

# Report of the WOA Working Group on Wildlife

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for Animal Health**  
Founded as OIE

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## Summary

The Working Group on Wildlife met from 22 to 25 April 2025 to review key outcomes of the wildlife health programme, to provide technical guidance on selected topics, and to guide on future strategy and programming.

The Working Group reviewed and discussed an updated version of its Terms of reference. The final and agreed version is in [Appendix III](#) of this report.

The Working Group was informed about the evaluation of the current Wildlife Health Framework [WHF] and was involved to define the evaluation question. It was also involved to define the vision (final objective) for the development of the next WHF.

The Working Group was informed about continuing and new collaboration and their outcomes with the network of Collaborating Centres working on wildlife health, the network of National Focal Points for Wildlife, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Wildlife Diseases Association (WDA), the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The members of the Working Group made when relevant recommendations, suggestions or comments for their fruitful implementation. The Working Group was also informed that WOAAH applied for and was selected as the new secretariat of the International Alliance against Health Risks in Wildlife Trade.

The Working Group continued to collaborate with the Terrestrial Animal Health Code Commission and contributed to their working plan, when relevant, in providing expertise on wildlife and in commenting draft chapters with a wildlife health perspective.

The Working Group was informed about Guidelines in development by WOAAH or developed by other international organisations and of interest for wildlife health. The Working Group was also informed about the draft Terrestrial Animal Health Code Chapter on emergency standards and made comments on it.

The Working Group discussed the current high pathogenicity avian influenza situation in wildlife worldwide, in particular in Antarctica and the southern hemisphere, and the surveillance activities and data collected by WOAAH over the last 6 months. It made recommendations. A statement on Bluetongue and other orbiviruses in wildlife highlighting the link with climatic factors and providing recommendations for actions was finalised by the Working Group.

The Working Group discussed how to communicate better to the Members the WOAAH Guidelines on wildlife already developed and published.

Finally, the Working Group had a discussion with the WOAAH AMR Department to explore how the global availability of Veterinary Medicinal Products could be increased for wildlife animals. The Working Group also discussed how to communicate to remind the Members of the lethal effect of the use of Diclofenac in livestock for vulture population worldwide.

### 1. Opening

The meeting of the WOAAH Working Group on Wildlife (the Working Group) was held from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2025 at the WOAAH Headquarters in Paris, France, and was chaired by Dr William Karesh.

Dr Montserrat Arroyo, Deputy Director General for International Standards and Science, welcomed the members of the Working Group and thanked them for their participation. She emphasized that the work of the Working Group was valued by the Members. She noted that it was a timely meeting, given recent developments such as the creation of a new position of Deputy Director General for International Standards and Science, who will be responsible for overseeing and managing global strategies (including disease control as well as topics such as wildlife and animal welfare). This role aims to promote a more cross-cutting approach to the Organisation's strategies, moving away from a department-by-department model and improving the implementation of these strategies across different regions.

She also informed the Working Group that webinars would begin this week to present the work of the various specialist commissions to the Members. The objective of these webinars is to demonstrate increased transparency in the reports of the specialist commissions, particularly in terms of the Members' comments and the commissions' responses.

Another positive development she shared was the launch of a new webpage dedicated to WOAAH Standards. This webpage features a search engine to help users find specific content within the standards. This navigation tool aims to improve accessibility of WOAAH International Standards for members and stakeholders.

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Regarding the meeting agenda, she expressed her interest in exploring collaboration opportunities with the International Cooperation on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Product (VICH) concerning Veterinary Medicinal Products, including the issue of falsified products, and addressing wildlife needs. She also highlighted the recent WOA-FAO Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza adopted at the international level and the challenges Members face in incorporating wildlife into these strategies.

Finally, she underscored the importance of potential future collaboration between the Working Group and the WOA-FAO Status Department.

## **2. Adoption of agenda and designation of the rapporteur**

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

## **3. Working Group on Wildlife – Updated Terms of Reference**

The Working Group was informed that WOA-FAO currently has two Working Groups, one on Antimicrobial Resistance (WG-AMR) and the other on Wildlife. The Working Group on Antimicrobial Resistance has been set up recently and the Terms of reference (ToRs), including purpose and responsibilities, mode of operations, and membership, had to be developed. This led to a debate on what should be the content of the terms of reference for the Working Group. The aim of this item was to present and to discuss with the members of the Working Group an updated version of their ToRs with the aim to align them with the ToRs of the WG-AMR.

### Outcome:

The Working Group reviewed an updated version of their ToRs which were developed based on the recently new ToRs adopted by the WG-AMR, and after discussion, edits and comments agreed on a final draft version provided in [Annex III](#).

## **4. Follow-up of the work plan of the WG-AMR**

Progress on the work plan during the period November 2024 to April 2025 of the Working Group was presented. The Working Group took note of the items completed and, for the items not yet completed, provided inputs and advise to complete them by the next meeting of the Working Group in November 2025.

