



# BWDS NEWSLETTER

2010/01

20 JUNE 2010

*Website : <http://wildlife.var.fgov.be>*

## CONTENTS

1. Editorial
2. Meeting Report General Assembly, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009.
3. Report Workshop Rodent Sampling, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010
4. WILDSURV News
5. EWDA meeting to set up a European Network for Wildlife Disease Surveillance, October 2009:  
Summary of data
6. Meeting of the OIE Working Group on Wildlife Diseases, February 2010: Report
7. Announcements

## 1. Editorial

This is the first BWDS Newsletter for 2010 and we realise that it is already June, which is rather late for a “first” Newsletter. The reason for the delay is that we have been occupied intensively in the finalisation of the WILDSURV project (see below), which ended officially in March 2010. This is also the reason why no general assemblies have been organised until now and consequently why no meeting reports were written earlier this year.

Nevertheless the BWDS activities were reactivated recently by the organisation of a workshop at the ITM (Antwerp) about rodent trapping and sampling, for which only those people working directly with rodents were invited. The aim was to get to a kind of cooperation between different groups and to create general guidelines concerning the sampling for wildlife diseases in rodents. A report about this workshop is included below.

The edition of the BWDS Newsletters from now on will be coordinated to a large extent by Leen Claes (ITM) in cooperation with the other board members who thank her very much for her support. The next general assembly is scheduled for September 2010 (date not fixed as yet). An invitation with practical details will be sent later on.

## 2. Meeting Report General Assembly, October 27<sup>th</sup> 2009.

During the previous General Assembly, co-organised by Prof. S. Croubels of the Department of Veterinary Toxicology, on October 27<sup>th</sup> 2009 at the Veterinary Faculty of the Ghent University, Prof. Marcos Pérez López from the Veterinary Faculty of Cáceres in Spain gave an interesting

presentation about poisonings in wildlife, based on his ample experience. The abstract is included below. Cáceres is located in the heart of Extremadura, a Spanish province near to the Portuguese border and is known for its wealth of wildlife. The natural beauty of the area was perfectly illustrated by the many slides accompanying this comprehensive presentation. A problem-oriented discussion focusing on cases and practicalities, followed the presentation. The BWDS board thanks Prof . M. Pérez López very much for his contribution.

Due to the proportion of the presentation, attended by not only BWDS members but also many cooperators of the Ghent Veterinary Faculty, no other subjects were scheduled for this general assembly.

---

**Abstract: Presentation of Prof. Marcos Pérez López:**

*Toxicology Department, Veterinary Faculty of Cáceres, Spain*

**POISONINGS IN WILDLIFE**

Accidental or deliberated poisoning of wildlife can be considered a worldwide well documented problem, not easy to resolve, as there is a broad spectrum of factors which have generated the use of poison, and so they are difficult to control. In Extremadura, a region situated in South West Spain, and with a first-order richness of wild fauna, this problem runs into very serious levels, associated to the fact that many of the best preserved wildlife populations within the European Union are here located. In this sense, the Toxicology Unit of the Veterinary School of Cáceres (University of Extremadura, UEX), which develops its work thanks to the collaboration agreement with the regional ministry of environment (in Spanish, *Consejería de Medio Ambiente*), and associated to the professional personnel from the Wildlife Recovery Centre “Los Hornos”, constitutes the main tool for identifying those chemical agents which are involved in poisoning cases to wild animals.

The results obtained during these last years of work show the main importance of birds (and specially raptors) as the most affected species by both accidental and intentional poisoning. With respect to the toxic agents involved, anticholinesterasic pesticides (in particular, the carbamates aldicarb and carbofuran) constitute the main causes of such poisoning. Moreover, a characteristic trend has been observed during the last months, associated to the fact that many carbamate pesticides have been banned, thus producing the appearance of “new” poisoning agents, as for example fenthion and endosulphan, associated not only to affected animals but also to baits observed in the wild.

