

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WILDLIFE VETERINARIANS

POSITION STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE, WILDLIFE DISEASES AND WILDLIFE HEALTH

There is widespread scientific agreement that the world's climate is changing and that the weight of evidence demonstrates that anthropogenic factors have and will continue to contribute significantly to global warming and climate change. It is anticipated that continuing changes to the climate will have serious negative impacts on public, animal and ecosystem health due to extreme weather events, changing disease transmission dynamics, emerging and re-emerging diseases, and alterations to habitat and ecological systems that are essential to wildlife conservation. Furthermore, there is increasing recognition of the inter-relationships of human, domestic animal, wildlife, and ecosystem health as illustrated by the fact the majority of recent emerging diseases have a wildlife origin. Consequently, there is a critical need to improve capacity to identify, prevent, and respond to climate-related threats. The following statements present the American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians (AAWV) position on climate change, wildlife diseases, and wildlife health.

The American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians recognizes that climate change has:

- Serious far-reaching negative implications for wildlife health and conservation.
- The potential to place unprecedented demands on government agencies and other entities responsible for managing and conserving wildlife in North America.

The American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians supports:

- The One Health approach with strong coordination and collaboration among all tiers of public health, agriculture, and wildlife management government agencies to address climate change issues of mutual concern.
- Enhancing the capacity of federal, state, and local wildlife agencies, tribal nations, and non-governmental organizations to prepare for and respond to wildlife disease threats and wildlife health impacts linked to climate change.
- Funding research to increase understanding of the potential impacts of climate change on wildlife and ecosystem health as well as to develop and enhance early warning, surveillance and response systems to mitigate the wildlife health impacts of climate change.
- The development of educational initiatives to raise the awareness of the link between climate change, wildlife diseases and wildlife health among all stakeholders.

The American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians urges:

- That wildlife management agencies and professionals inform communities, policy makers, other government agencies, and industry of the wildlife and ecosystem health impacts of climate change.

- Active engagement with all stakeholders by wildlife management agencies and professionals to ensure consideration of the potential negative wildlife health and conservation impacts of all aspects of human behavior, consumption, and decision making that may contribute to climate change.
- The active promulgation of policies towards preventing and mitigating the wildlife health impacts of climate change.
- That the wildlife management and conservation communities, including wildlife health professionals, be at the forefront of all planning, policy guidance, decisions and responses related to the impacts of climate change on wildlife diseases and wildlife health.