Student Chapter Progress Report 2018

Chapter Name: EWDA Student Chapter
Advisor: Lineke Begeman, Student Activities Coordinator EWDA

Number of Student Chapter members: 59

Current Student Board
The current Student Board was elected in September 2017 and will stay in office until the next elections held in June/July 2019. The current Board Members are:

- Chair: Anna Hillegonda Baauw, The Netherlands
- Secretary: Rebecca D. Berg, Denmark
- Communications Officer: Eirini Kamenaki, Greece
- Workshop Coordinator: Manon Moullec, France
- Past-Chair/Advisor: Anne-Fleur Brand, The Netherlands

Activities
It is a pleasure to inform you on the ongoing activities organized by the EWDA Student Chapter and its members during the past year.

1. Country representatives

To date we have 18 country representatives for 14 countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Spain and Switzerland. Hungary and Italy are newly represented countries since last year. Besides organising local lecture events about wildlife disease research opportunities and the EWDA in general, our country reps continue to set up networks with already existing wildlife groups and wildlife disease research mentors in their countries.

We strongly encourage our members to gain experience in raising funds for student activities. This skill may be very useful in the future, when applying for your own research funds. To support our Country Representatives, they can also apply for small grants to help them organise wildlife health events on a national level (if all requirements are met). Please find an overview of activities that were organized in the period from March 2017 to April 2018 below:
1.1. The United Kingdom: Field Trip

On March 4th, 2017, UK country representatives Stuart, Sima and Harriet, together with the BVZS British Wildlife Health Network organized a fieldtrip to Slimbridge, Gloucestershire. The day was hosted by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, which presented their work on wild bird surveillance and conservation. Scientists from the Animal and Plant Health Agency were present as well, and talked about their research into badger TB epidemiology. Members of the British Wildlife Health Network joined for the day and were available for student mentoring in a relaxed setting.

1.2. Belgium: Marine Mammal Symposium

On April 21st, 2017 Belgian country representatives Marianthi Ioannidis and Anna Baauw (Wallonian and Flemish part) organized their first event in collaboration with the VSDW (Veterinary Student association for Development and Wildlife) of the University of Ghent and the committee “Céto-Ornitho” of the university of Liège. The symposium was about the causes of death in marine mammals along the Belgian coast. It was organized at the university of Ghent and in collaboration with the Prof. Pieter Cornillie. The lecturer was the Dr. Thierry Jauniaux, DVM, PhD, DEZMC.

The symposium was very well attended, and had approximately 150 student attendees. We started the event with a short presentation about the history and aims of the EWDA student chapter from Anna. Then Dr. Jauniaux started his lecture. Dr. Jauniaux talked about his experience in the investigations of dead stranded marine mammals, his current research focus, and how the marine mammal stranding network is organized in Belgium. We discovered that a large proportion of marine mammals strandings is due to net accidents or pollution, showing us how much impact the human society has on marine live. Dr. Jauniaux also spoke about the latest discoveries of grey seals killing harbour porpoises. This could be determined because DNA analysis showed that grey seal DNA was present in wounds of harbour porpoises.

After the lecture we had coffee in the very atmospheric anatomy museum of the faculty. Coffee was shared over discussions with Dr. Jauniaux and other professors of the University.
The second part of the symposium was more practical: there was a demonstration of two necropsies: one on a seal and one on a porpoise. The necropsy of the porpoise was conducted by Dr. Jauniaux and the seal necropsy by Norbert van de Velde, in parallel and with a live stream to the auditorium for people that didn’t have a place in the demonstration room. They explained the anatomical differences, common pathologies, and the standard protocol used for both different species of marine mammal necropsies.

