

Report of the WOA^H Working Group on Wildlife

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for Animal Health**
Founded as OIE

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1. Summary

The Working Group on Wildlife met from 28 November to 1 December 2023.

The Working Group expressed its serious concern about highly pathogenic avian influenza in wild animals. In particular, at the time of the meeting, there was potential for the panzootic to have devastating impacts on wildlife populations in the sub-Antarctic region. The Working Group recommended that WOAHA support its Members in managing risks from avian influenza to wildlife populations and developed some concrete guidance to support Members with decision making. It also made recommendations to WOAHA on areas of risk communication.

The Working Group was impressed by the extensive scoping work which had been carried out to ensure that the next generation wildlife disease reporting system (which would replace WAHIS-wild) was purposeful. It provided feedback on preliminary results of the scoping work. It highlighted that an enabling environment was critical for facilitating the collection and dissemination of wildlife disease data (including emerging diseases) of value for animal health, public health, and biodiversity.

The Working Group was informed about the outcomes from and plans for collaboration with international partners: the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Wildlife Disease Association (WDA), the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), the Collaborative Partnership for Wildlife (CPW), and the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD).

The Working Group welcomed the recent establishment of a formalised Network of Collaborating Centres working on wildlife health together with the development of its own terms of reference and work plan. The Working Group also noted that new terms of reference for National Focal Points for wildlife had been finalised, but had not yet been disseminated.

The Working Group was updated on baseline and stocktaking work which had been carried out to support the Wildlife Health Framework. This included, external consultancies (wildlife legislation and impact of infectious disease on wildlife) and a stakeholder needs assessment.

The Working Group was informed that the Guidelines for Reducing the Risk of Disease Spillover Events at Markets Selling Wildlife and along the Wildlife Supply Chain were advancing and should be completed by May 2024, after being piloted in Thailand.

The Working Group continued its collaboration with the Terrestrial Code Commission and reviewed the Commission's work programme, which outlines the current and planned work to be undertaken to develop and update Terrestrial Code chapters, to identify areas where the epidemiology of the disease warranted review and further consideration of wildlife.

Finally, the Working Group provided input into the WOAHA wildlife communication strategy and indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation of the WOAHA Wildlife Health Framework.

2. Opening

The meeting of the WOAHA Working Group on Wildlife (the Working Group) was held from the 28th of November to the 1st of December 2023 at the WOAHA Headquarters in Paris, France, and was chaired by Dr William Karesh.

Dr Montserrat Arroyo, Deputy Director General of WOAHA, welcomed the members of the Working Group. Dr Arroyo highlighted the importance of the work done by the Working Group for WOAHA Members. Dr Arroyo noted the full agenda including a discussion on the highly pathogenic avian influenza panzootic in wildlife and the most recent detections in the sub-Antarctic region. A great deal of the work at WOAHA needs wildlife input, including considerations around disease drivers, discussions on disease emergence, and the development of animal health information systems. To progress the WOAHA One Health agenda, Dr Arroyo emphasised that there was a need to think beyond human health and livestock, and to consider the importance of wildlife itself.

3. Adoption of agenda and designation of the rapporteur

Dr Marcela Uhart was appointed as rapporteur for the meeting. The agenda and the list of participants are provided in Annexes I and II respectively.

Feedback from the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases meeting

Dr Misheck Mulumba presented feedback from the 2023 September meeting of the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (SCAD) on the reports of the two last meetings of the Working Group (December 2022 and June 2023).

Comments

- The Working Group noted that the current Terrestrial Animal Health Code definition of emerging disease (in the context of compulsory disease reporting) may lead to some significant disease events not being reported to WOAAH.
- The Working Group suggested that SCAD consider the recent work on Avian Influenza of the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) for the Americas¹.

4. Follow-up of the work plan (June to December 2023) of the Working Group on Wildlife

Progress on the work plan for the period June to December 2023 of the Working Group was presented. The Working Group confirmed the items completed and noted that, for the items not yet completed, they would be addressed at this meeting.

5. Multisectoral coordination and collaboration

5.1. Network of Collaborating Centres working on wildlife health

Dr Dharmaveer Shetty updated the Working Group on the first meeting of the Network of WOAAH Collaborating Centres on Wildlife Health that was held at WOAAH Headquarters from 20 to 21 November 2023. The network comprises eighteen WOAAH Collaborating Centres working on wildlife health, from which eleven constitute the Core Leadership team. Ten of the eleven Collaborating Centres from the Core Leadership team attended the meeting. The objectives of the meeting included structuring the network, defining its purpose and objectives, including finalizing terms of reference, development of a workplan for the first year, and aligning member expertise with WOAAH's wildlife health goals.