---

3. Report Workshop Rodent Sampling on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010, at ITM, Antwerp

---

1. Workshop

**Present:** Stéphane De Craeye (WIV), Bart Hoet (Federal Government, Animal Welfare), Paul Tavernier (UGhent; WILDSURV), Stefan Roels, (VAR; WILDSURV), Goedele Verbeylen (ZWG-Natuurpunt.Studie), Paul Van Daele (University of Ghent; ZWG-Natuurpunt.Studie), Kristof Baert (INBO), Paul Heyman (RLVBD, Queen Astrid Military Hospital), Christel Cochez (RLVBD, Queen Astrid Military Hospital ), Leen Claes (ITM), Benny Borremans (UAntwerp), Katrien Tersago (UAntwerp), Sophie Roelandt (VAR; WILDSURV), Wesley Tack (UGhent), Alexandre Dobly (VAR).

**Objective:** To discuss sampling possibilities in wild rodents.

Wild rodents are an important source of zoonotic agents and animal pathogens, as demonstrated by the prioritisation results of the Wildtool system that has been developed in the federal government project Wildsurv. In case of future demands for surveillance of pathogens in wild rodents, it is necessary to be informed about organisational, safety and legal aspects of sampling in this class of wildlife. This could be done by providing a practical guideline to use as a reference frame for those working with rodents. The aim of this workshop was therefore to draw up such a document by bringing together experts in rodents. Starting from a number of short informative talks, a discussion was held to get answers to specific questions regarding the subject.

1. The meeting was introduced by Paul Tavernier who illustrated the importance of sampling in rodents by demonstrating the Wildtool system for prioritisation of wildlife diseases.
2. The animal welfare legal aspects of sampling in wild rodents, based on the legislation for laboratory animals and focusing on wildlife, were explained by Bart Hoet (Federal Government, Animal Welfare).
3. Paul Van Daele (University of Ghent; Zoogdierenwerkgroep, ZWG - Natuurpunt.Studie) presented the rodent population monitoring activities of the ZWG through a network of volunteers and a monitoring network.
4. Goedele Verbeylen (ZWG - Natuurpunt.Studie) discussed the legal requirements for temporary disturbance and trapping of protected rodent species without invasive manipulations of the animals. Permits issued by the respective regional governments are necessary to work with protected species.
5. Kristof Baert informed us about the scientific research in rodent pest species at the Flemish Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO) (mainly concerning resistance against rodenticides). They work with a federal government issued permit (to be renewed regularly after evaluation) and an ethical committee.
6. A minimum of biosecurity measures are needed when manipulating wild rodents, to prevent the transmission of zoonotic agents. Guidelines are demanded by those working in the field (ZWG) in order to instruct their volunteers who are often unaware of possible risks. Paul Heyman (RLVBD, Queen Astrid Military Hospital) agreed to coordinate the drafting of a short and practical biosecurity guideline for wild rodent trappers and samplers.
7. Discussion: Questions and answers were formulated during the different talks, on which the discussion was further developed. The main issues discussed will be included and processed in the resulting document.

## 2. Administrative Chapter

The meeting was concluded by a short administrative chapter about general BWDS matters.

- The **BWDS website** needs to be updated urgently. Information about the last BWDS Symposium in October 2010 and the joint EWDA and Wildtech meetings have not been included as yet. A practical and cheaper solution, allowing updating the website by the board members themselves (without having to contact the programmer for each update) has been proposed earlier but a practical solution has not been found until now. This solution could possibly be developed through support of the ZWG (contact persons Paul Van Daele, Goedele Verbeylen); this will be followed up as soon as possible.

- Preparations for **the next (4<sup>th</sup>) BWDS Symposium in 2011** should be started up from now on. A general theme for the Symposium still has to be chosen, and based on this a preliminary program

can be built and keynote speakers contacted. This preliminary program is necessary to contact possible sponsors timely.

**We call on everybody to propose the general theme** for the 4<sup>th</sup> BWDS Symposium and also to contact or suggest interested sponsors as soon as possible. This time the venue will be at the CODA/CERVA/VAR site at Tervuren. A definite date has not been fixed yet but October 2011 is the most appropriate period, consistent with the previous BWDS Symposia. Please send your idea's to the board members of the BWDS ( e-mail: [paul.tavernier@UGent.be](mailto:paul.tavernier@UGent.be) ; [Paul.Heyman@mil.be](mailto:Paul.Heyman@mil.be) ; [stroe@var.fgov.be](mailto:stroe@var.fgov.be) ), by September 2010 latest.