The day was a real success! The day was well-attended, with both the auditorium and the demonstration room being full. Students and teachers were very and the active participation of the students, shows that a good learning environment was created.
1.3. Austria: Wildlife Disease Lecture Event 1

On **May 23rd, 2017** a Wildlife Disease Lecture Event was organized in **Vienna** by Sinan Julian Keleş (EWDA Student Chapter Country Representative Austria) and AVE (Akademikergruppe Veterinärmedizin)

**Speakers:**
- Prof. Leonida Fusani, PhD, MPhil, MSc Professor of Animal Physiology and Ornithology, University of Vienna Director, Konrad Lorenz Institute of Ethology, Vetmeduni Vienna
- Dr. Pia Cigler, Dr.vet.med. Small Animal Clinic, Service for birds and reptiles, Vetmeduni Vienna
- Prof. Gerhard Loupal, Dr., Dipl.ECVP Institute of Pathology and Forensic Veterinary Medicine, Vetmeduni Vienna

Please find the report by Sinan Julian Keleş below:

“As a country representative I am interested in getting students interested and involved in our student chapters’ activities and spreading the word about the EWDA. Therefore, we organized a lecture event and two field trips with a focus on ornithology, giving vet and wildlife ecology students as well as members of our faculty the opportunity to network on an interdisciplinary level. The lecture evening provided the audience with insights into the world of wild birds, aspects of their physiology, diseases and pathology.

We started the event with a short presentation on the structure and mission of the Wildlife Disease Association, EWDA and of course the student chapters. This was followed by Leonida Fusani’s lecture: “Food intake and energy stores regulate bird migration: An overview”. The presentation focused on physiological aspects of bird migration such as how condition (body mass, fat and body score) predicts migratory restlessness and how stopover rates depend on fat reserves.

The next speaker was Pia Cigler, who works mainly as a clinician with birds and reptiles. She explained causes and treatment of different wild bird species that had been presented with in the past two years. Her case presentations ranged from pigeons, barn owl and the common kestrel to the white-tailed eagle and the bearded vulture. She also discussed common radiological techniques and bandaging methods with us.

Last but not least, Gerhard Loupal, veterinary pathologist and BirdLife Austria’s honour president, introduced us into selected diseases and pathology of wild birds. Salmonellosis, Usutu-virus-infection, Avian Influenza and others were part of his lecture.

*Picture credits go to Sarah Hochgeschurz and Corina Sonnberger.*
Prof. Loupal is also our ornithology field trip guide. He was so kind to lead our group of 15 people into the national park “Donauauen”, Lobau area, close to Vienna on a half day tour.

We were spotting birds not only using binoculars but by listening to their different calls and relating distribution to season and environmental habitat.
We ended the fieldtrip with lunch at a traditional Austrian restaurant close by. This ornithology lecture event was very successful. We had about 30 participants and enjoyed drinks and snacks sponsored by AVE. Thanks to our wonderful lecturers!
1.4. Austria: Wildlife Disease Lecture Event 2

On June 8th, 2017 another Wildlife Disease Lecture Event was organized in Vienna by Sinan Julian Keleş (EWDA Student Chapter Country Representative Austria) and AVE (Akademikergruppe Veterinärmedizin).

Please find the report by Julian Keleş below:

“During the Zoo and Wildlife Health Conference in Berlin, it came to my attention that Dr. Steve Thompson, would be in Vienna. Dr. Steve Thompson, DVM, DABVP (certified in canine and feline practice) is a clinical associate professor at Purdue University’s College of Veterinary Medicine, located in West Lafayette, Indiana, USA. He is involved with several conservation organizations and provided veterinary care in wildlife cooperatives with the Ohio and Indiana Departments of Natural Resources and US Fish & Wildlife related to Peregrine Falcons, Whooping Cranes, River Otters, Allegheny Wood Rats, Hellbenders and Timber Rattlesnakes.

Lucky us, we were able to also get him as a speaker for an EWDA lecture event on his last day in Vienna. Even though it was on short notice, we still managed to organize a seminar-room, thanks to the Viennese University Clinic for poultry and fish medicine.

We started the event with a short presentation on the Wildlife Disease Association, EWDA and the student chapters.

