



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WILDLIFE VETERINARIANS

SPRING 2006

REFLECTIONS ON THE AVMA COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Paul L. Barrows DVM, Ph.D.

Among the AVMA's established Councils and Committees, the Committee on Environmental Issues (CEI), formerly the Committee on Environmental Affairs, is one of the most important to the wildlife community. Committee members represent broad elements within the profession, to include: veterinary toxicology; aquatic animal medicine; bovine, small ruminant and swine practitioners; AAHA; government service; veterinary ecology; preventive medicine; and many others. The Committee in its present form was established by the AVMA Executive Board in April 2001 following successful efforts to retain the committee subsequent to an earlier AVMA "sunset review". Representative term lengths are 3 years, with the opportunity of being renominated for a second 3 years. Importantly, the AAWV and the AAZV have combined representation on the CEI. I have been privileged to serve as the AAWV/AAZV representative for the past 6 years.

Among the numerous charges and objectives of the committee are to: address the veterinarian's role in environmental matters; contribute to the development of AVMA policy and position statements on environmental issues impacting the profession; assist AVMA regarding legislative, research, public relations and continuing education initiatives; and raise awareness about environmental career opportunities in veterinary medicine. The Committee meets twice a year in Schaumburg, IL. Each member is provided an extensive "read ahead" agenda, with accompanying support material. As the AAWV/AAZV representative, I would contact the organizations' leaderships requesting topics, concerns, and issues of import which I would then take to the CEI for consideration and action where appropriate. Additionally, I would offer opinions and perspectives on a host of other issues brought before the Committee. It has been my goal to represent and speak on behalf of what I believed to be the best interests of our two organizations and their constituents.

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President's Message

MEMBERS ARE ACTIVE AND DIVERSE GROUP MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Kirsten Gilardi

My principal role at the UC Davis Wildlife Health Center is to run our marine wildlife and ecosystem health program, the SeaDoc Society. We apply principles of diagnostics and therapeutics to marine management and conservation issues and in so doing, work with marine scientists, fisheries managers, NGOs, and coastal residents as much—if not more often—than with veterinarians.

A few weeks ago, the SeaDoc Society convened a workshop in Baja California, Mexico to launch a "Vital Signs" monitoring program for the Baja California Pacific coastal ocean. We invited academic and government scientists, and conservationists from both sides of the border, most of whom we were meeting for the first time. Imagine our very pleasant surprise to discover that a significant number of the 40+ Mexican and American guests were veterinarians, all of whom were now working in the realm of marine science, natural resource management and conservation.

Well, upon a quick glance through completed membership surveys we're receiving back from many of you, I shouldn't have been so surprised. In fact, these member surveys are revealing a similar level of diversity in the things we AAWV members do as veterinarians working with wildlife. We are a group of practitioners, researchers, rehabilitators and policymakers applying our skills as veterinarians in a variety of realms, including the U.S. military, private practice, state and federal resource agencies and at universities. As the anxious eyes of the world watch H5N1 avian influenza makes its way around the globe, our organization's members and the breadth of expertise and knowledge we represent is—and will continue to play—a critical role in research and policy that protects animal and human health.

(Continued page 2)

(AVMA Committee—from page 1)

It would be impossible within the confines of this brief synopsis to identify the dozens and dozens of topics, legislations, policies, position statements, and the like which we have dealt with over these 6 years. Some of those most directly associated with AAWV interests that I have pursued include: developing information relating to urban wildlife; organizing an AVMA session (Nashville, '02) on the negative impacts of feral cats and Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) programs; serving as a speaker on the TNR issue at the AVMA's Animal Welfare Forum in 2003; and drafting proposed revisions to AVMA positions on traps and trapping. One of my primary objectives while serving on the CEI was to educate CEI and AVMA members regarding the importance of non-veterinary wildlife professionals, be they disease experts, management specialists, or professional organizations. At nearly every meeting I mentioned or cited The Wildlife Society and its views on topics we were addressing. The importance and relevance of The International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) and the US Animal Health Association (USAHA), along with their respective committees dealing with wildlife diseases and health, were frequently included in my discussions with CEI members. Emphasis on the essential importance of the AVMA communicating with both veterinary and non-veterinary wildlife health and management professionals whenever wildlife related issues arise was a regular part of my efforts to "educate". I found CEI members to be very open to learning more about the roles wildlife veterinarians and other wildlife disease and management professionals play, the challenges they face, and the vital contributions they make to our nations wildlife, livestock, and human health on a daily basis.