**-The next BWDS general assembly is planned for September 2010.** At this next meeting the biosecurity guidelines for rodent trappers will be discussed. Furthermore Stéphane De Craeye (WIV) agreed to give a presentation about toxoplasmosis in wildlife. A third speaker will be looked for. The exact date and place of this meeting will be communicated later on.

#### 4. WILDSURV News

The final meeting of the Belgian federal government project WILDSURV took place on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The end report was submitted on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The major realisations of this project have been discussed in earlier BWDS Newsletters. The database Wildtool for prioritisation of wildlife-borne diseases in function of their need for surveillance has been described in a paper that was submitted recently for publication. New informal networks for sampling in different wildlife species have been started up, based on the comparison of prioritisation results by Wildtool with existing networks. Sampling networks are different for particular wildlife groups (e.g. rodents, birds, cervids,..) and can be activated selectively according to specific needs.

We are now searching for the possibilities to continue the working of Wildtool through national or international cooperation (report: Paul Tavernier).

#### 5. EWDA meeting to set up a European Network for Wildlife Disease Surveillance, October 2009: Summary of data

Joined to the 3<sup>rd</sup> BWDS Symposium, a EWDA meeting was held on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2010, to set up a network for wildlife disease surveillance in Europe (NDOWS: National Diseases of Wildlife Schemes). A summary of data presented during this meeting can be found at the EWDA website: <http://www.ewda.org/EWDA%20Summary%20of%20reports,%20Brussels%20Oct%202009.pdf>

#### 6. Meeting of the OIE Working Group on Wildlife Diseases, February 2010: Report

The meeting of the OIE Working Group for Wildlife Diseases was held from 1 to 4 February 2010, at the OIE Headquarters in Paris. The report of the meeting can be accessed through the following link: [http://www.oie.int/download/WG/2010/A\\_WGW\\_feb2010.pdf](http://www.oie.int/download/WG/2010/A_WGW_feb2010.pdf)

---

7. Announcements:

---

**1) Climate change: Health and Ecology, 1-3 September, 2010. Uppsala, Sweden**

Details: [http://www.sva.se/sv/navigera/tjanster\\_produkter/Utbildningar-och-kurser/Climate-Change-Health-and-Ecology/](http://www.sva.se/sv/navigera/tjanster_produkter/Utbildningar-och-kurser/Climate-Change-Health-and-Ecology/)

**2) Compassionate Conservation. Animal Welfare in Conservation Practice, 1-3 September, Oxford, UK**

Details: <http://www.compassionateconservation.org/>

**3) EWDA Conference, 13-16 September 2010, Vlieland, The Netherlands**

(3rd announcement in BWDS Newsletter). “Early bird registration” and abstract submission were closed on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010. “Late bird registration” is still open.

Details: <http://www.ewda-2010.nl/default.aspx>

**4) 3<sup>rd</sup> International Symposium on "Game and Ecology", 4 – 7 October 2010, Plitvice Lakes, Republic of Croatia**

All the details can be accessed through the following link: <http://www.wildlife.hr>

**5) OIE Global Conference on Wildlife: Animal Health and Biodiversity – Preparing for the Future, 23–25 February 2011, Paris, France**

Organised by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), in collaboration with FAO and WHO, this solution-focused conference will address both benefits and challenges that are related to integrated management approaches to the health risks at the wildlife/domestic animal and human ecosystems interface.

This high-profile meeting will be a unique opportunity to build the future in the context of globalisation and climate change taking into account the need to protect biodiversity worldwide. It will inform responsible parties and decision makers about the important links between the health of wildlife, domestic animals and people and their relations with the environment. The conference will bring together participants from both the public and private sectors to analyse the societal benefits, including public health and environment, to be gained from protecting the health of wildlife.

In addition to OIE Delegates and Wildlife Focal Points, professionals and policy makers engaged in natural resource management, animal and human health and economic development will be invited. This Global Conference will also be open to all other participants who are interested in the topic and would like to attend.

All relevant information about the Conference, including the programme, will be online on the ome page of the OIE website: [www.oie.int](http://www.oie.int). (Announcement by : Dr. B. Vallat, OIE director-general)