Comments:

- The Working Group welcomed this initiative and requested access to the documents and presentations drafted and given during the initial meeting.
- The Working Group also emphasized the importance of this network to the Wildlife Programme at WOAAH, and the importance of linkage between the Working Group and the Network. It was proposed that the Chair of the Collaborating Centre Network be invited, as observer, to the next meeting of the Working Group on Wildlife. The Working Group also suggested that this Network develop connections with the Regional Wildlife Focal Point networks.
- The Working Group recognized that there was a need for resources to support the Collaborating Centre Network so it can best support the Wildlife Health Programme in delivery of the priority outputs. Where possible, any activities and or outputs of the Collaborating Centre Network should directly support delivery of the objectives of the Wildlife Framework. Where there is direct alignment, these activities should be prioritised.

5.2. Wildlife Networks in WOAAH

Dr Shetty provided an update on activities to further develop and support the network of WOAAH National Focal Points for Wildlife. Existing initiatives included:

- Completion of Regional Training Programs across Africa, Asia-Pacific, the Americas, Middle East and Europe, including multiple webinars spanning different regions like the Americas and Europe. An external consultant-led evaluation of the past training programmes is also being planned.

¹ <https://rr-americas.woah.org/en/events/second-meeting-of-the-gf-tads-standing-group-of-experts-on-avian-influenza/>
https://rr-americas.woah.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/eng_esp-2-sqe-ai-recomendations-final.pdf

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- Development of sub-regional networks such as the East Asia, Pacific, South Asia, and South-east Asia wildlife health networks, and regional networks for the Asia-Pacific, Europe, and America, as well as preliminary work to in Africa.
 - Multiple pilot programs have been conducted to test ideas such as a mentoring programme, and to facilitate coordination and linkage using communication tools such as WhatsApp and listserv group email.
 - Development of an e-learning platform on wildlife health for national veterinary services.
 - Terms of reference for the WOA National Focal Points for Wildlife are to be updated, while a WOA National Focal Point Coordinators Forum has been developed to coordinate and learn from other National Focal Points.

Comment:

- The Working Group welcomed the development of these different networks, their complexity, and suggested development of a map or diagram of the different networks that could be used to help WOA and the networks visualise connections and gaps in the system.

5.3. Partnership with IUCN (update)

Dr François Diaz presented the final version of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) and the latest version of the workplan between IUCN and WOA. The Working Group was informed that the “WOA Guidelines for Wildlife Disease Surveillance: An overview”, developed in 2015, was being updated. The “IUCN/WOA Guidelines for Wildlife Disease Risk Analysis and the IUCN/WOA Manual of Procedures for Wildlife Disease Risk Analysis”, originally published in 2014, is also being updated with a planned release date of 2025 for the second edition.

Comments:

- The Working Group noted the MoU and workplan for collaborative activities in support of the WOA Wildlife Health Programme.
- The Working Group recommended that the joint materials developed in collaboration with IUCN be made available in the three official WOA languages (English, French and Spanish).

5.4. Partnership with CITES (update)

Dr Diaz provided a summary of the latest meeting of the 77th CITES Standing Committee, informed the Working Group of the latest versions of the MoU, shared the workplan, and provided an update on the CITES Working Group on the rapid movement of diagnostic samples.

Comments:

- The Working Group emphasised the importance of continuing efforts by WOA to facilitate rapid movement of diagnostic samples from wildlife.
- The Working Group suggested exploring in parallel opportunities for the inclusion of the need for rapid movement of wildlife diagnostic samples in the International Pandemic Treaty currently under development.

5.5. Partnership with Wildlife Disease Association (WDA)

The Working Group was updated on ongoing engagement with the Wildlife Disease Association (WDA), in pursuit of future collaboration with this organisation:

- A needs assessment had been performed
- An initial meeting had been held to initiate implementation of the partnership
- Participation of WOA in the upcoming International WDA meeting, and attendance of a WDA representative at the WOA General Session were being explored.

Comments:

- The Working Group suggested that WOA explore opportunities to involve WDA and its membership in conducting regular and periodic surveys on emerging wildlife issues, including past, present and future wildlife health issues, which could be pathogen/aetiology, species and or region focused, and an annual wildlife health foresight exercise that could form a new standing, foresight item at Working Group meetings.