## **5. Wildlife Health Framework – Discussion on the evaluation of the current Wildlife Health Framework [WHF] (define evaluation question) and vision (final objective) for the development of the next WHF**

### **5.1. Evaluation of the current WHF – Involvement of the WG-AMR**

The Working Group was informed that a consultant team had been selected in April 2025 to conduct the evaluation of the Wildlife Health framework (2021-2025). The Working Group had the opportunity to review the consultant's ToRs and to provide their feedback on the questions driving the evaluation at the last meeting. The consultant conducted a focus group interview with the Working Group to collect their views on the Wildlife Health Framework achievement, challenges and successes. An Individual interview will be scheduled with the Chair at a later stage.

#### Comments:

- The Chair expressed his willingness to be involved in reviewing the final questionnaire for stakeholders that would be developed to conduct the evaluation of the Wildlife Health Framework.
- The Working Group suggested to focus the evaluation on the performance and steps forward in achieving the objectives, rather than a technical evaluation of the products. This recommendation is consistent with the ToRs of the consultants.

### **5.2. Working session – Vision (final objective) of the WG-AMR for the Next WHF (2026-2030)**

The Working Group members were reminded about their contributions to the foresight exercises and particularly about the vision for the future of wildlife health that resulted from these working sessions. In addition, the main outcomes of the different consultations of Delegates and other wildlife health stakeholders were presented to provide some background prior to brainstorming about the vision for the WOA-FAO wildlife health strategy.

#### Comments:

- The Working Group identified several key elements to consider while developing the global vision of the WOAH Wildlife health Strategy: “healthy wildlife”, “WOAH a Global leader in securing the health of wildlife”, “Convening for global wildlife health”, “Healthy wildlife for a better world”. Several proposals emerged, with the use of an Artificial Intelligence tool regarding the vision: (1) *To lead global partnerships in securing wildlife health through an integrated system that supports WOAH Members, safeguards biodiversity, and builds a sustainable future*, (2) *Global leadership in securing wildlife health for a sustainable future*, (3) *Healthy wildlife, stronger ecosystems, and a safer planet*, (4) *Uniting global partners to protect and support wildlife health worldwide*, (5) *An integrated global effort for healthier wildlife and resilient ecosystems*, (6) *Protecting wildlife health today for a sustainable world tomorrow*, (7) *Global collaboration for thriving wildlife and lasting health security*, and (8) *Leading global action to safeguard wildlife and support planetary health*.
- The Working Group suggested to ensure that the vision for the Wildlife health strategy is aligned with WOAH's vision overall in order to ensure its inclusion in the organisation's mandate and avoid creating the appearance of a separate entity.
- The Working Group also noted that as the WHF was still relatively new with regards to implementation and integration into WOAH operations and Member alignment, as well as outcomes were still being assessed, major changes to the framework may be disruptive and counter-productive at this time.

## 6. Multisectoral coordination and collaboration

### 6.1. Network of Collaborating Centres working on wildlife - update

Dr Dharmaveer Shetty informed the Working Group that the Collaborating Centre Network on Wildlife Health currently comprised of 19 Collaborating Centres, working directly (7) or tangentially (12) on wildlife health and biodiversity. He presented an activity report of this network for the period 2023-24 mentioning the contribution of the Collaborating centres in their individual capacity and in a group capacity.

#### Comments:

- The Working Group commented and noted the progress on the activities of the network of Collaborating Centres.
- The Working Group suggested that the network of Collaborating Centres update the guidelines on wildlife disease outbreak or incident investigation presented in the fourth cycle Training Manual for the National Focal Points for Wildlife and in parallel develop a short version of these guidelines that can be readily applied in the field.
- The Working Group supported that the network contribute to work on revising Chapter 1.1.2 of the Terrestrial Manual, titled “Collection, submission, and storage of diagnostic specimens”. This chapter is due for updates to address gaps in wildlife disease diagnosis and specimen handling, as previous revisions focused primarily on domestic animal health. A separate section for wildlife diagnostic procedures has been recommended.
- The Working Group recommended the network contribute to the upcoming development of the next 5-year plan of the wildlife health framework/strategy.
- The Working Group suggested that the network continue expanding the number of institutions participating in the network in line with their working plan.
- The Working Group pointed out the value of the technical disease cards and the importance of keeping them updated either through the network of Collaborating Centre or through another process.

### 6.2. Network of National Wildlife Focal Points - update

Dr Shetty provided the Working Group with an update on the network of National Wildlife Focal Points. He informed the Working Group that WOAH called for a consultancy to evaluate the WOAH National Focal Point on Wildlife Training Workshops Programme, a service provider had been selected, and the evaluation should be finalized by September 2025. He also presented a draft note regarding the production of a biannual information bulletin for the network.

#### Comments:

- The Working Group noted the consultancy and mentioned its interest on the outcomes.
- The Working Group reviewed the draft note regarding the production of a biannual information bulletin and made comments. In particular, they suggested keeping track of readership and consultation of the different information items provided by this bulletin (e.g. number of clicks). The Working Group also noted that significant resources

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are needed to make this effort sustainable and suggested that the team should be aware of the requirements from the programme and the need to prioritise efforts at the onset.

