selectively attract rabid bats. This work will soon be published online in a new WDA website feature 'Reports from the Field'.

Nordic Section report

Dr. Carlos Gonçalo das Neves

Second case of Spirocerca lupi in a Danish red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

Just recently, during routine health surveillance of wildlife the second Danish case of *Spirocerca lupi* infection in a red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) from Jutland was detected – the first case was discovered one year ago. *Spirocerca lupi* is a Spirurid parasite that causes nodules in the esophagus, stomach and aorta in wild and domesticated canids and felids, and the nodules often transform into malignant cancerous masses. The affected fox had several large nodules (3x3 cm) in the serosa of the ventricular wall and many smaller nodules in the omentum - numerous *S. lupi* worms were harvested from these nodules (Figure 1). The fox otherwise appeared healthy.

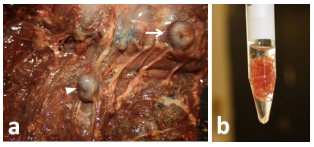


***Figure 1**. Spirocerca lupi infection in a red fox (Vulpes vulpes) from Denmark. a) Large nodules were seen in the serosa of the ventricular wall (arrow) and smaller nodules in the omentum (arrowhead); b) Numerous worms were harvested from the nodules.*

On-going Distemper epidemic in Danish wildlife

Since the early spring of 2012, a Distemper epidemic has been going on in wildlife and farmed mink (*Neovision vison*) in Denmark. Among wildlife red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) have been the main species affected, but the disease has also been diagnosed in raccoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*), stone marten (*Martes foina*), polecat (*Mustela putorius*) and just recently badger (*Meles meles*). So far, pet dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*) have been spared. In the spring of 2014, increased mortality among seals was reported from our Swedish neighbors - and Distemper was feared. Therefore several regulated harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) and dead grey seals (*Halichoerus grypus*) from Oresund, the waters bordering Sweden were examined for Distemper by PCR at the Danish National Veterinary Institute – all with negative result. A Distemper epidemic of such extent affecting both wild and domestic animals has not been recorded in Denmark in recent years and it has had a major negative impact on the Danish fox population in some areas of Jutland.

Eurasian Jackdaws mortalities and caffeine in Sweden

In 2013 and 2014, large numbers of Eurasian Jackdaws (*Corvus monedula*) and small numbers of hooded crows (*Corvus cornix*) were found dead overnight on three occasions, in Helsingborg and Trollhättan, in south-central Sweden.

In Helsingborg approximately ten dead birds were found in April 2013, and more than a hundred in January 2014 at the same location. In Trollhättan more than eighty birds were found in one spot in November 2013.

Necropsies performed at the National Veterinary Institute found no signs of underlying disease, and willful or unintentional poisoning was suspected.

Toxicological analyses performed at Michigan State University detected caffeine in liver samples from all investigated birds. All birds were found under roosting trees and showed signs of blunt trauma, supporting the hypothesis that they had been affected during the night and had fallen from the trees. Hypothermia because of low night temperatures probably contributed to the mortalities.

The source of the caffeine has not been confirmed but waste from a local coffee roasting plant and restaurants, has been implicated.

USGS National Wildlife Health Center Quarterly Mortality Report

Written and compiled by the U.S. Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center Field Investigations Team members: Anne Ballmann, LeAnn White, Barb Bodenstein, and Jennifer Buckner

Great Lakes winter waterfowl mortality

Avian mortality associated with emaciation and starvation accounted for over 30% (3,649/11,719) of total estimated mortality reported to the National Wildlife Health Center during the first quarter of 2014. Reports of emaciated birds ranged from brown pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) in Georgia in January to American robins (*Turdus migratorius*) in South Dakota in March, but the majority of investigations involved waterfowl in the Great Lakes states. Moribund and dead birds were found around the shores of Lakes Michigan, Erie, and Ontario starting in early January, with many carcasses uncovered during the spring thaw. Species most affected in the Great Lakes region were the diving ducks including mergansers (*Mergus sp*), scaup (*Aythya sp*), white-winged scoters (*Melanitta fusca*), and common goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*). Waterfowl were also affected on smaller bodies of water inland from the Great Lakes (e.g., Pigeon Lake, Michigan and Conneaut Lake, Pennsylvania). Throughout the winter, Midwest news articles highlighted the appearance of stranded birds such as grebes (*Podiceps sp*) and mergansers in driveways and snow drifts, as well as the associated influx of submissions of weak birds to area rehabilitation centers. Stranding, starvation, and emaciation in dabbling and diving waterfowl were likely caused by the severe winter conditions in 2013/2014 resulting in increased ice cover on lakes and inaccessible food sources. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, ice covered more than 90% of the Great Lakes at peak in 2014, compared to an average annual maximum of 51.4% since 1973. Waterfowl carcasses from the Great Lakes region evaluated at various diagnostic laboratories (National Wildlife Health Center, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and Michigan and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources) were negative for a variety of other possible etiologies, including avian influenza, botulism, lead toxicosis, West Nile virus, avian cholera, and parasitic infections. Aspergillosis was detected in mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) near Lake Huron (Alcona County, Michigan). Some specimens had elevated levels of selenium but this was not considered to be a cause of death. Also detected in carcasses associated with groups of emaciated waterfowl were signs of trauma and drowning, likely due to harsh environmental conditions and/or weakened condition of the birds. Given the large avian population at risk and the broad geographical scale, the total waterfowl mortality associated with harsh winter 2013/2014 conditions in the Great Lakes region was likely far greater than that reported. Please submit relevant reports to Jenny Chipault, USGS National Wildlife Health Center, 608-270-2473, jchipault@usgs.gov