- The Working Group highlighted the potential synergy between WOA National Focal Points and WDA in future joint activities, and
- suggested ways of further engaging WDA membership via WOA presence at WDA conferences for example as presentations in scientific sessions, sponsoring of keynote speakers, and or provision of outreach material as part of trade or supported displays.

5.6. Partnership with Council for Games and Wildlife Conservation (CIC)

Ms Sophie Muset informed the Working Group that the MoU between the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) and WOA, as well as a 3-year workplan, had been updated. The MoU will be presented for adoption to the next WOA General Session in May 2024.

Comments:

- The Working Group recommended that, in the context of the MoU, WOA encourages CIC to work towards replacement of lead ammunition with non-toxic options given scientific evidence of the detrimental effect of lead from hunting ammunition to wildlife, environment and human health².

5.7. Analysis and need assessment of stakeholders in the WOA wildlife health framework: presentation of results

WOA conducted an analysis and needs assessment of stakeholders involved in the Wildlife Health Framework (WHF). The assessment was part of an overall baseline and stocktaking exercise that will provide a solid foundation to inform decision making during the implementation of the programme.

Internal (WOA central and regional staff), related (Collaborating Centres and Working Group) and external (academic, associative, treaty, funders, international organisation among others) stakeholders were interviewed. Ms Muset presented the results of these interviews.

Comments:

- The Working Group noted that the highest ranked needs identified by survey respondents from all categories were to: (1) Promote multisectoral coordination and collaboration, (2) Increased capacity for wildlife disease surveillance and management and (3) Awareness and advocacy.
- Based on these rankings, the Working Group encourages WOA to recognize the value of its role in promoting multisectoral coordination and collaboration to Members and to continue and expand its efforts in this area. For WOA National Focal Points for Wildlife, the Working Group also suggested developing training tools and seminars focusing on network management, collaboration and coordination.

5.8. Update on engagement with Collaborative Partnership for wildlife (CPW) and the Convention for Biodiversity (CBD)

The WOA collaboration with the Collaborative partnership for wildlife (CPW) and the Convention for Biodiversity (CBD) was presented.

CPW is a voluntary partnership of 13 international organizations (Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat, Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Secretariat, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), TRAFFIC – The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Organisation for Animal Health (WOA)) with substantive mandates and programmes to promote the sustainable use and conservation of wildlife resources.

The collaboration with CBD is through the Inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species. The general purpose of the Liaison Group is to facilitate cooperation among relevant organizations to support measures to prevent the introduction and mitigate the impacts of invasive alien species. Eleven international organizations participate in the

² Uhart M, Ferreyra HDV, Romano M, Muchiutti A, Alzuagaray S, Santiago M, Caselli A. Lead pollution from hunting ammunition in Argentina and current state of lead shot replacement efforts. *Ambio*. 2019 Sep;48(9):1015-1022. doi: 10.1007/s13280-019-01178-x. Epub 2019 Apr 9. PMID: 30968333; PMCID: PMC6675803
 Arnemo JM, Andersen O, Stokke S, Thomas VG, Krone O, Pain DJ, Mateo R. Health and Environmental Risks from Lead-based Ammunition: Science Versus Socio-Politics. *Ecohealth*. 2016 Dec;13(4):618-622. doi: 10.1007/s10393-016-1177-x

liaison group as core members: The Centre for Agricultural Biosciences International (CABI), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), the World Customs Organization (WCOOMD), and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Comments

- The Working Group noted the update on the CPW and CBD partnerships.

6. Quality data collection, reporting, analysis and use improved

6.1. Presentation of the results of the survey of National Focal Points (including wildlife, aquatic and notification) on needs regarding wildlife health data

Dr Claire Cayol presented the results of the online survey of National Focal Points that aimed to gather information on: (1) national strategies to manage wildlife health data gathered from surveillance, (2) the optimal system to support countries in reporting information to WOAH for aquatic and terrestrial species, and (3) the stakeholders involved. The survey of the National Focal Points for animal disease notification, the National Focal Points for Wildlife, and the National Focal Points for Aquatic Animals was conducted from June to July 2023. The results are summarised on the dashboard available on the WOAH website at: [View the dashboard](#)

Comments:

- The Working Group noted that these results provided useful information for the development of the future platform for collecting wildlife disease information (what to do and what should be avoided to ensure adoption by Members).
- The Working Group noticed the apparent disconnect between people working on aquatic and terrestrial species and the need to facilitate greater communication and linkage between these sectors as was highlighted by the survey findings.

