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Newsletter

October 2016

What a great conference in Cortland, New York this summer!

Make sure to check out some of the photos from the conference here: http://www.wildlifedisease.org/wda/CONFERENCES/PastInternationalConferences.aspx

Student Chapter Corner

By Catharina Vendl, Student Representative on Council
catharinavendl@gmail.com

Update: The WDA currently has 11 student chapters (sc) that aim to spread the word of the mission of the WDA among students all over the world. 9 sc are located in the US. The WDA-A sc (~20 WDA members) represents students of Australia and New Zealand, whereas the EWDA sc (78 WDA members) brings together students all over Europe. I am pleased to welcome two new chapters to the WDA student family: The Washington and Oklahoma State University sc!

Selection of recent and upcoming events: In April the Student Chapter of the University of Georgia held a "Techniques Day". This event allowed sc members of all years to learn and practice field techniques of particular importance in wildlife disease research, including telemetry, remote chemical delivery using dart guns, and trapping demonstrations. "It's great to be able to get hands-on experience and practice some of these skills that aren't covered in vet school" noted a UGA veterinary student. Thanks to the high demand the UGA sc aims to provide the experience again this fall and may even hold the event on an annual basis. Other scheduled events throughout the year included talks by wildlife disease professionals, other wet labs, workshops and regular social events. Find out more on https://sites.google.com/site/ugawdasc/

The EWDA Student Chapter would like to take this opportunity to announce the upcoming 7th student workshop "One Health: Living and Surviving the interface", to be held at the Les Pensières Conference Centre, in Annecy, France, in April 2017. The One Health-approach originates from the understanding of the intricate relationship between people, animals and the environments we live in. The workshop's program will soon be released, including lectures of internationally renowned scientists, group working sessions and panel discussions. Applications will be open to all WDA student members. The planned live streaming of lectures will allow students and professionals from all over the world to benefit from this event. For more details refer to: https://ewdastudent.wordpress.com/7th-ewda-student-workshop-2017/

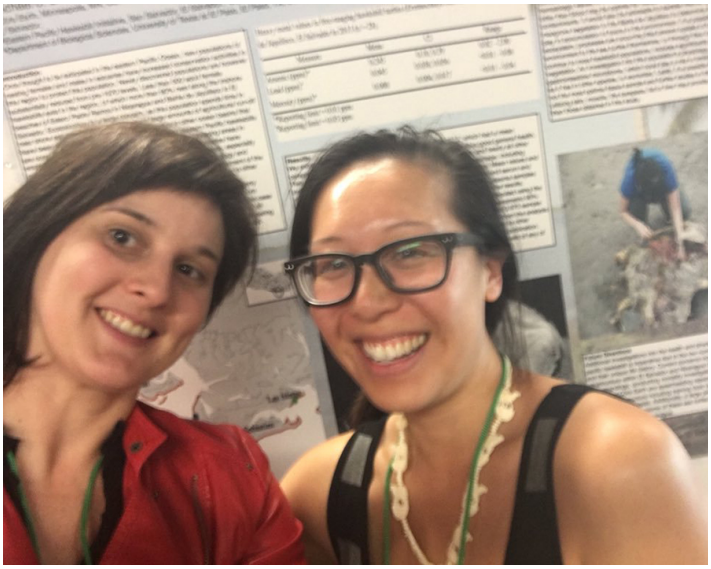
Our student chapters are doing an awesome job. However, many countries and universities still don't have their own Student Chapter. If you are a student at such a university, think about starting one! Also, if you'd like to have your Student Chapter featured in the next WDA newsletter, let Catharina know!

WDA2016 Student Travel Award report: Stephanie Hing, a PhD student at Murdoch University, Australia, won the student travel award of $ 1000 for the international WDA conference in New York and summarized her experience this way:

> Where can you meet the expert whose work inspired your research?
>
> Where can you hear the latest updates from international leaders in wildlife health and conservation?

