



**National Wildlife Health Center
Wildlife Health Bulletin 2015-04**

The Wildlife Health Information Sharing Partnership – event reporting system

To: Natural Resource/Conservation Managers
From: Dr. Jonathan Sleeman, Center Director, USGS National Wildlife Health Center
Date: May 18, 2015

The USGS National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) is pleased to announce that the [Wildlife Health Information Sharing Partnership – event reporting system](#) (WHISPers) is now available online.

WHISPers is a partner-driven, web-based repository for sharing basic information about historic and ongoing wildlife mortality and morbidity events involving five or more wild animals. The system provides natural resource managers with timely, accurate information on these events to facilitate disease management and planning. The system is also a searchable archive of historic wildlife mortality and morbidity event data. The records in WHISPers can be searched by species, disease, location (to county level), and event start and end dates. The system currently contains the verified (laboratory diagnosed) records that the NWHC has maintained on wildlife mortality events, which includes event information shared by state and federal partners, and probably represents the largest wildlife disease database available in the U.S. However, the information is opportunistically collected and voluntarily reported to NWHC and, therefore, does not contain all the mortality events that have been documented in North America.

Primarily, WHISPers is intended to be used as a wildlife health management tool. Our intent is that this system will provide management agencies with situational awareness regarding diseases affecting wildlife populations. Many diseases are predictable, occurring in the same locations at similar times each year. By chronicling these "typical" events, we can develop a better picture of disease impacts on wildlife across North America. With knowledge of "typical" events, it is also easier to identify departures from baseline, including new species or geographic areas affected by known diseases, or new diseases as they emerge and potentially spread across the landscape. A centralized repository of this information promotes better awareness of wildlife diseases and augments opportunity for both proactive and timely reactive response by natural resource managers. You might be familiar with the [quarterly summaries](#) of wildlife morbidity or mortality events disseminated by NWHC over the past decades via static reports; WHISPers represents a significant upgrade to these reports, with tools designed to query, map, sort, and download wildlife mortality event data.

A list of responses to frequently asked questions ([FAQs](#)) about the system is available online. If you have additional questions or concerns, please visit <http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/whispers/site/contact> or contact us via whispers@usgs.gov. Note that the system is a work-in-progress and feedback and suggestions are most welcome. In addition, we will be creating a focus group of partners to help us continually improve the system and if you are interested in participating, please let us know. Finally, the value of this system will be improved with inclusion of more information on wildlife mortality events as this will result in better temporal, species, and geographic coverage. Thus, the next phase of the project is to create a mechanism for partners to import information on wildlife mortality events. If you have an interest in participating in this phase, please let us know.

We thank all the partners who have provided very valuable feedback and ideas so far. This has resulted in a much improved system.

Disease Investigation Services:

To request diagnostic services or report wildlife mortality events, please contact the NWHC at **608-270-2480** or by email at NWHC-epi@usgs.gov, and a field epidemiologist will be available to discuss the case. To report wildlife mortality events in Hawaii or Pacific Island territories, please contact the Honolulu Field Station at 808-792-9520 or email Thierry Work at thierry_work@usgs.gov. Further information can be found at <http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/services/>.

[Wildlife Mortality Reporting and Diagnostic Submission Request Form](#)

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the scientific and technical services we provide, please do not hesitate to contact NWHC Director Jonathan Sleeman at 608-270-2401, jsleeman@usgs.gov.

To see past Wildlife Health Bulletins, click [here](#).

WILDLIFE HEALTH BULLETINS are distributed to natural resource/conservation agencies to provide and promote information exchange about significant wildlife health threats. If you would like to be added to or removed from the mailing list for these bulletins, please contact Gail Moede Rogall at 608-270-2438 or e-mail: nwhc-outreach@usgs.gov.