

Management of Disease in Wild Mammals

Richard J. Delahay • Graham C. Smith
Michael R. Hutchings
Editors

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 Springer

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Preface

In recent years nobody could have failed to notice the frequent and often sensationalist media headlines warning of the latest global disease threat to humankind. But behind all the hyperbole lie real challenges related to dealing with the increasing incidence of emerging zoonotic disease events, the majority of which are thought to originate in wildlife (Jones et al. 2008). There are also many important diseases of domestic livestock which also occur in wildlife (e.g. foot and mouth disease and classical swine fever in wild boar, bovine tuberculosis in deer, badgers or possums), some of which can have a devastating impact on the farming industry, the wider rural economy and ultimately the public purse. But we should also not forget that wildlife diseases may have serious implications for the conservation of biodiversity. For some of the rarest, most endangered species (such as the Ethiopian wolf) disease may pose the greatest threat to their survival. If we are to avoid or reduce these impacts then we must improve our ability to detect and manage the risks associated with disease in wildlife populations. This is a challenge that will require expertise from many different disciplines: veterinary, ecological, medical, economic, political and zoological. In such an interdisciplinary field it is difficult to stay up to date with contemporary ideas and with techniques that may be rapidly evolving. We hope that in some small way this book contributes to informing people from a range of disciplines on our current state of knowledge and potential future directions in the management of disease in wildlife.

Largely because of our personal interests and expertise we have focused in this book on disease in wild mammals, although much that is discussed will be relevant to other wild fauna. Our aim has been to present and discuss the main issues related to disease management in wild mammals, and in doing so we have inevitably drawn upon the opinions of experts in a range of fields. We have attempted to be as inclusive as possible, in the knowledge that this is a topic at the interface between several scientific disciplines. We also acknowledge the important role that scientific knowledge plays in underpinning policy, and have therefore produced a text that is hopefully also accessible to those without a scientific training, but who are nevertheless important players in the development and implementation of disease management plans.

The editors have worked in the field of wildlife diseases for many years and whilst we maintain interests in other fields we continue to have close links with

each other, particularly in the area of bovine tuberculosis in wildlife. We have seen at first hand how opinions change over time (albeit slowly in some cases), and how this process depends on the views and foresight of a wide diversity of experts. We have thus sought to include the opinions of many additional experts in different fields and would formally like to acknowledge their invaluable contributions. The co-authors not only gave generously of their time and expertise in helping to write individual chapters, but in many cases also improved the book by commenting on and correcting errors throughout the text. In addition we would like to thank Fred Landeg, Hamish McCallum, Menna Jones, Pete Robertson and Robbie McDonald for reviewing parts of the text and giving us additional perspectives. GCS and RJD would also like to thank Chris Cheeseman for his support and enthusiasm over the years. Many of the authors are involved in the Wildlife Disease Association and in particular with the European Section and we wish to collectively acknowledge the important contributions this organisation has made to promoting scientific endeavour in this field.

Contents

1	The Science of Wildlife Disease Management.....	1
	Richard J. Delahay, Graham C. Smith, and Michael R. Hutchings	
2	Wildlife Population Structure and Parasite Transmission: Implications for Disease Management.....	9
	Paul C. Cross, Julian Drewe, Victoria Patrek, Gareth Pearce, Michael D. Samuel, and Richard J. Delahay	
3	Assessment of Transmission Rates and Routes, and the Implications for Management.....	31
	Peter Caley, Glenn Marion, and Michael R. Hutchings	
4	Modelling Disease Dynamics and Management Scenarios.....	53
	Graham C. Smith, Glenn Marion, Steve Rushton, Dirk Pfeiffer, Hans H. Thulke, Dirk Eisinger, and Michael R. Hutchings	
5	An Economic Perspective on Wildlife Disease Management.....	79
	Richard Bennett, Graham C. Smith, and Ken Willis	
6	Options for the Control of Disease 1: Targeting the Infectious or Parasitic Agent.....	97
	Jean Blancou, Marc Artois, Emmanuelle Gilot-Fromont, Volker Kaden, Sophie Rossi, Graham C. Smith, Michael R. Hutchings, Mark A. Chambers, Steve Houghton, and Richard J. Delahay	
7	Options for the Control of Disease 2: Targeting Hosts.....	121
	Stephen P. Carter, Sugoto S. Roy, Dave P. Cowan, Giovanna Massei, Graham C. Smith, Weihong Ji, Sophie Rossi, Rosie Woodroffe, Gavin J. Wilson, and Richard J. Delahay	

8 Options for the Control of Disease 3: Targeting the Environment 147
Alastair I. Ward, Kurt C. VerCauteren, W. David Walter,
Emmanuelle Gilot-Fromont, Sophie Rossi, Gareth Edwards-Jones,
Mark S. Lambert, Michael R. Hutchings, and Richard J. Delahay

9 Risk Assessment and Contingency Planning for Exotic Disease Introductions 169
Vicky S. Jackson, Selene Huntley, Alex Tomlinson,
Graham C. Smith, Mike A. Taylor, and Richard J. Delahay

10 Wildlife Disease Surveillance and Monitoring 187
Marc Artois, Roy Bengis, Richard J. Delahay, Marie-José Duchêne,
J. Paul Duff, Ezio Ferroglio, Christian Gortazar, Michael R. Hutchings,
Richard A. Kock, Frederick A. Leighton, Torsten Mörner,
and Graham C. Smith

11 Disease Management in Endangered Mammals 215
Andrew C. Breed, Raina K. Plowright, David T. S. Hayman,
Darryn L. Knobel, Fieke M. Molenaar, David Gardner–Roberts,
Sarah Cleaveland, Dan T. Haydon, Richard A. Kock,
Andrew A. Cunningham, Anthony W. Sainsbury,
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Glossary 241

References 245

Index 279

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