6.2. Presentation of the survey on existing information systems for Wildlife health

Dr Cayol presented the survey that was used to compile information on the design, maintenance, flexibility and useability of information systems currently used for wildlife data management, especially wildlife health data. The aims of this survey were to (1) increase the understanding of the current ecosystem of wildlife data management, (2) contribute to building a strong business case for the future global information system for wildlife health data management, (3) identify good practices in wildlife health data management and support decision-making.

The survey targeted 82 information systems, including 49 national databases as described by the WOAH in-country survey 2021. Twenty-four information system managers connected to the survey and 16 full answers were received from 14 countries.

6.3. Presentation of the partial report and outcomes of the first meeting (out of 3) of the *ad hoc* Group to follow the development of a new information system

Dr Cayol presented the outcomes of the two first meetings of the *ad hoc* Group to follow the development of a new information system, including the type of event notified, the nature of the data, the data providers, and the data users.

Comments

- The Working Group acknowledged the efforts made to identify and align the goals of WOAH, Members and other stakeholders and highlighted a need to keep clarifying the added value of such a system to users. The system could serve/respond to a need of Veterinary Services or serve One Health purposes. The desire of WOAH to collect information from wildlife health for One Health purposes might not match Members visions. Both goals are not mutually exclusive but it is crucial to handle this mismatch.
- The Working Group noted that a system based on mortality events as suggested by the *ad hoc* Group would serve conservation purposes but would not be useful for livestock or human health for which diagnostic information is needed.
- The Working Group suggested that the strategy focus on producing a tool that would support Members without increasing their workload and that captures information from other sources, thus generating an information stream that Veterinary Services have not been able to capture so far. The system could increase awareness of

Veterinary Services on wildlife health incidents and issues at the National level by centralising data from all wildlife health stakeholders and providing rapid risk assessment. The benefit for other stakeholders could be increased traction on reported cases, risk assessments and potentially, increased investigations. These benefits to data stakeholders should be highlighted for sustainability. An iterative, scalable approach was recommended with new functionalities built up over time. Integration to other information systems should be considered early in the design process. Building on previously developed and available architecture was encouraged.

- The Working Group advised against the use of the term “validation” as a business rule for inclusion of data in the information system since it refers to the use of specific diagnostic testing conditions which are often not met in wild species disease identification. Data collected by an early warning wildlife disease system will, by definition, in most cases be non-validated.
- The Working Group noted that the risk of non-validated reporting to trade is largely mitigated by blocking notification of listed diseases automatically in the new system which targets non-listed diseases that do not have an impact on trade.
- User uptake and sustainability of the system will be more likely if the information system is designed to bring added value to all users, including those that contribute information.
- The Working Group noted the importance of an enabling environment for the success of the project which will need to consider not just the external environment, but also dedicated support within WOAAH as well.

6.4. Presentation of the work done on timeliness/completeness for listed / non-listed diseases

Dr Lina Awada presented WOAAH's current work on assessing the completeness and timeliness of disease reporting to WOAAH and the influencing factors. The scope of the work included listed diseases and non-listed wildlife diseases prioritised by the Working Group. Results would be shared with Members and all relevant stakeholders, and would support WOAAH's thinking on the scope, processes and objectives of the current effort on disease reporting, and their fit with Members' needs. This would inform the development of the WOAAH Epidemic Intelligence Framework (an initiative that had just begun) and the future strategy for reporting wildlife health data to WOAAH. Automation would allow analyses to be repeated for subsequent years to assess changes in reporting.

Comments

- The Working Group indicated that there was a need to clarify the objectives of WOAAH to ensure transparency of disease information, particularly with regard to information on wildlife, as the Working Group considered that this category of animals had not been a high priority since the creation of the organisation.
- On the completeness analysis, the Working Group discussed sources of information that could be used to complement event detection.
- On the results presented for listed diseases, the Working Group discussed and commented that the percentages of completeness in WAHIS for the different diseases studied appeared to depend on the status of the diseases and potential funds available for their control.
- On the analysis of timeliness, the Working Group recommended using a stratified approach based on the nature of the diseases (infectious or not) and their basic reproduction number (R0) when known, or if unknown, ability to cause impact across the three domains of trade and market access, human health, and biodiversity.
- The Working Group referred to some publications that might be worth consulting as part of this work and suggested some other appropriate sources of information.

