

# National Wildlife Health Center

***The National Wildlife Health Center serves the nation and its natural resources by providing science, technical support, and information to promote science-based decisions affecting wildlife and ecosystem health. Through research, technical assistance, education, and information transfer, we provide leadership on national and international wildlife health issues.***

During the last 30 years, the emergence of new diseases afflicting humans and the resurgence of previously conquered diseases have become international concerns. Novel and re-emerging diseases also afflict wildlife. The U.S. Geological Survey's National Wildlife Health Center (USGS-NWHC) is charged with addressing health and disease issues of free-ranging wildlife across the Nation. Located in Madison, Wisconsin, with a field station in Honolulu, Hawaii, NWHC works closely with other federal, state, and tribal agencies to apply scientific findings to manage and prevent disease outbreaks.

Specialized biological containment facilities (bio-safety level 3) allow USGS scientists to investigate highly infectious diseases affecting a broad spectrum of wildlife such as migratory birds, amphibians, eagles, sea turtles, coral, wolves, large mammals, and other species. The staff of more than 70 scientists and support personnel are specialists in fields such as wildlife ecology, epidemiology, veterinary medicine, pathology, virology, bacteriology, parasitology, chemistry, biometry, and population ecology. NWHC provides disease diagnosis, field investigation, disease management and advanced research, and training, in addition to maintaining extensive databases on disease findings in wild animals and on wildlife mortality events.

NWHC research on zoonotic diseases concentrates on improving our understanding of the ecological relationships among free-ranging wildlife, domestic animals, and humans. The gregarious habits of

many wildlife species can enhance their susceptibility to catastrophic losses from diseases like avian botulism and pesticide poisoning, and from infectious diseases that can rapidly spread through a population. Because of wildlife's mobility, there is potential for infectious disease to spread quickly to new locations and populations. Timely and accurate diagnosis of wildlife illness and mortality is critical to achieving effective disease control and prevention.

NWHC research focuses on understanding the ecology of disease in order to identify the most vulnerable links among affected species (host), disease agents, vectors, and

tal factors influencing disease outbreaks, and explore the pathogenesis of disease agents in susceptible hosts.

Other Center research involves developing technology for disease detection, control, and prevention. We continue to expand our understanding of wildlife disease dynamics and risk analysis through surveillance and effective sampling. We also serve to educate others involved with wildlife. Through advancing wildlife and ecosystem health for a better tomorrow, we can increase our understanding of the complex interactions among wildlife, humans, and ecosystems.



environmental factors that result in disease. This understanding is fundamental for developing effective disease prevention and control strategies. Center investigators also evaluate effects of disease on wildlife population dynamics, model environmen-

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