Report of the Meeting of the Regional Coordination Group on Wildlife Health

Original: English (EN)

Date: 30 June-2 July 2026,
Buenos Aires, Argentina

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World Organisation for Animal Health
Founded as OIE

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1. Background

Since 2020, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) has expanded its wildlife health outreach, promoting the development of surveillance systems at the national, regional and international levels, and encouraging its Members to strengthen the recognition and integration of wildlife health within their national animal health systems.

The OIE Wildlife Health Framework (2021-2025) recognised the urgent need to enhance One Health approaches by reinforcing the role of wildlife health. Acknowledging the interdependence of wildlife, domestic animal health, ecosystem integrity and biodiversity, the Framework aimed to improve the management of disease risks at the human–animal–environment interface while protecting wildlife.

In the Americas, regional priorities for wildlife health were discussed during a training for WOAH Delegates and National Focal Points for Wildlife held in Mexico in 2023. The meeting resulted in the development of guidelines for a Regional Wildlife Health Action Plan.

Despite these advances and the increasing availability of global and regional guidance, tools and networks, efforts to address wildlife health risks across the Americas remain fragmented. At country level, key challenges include limited institutional capacity within Veterinary Services, insufficient financial and human resources, inadequate legal and policy frameworks, and the limited integration of wildlife health into the broader One Health agenda. At the regional level, there is also a need to further consolidate wildlife health within WOAH's regional agenda, ensuring greater coordination, continuity and alignment of activities with regional priorities and Members' needs.

In response, the WOAH Regional Commission for the Americas agreed, during its meeting at the 92nd General Session in May 2025, to establish a Regional Coordination Group (RCG) on Wildlife Health in the Americas. The RCG was tasked with supporting the development, implementation and monitoring of the Regional Wildlife Health Action Plan. As an initial step, the RCG held a virtual meeting in December 2025.

Building on the Wildlife Health Framework (2021–2025), WOAH launched its Wildlife Health Strategy 2026–2030 in May 2026. The Strategy provides a more focused roadmap for addressing wildlife health risks through a One Health approach, focusing on strengthening wildlife health governance, advancing science and risk analysis, and developing sustainable, integrated multisectoral surveillance systems. It also emphasises translating global guidance into practical action at regional and country levels through stronger collaboration and partnerships.

Following the launch of the new Strategy, the RCG met in person in Buenos Aires from 30 June to 1 July 2026 for a facilitated workshop to develop the regional work plan.

2. Welcome

Francisco D'Alessio, WOAH Regional Representative for the Americas, welcomed members of the RCG and thanked them for their availability and contribution to the wildlife health work in the region. He highlighted the importance of the involvement of all stakeholders, so that the different perspectives and realities of the various sectors can be considered. He also clarified that the discussions held during the workshop would be treated as confidential, creating a safe space for participants to express their views freely and without reservation.

3. Introduction

Maria Mesplet, WOAH One Health regional officer, provided background information on the regional work on wildlife health and the establishment and composition of the Regional Coordination Group on Wildlife Health for the Americas.

Damien Joly, President of the Coordination Group and Chair of the Meeting, outlined the objectives, activities and operating arrangements of the RCG.

Stephanie Signoret, WOAH's project officer at WOAH Preparedness and Resilience Department, WOAH Headquarters, provided an overview of the recently launched WOAH Wildlife Health Strategy (WHS 2026–2030), outlining its development process, key strategic components, and its Theory of Change. The presentation also covered the latest wildlife health guidelines published by WOAH and concluded with an introduction to the WildEpi platform, highlighting its role in supporting wildlife disease surveillance and reporting.

4. Regional priority wildlife health issues setting

The RCG discussed the priority wildlife health issues in the Americas, defining them as critical challenges or concerns requiring strategic attention and action from a wildlife health perspective. The Group agreed to propose five priority issues to guide the identification of potential regional activities supporting the implementation of the Global Wildlife Health Strategy in the Americas during 2027–2028:

- High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)
- Rabies
- African Swine Fever (ASF)
- Harmful algal blooms (HABs)
- New World Screwworm (NWS)

5. Assessment of the current situation and gap analysis

Building on the five priority wildlife health issues identified in the previous session, participants assessed the current situation and identified key challenges and gaps affecting the region's capacity to address these issues from a wildlife health perspective, in line with the priorities of the WOAH WHS (2026–2030). The discussion was structured around five thematic areas:

- Governance and policy (including relevant WOAH standards and guidelines);
- Surveillance systems,
- Partnerships and networks;
- Capacity building; and
- Evidence generation.