The Working Group will be kept informed of progress as part of future meetings

6.5. Update on non-listed wildlife disease codification (project extends codification to non-listed diseases to wild species)

Dr Cayol highlighted that it was necessary that the existing codification system for animal diseases encompass wildlife diseases and becomes a universal nomenclature and reference source for relevant stakeholders worldwide, such as international organisations, veterinary laboratories, veterinary services, public health entities, research institutions, and universities. Dr Cayol added that this codification would facilitate standardized collection and sharing of information on all animal diseases, especially wildlife diseases, by harmonizing description, classification and coding of diseases, hosts, and aetiologies. This would be done through the integration of wildlife diseases and non-infectious diseases into the current animal disease codification system. Dr Cayol also mentioned that given the number of species involved and the continual uncovering of novel host-pathogen associations, the system should provide a reliable yet flexible framework for gathering data on wildlife diseases, which are complex by definition. Therefore, she pointed out that the suggested wildlife diseases codification system would encompass and go beyond the context of the WOAAH's standards (Codes and Manuals).

Comment

- The Working Group noted the update from Dr Cayol and expressed its support for this project.

Open-source access to previous wildlife health data collected by WOAAH

Dr Cayol informed the Working Group that since the decommissioning of WAHIS-wild beta, historical wildlife health data (10 years voluntary reporting, 36853 reports, 131 countries) previously shared, were offline. She mentioned that an attempt was made to offer these data to the research community and wildlife stakeholders and asked the opinion of the Working Group.

Comments

- The Working Group supported public access to these data.

6.6. Wildlife health data collection and the potential impacts on trade and economy

Dr Cayol informed the Working Group of the interest of WOAAH to have its opinion regarding the potential impacts of the collection of wildlife health data on trade and economy, by starting with WOAAH official disease status (foot and mouth disease [FMD], African horse sickness [AHS], classical swine fever [CSF], contagious bovine pleuropneumonia [CBPP], bovine spongiform encephalopathy [BSE], and peste des petits ruminants [PPR]) in particular what is the potential impact on status recognition of the circulation of the given pathogen in wildlife? And how to leverage the potential reputational and economic consequences of wildlife disease reporting on trade?

Comments

- The Working Group proposed to dedicate time at its next meeting to develop an evaluation framework and then to perform the evaluation of the 6 diseases listed above during the interval period until the next meeting of the Working Group at the end of 2024, and to finalise the evaluation at that meeting. The aim would be to initiate a discussion on the basis of this evaluation with SCAD in 2025.

7. Guidelines, standards, risk reduction strategies updated & developed

7.1. Terrestrial Animal Health Code: coordination with the Working Group in the development and review of the Terrestrial Code - TAHSC work programme

Dr Francisco D'Alessio presented an update of the work programme of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (updated at the last meeting of the Commission in September 2023), in particular the Terrestrial Code chapters circulated for comments and those proposed for adoption at the next General Session.

Comments

- The Working Group expressed interest in providing comments on the following Terrestrial Animal Health Code chapters that had been circulated in the September 2023 Code Commission's report: User's Guide, Chapter 4.X Biosecurity, Chapter 5.4. Measures and procedures applicable in the exportation of commodities, Chapter 5.6. Measures and procedures applicable in the importation of commodities, Chapter 7.1. Introduction to the recommendation for animal welfare, Chapter 8.Y. Infection with Nipah virus.
- The Working Group expressed interest in following closely the work items that was currently at an earlier stage of development: emergency management; revision of Chapters 7.2., 7.3. and 7.4. on welfare of animals during transport by land, sea, and air; revision of Chapter 7.6. Killing of animal for disease control purposes; revision of equine encephalitis chapters; overall consideration of Section 10 Aves and the new Chapter on Crimean Congo haemorrhagic fever. The Working Group agreed to provide comments on the ongoing work, and expressed interest in being involved in the development, as relevant.
- The Working Group will develop a request to the Terrestrial Animal Health Code Commission to consider the updating the current chapter 10.4. of the Terrestrial Code on "Infection with high pathogenicity avian influenza viruses" to include wild mammals in the scope of the chapter.
- The Working Group will review the WOAAH list of non-listed diseases of wildlife with the aim to see if any are appropriate to be proposed for inclusion in the WOAAH listed diseases. The result will be discussed at the next meeting of the Working Group.

