



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Wildlife Health Office

Natural Resource Program Center



What is the Wildlife Health Office?

The National Wildlife Refuge System established the Wildlife Health Office to enhance its capacity to monitor and manage wildlife populations. The program conducts wildlife health and disease surveillance, response, and management activities to address the impacts of environmental changes on wild populations and to support the wildlife conservation, population monitoring, and management goals of the Service. The Wildlife Health Office provides a stable, long-term, prepared, and proactive resource for the improvement of wildlife health across the country.

What is the philosophy of the Wildlife Health Office?

Maintaining healthy animals and healthy populations through preventive medicine is far more efficient and cost effective than reacting to diseases once they become a problem. This requires actively addressing the root causes of wildlife health problems, which are often anthropogenic, rather than just treating the symptoms of disease.



What does the Wildlife Health Office do?

- Disease surveillance and investigations
- Inventory and Monitoring
- Technical assistance in the field
- Policy guidance
- Emergency response
- Training and outreach
- One Health collaborations



What should I do if I find sick or dead wild animals?

In order to be vigilant in detecting new, emerging, and introduced diseases, and to maintain long-term surveillance of domestic disease problems affecting wildlife, it is important that wildlife morbidity and mortality events (i.e. several sick or dying wild animals) are reported and investigated. Even if similar mortality events have occurred in an area in the past, reporting the event and obtaining a diagnosis will allow for consistent disease trend analysis and the detection of new pathogens.

What information should I collect if I find dead animals?

There are important questions to ask yourself while investigating a wildlife mortality event. Please make note of the following information so that you can report it to the lab with your carcass or sample submissions:

1. Date found
2. Disease onset date
3. What is the species of the sick or dead animal?
4. Number of sick or dead animals for each species
5. Ages and sexes of sick or dead animals for each species
6. Are the animals wild or captive?
7. Die-off location (refuge unit, pond, address), state, county, nearest city, GPS coordinates if you can take them
8. Number, species, sex, age of carcasses/samples collected
9. If samples, what tissues/fluids were collected, how were they preserved?
10. How was carcass/sample stored (refrigerated, frozen, formalin)?
11. Was the animal found dead, died in hand, or euthanized (note how the animal was euthanized)?
12. Is the animal a rabies suspect? If so, has there been any domestic animal or human contact?
13. What symptoms were the sick animals displaying (limp, neck arched back, blood coming from mouth, diarrhea, extremely thin)?
14. Is there any other information surrounding this case that you feel might be important for making a diagnosis (recent bad weather, fireworks, electric lines or turbines, tall buildings, what the animals were eating, potential intentional poisoning or shooting)?

To whom should I report wildlife health issues?

FWS Wildlife Health expert

Samantha Gibbs, 571-216-5776, samantha_gibbs@fws.gov
Lee Jones, 406-587-2169, lee_c_jones@fws.gov

USGS National Wildlife Health Center Field investigation team contacts:

Lower 48 and Alaska: 608-270-2480, NWHC-epi@usgs.gov
Hawaii, Pacific Islands: Dr. Thierry Work, 808-792-9520, thierry_work@usgs.gov

USDA APHIS Wildlife Services Wildlife Disease Biologist in your region

Website: Wildlife Services state offices

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/us_states_maps3.shtml

Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (southeastern U.S.)

Website: SCWDS Diagnostic Services

<http://vet.uga.edu/scwds/diagnostic>

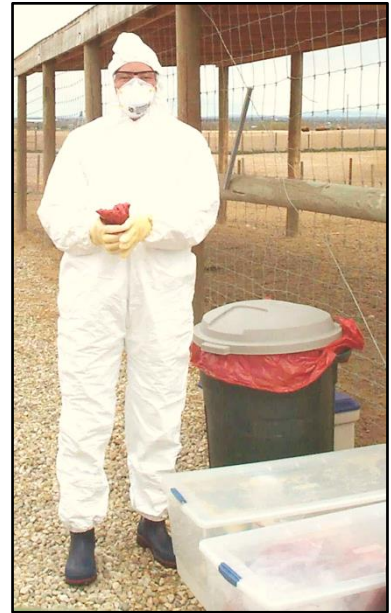
Phone: 706-542-1741, ask for the veterinarian on duty

Northeast Wildlife Disease Cooperative (northeastern U.S.)

Website: NEWDC Laboratory contacts

<http://sites.tufts.edu/nwdc/forms/>

You may also contact the state wildlife agency disease biologist or veterinarian for the state in which you observe the mortality event.



For more information, contact:

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<https://sites.google.com/a/fws.gov/fws-wildlife-health/>



<http://www.fws.gov/refuges>

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