As AAWV members, you have a direct conduit to the CEI and the AVMA. Issues of import or concern should be conveyed to AAWV President Kirsten Gilardi, who will communicate with your representative on the CEI. I will continue to be your representative until after the AVMA annual meeting in Hawaii this summer. Dr. R. Scott Larsen to succeed me as your representative for the next three years.

As an AAWV member dating back to the inception of the organization, nothing I have done has been more rewarding than representing AAWV on this Committee. I have learned a huge amount about things I might otherwise have missed, and hopefully I have made positive contributions and educated others about the vital importance of the AAWV and its members.

(President's Message—from page 1)

A few quick notes...

2006 Membership Survey: Thanks to everyone who took the time to complete and return the membership surveys distributed in our Winter 2006 newsletter. We've had a terrific response and I'm looking forward to presenting the results at our annual business meeting in Storrs, CT when we meet with the WDA, as well as in the Summer 2006 newsletter.

New appointments to AVMA committees: It is my pleasure to announce that AAWV member Dr. Ted Mashima, University of Virginia-Maryland Center for Corporate Veterinary Medicine, has been appointed to a new 6-member AVMA Animal Welfare Advisory Committee to represent the interests of wildlife and exotic animal medicine. Ted will represent the AAWV and American Association of Zoo Veterinarians on this committee. Also, Dr. Scott Larsen has been appointed to succeed Paul Barrows as the AAWV and AAZV's joint representative on the AVMA Committee on Environmental Issues. Huge thanks to Ted and Scott for their willingness to represent our organization on these two important committees.

AAWV co-hosting the WDA meeting August 6-10 in Storrs, CT: The AAWV will hold its annual business meeting Aug. 8, 5-6 P.M. in conjunction with the 2006 WDA meeting, and along with the AAZV will co-chair a session on "Advancing Global Health: Linking Captive and Free-Ranging Wildlife Health". For more information, see the announcement next page and visit the website. I encourage you to attend the conference and our business meeting: this will be our annual opportunity to get members together in the same room for discussion and decisions, so hope to see you there! Also, the AAWV and the WDA are co-hosting a special session at the September 2006 meeting of The Wildlife Society in Anchorage, AK, titled "Disease Impacts on Wildlife Management and Conservation Efforts." Huge thanks to Jonathan Sleeman, Kimberlee Beckmen, and Scott Larsen for their efforts in planning and organizing AAWV's involvement in these upcoming conferences.

UPCOMING MEETINGS IN 2006

- May 6-10** Annual Meeting of the International Association of Aquatic Animal Medicine, Nassau, Bahamas. For more information see www.wyndhamnassauresort.com/
- Jun 17-21** 86th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists. Amherst, MA. For more information, go to www.mammalsociety.org or the meeting website at <http://asm06.org/>
- Jun 24-29** 20th Annual Meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology. San Jose, California, USA. For more information see <http://conbio.net/SCB/Activities/Meetings/>
- Jul 15-19** 143rd AVMA Annual Convention. Honolulu, Hawaii. For more information go to www.avmaconvention.org/
- Aug 6-11** Annual Meeting of the Wildlife Disease Association. University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT. For more information go to www.wildlifedisease.org/meetings.htm
- Sep 20-24** Annual meeting of the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians. Tampa, Florida. For more information see www.aazv.org/meetings.htm
- Sep 23-27** 13th Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society, Anchorage, Alaska. For more information see www.wildlife.org/conference/

Advancing Global Health: Facing Disease Issues at the Wildlife, Human, and Livestock Interface

The 55th Annual Meeting of the Wildlife Disease Association in conjunction with the AAWV will be held August 6-10, 2006 on the main campus of the University of Connecticut in Storrs, Connecticut, USA. With news headlines that make avian influenza, SARS, Ebola, and West Nile virus household words, it is apparent that the health of wildlife is inextricably linked to that of people and domestic animals. Diseases that cross the wildlife, human and livestock interface have enormous health, economic, and social ramifications. Consequently, there is a great need to improve collaboration and communication among wildlife, livestock and human health practitioners.