7.2. Legislation update (Wild Aquatic animal legislation review and wildlife legislation pilot)

Ms Muset informed the Working Group that following the recommendations from the wildlife health legislation review (focusing on terrestrial animals) conducted in 2022, WOAHA developed a questionnaire to assess the state of wildlife legislation in countries.

Two pilot missions had been conducted in Guyana and Rwanda in 2023, as part of regular VLSP missions to test out the questionnaire, assess its relevance and collect inputs from the country for improvement. Mission reports had been produced and further discussions were ongoing to integrate the feedback and preliminary results into the current questionnaire and eventually identify next steps to make it an official tool to support relevant amendment to the Chapter on legislation.

A second consultancy had been initiated to look at legislation in wild aquatic animal health. Terms of reference relevant to review of legislation pertaining to wild aquatic animal health had been developed to complement the first legislation review that focussed on terrestrial animals and help better understand the current state of play and how wild aquatic animal health is managed and which institution(s) have the mandate to deal with this matter. The aim was to launch a call for proposal by the end of the year.

Comments

- The Working Group noted and supported the update as well as the wild Aquatic animal legislation review and wildlife legislation pilot.

8. Scientific knowledge developed and disseminated

8.1. Consultancy on “Review and analyse of diseases (caused by infectious agents and toxins) affecting wildlife that are potentially a threat to wildlife conservation” (update)

The Working Group was informed that the current consultancy on review and analysis of diseases (caused by infectious agents and toxins) affecting wildlife that are potentially a threat to wildlife conservation was ended before completion and that a new call may be launched taking into account the experience of the first one.

Comments

- The Working Group suggested waiting for outcomes of the consultancy on the sensitivity of wildlife diseases data and fill in the gaps to achieve the objectives of this consultancy. It also suggested that liaising with WDA to survey the wildlife experts of this network on the past, present and future wildlife mortality events of concern for their region and the species they are specialised on could be considered.

8.2. Guidelines for Reducing the Risk of Disease Spillover Events at Markets Selling Wildlife and along the Wildlife Supply Chain (update)

The Working Group was informed that the guidelines for *Reducing the Risk of Disease Spillover Events at Markets Selling Wildlife and Along the Wildlife Supply Chain* will be finalised by May 2024. The release had been delayed pending review by the Collaborating Centre for Risk Analysis (UK) to ensure the approach and terminology are consistent with WOAHA's other materials on risk analysis.

Comments

- The Working Group emphasized that the guidelines were developed to be read and applied by any person involved in the wildlife trade to prevent wildlife disease spread and not only technical experts. There was a need to have something released into the space quickly and the guidelines were based on the IUCN-WOAH Manual of Procedures and the Guidelines for Wildlife Disease Risk Analysis and modified to be presented in simple language to facilitate use by a broader audience.

8.3. Upcoming Panorama Issue on Wildlife and biodiversity

Dr Dharmaveer Shetty updated the Working Group on the upcoming issue (released in early 2024) of WOAHA Panorama that will be on Wildlife and Biodiversity. He presented the content with the different articles and the authors.

Comments

The Working Group noted this effort to inform and engage Members and the broader public.

8.4. Update on WOAAH regional workshops on risk-based management of spillover events in wildlife

Dr Paolo Tizzani presented an update on a series of workshops organised by WOAAH in the Asia-Pacific region under the EU-funded project "Working Together to Fight Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)" targeting nine countries in Asia (China P.R., India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam). Component 5 of the project aims to strengthen country and regional pandemic preparedness to mitigate the impact of future pandemic events in the region, including a series of table-top exercises led by WOAAH in three countries (with QPT & EU observers invited). A first workshop was held in India in September 2023, a second is to be conducted in Japan in December 2023 and a third one in a third as yet to be decided country in Southeast Asia in 2024.

Comments

- The Working Group recognised the usefulness of these workshops in building country preparedness, and the opportunity to facilitate linkages between different agencies and organisations working on spillover events in wildlife.

9. Highly pathogenic avian influenza

9.1. WOAAH Initiative on HPAI in marine mammals - update

The Working Group was updated on the development of a practical guide for field response to highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreaks in marine mammals, with a focus on biosecurity, sample collection and carcass disposal. The guide would be available by the end of the year.

Recommendation:

- The Working Group welcomed the initiative and recommended that once reviewed, the guide be distributed to WOAAH networks (National Focal Points for Wildlife, network of Collaborating Centres working on wildlife, WOAAH website and WOAAH Communication Department), international partners (Antarctic Treaty, International Whaling Commission, WDA, Society for Marine Mammalogy) and others.