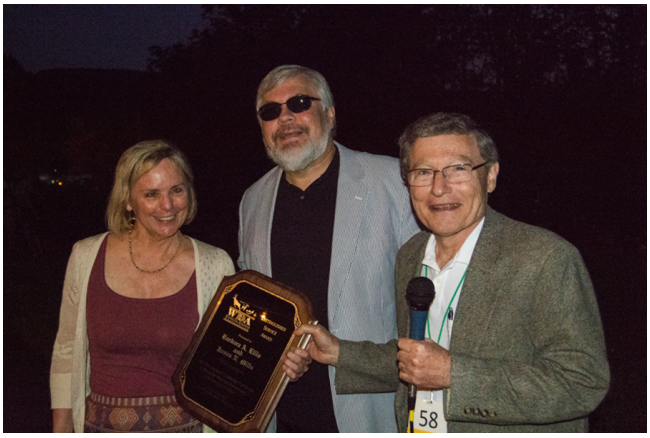
Where can you present your work to an audience full of wildlife professionals?

Where else but WDA2016!



The WD2016 conference filled me with an undeniable sense that I had “found my people”, a diverse community of individuals working together to achieve common aims. It was fantastic to meet fellow wildlife health PhD students, all of us battling through this journey, experiencing similar highs and lows. I was also rather star-struck to meet leaders in the field, many of whom are responsible for seminal studies that inform our current work. Attending WDA2016 represented the culmination of years of blood, sweat and tears, and many long nights running around in the Australian bush. While presenting to such an esteemed audience was a hugely daunting experience, I will always be grateful for the opportunity to share my PhD research. The chance to dance the night away with such a wonderful bunch of party animals was a bonus! Thank you to the WDA for the generous support enabling me to travel the 19,000km (11,600 miles) from the most remote city in the world to New York State. The WDA family is such a strong, collegiate network, so willing to support students and we hope we do you proud.

Congratulations and a big thank you to Barbara Ellis and Jim Mills, 2016 Distinguished Service Award Recipients!



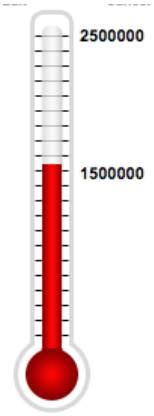
We are asking all Wildlife Disease Association Members to donate $20 to the JWD Endowment when they renew their WDA Membership this fall

By Dave Jessup and Joe Gaydos

Here's why:
Since we started in 2012 we have raised 3/5ths (US$1.5 million) of what we need to endow JWD production and worldwide availability in perpetuity. We only need to raise $1 million more between now and 2020. More importantly, we need all WDA members to invest in this effort.

Q & A – Journal of Wildlife Diseases endowment campaign:
Why is the JWD endowment critical? Endowment is a way to assure that something important will exist long after we are gone. In this case, we want to ensure, in perpetuity, coverage of the publication costs of the Journal of Wildlife Diseases and of providing free access to JWD for colleagues in the 2/3rds of nations with lowest per capita GDP. The latter is of utmost significance, as that is where conservation and health challenges are most acute, and ability to pay the least available.

What will this do? This will provide WDA with a third steady and reliable revenue stream. For the last 50 years membership fees and author page charges were the only WDA income. We don't want to raise these, and would prefer to keep them static (falling at the rate of inflation). A third revenue source will allow WDA to consider adding benefits the membership wants the most.



What will it take? WDA needs to set aside $2.5 million in a safe, conservative invested account that produces approximately $100-120,000 per year in interest and income by 2020. We currently are 3/5ths of the way ($1.5 million) towards achieving this goal.

Who decided on this priority for the WDA? JWD endowment was chosen as WDA's highest priority based on two WDA leadership visioning efforts over 10 years, several motions and decisions of WDA Council, and as a result of membership polling. It was deemed to be the optimal way for WDA to meet its Mission Statement and benefit wildlife health work worldwide.

What is an endowment? Although commonly used by North American colleges and universities, foundations and non-profit organizations, endowments are not as common in the rest of the world. Where non-profit and scientific institutions cannot rely on government support, they can accumulate and invest their funds, usually in stocks and bonds, to provide steady permanent revenue stream. The yearly increase and interest on these invested 'endowed funds' (in the range of 4-5% per year) are not taxed and can only be used for the stated purpose.

How you can help? We are asking ALL Wildlife Disease Association members to donate US$20 to the JWD Endowment fund in 2016-17. With nearly 1,500 members, this means we can raise US$30,000 towards our goal. Thanks to an anonymous matching donation of $9,000 for any member donations before January 15, 2017, we'll actually raise $39,000 through this effort.

Donating is easy. When renewing your WDA membership use the JWD endowment check off box to donate $20.
http://www.wildlifedisease.org/wda/ABOUTWDA/DonatetotheWDA.aspx Of course you can donate more if you like. Donations are US income tax deductible and will be personally and publically acknowledged.