The WDA and the AAWV invite members from a variety of human and animal health disciplines to attend a conference

entitled "Advancing Global Health: Facing Disease Issues at the Wildlife, Human, and Livestock Interface". This meeting will bring together animal and human health practitioners in one forum to discuss these increasingly challenging issues.

Submission deadline for presentations and posters is May 1, 2006, and can be on any topic of wildlife health. Submit abstracts as an email attachment in MS- Word or OpenOffice format to wda.2006@gmail.com. The length should not exceed 250 words. The deadline for students wishing to be considered for the Terry Amundson Student Presentation Award or the Wildlife Disease Association Graduate Student Research Recognition Award is April 20, 2006. For more information, see www.conferences.uconn.edu/wildlife/index.html.

An Invitation from The American College of Zoological Medicine

Dear AAWV members:

For those of you who may be unfamiliar with our organization, we would like to introduce ourselves. The mission of the ACZM is to further the health and well being of captive and free-ranging wild animals by integrating the principles of ecology, conservation and veterinary medicine. Our membership has a tremendously diverse range of medical expertise in such areas as aquatic animal medicine, wildlife medicine, ecosystem health, reptile medicine, avian medicine, conservation medicine, zoo medicine, exotic pet medicine and numerous others. We believe this broad diversity is what gives this veterinary specialty college its unique value.

If you are interested in joining the ACZM, we would like to help guide you through the certification process. Becoming a board certified specialist is a challenging venture for anyone and we recognize that both the process to credential for the examination and the commitment to study and pass the two-day examination is significant. To assist those who are interested, a mentor from the ACZM is assigned to potential candidates. In addition, the ACZM supports several board review classes throughout the year to aid individuals in preparing for the examination [See listing under OPPORTUNITIES, pg. 5].

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss with your membership more about our college and its programs. Our website at ACZM.org also provides a wealth of information.

Sincerely yours,

The ACZM Executive Board

INITIATIVE OUTLINES STRATEGIES FOR WILDLIFE HEALTH IN THE US

Input Requested from AAWV Members by July 1

The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) has drafted a National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative, and is currently seeking input on this draft from wildlife health agencies and organizations. This Initiative has been developed by an IAFWA working group, the Fish and Wildlife Health Committee, chaired by Becky Humphries (Minnesota DNR) and comprised of representatives of state and federal wildlife agencies. The working group has met several times over the last year to develop this draft plan, and is now seeking input from as many other agencies and organizations as possible, including the AAWV members.

The Initiative is important, as it outlines goals and strategies for a regionally-focused yet unified approach to wildlife health in the United States, which will serve as guidelines for state and federal natural resource agencies. Please take the time to view the draft document, which is posted on the Members page of our website (www.aawv.net). Forward your comments to Kirsten Gilardi (kvgilardi@ucdavis.edu) no later than **July 1, 2006**. Kirsten will assemble AAWV member comments on the draft and present it for discussion at our August 8, 2006 business meeting in Storrs, CT. A final copy of AAWV comments on the draft National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative will be forwarded to IAFWA by mid-August 2006.

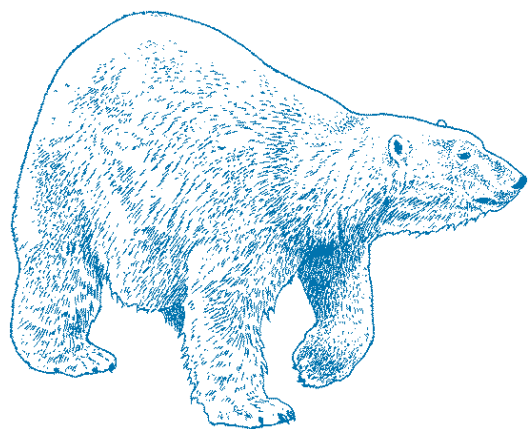
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSIDERS LISTING POLAR BEARS UNDER ESA

On February 16, 2005 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was petitioned to list the polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, with additional information supporting the petition submitted in December 2005. The petition contained detailed information on the natural history and biology of the polar bear and on the current status and distribution of and perceived threats to the species. On February 8, 2006 the USFWS announced that the petition presented substantial scientific and commercial information indicating that the listing may be warranted. As a result, the agency has initiated a status review of the polar bear to determine if the species should be proposed for listing and opened a 60-day public comment period to give all interested parties an opportunity to provide information on the status of the polar bear throughout its range.