### **6.3. Partnership with CITES - update**

Dr François Diaz provided an update on the partnership between WOA and CITES. He informed the Working Group that in the Memorandum of understanding signed by WOA and CITES in March 2024, two main issues were identified and included (1) identifying zoonotic disease risk associated with CITES activities and CITES listed species and (2) the safe and fast transport of biological samples from wild animals for diagnosis or identification. He mentioned that to address these issues, coordination and dialogue between Veterinary Authorities and CITES Management and Scientific Authorities at the national level and close collaboration between CITES and WOA at the global level were identified as important. He presented to the Working Group a draft concept note that aims to organise a series of webinars at the regional level to facilitate this coordination and dialogue between the different stakeholders and opened a discussion to collect comments and feedback from the members of the Working Group on this draft concept note.

#### Comments:

- The Working Group reviewed the concept note, made few comments and agreed, in general, on the proposed initiative.
- Dr Wong informed the Working Group of the recent CITES Resolution that indicated WOA Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centers could now be registered as officially recognized institutions through an expedited process by the National CITES authority of their Country. The Working Group suggested WOA informing the WOA Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centers about this registration process.

### **6.4. The Alliance against health risk in wildlife trade**

Dr Claire Cayol informed the Working Group that WOA applied for and was selected as the new secretariat of the International Alliance against Health Risks in Wildlife Trade, which is a network of multiple organizations and individuals and is presented as an open, inclusive, and collaborative space where stakeholders join forces to address issues related to the wildlife trade. She also added that the Alliance currently includes more than 400 international members from academia, NGOs, and civil society and that hand in hand with the steering committee, WOA would define and implement the strategy for this Alliance while keeping in mind the initial spirit: to be an incubator for science-policy dialogue, risk assessment, and mitigation, as well as a knowledge hub on health risks associated with the wildlife trade. She pointed out that, with this new project, several challenges would occur for WOA, and for the ones already identified, she welcomed any advice from the Working Group.

#### Recommendation:

The Working Group congratulated WOA for being selected as the new secretariat of the International Alliance against Health Risks in Wildlife Trade and highlighted the great work that could be done in the future through this initiative. The Working Group also advised that this work should not detract from the other, important core mission activities.

### **6.5. CIC Statement on the lead ammunition**

Following up on previous discussions with the Working Group, Ms Sophie Muset presented to the Working Group a draft joint WOA/International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) position statement on the phasing out of lead ammunition. The draft was comprehensively reviewed and commented by the Members of the Working Group.

#### Comment:

- The Working Group, in commenting the joint position paper, reiterated the importance of a true phasing out, and removing from the document all sections providing arguments to prevent or slow down the process.
- A revised draft, taking into account these comments, will be circulated to the Working Group by email by the end of June.

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## 6.6. Partnership with Wildlife Disease Association (WDA) - update

Dr Shetty provided an update on the collaboration between WOAAH and WDA to the Working Group. He recalled the suggestion from the Working Group on the potential interaction and partnership regarding compiling from WDA members a regular yearly update on emerging diseases in wildlife that could be a potential threat to Members' jurisdictions. He requested the Working Group to provide WDA with detailed information on this suggested partnership activity. He also updated the Working Group on the Foresight exercise conducted at the last WDA meeting with the WDA members, based on the recommendation from the Working Group to directly engage the members.

### Comment:

- The Working Group reinforced its recommendation to establish a formal partnership with the WDA. The Working Group will work on updating the current version of the ACID Test on partnerships that can be submitted to WOAAH Comex for establishing an official partnership with the signing of an MoU.
- The Working Group discussed the need to collect updated information on emerging diseases in wildlife on a regular basis. WDA could possibly collaborate on this task since it counts on an extensive network of experts in the different fields of wildlife health worldwide. If the collection of information became structured, the Working Group also suggested that WOAAH could tap into its extended network of National Focal Points for Wildlife and Collaborating Centres to be involved in this collection of information. They also spoke about tapping into the upcoming Epidemic Intelligence Framework for this purpose.
- Moving forward, the Working Group pointed out the importance of working closely with WDA which has an extensive network of experts and therefore it would be beneficial to find activities and initiatives of common interest.

## 6.7. Upcoming events: objectives and potential achievements

The Working Group was informed about international events on wildlife that would be held in the second semester 2025 and advice was requested on the ones WOAAH should attend or contribute to.

### Recommendation:

- The Working Group pointed out that the IUCN Congress (October 2025) and the CITES CoP 20 (November-December 2025) were both interesting to attend. However, if in need to prioritize, CITES CoP 20 would be a priority based on the pending activities between WOAAH and CITES. The IUCN Congress is a huge event where there would be an interest to attend if WOAAH was involved in some specific events and had specific topics of interest to discuss during the congress.

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

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

Dr Gillian Mylrea and Dr Akinobu Kawumara, from the Standards Department, informed the working Group on the new way to present the comments received on the draft Terrestrial Code chapters, including the one received from the Working Group. Additionally, they presented an update of the work programme of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (updated at the last meeting of the Commission in February 2025), in particular the Terrestrial Code chapters circulated for comments and those proposed for adoption at the next General Session.