And for a limited time **your donation will be doubled**, then doubled again ! We have an anonymous donor who has pledged to match the first $9000 on member pledges received before January 15, 2017. Last year this brought in over $18,000 and Council matched that and will likely do so again this year. **So your $20 could become $80.**

Are there other ways to help? Several members are providing legacy donations.
http://www.wildlifedisease.org/wda/Portals/0/DocLinks/WDAEndowmentBrochureJSA.pdf

If you have a 401K personal retirement account you must start taking disbursements when you reach 70 ½. If those go directly to a non-profit like WDA you pay no taxes and have a tax deductible donation. A few members are looking at this with the help of Jacobson & Schmitt Advisors (Madison, WI) at 1.877.662.7503, WDA's Investment Manager,. They will work with your current Investment Advisor to facilitate a simple transfer of securities. One WDA member has been donating securities (stocks and bonds) that have accrued substantial gains and doesn't have to pay Federal income taxes on those gains. Another member has assigned the authorship income from a book he authored to the JWD endowment.

A charitable contribution, as designated by your Estate Plan/Will can be accomplished by working with your Estate Attorney to designate WDA as the beneficiary of a portion of your estate, upon your passing. This can be done by listing WDA as a beneficiary of your IRA or within your Will or other estate documents. It's essential you consult with your Estate Attorney regarding your individual situation. One member has even made WDA the beneficiary of his life insurance!

Or how about:
Helping us find a foundation, agency, non-profit or company that would like to donate to the JWD endowment ? Several government agencies and non-profits are already contributing. A Foundation search was done in April-May 2016, and although no quick success, it is being followed up.

Turn that clunker into a tax deductible contribution to the JWD endowment
http://wildlifedisease-cardonations.org/ 'Turn cars into care'..... If you care about assuring the JWD is available in perpetuity, and available in the developing world, you can now contribute by donating an older car, boat, ATV or other vehicle.

By using the Amazon Smile program set up for WDA, http://smile.amazon.com/ch/36-6098737 the JWD endowment will receive a donation of 0.5% of the value of any purchases you make.

SAVE THE DATE: 66th WDA Annual International Conference in Chiapas, Mexico, July 23-28, 2017

WDA Small Grants Program: Call for Proposals for January 2017

By Bonnie Raphael (Chair), Ezequiel Hidalgo, Carol Meteyer, Karrie Rose, Bonnie Raphael, and Lisa Yon, WDA Small Grants Committee

The Small Grants Committee is requesting proposals for 2017. The available funding is $11,000 which may be used to award multiple proposals. The deadline for submissions will be January 15, 2017. Guidelines and criteria used for scoring and selection proposals can be found on the WDA Small Grants webpage. Please read these guidelines carefully. We have also included an example of a successful proposal on the webpage: http://www.wildlifedisease.org/wda/ABOUTWDA/SmallGrants.aspx

The WDA Small Grants Program is an opportunity for members of the WDA to contribute to the mission of the WDA "to acquire, disseminate and apply knowledge of the health and diseases of wild animals in relation to their biology, conservation, and interactions with humans and domestic animals".

The third year of the WDA Small Grants Program was a success, and two proposals received funding in 2016. When completed, the products of both of these projects will be made available to WDA members.

Translation, Editing and Distribution of the IUCN/SSC Tapir Specialist Group Tapir Veterinary Manual (2014) in Portuguese and Spanish (Renata Carolina Fernandes Santos, Viviana Quse, Patrícia Medici)

A workshop to: Define the Essential Attributes of a National Wildlife Health Program (Jonathan Sleeman and Craig Stephen).

The committee will look favorably on proposals that reach the widest possible audience and is excited to receive your proposals and see the creative ways that our membership can further the mission of the WDA.

Quarterly Wildlife Mortality Report, October 2016

Written and compiled by members of the U.S. Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center - Wildlife Epidemiology & Emerging Diseases Branch.

Detection of EA/AM H5N2 HPAI in a Mallard from Alaska

On August 26, 2016, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) confirmed the detection of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N2 in a mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*) from Alaska. Samples were collected as part of the national surveillance for HPAI in wild birds by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game during live bird banding at a waterfowl refuge in Fairbanks, North Star Borough, Alaska. Genome sequencing analysis shows that the Alaska isolate is a strain of Eurasian/American (EA/AM) H5N2 HPAI with over 99 percent similarity to the virus isolated from a northern pintail duck (*Anas acuta*) in Washington State in December 2014. Enhanced sampling of wild birds in proximity to this detection in Alaska is ongoing to determine if additional HPAI viruses can be detected in this region. Avian influenza virus has not been identified in domestic birds in Alaska as of late September.