Dr. Thompsons topic was Veterinary Roles and Research in Conservation and Wildlife Medicine and he covered a wide range of wildlife aspects during 120 minutes. He began with how tax donations, banquet and stamp fundraising efforts, and ammunition and gun sales contribute to Conservation
funding in the USA and North America. Dr. Thompson shared information on a bovine tuberculosis concern in Michigan’s free ranging white tail deer in hunting areas close to Lake Huron, part of a poster abstract he also presented at the Berlin meeting.

He gave us great insight into one of his early projects with peregrine falcons when he was still a veterinary student at The Ohio State University. These falcon population declined in numbers due to being at the top of the food chain while a pesticide called dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), was being used. High concentrations of a DDT metabolite prevented normal calcium production causing thin eggshells that would easily break under the parent’s weight during incubation. Urban falcon programs involved hacking out young on the top of city skyscrapers where they would learn to prey on city pigeons.

He also introduced us to Purdue projects working with sea otters and river otters, including immobilization, capture, transport and different procedures and difficulties that had to be overcome and dealt with in order to collect data and to successfully reintroduce more than 300 individuals back into Indiana rivers.

His final topic was the capture, handling and radio tracking of timber rattlesnakes expanding on his veterinary presentation from Berlin and his upcoming publication in the July edition of Journal of Wildlife Diseases.

As a country representative I am very happy that we could get Dr. Steve Thompson as a speaker for our lecture named ‘Veterinary Roles and Research in Conservation and Wildlife Medicine’ for our latest Wildlife Disease Lecture Event in Vienna. It is impressive to see how a small animal clinician can contribute to saving species in the wild. Thanks for your talk Dr. T!”
Snacks were sponsored by Dr. Thompson and drinks by AVE and we had a successful Wildlife Disease Lecture Event with about 25 national and international vet and wildlife ecology students and included several researchers from our faculty.

1.5. Belgium: Bat lecture

On July 31st, 2017, a summer lecture title ‘Bats: Threatening or Threatened’ was organized by Anna Baauw and Marianthi Ioannidis (country representatives of Belgium) at Ghent University. With a lot of enthusiasm, Prof. Vikram Misra from the University of Saskatchewan discussed the fascinating relationship between bats and viruses, spillover of viruses to other species and white nose syndrome, which is currently killing bats in North America.

1.6. The Netherlands: Whale behaviour lecture

On September 19th, 2017, a lecture was organised about whale behaviour by the Dutch Association for Birds & Exotics “Archaeopteryx”. Annebelle Kok, researcher at Leiden University, gave a presentation about the effect of abiotic disturbances on interactions within and between species. Specifically, on how predator-prey interactions in the marine environment are affected by anthropogenic sound. Furthermore, she explained how whale research is carried out.
1.7. The Netherlands: Otters in The Netherlands lecture

On November 15th, 2017, a lecture was organised about river otters by the Dutch Association for Birds & Exotics “Archaeopteryx”. Veterinarian Peter Klaver told the audience about his experience with hand-rearing otters, their introduction in the wild in Friesland and more. The river otter (Lutra lutra) became extinct in The Netherlands in the late ‘80s. However, the species was reintroduced in 2002 and their numbers have increased. This can be attributed to mitigation measures, adaptations to fishing nets and recovery of the water quality. Currently, the otter is mainly found in Overijssel, Friesland, Drenthe, Flevoland and Gelderland.


On the 17th and 18th of November 2017 the first edition of the Belgian EWDA Student Chapter symposium took place, organised by Belgium country representatives Anna Baauw and Marianthi Ioannidis.

Please find their report below:

About 150 students and professionals from over 15 European Countries came together to learn and discuss about wildlife health and conservation.