### Comments

- Relevant chapters with the deadline to review them would be sent by the Code Commission secretariat to the Working Group for comments

### 7.2. Guidelines on risk management at the Wildlife livestock interface

Dr Dolores Gavier-Widen presented to the Working Group progress on the development of the Guidelines on Risk management practices at the domestic-wild animal interface, led by a consulting team and supported by an *ad hoc* Group of which Dr Gavier-Widen is a member.

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### Comments

- The Working Group suggested to develop a decision tree (framework) to help users of the document with different options and outcomes, to ensure interventions achieved balanced outcomes for wildlife and livestock. It also suggested to consider aquatic animals in the development of the guidelines and including that the Risk mitigation measures should not be detrimental to wildlife and to consider nature-based solutions.
- Finally the Working Group proposed to review the draft when available for comment.

### **7.3. IUCN Guidelines on wildlife – human conflict and coexistence**

The Working Group was informed of the Guidelines on wildlife – human conflict and coexistence, published recently by IUCN. The aim of these guidelines is to provide foundations and principles for best practices, with clear, practical guidance on how best to tackle conflicts and enable coexistence with wildlife. A discussion was opened with the members of the Working Group to envisage the potential use of these guidelines by WOA and its work on the interaction of livestock and wild animals or on wildlife health in general.

### Comments

The Working Group noted that the guidelines were very extensive and comprehensive, and could be used to think about human wildlife conflict when there are health issues involved either directly (like rabies and bats) or with livestock (like with HPAI and poultry). The Working Group suggested considering within the scope of the WOA-IUCN collaboration, the production of a three-page document specific for health issues.

### **7.4. Development of other Guidelines for 2025/2027**

At its last meeting (November 2024), the Working Group highlighted the following topics as relevant for the development of guidelines: production of wildlife emergency response guidelines and associated training and simulation exercises for national focal points for wildlife, guidelines on outbreak investigations for wildlife national focal points, guidelines on wildlife health diagnostics, and on wild animal sample transportation. The Working Group was asked to prioritize which Guidelines on wildlife health should be developed by WOA for the period 2025-2027, knowing that there might only be one guideline developed in this period of time due to budget and time constraints.

### Recommendations

The Working Group recommended prioritizing development of guidelines on outbreak investigations, on wild animal sample transportation, impact of climate change on wild animal health and then on collection, submission and storage of wild animal diagnostic specimen.

### **7.5. Presentation of the draft Terrestrial Animal Health Code Chapter on emergency standards**

Ms Madison Wimmers presented to the Working Group the new draft chapter of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code being developed by the WOA *ad hoc* Group on veterinary emergencies. She informed the Working Group that the chapter was proposed to take an all-hazards approach and be applicable to all terrestrial animals, and had been reviewed by the Terrestrial Animal Health Code Commission, the Aquatic animal Health Code Commission and one Member of the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases. She mentioned that a follow-up meeting would be organised in June 2025 to refine the chapter by removing duplications, ensure alignment with other chapters, and edited for consistency and linkages with established standards, with the aim to make the chapter concise and avoid overly prescriptive details. She invited the Working Group to consider the *ad hoc* Group report and to review the structure of the draft chapter, its overall direction, and its utility for Members in the applicability of emergency management in the context of wildlife.

### Comments

- The Working Group made comments on the draft chapter in particular on the communication aspect (coordinating messages between different sectors), legal aspects (complexities around land rights and access for example around indigenous or protected areas, international regulations, species or diagnostic sample movements), the welfare aspect which is very important for wildlife response especially regarding natural hazards, and lastly the need to involve wildlife experts in addition to veterinarians (who may have expertise on domestic animals but less on wildlife) in emergency response frameworks and training.

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- The Working Group suggested to develop an emergency case study where wildlife is involved to help guide and highlight to the *ad hoc* Group where wildlife health perspectives can and should be taken into account when editing the chapter content.
  - The Working Group mentioned its interest in being kept informed on the development of this chapter. Once it has been finalised, the Working Group would discuss the opportunity to develop guidelines for the interpretation of this standard specifically regarding wildlife.

## 8. Scientific knowledge developed and disseminated

### 8.1. HPAI

The Working Group discussed the current high pathogenicity avian influenza situation in wildlife worldwide, in particular in Antarctica and the southern hemisphere, and the surveillance activities and data collected by WOAHA over the last 6 months. It noted that the mortality of Antarctic wildlife has been vastly underestimated due to limitations in accessibility, survey effort and data transparency. It highlighted the urgent need for enhanced support and collaboration from national animal health services and National Antarctic Programs and that sequencing of viral genomes from all wildlife (particularly in South America and Antarctic wildlife) is critical to understand viral spread and evolution.

#### Recommendations

- The Working Group decided to review the documents that have been developed until now by WOAHA on HPAI in wildlife and to identify opportunities and needs for additional guidelines or for more outreach. The Working Group also agreed that the importance of enhancing surveillance of HPAI worldwide in wildlife should be communicated to the Delegates at the next General Session and later through webinars to discuss how to address and manage this disease in wildlife, and finally to consider developing best practices on outbreak prevention and management for Members. The Working Group also suggested that HPAI in wildlife be a technical item at one of the next General Sessions.