The USFWS is soliciting scientific and commercial information regarding this species, including information on population distribution, density and trends, taxonomy, food habits and habitat selection (especially denning habitat); information on the short- and long-term effects of climate change and sea ice change on the distribution and abundance of polar bears and their principal prey; information on the effects of other potential threats to the species, including oil and gas development, contaminants, hunting and poaching, and; information concerning whether any populations of the species may qualify as distinct population segments.

At the conclusion of the status review, a 12-month finding will be published announcing the USFWS' determination. If the listing is concluded to be warranted, the USFWS will publish a proposed rule to list the species at the end of the 12-month process, unless the action is precluded by the need to undertake higher priority actions on other species.

You can read the finding and obtain information on how to provide comments in the Federal Register after February 9, or by contacting the Service's Marine Mammals Management office at (907) 786-3800.



AVMA LAUNCHES ONLINE DATABASE—AQUAVETS.COM

Recognizing the growing demand among pet owners, aquaculture industries, veterinarians and other professionals, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has partnered with others to create AquaVets.com, the first free online database of aquatic animal veterinarians and diagnostic laboratories.

AquaVets.com allows users to perform searches of a comprehensive database that pools information on aquatic veterinarians and diagnostic laboratories. Users can search by species type, disease, location and other categories to quickly scan the 2,300 veterinarians and 110 diagnostic laboratories in the system and find the most appropriate resource.

"The AVMA recognized that aquaculture is the fastest growing segment of agriculture," said AVMA President Dr. Henry E. Childers. "More than 47 percent of all animal protein consumed is seafood, one-third of which is farmed, yet no single source of information on how to locate aquatic veterinarians or diagnostic laboratories existed. This has left aquaculture producers, animal owners, government agencies and other veterinarians at a disadvantage."

AquaVets.com was developed through the collaborative efforts of the AVMA, Aquaculture Underwriting and Management Services and GlobalVetLink as part of the National Risk Management Feasibility Program for Aquaculture. Partial financial support was provided by the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation of the United States Department of Agriculture Risk Management Agency.

For more information contact Sharon Curtis Granskog at 847-285-6619 or sgranskog@avma.org

NEW PUBLISHER FOCUSES ON WILDLIFE HEALTH

Corvus Publishing is a new publisher concentrating on books related to wildlife health and disease, and is interested in hearing from authors with manuscripts or manuscript ideas pertaining to this field. Corvus Publishing offers subsidized publishing arrangements, allowing for production of more specialized books for smaller target audiences and payment of higher royalty rates to authors. Arrangements with authors normally requires contribution of 50% of the printing and first year's advertising costs. In return, authors receive royalties of 50% of the selling price of all books sold. The expenses are not as high as most authors might imagine and authors can expect to more than recoup their investment after the book is published.

For additional information or if you have a manuscript or an idea for a manuscript, please contact Dennis Padovan, publisher, Corvus Publishing Company, 6021 South Shore Road, Anacortes, WA 98221, or email DP@CorvusBooks.com.

OPPORTUNITIES—EMPLOYMENT, FUNDING, EDUCATION

[*Editor's note:* Even though some deadlines are past, we include listings that we think might be of particular interest to the AAWV members.]

Preparation Courses for Board Certification in Zoological Medicine

The annual zoological medicine short course for the ACZM board preparation will be hosted by UC Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine July 14-18, 2006 and is geared to help participants prepare to take ACZM boards. Cost is \$600 and is limited to 25 people. Registration deadline is June 1. For further info: Scott Larsen, (530) 752-2985 or (530) 752-1393 or slarsen@ucdavis.edu.

The ACZM Education Committee will also sponsor a 1-day ultra-short course Saturday, May 6, 8 am to 5 pm in conjunction with the International Association of Aquatic Animal Medicine Annual Conference in Nassau, Bahamas. The course introduces interested veterinarians to the ACZM and explain reasons for becoming a Diplomate of the American College of Zoological Medicine. This course is specifically designed not to overlap with the content covered at the ACZM Short Course at UC Davis. The cost is \$120. Registration deadline is April 14; reg form is available on the IAAAM web site www.iaaam.org or the ACZM web site www.aczm.org. For more information contact Craig A. Harms, North Carolina State University Center for Marine Sciences and Technology, 303 College Circle, Morehead City, NC 28557, or craig_harms@ncsu.edu.