The red line of the symposium was inspired on an article in the first journal of the WDA of this year: ‘Wildlife Health 2.0: Bridging the Knowledge-to-Action Gap’ by C. Stephen. Hence, the topics covered were very broad, but all the speakers, one way or another, aimed to their research findings into action, or were working on ways to do this. Topics included vulture conservation, dolphin vaccination, breeding programmes, amphibians, Lyme disease, elephant herpes, and many more. We learned how field work, collecting data, collaboration between vets and scientists, social aspect and fun are all important elements in order to finally make an impact on wildlife conservation. The first day, two sessions were organized parallel: one on terrestrial and one on marine mammals. Both sessions followed two lectures and two wildlife necropsy demonstrations. On the second day, we started off with a series of lectures, followed by discussion sessions with the speakers in small groups in the afternoon, and of course... chocolates and beers (and other drinks) were the main ingredients of the final part of the programme.

We were really overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of all the participants, coming to Liege from so many different places and backgrounds. It was very nice to meet so many different people from different countries having the same interest. We were also very touched by the motivation and passion of the speakers. They all volunteered to speak for us (some travelling quite long distances even) and all of them really inspired us...

So, a big thank you to them! And another big ‘thank you’ goes to the sponsors, collaborators, and volunteers, who made this symposium possible. Now, we enjoy having some extra spare time... but we keep very nice memories from this event and are looking forward to meeting the EWDA family again, at a next event!
1.9. Austria: Wildlife Disease Lecture Event 3

On December 8th, 2017, another Wildlife Disease Lecture Event was organized in Vienna by Sinan Julian Keleş (EWDA Student Chapter Country Representative Austria) and AVE (Akademikergruppe Veterinärmedizin)

Speakers:

- Sinan Julian Keleş, Veterinary Student
  EWDA Student Chapter Country Representative Austria
- Johanna Painer, PhD, DVM, Wildlife Veterinarian
  Department of Integrative Biology and Evolution, Vetmeduni Vienna
- Janosch Hagen, BSC, Adventurer
  http://janosch-hagen.de

Please find the report by Julian Keleş below:

As a country representative I am aiming on getting students interested and involved in our student chapters’ activities and spreading the word about the EWDA. This time we organized a very successful lecture event with a focus on “Nordic Fauna”. The lecture hall was filled with around 90 people, consisting of vet and wildlife ecology students, members of the faculty as well as external people. Interdisciplinary networking between the presentations was encouraged through free soft drinks, cookies, hot Punsch and Glühwein.

We began with a short presentation about the WDA, EWDA and of course the Student Chapters. I started the programme with sharing my experiences of the “Rocky Mountain Wildlife Veterinary Externship 2017” that I attended. Talking about the application process, different agencies such as the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, National Park Service and Colorado Parks and Wildlife as well as projects and animals I got exposed to during my externship. We touched topics from Chronic Wasting Disease in elk, Tularaemia in prairie dogs, Brucellosis in elk and bison and Mycoplasma infections in big horn sheep to the reintroduction of the black footed ferret, management of captive wildlife and greater social and political topics when dealing with wildlife. I gave an outline about a student project I completed during my externship, investigating the use of drones as a tool in
captive wildlife management. A live demonstration of the drone was performed (the video can be found on our Facebook page).

The second lecture “Reproduction Biology and Reproduction Management in large European Carnivores” was held by Dr. Johanna Painer, who works as a wildlife vet and researcher at our university. She explained in depth the oestrus cycle of the Eurasian Lynx, which is very unique with high progesterone levels throughout the year due to physiologically persistent corpora lutea on the ovaries of these wild cats, which was part of her PhD thesis. She explained how this helped to understand the mechanisms in wild lynx in order to gain valuable knowledge for the reproduction management in the endangered Iberian Lynx. Furthermore, she talked about the physiology of hibernating brown bears and their reproduction cycle and possibilities of contraception in bears. Dr. Painer shared great pictures of her fieldwork in the snowy backcountry and explained difficulties that she encountered out there.