### 8.2. Bluetongue statement

Dr Cayol presented, in follow-up of the last meeting of the Working Group (November 2024), a draft statement on the direct and indirect impacts of bluetongue on wildlife in Europe.

#### Comments

- The Working Group reviewed the document, suggested some comments including not limiting it to Europe and to include other regions where the diseases is present endemically like America. The document will be released as a statement of the Working Group.

### 8.3. WOAHA Scientific documents (Guidelines, Guidance and Statement): definition and distinction

The Working Group, in the framework of its activities, has developed different type of documents, ranging from a short text to inform or alert the international community on a specific health event in wildlife to a long and scientifically robust document to support the WOAHA Member Countries in their management of wildlife health. The purpose of the item was, for the Working Group, to define the different types of documents that it can produce or support.

#### Outcome

The Working Group suggested that WOAHA finalize these definitions based on their inputs, in particular to pay attention to the translations in different languages of the terms used to define the different types of documents mentioned in the document shared. However, the Working Group pointed out that in case of any official adoption of definition and distinction of these scientific documents by WOAHA at the global level, the definitions used and followed should be aligned with those used by WOAHA.

### 8.4. Risk mitigation strategy for global wildlife health information sharing

Dr Cayol informed the Working Group that a scientific paper is being developed by a wide consortium of authors on risk mitigation strategies for wildlife health data sharing. The content of this paper is based on the work of the *ad hoc* group for NG-WHIS and on several focused discussions led by WOAHA, some of which were facilitated by Dr Jonathan

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Sleeman (member of the Working Group). The different members of the Working Group were invited to contribute to this scientific paper.

Outcome:

- Members of the Working Group agreed to be contributors or reviewers of this scientific paper.

## **9. Capacity in wildlife health management**

### **9.1. Guidelines for wildlife surveillance (diseases, pathogens, toxins)**

The Working Group was informed that the WOAH-IUCN Guidelines for surveillance of diseases, pathogens and toxic agents in free-ranging wildlife, released in September 2024, has been already disseminated to the network of Collaborating centres working on wildlife health, the network of National Focal Points for Wildlife, the Collaborative Partnership for Wildlife, The Alliance, and the Wildlife Disease Association. It was also informed of a training workshop organised in Liberia based on these guidelines for the wildlife authorities of the Country. It was requested to the Working Group to advise on additional ways to disseminate these guidelines and on additional opportunities to organise training workshops in WOAH Member Countries.

Comments:

- The members of the Working Group mentioned that they had already disseminated the guidelines through their own networks. The Working Group suggested, if budget allows it, organizing training workshops at the national level. The Working Group also pointed out that Webinars could be a good and low-cost way to disseminate the guidelines and to bring together all the stakeholders that should be involved in wildlife health surveillance (i.e. Veterinary services, wildlife authorities and Public health). All these initiatives could be done with the support of Collaborating centres on Wildlife health.

### **9.2. Guidelines on wildlife trade**

The Working Group was informed that the WOAH Guidelines for addressing disease risks in the wildlife trade, released in May 2024, had been already disseminated to the network of Collaborating centres working on wildlife health, the network of National Focal Points for Wildlife, the Collaborative Partnership for Wildlife, The Alliance, and the Wildlife Disease Association. It was also informed of a training workshop organised, as a pilot, in Thailand (in December 2023 and April 2024) on these guidelines for the veterinary service of the Country, and that there is interest from Cambodia to host such a training workshop in the future. It was requested to the Working Group to provide advice on how to better disseminate these guidelines and on additional opportunities to organise training workshops in WOAH Member Countries.

Comments:

- The members of the Working Group mentioned that they had already disseminated the guidelines through their own networks. The Working Group suggested, if budget allows it, to organize training workshop at the national level. The Working Group also pointed out that Webinars could be a good and low-cost initiative to diffuse the guidelines and to convene all the stakeholders that should be involved in risk analysis in the wildlife trade (i.e. Veterinary services, law enforcement authorities, wildlife authorities, border patrol, and Public health). All these initiatives could be done with the support of Collaborating centres on Wildlife health.

## **10. Awareness and advocacy tools for the promotion and enhancement of wildlife health**

### **10.1. Wildlife trade side event during the General Session**

The Working Group was informed that the Preparedness and Resilience department (PRD) is organizing a side event focusing on wildlife trade at the WOAH 92<sup>nd</sup> General Session, to be held at Maison de la Chimie in Paris on May 27<sup>th</sup> and reviewed the provisional agenda.

Comment:

- The Working Group commended the initiative and made some comments and suggestions on the concept note presented.

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## 11. Any other business

### 11.1. Explore how the global availability of Veterinary Medicinal Products (VMP) could be increased for wildlife animals

Dr Mária Szabó informed the Working Group that the 7<sup>th</sup> VICH (International Cooperation on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Product) public conference, hosted by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) last year on 13-14 November 2024, and Pre-Forum and Forum meeting held from 11 to 12 November 2024, included an item and discussion on "Regulatory approach to unmet needs (regulatory flexibilities, encouraging innovation, limited use, minor use minor species)". She mentioned that, during the meeting, WOAAH offered its support to explore how the global availability of Veterinary Medicinal Products could be increased for wild animals. WOAAH is an associate member of VICH and plays a pivotal role in this initiative, in collaboration with its Collaborating Center for Veterinary Medicinal Products (ANSES - French National Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety).