Hawaiian Island sea urchin mortality

The National Wildlife Health Center-Honolulu Field Station is collaborating with University of Hawaii, State of Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources, and The Nature Conservancy to investigate an unusual mortality of collector urchins (*Tripneustes gratilla*) that has been ongoing since February 2014. This issue is important because urchins play a critical role as grazers in tropical coral reefs by helping prevent overgrowth of algae on reefs. Awareness of this issue was made apparent in the early 1980s in the Caribbean when more than 90% of its urchin population declined over a 3.5 million square kilometer area within approximately a 12 month period, resulting in an 80% decline of coral cover with attendant loss of biodiversity. Mortalities of collector urchins have been documented on most of the main Hawaiian Islands, and efforts are ongoing to identify the potential cause. Field investigations on Oahu have revealed at least two sites with mortalities, and a recent investigation on Maui confirmed presence of mortality on west Maui. Occasional reports have come from Hawaii and Kauai. A recent survey of urchins in south and southwest Maui revealed most to be healthy and the disease limited to a single area. The main species affected is collector urchins, but occasional reports of other species of urchins dying in north Kauai have been received; however, no specimens were available for laboratory evaluation. Contact: Dr. Thierry Work, USGS National Wildlife Heath Center – Honolulu Field Station, 808-792-9520, thierry_work@usgs.gov

White-nose syndrome Winter 2013/2014 summary

In the United States, three new states (Arkansas, Michigan, and Wisconsin) reported their first confirmed cases of white-nose syndrome (WNS) among clinically affected cave-hibernating bats during the 2013/2014 winter season, increasing the total number of affected states to 25 and 5 Canadian provinces. In addition, continued expansion of the disease was reported in Midwestern and Southeastern states and in the Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario. Evidence of the disease now extends as far west as Jackson County, Missouri (approximate longitude -94.5°) on the Missouri/Kansas border and as far south as Paulding County, Georgia (approximate latitude 33.9°). Mortality among hibernating bats was observed in several sites within the newly WNS-confirmed states (Arkansas, Michigan) as well as in Georgia, which was first confirmed positive for WNS last winter (2012/2013). Non-lethal swab surveillance for the causative fungus, *Pseudogymnoascus destructans (Pd)*, expanded into the Great Plains and Southern states and, using this methodology, *Pd* was detected in several central Mississippi counties for the first time since the emergence of WNS in North America in 2007. Also of note, Woodward County, Oklahoma formerly classified as "WNS suspect" since spring 2010 was removed from the WNS distribution map based on subsequent testing with improved assays and surveillance. Several winter mortality events involving Brazilian free-tailed bats (Texas, Arkansas) were also investigated during this period. In both instances, submitted bats were found to be emaciated. All those tested for rabies were negative and no evidence of WNS or *Pd* exposure was detected. An underlying cause for the emaciation was not identified; starvation is suspected in the Texas mortality event. Partners are reminded that the NWHC provides diagnostic and epidemiological assistance to investigate unusual bat mortality events throughout the year. State/federal/tribal agencies wishing to participate in the expanded national Pd surveillance strategy should contact Dr. Anne Ballmann (608-270-2445, aballmann@usgs.gov) to discuss options for their region.

The complete Quarterly Wildlife Mortality Report is available at:

http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/publications/quarterly_reports/index.jsp.

To view new and ongoing wildlife mortality events nationwide visit:

http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/mortality_events/ongoing.jsp.

WDA Election results are in!

WDA Officers and Council:

Secretary - Carlos Das Neves, Treasurer - Laurie Baeten, Council Members at Large - Frances Gulland and Karrie Rose, Student Representative on Council - Michelle Verant.

Congratulations to all and sincere thanks to those who agreed to run and keep WDA an open, democratic and participatory organization.

Wildlife Veterinary Section:

Chair – Anne Justice-Allen, Secretary – Holly Ernst, Treasurer – Nancy Boedecker, Newsletter Editor – Nina Schoch, and Student Representative – Sarah Alexander.

The WVS elections committee would like to thank all candidates for their participation and all members who took the time to cast a vote to help set the direction of this section for the next 2 years. The new officers will be seated prior to, and introduced at, the 2014 New Mexico WDA conference.

African Mideast Section:

Chair – Thomas Nyariki, Vice-Chair – Anne-Lise Chaber, General Secretary – Mike Kock, Deputy Secretary – Lawrence Mugisha, Treasurer – Julius Keyyu, Member at Large – Francis Gakuya, and Student Representative – Elizabeth Cook.

This new set of Officers will be recognized by Council in July and, as they are new officers in a new Section, assume their duties immediately. Congratulations all candidates and to the AME Section on a new beginning.