CEO, Centre for Aquatic Health Sciences

The British Columbia Centre for Aquatic Health Sciences is seeking a CEO to focus on operations, strengthening existing collaborations, building new partnerships and executing programs and initiatives that support the CAHS mission statement.

The CEO will provide expert advice on aquatic animal health issues in BC and will have experience in veterinary science; fish farming, and shellfish and wild fish health, welfare and production; seafood quality and safety; veterinary diagnostic laboratory techniques and operations; and federal and provincial fish health and production regulations.

For more info: visit www.caahs-bc.ca. Submit your CV to BC CAHS in person, by email: barb.sharpe@caahs-bc.ca or by Fax (250) 286-6103.

Aquatic Animal Health CE at University of Prince Edward Island

The Canadian Aquaculture Institute, in association with the Atlantic Veterinary College at the University of Prince Edward Island, is offering the following CE programs and workshops during the Spring/Summer 2006:

- June 5-8: Mollusc Health and Disease Management
- Aug. 14-18: Advanced Pathology Techniques for Fish
- Aug. 21-25: Care, Handling and Use of Aquatic Animals
- Molecular Biology Techniques (TBA)

For more info: <http://www.upei.ca/cai> or contact Christine Jackson, Program Development Officer (902) 894-2839; (902) 628-4355 Fax or acjackson@upei.ca.

Associate Veterinarian The Zoological Society of San Diego

The Zoological Society of San Diego is seeking an Associate Veterinarian. Duties will include clinical veterinary care focusing on routine procedures, medical case management, critical care case management, preventive medicine procedures, veterinary support for field projects clinical investigation and publication, and teaching/training of a zoological medicine resident and veterinary students at the San Diego Zoo.

Required qualifications include: 1) a DVM or equivalent degree from an AVMA accredited institution, 2) completion of a two-year training program in zoo and wildlife medicine or equivalent experience, 3) licensed in the State of California or become licensed within six months from beginning of employment, and 4) accreditation or eligible for accreditation to perform cervid tuberculin testing.

For a complete description: www.sandiegozoo.org/CF/jobs/jobdetail.cfm?id=178.

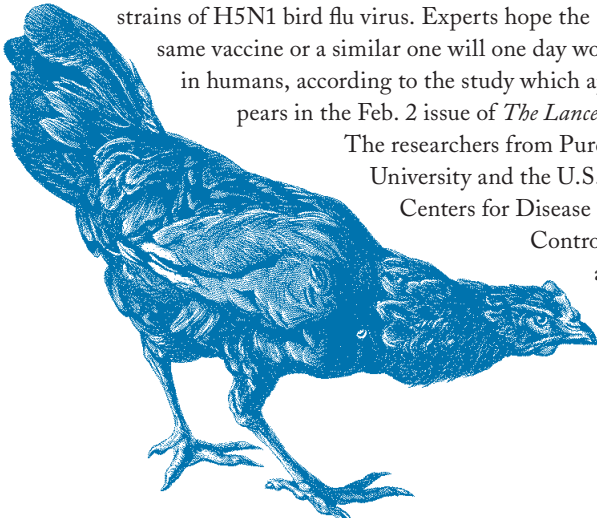
Send a CV: San Diego Zoo, Human Resources Department, Attn: #171002, P.O. Box 120551, San Diego, CA 92112 by April 14, 2006. EOE/AA.

Scientists Create H5N1 Avian Flu Vaccine

From USAHA News Alert Summaries (edited)

Scientists have succeeded in creating a genetically engineered vaccine that protects mice from several different strains of H5N1 bird flu virus. Experts hope the same vaccine or a similar one will one day work in humans, according to the study which appears in the Feb. 2 issue of *The Lancet*.

The researchers from Purdue University and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and



Prevention used a genetically engineered adenovirus to produce hemagglutinin subtype 5 (H5HA), a H5N1 viral protein isolated from a human case of bird flu in Hong Kong in 1997. In using a common cold virus as a carrier the vaccine can be quickly, safely, and easily produced, and because it is active against different virus strains it can be stockpiled for use in a future pandemic. "There are two main advantages [of the new vaccine]," said Dr. Leon Russell, president of the World Veterinary Association and a professor of veterinary integrative biosciences at Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine. "You don't have to use eggs, and it's just one strain, kind of a blanket strain, so it would be much more efficient."