#### Comments:

- The Working Group thanked Dr Szabó for involving them in this issue. The Working Group proposed to provide relevant contact persons and organizations working with veterinary medicinal products for wildlife and to consider engaging the network of Collaborating Centres working on wildlife and relevant international partners on this issue.

### 11.2. Diclofenac in veterinarian practice and impact on vulture population worldwide

The Working Group was informed that the use of diclofenac in veterinary practice (particularly in cattle) led to a catastrophic decline of up to 99.7% in vulture populations across India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh. As a result of the collapse of the ecosystem services the vultures used to provide (e.g. removing carcasses), an increase of feral dogs and consequently an increase in the cases of rabies in rural communities. A [recent study](#) suggests that over 500,000 human extra deaths were linked to the collapse of vulture populations.

#### Comments and Recommendations:

- The Working Group pointed out that they were well aware of the issue, and highlighted that this was further proof that the health of humans, domestic and wild animals and the wider environment are closely linked and interdependent and that the One Health approach is crucial.
- The Working Group suggested alerting the Delegates to the impact of diclofenac used in livestock on vulture populations at the next General Session and encouraging the Members to use alternatives to Diclofenac as well as apply alternative management processes where relevant (e.g. see [assessment report from the Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use](#) – European Medicines Agency).
- The Working Group also agreed to be involved in a joint statement with CMS and IUCN on this issue.

### 11.3. Pathogen spillover livestock – wildlife: potential impact in Europe for wildlife with FMD and PPR

Dr Alexandre Fediaevsky provided the disease situation regarding the current FMD outbreaks in Europe and he mentioned the need for clarification from different national authorities regarding the role of wildlife in the epidemiology of the disease. He mentioned also that several news items talked about the fact that if wildlife was infected, this could lead to significant difficulties for the eradication and control of the disease. Whilst the role of the African buffalo as a disease reservoir for FMD is well known in Africa, this is not so clear for other wild species present in Europe. He also presented the current situation regarding PPR outbreaks in Europe, with similar questions.

#### Recommendation:

- Given that wildlife are unlikely to be epidemiologically important during an FMD outbreak, control measures should focus on livestock, including on-farm biosecurity. If wildlife culling is being considered, the ecological, sociological, and epidemiological contexts have to be fully considered to inform decisions and determine potential benefits and adverse consequences. There must be strong evidence that wildlife contribute to the maintenance and transmission of the virus in the absence of domestic animal infection to avoid unnecessary culling, inadvertent spread of disease, and impact on wildlife populations and biodiversity.
- Regarding PPR, the Working Group suggested to refer to the guidelines on the management of PPR in wildlife published jointly by WOAAH and FAO, in 2022.

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**12. Date of next meeting and discussion on modality (IP or distance)**

The Working Group proposed the following dates for its next meeting: from Monday 10 to Friday 14 November 2025 (with Tuesday a day off as a bank holiday in France).

**13. Adoption of the report**

The report was adopted by the Working Group.

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.../Annexes

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## Annex I.

### Adopted Agenda

#### MEETING OF THE WOAHP WORKING GROUP ON WILDLIFE

Paris (France), 22 to 25 April 2025

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1. **Opening**
2. **Adoption of agenda and designation of the rapporteur**
3. **Working Group on Wildlife – updated Terms of reference**
4. **Follow-up of the WGW work plan**
5. **Wildlife Health Framework – Discussion on the evaluation of the current Wildlife Health Framework [WHF] (define evaluation question) and vision (final objective) for the development of the next WHF**
  - 5.1. Evaluation of the current WHF – Involvement of the WGW
  - 5.2. Working session – Vision (final objective) of the WGW for the Next WHF (2026-2030)
6. **Multisectoral coordination and collaboration**
  - 6.1. Network of Collaborating Centres working on wildlife (update)
  - 6.2. Network of National Wildlife Focal Points (update)
  - 6.3. Partnership with CITES (update)
  - 6.4. The Alliance against health risk in wildlife trade
  - 6.5. CIC Statement on the lead ammunition
  - 6.6. Partnership with WDA (update)
  - 6.7. Upcoming events: objectives and potential achievements
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
  - 7.2. Guidelines on the Wildlife livestock interaction
  - 7.3. IUCN Guidelines on wildlife – human conflict and coexistence
  - 7.4. Development of one Guidelines for 2025/2026
  - 7.5. Presentation of the Code Chapter on emergencies and SIMEX
8. **Scientific knowledge developed and disseminated**
  - 8.1. HPAI
  - 8.2. Bluetongue statement
  - 8.3. WOAHP Scientific documents (Guidelines, Guidance and Statement): definition and distinction
  - 8.4. Risk mitigation strategy for global wildlife health information sharing
9. **Capacity in wildlife health management**
  - 9.1. Guidelines for wildlife surveillance (diseases, pathogens, toxins)
  - 9.2. Guidelines on wildlife trade

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10. **Awareness and advocacy tools for the promotion and enhancement of wildlife health**

10.1. Wildlife trade side event during the General Session

11. **Any other business**

11.1. Explore how the global availability of Veterinary Medicinal Products (VMP) could be increased for wildlife animals

11.2. Diclofenac in veterinarian practice and impact on vulture population worldwide

11.3. Pathogen spillover livestock – wildlife: potential impact in Europe for wildlife with FMD and PPR

12. **Date of next meeting and discussion on modality (IP or distance)**

13. **Adoption of the report**

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## Annex II.