Janosch Hagen showed his 1.5h documentary “Conquest of the North”, which is his life-changing story about a 6 months journey, traveling 4500km through the backcountry of Canada and Alaska on a kayak and on foot with his schoolmate Jan Friedrich Krüger. Janosch caught the attention of every single person in the lecture hall with his breath-taking photographs, videos and close-up story telling. During their once in a lifetime adventure, they encountered dozens of black bears and caribous, a lot of moose, even grizzly bears and the occasional Canadian lynx and timber wolves. His presentation was not only entertaining, but taught values about nature and wildlife. Find out more about Janosch and his show on his homepage at https://janosch-hagen.de.

On the 25th of November we were lucky again to have veterinary pathologist and BirdLifeAustria’s honour president Prof. Loupal guiding this year’s third ornithology fieldtrip with 15 people through the Nationalpark „Donauauen“.

We were spotting birds not only by binocular but by their different calls and relating distribution to season and environmental habitat. We ended our fieldtrip with lunch at a traditional Austrian restaurant close by.

A big “thank you” goes out to our lecturers and field guide.

1.10. The Netherlands: European bison lecture

On January 27 2018, a lecture was organised about European bison by the Dutch Association for Birds & Exotics “Archaeopteryx”. Veterinarian Mark Hoyer told the audience about his experience with these animals. Dr. Hoyer plays an important role in conservation and management of European bison that have been released in the “Amsterdamse Waterleidingduinen”. Furthermore, Dr. Hoyer is the former veterinarian of different zoos in The Netherlands. He is an expert in remote immobilisation of wildlife and provides theoretical and practical courses for both students and veterinarians. More information can be found at http://www.mh-via.nl/.
1.11. France: EWDA lecture

On March 17th, 2018, a small wildlife congress was organised in Toulouse by the French organisation Yaboumba. EWDA Student Board member Manon Moullec gave an informative presentation for about the EWDA Student Chapter and the upcoming Pre-Conference Student Event that will take place in August.


On March 17th, 2018, Hungary’s country representative Katalin Horvath organized a lecture at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Budapest. Dr. Geraldine Lacave discussed where we come from and where we are going with marine mammals in human care. This lecture was attended by about 60 students. After the lecture, there was plenty of time for questions.

Besides this lecture, monthly gatherings take place in Budapest, where the EWDA was presented and students talk about externship experiences (e.g. at a falcon hospital in UAE, and at a seal sanctuary).

1.13. Belgium: Elephant lecture

On April 19th, 2018, a lecture on elephant physiology and anatomy will be given by Dr. Olivier Jacqmot at the veterinary faculty in Liège. The EWDA Student Chapter will be presented on the event as well.

2. Social media

At this point in time we have a website, Facebook page, Facebook group and Twitter account to promote the Student Chapter and sharing knowledge. Most of the country representatives also keep a facebook page or group for their local group. In our experience, this is a very valuable tool to connect students to professional events and opportunities. Hungary’s country representative reported that students in her country are attending local conferences and other events in higher numbers since the local EWDA student group started and students joined their Facebook group. Apparently, it helped for the students to notice /become aware that these events were happening.

Using these media, our members get updates about the most recent news in the area of wildlife diseases and conservation. We post advertisements of open positions worldwide related to the field. We also share reports and pictures of all of our and the country reps’ activities. Recently, we’ve implemented the ‘internship of the month’, where we approach students who have done an interesting internship and ask them to write a short report to share their experiences.

3. Outreach

We are very dedicated to provide support and advice to younger Student Chapters worldwide to help them set up similar events such as the EWDA Student Workshop. For this purpose, we keep in touch with the other Student Chapter via the WDA Student’s Activities Committee.
4. Mentoring Programme

Earlier this year, a mentoring programme was set up by the WDA Student Activity Committee in collaboration with the AAZV (American Association of Zoo Veterinarians). After a successful first application round, a second application round was opened in October. For the second round, the EWDA Student Chapter reached out to the EAZWV (European Association of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians) to join the initiative. The involvement of the EAZWV has increased the mentor applications from Europe.

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On behalf of the EWDA Student Chapter, we would like to thank the WDA for its continued support and look forward to future collaborations.

The EWDA Student Chapter Board 2017-2019