Since the detection of HPAI viruses in wild birds and poultry in the United States and Canada in December 2014, the USGS National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) has continued to work closely with the USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and state wildlife agencies to implement enhanced mortality investigations and national surveillance in wild birds for HPAI viruses. This is the first detection of HPAI in a wild bird since November 2015 when it was detected in a hunter-harvested mallard in Oregon (although that case remains unconfirmed as full characterization by virus isolation and genetic sequencing was unsuccessful because no virus was isolated from this bird).

For an up-to-date summary of positive results from combined federal and state agency HPAI national surveillance in wild birds for the 2016-2017 surveillance year, please view this table: Wild Bird HPAI Cases in the U.S. This summary was excerpted from a NWHC Wildlife Health Bulletin available at this link.

Virulent Newcastle Disease Virus in Double-Crested Cormorants

In July and August, 2016, the USGS National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) received multiple reports of sick or dead juvenile double-crested cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) from several states in the Great Lakes region. Common clinical signs observed included increased fledgling mortality at rookeries, neck weakness, unilateral wing paralysis, incoordination, and tremors. In some locations, concurrent mortality in other species including gulls and pelicans was reported.

Subsequent to the investigation, virulent Newcastle Disease virus (vNDV) was confirmed by genetic sequencing in 12 cormorants submitted from four counties in Minnesota (Big Stone, Mille Lacs, Pope, Rice) and two counties in Wisconsin (Dodge, Door). Cormorants from Lake County, Indiana screened positive for avian paramyxovirus-1 (APMV-1) by matrix PCR, but vNDV was not isolated. It is possible that vNDV was present, but that there was insufficient viable virus for a positive isolation. Gulls and pelicans collected with cormorants in Big Stone County, Minnesota tested positive for salmonellosis and were negative for vNDV. The NWHC's experience with previous vNDV outbreaks has shown that sympatric species are rarely affected by vNDV. All birds submitted from these outbreaks screened negative for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus.

Certain strains of APMV-1 can cause significant wild bird mortality, but these events are typically limited to juvenile double-crested cormorants. Some strains of APMV-1 classified as vNDV, including some strains isolated from cormorants, can also cause significant disease in poultry and are reportable to state and federal agricultural officials. Avian paramyxovirus-1 can cause mild self-limiting conjunctivitis in humans, therefore the use of eye protection or face shields should be considered when investigating these events. As a routine precaution when handling any sick or dead birds, personal protective equipment including gloves, rubber boots, and disposable or cloth coveralls should be worn and hands should be thoroughly washed afterwards.

For additional information, see this Wildlife Health Bulletin.

Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans (Bsal) Surveillance Update

A newly identified fungal pathogen, from Asia, *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal), has caused mass mortality events and severe population declines in European salamanders via introduction into wild populations from the pet trade. North America has the highest diversity of salamanders in the world and introduction of this pathogen could be devastating, not only to local populations but also to global salamander biodiversity. The USGS National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) is working collaboratively with the USGS Amphibian Research and Monitoring Initiative (ARMI) to determine whether Bsal is present in North American salamander populations in targeted locations with high biodiversity and increased risk of exposure to the Bsal pathogen (Yap et al., 2015; Richgels et al., 2016). The NWHC and ARMI are working to reach a 10,000 sample goal in these high-risk locations. Samples are being collected by live capture and swabbing of salamander and newt species. As of August 2016, there have been no detections of Bsal in the 4,521 salamander and newt samples tested from 20 species submitted from 19 states. Sampling and diagnostic testing is ongoing and, once completed, the results will be incorporated with previous risk assessments (Yap et al., 2015; Richgels et al., 2016) to produce updated risk estimates of Bsal in the U.S.

For information on Bsal diagnostic and epidemiological activities at the NWHC, contact Dan Grear, NWHC Bsal Coordinator, dgrear@usgs.gov or C. LeAnn White, NWHC Wildlife Epidemiology and Emerging Diseases Branch Chief, clwhite@usgs.gov. For more information about Bsal field sampling and amphibian research activities, contact Hardin Waddle, USGS ARMI Bsal Coordinator, waddleh@usgs.gov.