### List of Participants

#### MEETING OF THE WOAHP WORKING GROUP ON WILDLIFE

Paris, 22 to 25 April 2025

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#### MEMBERS

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**Dr William B. Karesh (Chair)**  
President  
One Health Concepts  
New York, NY.  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Dr Mwansa Mathilda Songe**  
Researcher and Senior Lecturer  
(Veterinary Pathology and Aquatic  
Animal Health)  
School of Veterinary Medicine,  
University of Zambia  
ZAMBIA

**Dr Jonathan Sleeman**  
Adjunct Professor  
Faculty of Veterinary Science  
Mahidol University, Bangkok  
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Dr Markus Hofmeyr**  
*(Invited but could not attend)*  
Director of the Rhino Recovery Fund  
Wildlife Conservation Network  
209 Mississippi Street  
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Dr Marcela Uhart**  
Latin America Program  
One Health Institute  
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**Dr Rupert Woods**  
Chief executive officer at Wildlife  
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**Prof. Dolores Gavier-Widén**  
Head of Department of Pathology  
and Wildlife Diseases  
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**Dr Anna Wong**  
Senior Director/Wildlife Trade  
National Parks Board Headquarters  
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#### OBSERVERS

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**Dr Misheck Mulumba**  
ARC-Ondertsepoort Veterinary Institute  
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Onderstepoort  
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SOUTH AFRICA

#### WOAHP HEADQUARTERS

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**Dr Alexandre Fediaevsky**  
Head  
Preparedness and Resilience  
Department

**Dr Claire Cayol**  
Information Manager  
Preparedness and Resilience  
Department

**Dr Paolo Tizzani**  
Epidemiologist  
World Animal Health Information  
and Analysis Department

**Ms Sophie Muset**  
Program Manager,  
Preparedness and Resilience  
Department

**Dr François Diaz**  
Scientific Coordinator for bees and  
wildlife  
Preparedness and Resilience  
Department

**Dr Dharmaveer Shetty**  
Program Manager  
Preparedness and Resilience  
Department

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## TERMS OF REFERENCE

Founded in 1994, this Working Group on Wildlife (WGW) informs and advises WOA on health issues related to wild animals, whether in the wild or in captivity, and wildlife health surveillance, within a One Health framework, and considering biodiversity conservation. The Working Group comprises world-leading scientific experts in their subject areas and reports to the WOA Director General.

### Purpose and responsibilities

The Working Group on Wildlife (WGW):

1. Report to the WOA Director General who will transmit the report to the appropriate WOA governing and technical entities to ensure integration of wildlife health topics into WOA business -
2. Maintain global perspective and foresight on wildlife health and biodiversity and their interface with domestic animal health and veterinary public health.
3. Assist the WOA Director General, the Scientific Commission and other WOA Specialist Commissions as well as the Epidemic intelligence Framework to assess risks and make risk management recommendations.
4. Support and contribute to the development of WOA Standards and Guidelines, associated with wildlife health and biodiversity conservation.
5. Advise WOA regarding the development and implementation of the WOA Wildlife Health Programme, as well as all WOA Strategies where wildlife health is relevant, providing strategic vision and recommendations to ensure its relevance for the Member Countries.
6. Assist WOA in receiving, recording, and interpreting information on wildlife disease, including emerging diseases, vector borne diseases, zoonosis and invasive species occurrence from official sources through WAHIS, and support an international network to provide information from non-official sources.
7. Address specific issues relevant to wildlife health referred to the Working Group by the WOA Director General, which may include matters recommended by Specialist Commissions, Members or WOA itself.
8. Assist WOA in acquiring, communicating and disseminating information about wildlife health, ecosystem health and biodiversity conservation, and represent WOA as requested.
9. Support WOA in its interactions and collaborations with international organisations working on the animal, human and environmental health interface, and with the wider stakeholder community engaged in these issues.

### Membership

1. All members of the WGW shall be specialists recognised at an international level, and shall be selected for their competence (i.e., more than 10 years of work expertise on wildlife health and related sectors such as environment, national parks, wildlife conservation, wildlife trade, aquatic animals, and/or ideally across sectors [One Health]); this competence may have been acquired whilst working in veterinary practice, academia, competent authorities and/or private sector and by a recorded track of high-quality publications.
2. In addition to the aforementioned expertise recognition, membership should lead to a balanced and adequate geographic representation, as well as a balanced representation in gender.
3. Identification of candidates will be done through consultation of WOA Collaborating Centres, the Academic sector, reference laboratories, regional and subregional offices, relevant organisations or any other stakeholder within

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WOAH's network. This process may include setting up an open call for expression of interest. WGW Secretariat will gather resumés and other relevant documentation provided by candidates if they agree on it, for further consideration by the Director General.