"Our approach did away with the egg," said Dr. Suresh Mittal, co-author of the paper and a professor of virology at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind. The current human flu vaccine given annually contains three strains and its production system is based on chicken-egg technology. The system is cumbersome, requiring millions of fertilized chicken eggs and taking at least six months to produce vaccine. In contrast, the accessibility of the new vaccine will attract the attention of agricultural agencies and zoological institutions.

With the increasing incidence of avian influenza in the European domestic cat population concerns are developing that pet cats may become a source of transmission of AI to their owners. This new vaccine may prove to be a valuable component of veterinary and public health initiatives to control the disease.

More CWD in Alberta

From USAHA News Alert Summaries and Alberta Government News Release (edited) February/March 2006

Alberta has discovered another five cases of chronic wasting disease in the southeast part of the province since late 2005. This brings the total number of confirmed CWD cases in wild deer in Alberta to nine since the first case was discovered in September of 2005. The most recent case was discovered in early March 2006 as a result of disease control actions that removed 1,368 deer in the vicinity of Empress and Acadia Valley in southeast Alberta, where four wild deer were found with CWD in late 2005. Alberta's first case of CWD in wild deer was found about 30 kilometers southeast of Oyen, near the Saskatchewan border in southeast Alberta just north of the Acadia Valley.

Testing by the province is ongoing, with approximately 300 to 400 tests remaining. Additional herd reduction activities began in March, south of Empress and in the Red Deer River Valley south of Acadia Valley in the immediate vicinity of the positive cases found this winter. The disease control actions being taken are based on recommendations of an International Expert Scientific Panel on CWD and guided by Canada's National CWD Control Strategy.

These cases come on the heels of reports from the neighboring province of Saskatchewan that has set record highs for CWD, with 36 animals testing positive this year. Saskatchewan has reported more than 100 cases of the disease in wild deer since its first case in 2000.

Undiagnosed mortality in India's Golden Langurs

From ProMED (edited), Feb 2006

Indian wildlife authorities have sounded an alert over the deaths of a rare primate species from an as yet unidentified cause. A wildlife official in Assam said forest rangers recovered corpses of nine golden langurs in the western district of Kokrajhar, and according to locals and unofficial reports some 15 golden langurs have died so far in the area. The deaths have occurred during mating season for the golden langurs. The golden langur is one of the *world's most endangered species*, found only in a few pockets in western Assam and adjoining Bhutan. The total population of this rare primate species is about 10,000. The primates, first discovered in 1920, live in groups of up to 50; however, they are generally found in smaller troops of about nine.

Indian wildlife authorities are appealing to experts with knowledge in primates to help identify and combat the cause of mortality. One cause being considered is a toxic event linked to the use of chemicals to kill river fish. Wildlife officials in both India and Bhutan are also concerned about a viral etiology. "The golden langurs are found in a small belt and if there is a viral outbreak, then it might hit the species in our area as well. We are keeping a strict vigil and are in touch with our counterparts in Assam," a Bhutanese wildlife official said. Indian wildlife officials have sent samples for forensic tests.

Bacterial pneumonia in New Mexico's Bighorns

From ProMed, March 2006

Since late December 2005 eight Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep from the Gila National Forest have died from a bacterial pneumonia, most likely caused by *Pasteurella haemolytica* or *Pasteurella multocida*. Based on a sample group of 4 mortalities from 16 radio-collared sheep, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish biologist speculate that a quarter of the 100-plus herd might have died from the disease. The mortality rate seems to be lower than they had expected, although they recognize that the sample is small and may not be representative of the true rate.

New Mexico's population of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep has reached nearly 1000 for the first time since the late 1800s. There are herds around Wheeler Peak, Pecos and the Latir Wilderness in the north and the Manzano Mountains, Turkey Creek and the San Francisco River area in the south; it is the San Francisco herd that is infected. Established in the 1960s, the once-strong 150-200 member herd was reduced to a mere 38 by a previous, more devastating pneumonia outbreak that started in the early 1990s.

The goal of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish currently is to keep bighorn sheep separated from domestic animals to prevent the spread of the disease; however, because public lands are often interwoven with private land in New Mexico, it's hard to prevent contact or determine when contact occurred. It is thought that the most recent contact occurred at a private sheep ranch in Arizona, where the San Francisco herd also roams.