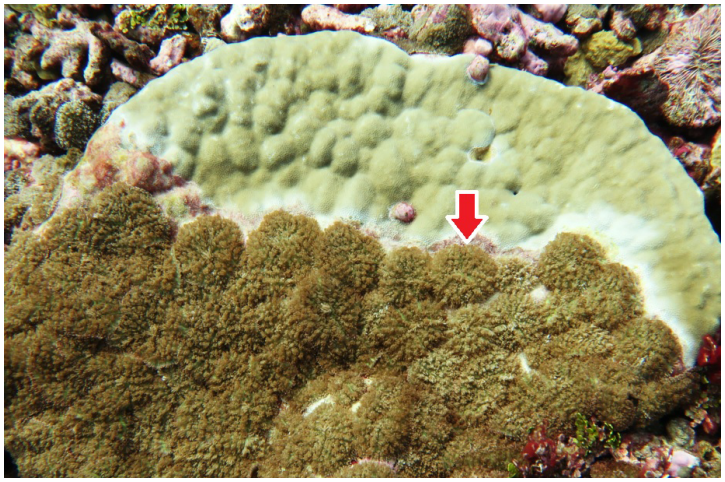
References:

Richgels KLD, Russell RE, Adams MJ, White CL, Grant EHC. 2016. Spatial variation in risk and consequence of *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* introduction in the USA. *R. Soc. Open Sci.* 3: 150616. http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rsos.150616

Yap TA, Koo MS, Ambrose RF, Wake DB, Vredenburg VT. 2015. Averting a North American biodiversity crisis: A newly described pathogen poses a major threat to salamanders via trade. *Science* 349(6247): 481-482. http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3bn651f5

Corallimorph Infestation at Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge

Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is jointly managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and The Nature Conservancy. Palmyra was heavily altered by the U.S. Navy during World War II with construction of multiple causeways and airstrips built from dredged corals. Today, the atoll has partly recovered and is known for its diverse coral reefs and associated biota and, on land, large stands of Pisonia forests and numerous species of land crabs and nesting seabirds. In 1991, a longline fishing vessel ran aground on the western shelf of Palmyra and, in 2007, the USGS National Wildlife Health Center's (NWHC) Honolulu Field Station (HFS) documented invasive corallimorphs (CM) overgrowing coral reefs surrounding the wreck (Work et al., 2008). A follow-up survey in 2011 revealed the infestation was spreading, thus prompting the FWS to remove the wreck in 2013. In 2016, the HFS conducted a follow-up survey of CM infestation in collaboration with Dr. Benjamin Neal of Bigelow Laboratories.



Corallimorph (brown anemones, bottom) smothering a Porites coral. Photo by Dr. Thierry Work, USGS National Wildlife Health Center Honolulu Field Station.

Compared to 2007 and 2011, it appears that in 2016 the CM infestation at the site of the shipwreck has abated considerably. However, heavy infestation on the shelf persists, both northwest and southeast of the wreck site. A new heavy infestation is also present at Penguin Spit to the southwest of the atoll. There, the reefs and associated sessile biota such as giant clams are smothered with CM infestation extending to a depth of 18 m.

Iron or other material leaching from metal may be associated with the spread of CM from the longline wreck; thus, removal of the wreck may explain the observed reduction of CM at the wreck site. In 2007, HFS noted a decreasing gradient of CM with increasing distance from mooring buoys at Penguin Spit. Replacing mooring buoy chains with non-metallic materials (e.g., Kevlar) would provide an additional test of the hypothesized metal-CM association.

To protect the long-term integrity of the atoll, it may be necessary to identify and implement CM eradication techniques. A proof-of-concept was implemented by HFS in collaboration with Dr. Greta Aeby (University of Hawaii) in 2011 using tarps, sandbags, and chlorine to successfully eradicate CM from 40 square feet of benthos, with the eradication continuing over a year. Upscaling this technique offers one possibility for long-term CM management efforts at Palmyra.

Reference:
Work TM, Aeby GS, Maragos JE. 2008. Phase Shift from a Coral to a Corallimorph-Dominated Reef Associated with a Shipwreck on Palmyra Atoll. *PLoS ONE* 3(8): e2989. http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0002989

To view, search, and download historic and ongoing wildlife morbidity and mortality event records nationwide visit the Wildlife Health Information Sharing Partnership event reporting system (WHISPers) online database: http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/whispers/

To request diagnostic services or report wildlife mortality: http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/services/