

## From Whales to Snails: A Strategy for Wildlife Disease Surveillance in New Zealand

McKenzie, Joanna and Langstaff, Ian

EpiCentre, Massey University, Private Bag, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

The EpiCentre at Massey University recently developed a strategy for wildlife disease surveillance in New Zealand, with the aim of establishing prioritised and coordinated systems that maximise the use of the existing infrastructure and expertise available. The project was initiated by the ministries of agriculture, health and conservation who recognised the need to bring wildlife disease surveillance into the national biosecurity framework.

The strategy was prepared around the three foundation stones: the wildlife populations of interest, disease data collection systems, and wildlife disease information management. The data collection strategies prepared for nine wildlife taxonomic groups were structured around three key components: scanning surveillance, targeted surveillance, and determining the significance of organisms. Scanning surveillance is based on the network of people that detects and investigates major die-offs and unusual disease events in wildlife, generating a broad picture of the wildlife disease situation in the country. Targeted surveillance is based on defined objectives to meet prioritised disease information needs. Epidemiological studies determine the significance of organisms that are detected through surveillance systems.

A separate strategy was prepared for the management of wildlife disease information, which comprised recommendations for disease data storage, analysis and interpretation, plus information dissemination. The national collation of data from the wildlife disease investigation network, plus data analysis and interpretation is an important component of surveillance to: establish baseline disease patterns for each taxonomic group, detect trends in disease patterns, plus identify gaps in surveillance.

Examples of specific data collection and information management strategies will be given in the presentation.