4. Members will be appointed by the Director General for a period of 3 years with re-appointment for additional 3-year terms based on the level of engagement and extent and quality of work conducted by the member within the WGW. In cases of consistent non-participation (e.g., repeated absence, failure to contribute, or disregard for the ToRs), the Director General may initiate a formal review process, in consultation with the Chair, Secretariat, and other members as appropriate, to determine appropriate action. Members shall be formally notified of any decision, with a clear rationale and effective date.
5. At each annual Session, the Director General shall report its composition to the World Assembly of Delegates ("the Assembly") for information.
6. In the exercise of their functions, members shall serve WOAHP WGW exclusively; while in that capacity they may not request or receive instructions from any government or authority external to WOAHP to ensure impartiality.
7. Members shall provide the Director General with a statement covering potential conflicts of interest between themselves and any commercial entity in accordance with the procedure established by the Director General.
8. Members shall respect the legitimate confidentiality of information with which they may be entrusted in the performance of their functions and shall submit such an undertaking to the Director General.
9. The WGW should be composed of at least a Chairperson, a rapporteur and not less than two other ordinary members at any given time.

#### **Mode of Operation**

1. The WGW shall meet at least twice a year, usually in April or June and November or December, ideally in-person in WOAHP Headquarters, with hybrid or fully virtual forms remaining open depending on the overall context. These meetings will be open to members of the Preparedness and Resilience Department, as well as to members of other Departments, when deemed relevant for the purposes of the agenda. When specific expertise not present in the group is needed, the WGW shall welcome external attendees. Observers might attend the meetings when required.
2. Routine business between meetings should be addressed by the WGW or a subgroup of the WGW via email exchanges with the support of the Secretariat.
3. The Working Group will use the WOAHP wildlife programme, regularly updated, as the skeleton of their bi-annual meeting agenda and as their work plan.
4. The WGW shall normally reach decisions by consent; if consent cannot be reached, the chair of the Group may take the final decision, however the opinion of the other members of the Group will be mentioned in the report.
5. The operating language of the WGW will be English.
6. The WGW will provide an update of their activities to the Director General and to Members during the WOAHP General Session.
7. The WGW will provide a written report of its meetings and teleconferences to the WOAHP Director General. The reports will be available for WOAHP Members on the organisation's website.
8. The Director General may request individual WGW members to participate in *ad hoc* Groups or Subgroups, or to represent WOAHP in relevant meetings or conferences where wildlife health expertise is requested.
9. Representatives of international organisations, that have a cooperation agreement with WOAHP, may be invited to participate as active observers at their own cost, depending on the agenda, in the WOAHP WGW biannual meetings.
10. Members of the WGW receive per diem and travel compensations according to WOAHP rules in place.

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### **Chair**

1. The chair shall be appointed by the Director General for a period of 3 years in consultation with the WGW, with possible re-appointments for additional 3-year terms.
2. The chair liaises with the Secretariat on behalf of the WGW.
3. The chair revises and approves the agenda compiled by the Secretariat for the WGW biannual meetings.
4. The chair moderates the WGW biannual meetings with support of the Secretariat and enumerates the agreed actions and decisions made by the WGW to be included in its meeting report.
5. The chair is responsible for reporting the WGW activities to the Director General and to Members during the WOA's annual General Session with support of the Secretariat.
6. The chair will maintain additional regular communication with the WOA's Preparedness and Resilience Department and other Departments as appropriate.
7. In case of absence or impediment for a meeting or event, the chair can nominate a member of the working group as interim acting chair for the time of the meeting or event.

### **Rapporteur**

1. The rapporteur will be appointed by the chair at the beginning of each meeting.
2. The rapporteur will revise and provide input for the proceedings of the WGW meeting within two weeks of receiving these. The proceedings will include key resolutions and workplan progress made by the WGW and will be prepared with the support of the WOA's secretariat.

### **Secretariat**

1. The secretariat prepares and sends formal meeting invitations on behalf of WOA to members of the WGW and observers, if any, via email. Delegates of countries where members of WGW reside will also be included for information.
2. The secretariat coordinates venue needs for face-to-face meetings.
3. The secretariat assists in the collation and preparation of meeting working documents and agenda with the input of the WGW chair.
4. The secretariat prepares meeting report drafts under the oversight of the WGW rapporteur. The meeting reports shall be reviewed by the WGW Chair and the Head of the Preparedness and Resilience Department. The final report shall be signed off by the Deputy Director General or the Director General and translated into the WOA's official languages.
5. The secretariat provides assistance in the preparation of technical documents developed by the WGW.
6. The secretariat updates the WGW webpage with meeting reports and technical documents.
7. The secretariat facilitates communication between WGW and specialist Commissions.
8. The secretariat interacts with the WGW during the whole year, fostering cohesion and engagement.

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