9.2. Avian Influenza in Sub-Antarctica outcomes from WOAAH, other potential steps

Dr Keith Hamilton updated the Working Group on the recent WOAAH communication and activities regarding highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in the Sub-Antarctic region. A meeting was held with the Antarctic Treaty secretariat and parties, WOAAH Members, and an internal meeting between the relevant WOAAH departments.

The Working Group stated that it was important for WOAAH to provide alerts on disease situations and develop documents useful to Members to support control and assist in managing outbreak and limiting spread of the disease. However, they highlighted that sometimes the development of such documents takes time and they are thus available too late to be useful in the field. Regarding the current situation with HPAI in the Sub-Antarctic region, they recommended that WOAAH:

1. Reinforce communications to Members that reports of HPAI in wild birds and marine mammals should not have any implication on country status or trade;
2. Encourage reporting of wildlife mass mortality events in Sub-Antarctic region and Antarctica to be reported by WOAAH Members to the Antarctic Treaty, as well as reporting of suspect events and mass mortalities prior to disease confirmation, including information on species affected, and sites of occurrence;
3. Encourage Veterinary Services to work with the environment sector and wildlife authorities for the investigation, diagnosis and sequencing of HPAI viruses affecting wildlife and, in the control, and management of HPAI in wild animals, and to share laboratory results with public health authorities;
4. Reinforce communications to Members to ensure that response and investigation of HPAI events was not detrimental to wildlife (such as hazing, disruption of breeding areas, culling, etc.).

And that:

5. The Working Group developed a statement on "Prioritising wildlife in the face of the current HPAI pandemic" and recommended immediate publication to the WOAAH website and communication to Members, Wildlife Focal Points and the general public.

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6. Considering current HPAI outbreaks spreading worldwide, the Working Group suggested WOAHA consider developing a fund that will help Members to investigate morbidity/mortality events in wildlife and manage these events.

Vaccination of Species of High Conservation Value – update

Feedback from the Science and Standards Departments on the draft document “Emergency vaccination of wild birds against high pathogenicity avian influenza” was tabled. Suggested changes were incorporated into a final draft which was re-named as a guideline.

Recommendation:

- The Working Group recognised the importance of making the guideline immediately available to Members to assist them in their approach to management of HPAI in wild birds and recommended immediate publication to the WOAHA website and communication to Members, Wildlife Focal Points and Collaborating Centres. A statement was drafted to accompany the posting.

10. WOAHA Wildlife Strategies

10.1. Communication strategy

The WOAHA communication strategy regarding wildlife was presented to the Working Group for their information.

Comments:

- The Working Group noted the strategy, its comprehensiveness, and provided some suggestions for improvement.

10.2. Wildlife Health Framework: Indicators and programme evaluation

Ms Muset presented indicators developed for the evaluation of the wildlife health programme.

Comments

- The Working Group suggested some reorganisation and simplification for clarity and recommended that the focus be on indicators relating to the main objectives and outcomes or impacts

10.3. WOAHA Three Horizons Exercise

The Working Group was informed of an internal WOAHA foresighting exercise utilising three horizons methodology that was aimed at transitioning the current Wildlife Health Framework to its next iteration. The next step of the process would be to organise a horizon scanning exercise that will inform development of a theory of change to support the next phase of the Framework.

Recommendation

- The Working Group noted the use of the three horizons process for planning and requested to be kept informed of developments with the strategy.

11. Any other business

11.1. WOAHA Emerging Disease Group (update)

The Working Group was updated on the planned activities of the WOAHA Emerging Diseases Group.

Comments

- The Working Group noted activities of the group and recognised the importance of its linkage to the Wildlife Working Group given the majority of emerging diseases arise in wildlife.

11.2. WOAH Forum for National Focal Point Coordinators

Dr Shetty introduced the WOAH Forum for National Focal Point Coordinators, which is a forum for information sharing and knowledge generation between the various coordinators of the 7 different National Focal Points who provide specialised support to the WOAH delegate. Two biannual meetings have been held where the participants discussed the various history, present, and future plans of the individual national focal point networks. In addition, the coordinators also shared the lessons learnt from the various activities of the individual networks.

Comments and Recommendations:

- The Working Group appreciated the establishment of the forum to learn from each network.

11.3. WGW membership update: call for new members – procedure

The Working Group was informed that a new procedure (an open call) would be set up for nomination of members of the Working Group.