Facial cancer killing Tasmanian devils

From ProMED, edited

Tasmanian devils are dying in droves from a facial cancer they may be spreading to each other through bites. In a report in the journal *Nature*, scientists say that a genetic analysis of the cancer shows the tumors are identical in each animal they studied. "We propose that the disease is transmitted by ... an infectious cell line passed directly between the animals through bites they inflict on one another," said Anne-Maree Pearse of the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment (DPIWE) in Tasmania. Pearse and a colleague found the tumors had 13 rather than the normal 14 chromosomes in the Tasmanian devil genome, and their arrangement was identical in tumors taken from different animals.

The cancer produces large tumors on the face and neck of the animals which interfere with feeding; death usually occurs within six months. Up to 80 percent of infected animals have died. Scientists suspect infected animals pass on the malignant cells when they bite each other during a fight or courtship, and suspect that the low genetic diversity of the Tasmanian devil population may reduce their immune response to the cancerous cells transferred during biting. Scientists in Tasmania are trying to separate infected animals from healthy ones to limit the spread of the disease.

Suspected pox kills 200 penguins

From ProMed (edited), Feb 2006

An unidentified illness has killed penguins in the Port Stephens area of West Falkland. As of late February, approximately 200 gentoo penguins and chicks have died at the rookeries at Ten Shilling Bay and Port Stephens Peak. Penguins with similar signs have also been reported from New Island and Albemarle. Initial indications are that the disease is an avian pox virus. The penguins appear weak and have wart-like lesions predominantly on their feet, flippers and around the eyes and beak; however, on badly affected animals, lesions may occur all over the body.

If the causative agent is found to be avian pox, it will be the first time that this disease has been reported in the Falklands and it is probable that there will be no resistance within the penguin population. In 2002, veterinarians from the Wildlife Conservation Society of New York took blood samples from black-browed albatrosses and gentoo penguins and tested for a wide range of avian diseases. It was found that, unlike seabird populations on the coasts of South America, the Falklands populations had no antibodies against the tested diseases. Given this immunologic naiveté, it is feared that mortality from this outbreak may be as high as 50 percent. Outbreaks have occurred in other sub-Antarctic islands, notably avian cholera on Amsterdam Island and South Georgia in 2005 and avian diphtheria in New Zealand.

Falkland agricultural and conservation organizations are responding to the outbreak with sample collection and analysis, and have solicited the help of exotic animal specialists in the UK to aid in identifying the cause of the outbreak. In addition, they are trying to minimize spread of the epizootic by encouraging proper disinfection after visiting penguin colonies, minimizing travel between colonies, and encouraging surveillance for and reporting of infected birds.

AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE NEW EDITOR



Jordan Mencher

Hi all, just a short note to introduce myself as the AAWV Newsletter editor. I grew up in beautiful Nova Scotia, Canada, moved to Massachusetts in 1989 to attend Tufts veterinary school, and moved out here to the Pacific Northwest in 1993 to work in a mixed-animal practice in rural western Washington. After several years in practice, I signed up at the University of Washington's College of Forest Resources for a Masters in Wildlife Science. For my thesis, I had the very good fortune to be able to work with Tonie Rocke at the USGS, National Wildlife Health

Center on her plague project, investigating oral and parenteral vaccination strategies in black-tailed prairie dogs and black-footed ferrets. After completing my Masters, I returned to private practice and am still looking for my dream job in the wildlife disease field—within an hour's commute of my house... Meanwhile, I try to stay current in the field by reading journals, attending meetings, spending time with wildlife health professionals, and getting involved in projects such as the AAWV newsletter. For that, I owe many thanks to the previous newsletter editor, Joe Gaydos, for thinking of me when he was ready to hand over the reins, and for his invaluable help in getting me up and running.

The AAWV newsletter is a dynamic creature, and I hope that I'm able to produce as interesting and diverse a newsletter as Joe put together. I welcome and encourage input from all AAWV members; when you are inspired, contact me at jmencher@u.washington.edu with articles to contribute and with ideas on how the newsletter can be improved. I look forward to working with and for all of you.

AAWV NEWSLETTER

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
WILDLIFE VETERINARIANS

Founded in 1979, the AAWV is a national, non-profit organization of veterinarians interested in all aspects of wildlife health.

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