



14 October, 2010

NOTICE OF WILDLIFE DISEASE RISK ASSESSMENT (DRA) TOOL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

Over the next twelve months CBSG, in collaboration with Reintroduction, Wildlife Health and Invasive Species Specialist Groups, will be leading an exciting new initiative aimed at advancing the way in which disease risks to wildlife are assessed and managed.

It is intended that this new disease risk assessment (DRA) resource will be built by an international network of stakeholders, including wildlife veterinarians, epidemiologists, ecologists, modellers and biologists. The goal will be ***an integrated package of disease risk assessment (DRA) tools, based on the best available science and technology, serving the global conservation community.*** This resource will constitute a major revision of CBSG's *Animal Movements and Disease Risk: A Workbook*, last published in 2005.

Beginning in 2012, this resource will provide the centrepiece for a global training programme in best practice DRA methodology for wildlife conservation professionals.

A stakeholder workshop will provide the principal engine for tool development. This is currently scheduled for **April 2011** and will be hosted by CBSG's Australasian branch in partnership with Auckland Zoo's New Zealand Centre for Conservation Medicine (NZCCM). In addition to this workshop an extensive programme of remote collaboration using virtual tools is envisaged, culminating in completion of the DRA resource in December 2011.

Further details on the context and background to this initiative are provided in the following pages.

We are currently seeking expressions of interest from potential collaborators and are keen to hear from members of your network. The initial deadline for expressions of interest is **30 November 2010**.

All correspondence and requests for further information should be directed to Richard Jakob-Hoff at Richard@cbsgaustralasia.com

Yours sincerely,

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WILDLIFE DISEASE RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

Vision

An *integrated package* of new and existing tools for risk assessment, adapted for wildlife disease analysis and management and freely available to the global conservation community.

Context

Disease is an increasingly serious threat to the sustainability of a growing number of wildlife species. The continuing expansion of human populations and their domestic animals into wilderness areas is also fuelling an upsurge of emerging and re-emerging diseases that cross former species boundaries while global warming is enabling the dispersal of disease vectors into new territories. The 'One World One Health' paradigm, and new disciplines like conservation medicine, have emerged in response to these trends and are designed to address the complexity of disease within a broader ecological context than the current individual species-approach that dominates Western human and veterinary medicine.

In addition to its significance to conservation, wildlife disease has economic and human health importance. Consequently, an expanding range of organisations and individuals are concerned with the assessment and analysis of risks associated with wildlife disease to assist with informed decision making - often with limited data. However, despite this growing interest in developing the science of conservation medicine, we lack a proper and coherent collection of qualitative and quantitative tools that the wildlife conservation practitioner can use to systematically assemble relevant data, objectively analyze disease risk, and confidently make informed management recommendations to improve population viability.

History

The IUCN's Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) recognised this need some years ago and led an initiative to develop new (and adapt existing) Disease Risk Assessment (DRA) tools, resulting in the publication of a Handbook in 2002.¹ A summary of its contents accompanies this notice². Since then there have been major advances in risk assessment science and technology and a parallel increase in interest in wildlife DRA among other SSC Specialist Groups, particularly the interdisciplinary groups such as Reintroduction (RSG), Invasive Species (ISSG), and Wildlife Health (WHSG) as well national biosecurity and wildlife conservation agencies. Consequently a review and revision of this publication – that aims to benefit from the wider perspectives of these groups and incorporate scientific and technological advances – is particularly timely.

Timeline, Venue and Workshop Participants

The workshop will run over a 3.5 day period and is scheduled for mid-April, 2011 hosted by the New Zealand Centre for Conservation Medicine (NZCCM), Auckland Zoo, Auckland, New Zealand. Our aim is to bring approximately 20 participants together representing a mix of relevant expertise and end-users of disease risk assessment tools. This group will include representatives of the key stakeholders noted above, wildlife veterinarians, epidemiologists, ecologists, modellers, and biologists who wish to pool their knowledge and work collaboratively towards achieving this important goal.

Process

Prior to the workshop a needs assessment questionnaire will be circulated to potential participants to help guide the content, structure and development of the DRA resource. Confirmed participants will also be asked to undertake a preliminary review of the Handbook in advance. At the workshop,

¹ Armstrong, D, Jakob-Hoff, R. and Seal, US (2002) Animal Movements and Disease Risk: A Workbook. Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (SSC/IUCN), Apple Valley, MN. **Can be downloaded at:** <http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/risk/>

² Miller, P.S. (2007), Tools and Techniques for Disease Risk Assessment in Threatened Wildlife Conservation Programmes. Int. Zoo. Yb. 41: 38 – 51.

following an introductory scene-setting session, participants will conduct a facilitated session to identify the strengths, weaknesses and gaps in the current Handbook. A process for addressing the weaknesses and gaps will be developed with the group who will then spend the rest of the workshop implementing this process. An editorial team will be selected to ensure continuity in style and consistency in content of the final publication. Working Groups will be tasked with delivering a post-workshop report to the editorial team by August, 2011. A draft publication will be circulated to these groups for review by October with the aim of having a completed resource, including any additional training materials, by December, 2011.