Comment:

- The Working Group welcomed the update and added transparency the process would bring and encouraged WOAH to proceed with the nomination of the new members to the Working Group as soon as possible.

11.4. Feedback on the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) statement. What impact did it have, and is any follow up needed?

The Working Group was informed on the analysis of the impact, on WOAH's social media, of the statement on El Niño phenomenon developed by the Working Group and the interview of Dr Billy Karesh on this statement.

Comment:

- The Working Group welcomed the analysis and noted the impact of the statement and interview and encouraged production of similar statements on a more regular basis.

11.5. Statements on highly pathogenic avian influenza

The Working Group developed a statement on highly pathogenic avian influenza and wildlife and a statement to accompany publication of the guidelines on emergency vaccination of wildlife against avian influenza and recommended that both be immediately published to the WOAH website.

12. Date of next meeting

The Working Group proposed the following dates for its next meeting from Tuesday 16 to Friday 19 April 2024.

13. Adoption of the report

The report was adopted by the Working Group.

.../Annexes

Annex 1. Agenda

MEETING OF THE WOAHP WORKING GROUP ON WILDLIFE

Paris, 28 November to 1 December 2023

- 1. Summary**
- 2. Opening**
- 3. Adoption of the agenda and designation of the rapporteur**
- 4. Feedback from the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases Meeting**
- 5. Follow up of the WGWP work plan**
- 6. Multisectoral coordination and collaboration**
 - 6.1 Network of Collaborating Centre's working on wildlife health
 - 6.2 Wildlife Networks in WOAHP
 - 6.3 Partnership with IUCN
 - 6.4 Partnership with CITES
 - 6.5 Partnership with WDA
 - 6.6 Partnership with CIC
 - 6.7 Analysis and need assessment of stakeholders involved in the wildlife trade and along the supply chain presentation of results.
 - 6.8 Update on engagement with CPW and CBD
- 7. Quality data collection, reporting analysis and use improved**
 - 7.1 Presentation of the results of the survey of NFP (including wildlife, aquatic and notification) on need regarding wildlife health data
 - 7.2 Presentation of the survey on existing information systems for Wildlife health
 - 7.3 Presentation of the partial report and outcomes of the first meeting (out of 3) of the ad hoc Group to follow the development of a new information system
 - 7.4 Presentation of the work done on timeliness/completeness for listed / non-listed diseases
 - 7.5 Update on non-listed wildlife disease codification (DETRA extend codification to non-listed diseases to wild species)
 - 7.6 Open-source access to previous wildlife health data collected by WOAHP
 - 7.7 Wildlife health data collection and the potential impacts on trade and economy
- 8. Guidelines, standards, risk reduction strategies updated & developed**
 - 8.1 Terrestrial Animal Health Code: coordination with the Working Group in the development and review of the Terrestrial Code - TAHSC work programme
 - 8.2 Legislation update (Wild Aquatic animal legislation review and wildlife legislation pilot)
- 9. Scientific knowledge developed and disseminated**
 - 9.1 Consultancy on "Review and analyse of diseases (caused by infectious agents and toxins) affecting wildlife that are potentially a threat to wildlife conservation" (update)
 - 9.2 Guidelines for Reducing the Risk of Disease Spillover Events at Markets Selling Wildlife and along the Wildlife Supply Chain (update)

9.3 Upcoming Panorama Issue on Wildlife and biodiversity

9.4 Update on WOAH regional workshops on risk based management of spillover events in wildlife

10. Highly pathogenic avian influenza

10.1 WOAH Initiative on HPAI in marine mammals – update

10.2 Avian Influenza in Antarctica – outcomes from WOAH, other potential steps.

10.3 Vaccination of Species of High Conservation Value – update

11. WOAH Wildlife Strategies

11.1 Communication strategy

11.2 Wildlife Health Programme : Indicators and programme evaluation

11.3 WOAH Foresighting effort

12. Any other business

12.1 WOAH Emerging Diseases Group (update)

12.2 WOAH Forum for National Focal Point Coordinators

12.3 WGW membership update call for a new members – procedure

12.4 Feedback on the ENSO statement. What impact did it have , and is any follow up needed?

12.5 Statements on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

13. Date of next meeting

14. Adoption of the report

Annex 2. List of Participants

MEETING OF THE WOAHP WORKING GROUP ON WILDLIFE

Paris, 28 November to 1 December 2023

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