The RCG discussed each thematic area, drawing on their national and regional experiences. Discussions focused on identifying existing strengths, current challenges and priority gaps affecting wildlife health systems across the region. Issue-specific gaps were also identified:

- For avian influenza, these included needs related to molecular characterisation, sample preservation, laboratory networks, wildlife population data and understanding impacts on wildlife.
- For ASF, discussions highlighted wild boar surveillance and sampling, roadkill surveillance, informal movement of pig products, stakeholder engagement and knowledge on the role of wild boar.
- For rabies, gaps related to passive/scanning surveillance, vaccination and vampire bat management, coordination among relevant services, and knowledge on the distribution and drivers of vampire bat populations were identified.
- For NWS, participants highlighted regulatory and political considerations, wildlife surveillance, coordination among wildlife actors, testing capacity, and knowledge gaps regarding susceptible wildlife species and environmental factors influencing NWS.
- For HABs, gaps included their limited consideration within existing animal health frameworks, surveillance in estuarine environments, coordination with fisheries stakeholders, testing capacity, and knowledge of impacts on wildlife species.

Each group documented its conclusions, which were subsequently presented in plenary and discussed collectively to identify common themes and regional priorities.

6. Work plan

A session was dedicated to discussing potential activities that could be implemented at regional level to address the gaps and barriers identified during the previous session.

The RCG also considered the scope of each activity, identifying whether action would be required at global, regional or national level. In addition, participants mapped the key stakeholders that should be involved in leading, implementing, financing and monitoring the proposed activities. These activities were organised according to four workstreams being used to structure WOAH activities for the Americas Region: Standards & Guidelines and Governance; Capacity building and training; Communication and partnerships; and Evidence, monitoring, evaluation and learning.

A scenario-based exercise was also conducted to explore potential challenges and assumptions that could affect the implementation of the regional work plan. Participants reflected on how proposed activities could be adapted in the event of challenges such as changes in government priorities, limited financial resources, or other unforeseen constraints, and identified possible mitigation measures to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the work.

Following the workshop, the activities proposed by the RCG were reviewed and consolidated to develop the Regional Wildlife Health Workplan for 2027–2028 and its accompanying narrative (Annex 3).

As part of this process, activities were regrouped by workstream rather than by individual priority issue. Similar and cross-cutting activities were brought together to reduce duplication, and, where appropriate, the scope of activities originally proposed for a single priority issue was broadened to address multiple wildlife health priorities, while retaining the specific needs identified by the Group.

Activities considered global in scope were identified for referral to WOAH Headquarters for consideration. Activities already covered through existing WOAH workplans or mechanisms, such as the Avian Influenza Workplan or Collaborating Centres' activities, were not duplicated and will instead be coordinated through the relevant mechanisms.

Although harmful algal blooms (HABs) were identified as a priority issue during the workshop, no specific HAB-related activities were included in the consolidated Workplan, as this topic is not currently addressed within WOAH's global wildlife health work. Instead, the Group will be invited to prepare an internal technical paper for consideration by WOAH Headquarters as a potential area for future work.

The resulting Workplan presents a consolidated set of regional priorities and activities to guide WOAH's wildlife health efforts in the Americas during 2027–2028. As the Workplan does not yet have dedicated funding, activities will be progressively planned and implemented according to available resources, funding opportunities and partnerships.

7. Stakeholders mapping

A stakeholder mapping exercise was conducted to support the implementation of the regional work plan. Participants mapped key stakeholders according to their level of influence and interest and subsequently categorised them based on the proposed engagement approach:

- Actively engage (high interest/high influence): PAHO/WHO[1], FAO[2], UNEP[3], WOAH Collaborating Centres, NGOs, CVP[4], IICA[5], CAN[6], OIRSA[7], SPAW[8], National Public Health Authorities, Indigenous Communities, National Parks/Protected Area Authorities,

- Keep satisfied (low interest/high influence): Agricultural ministries, Environmental authorities, industry, Customs & Border authorities, Minery industries, Forest industries

[1] Pan American Health Organization / Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization
[2] Food and Agriculture Organization
[3] United Nations Environment Programme
[4] Comité Veterinario Permanente del Conosur
[5] Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
[6] Andean Community
[7] International Regional Organization for Agricultural Health
[8] Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife

- Keep informed (high interest/low influence): CITES[9], IWC[10], Farmers, Hunters, Convention on Biological Diversity, IUCN[11], Rescue Centres, Academia

- Monitor (low interest/low influence): Construction & development (urban), live animal markets, society.

8. Next steps

To conclude the meeting, the Chair of the Group summarised the key discussions and agreements reached during the workshop and presented the proposed roadmap leading to the Conference of the Regional Commission in November 2026.

The draft Regional Wildlife Health Workplan for 2027–2028 and its accompanying narrative (Annex 3) will be presented at the Conference of the Regional Commission in November 2026. Following this presentation, the documents will be shared with WOAH Delegates and National Focal Points for Wildlife for feedback.

A virtual meeting of the RCG will be organised to work on the development of indicators to monitor the implementation of the Workplan.

The RCG will continue to work in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

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…/Annexes

[9] Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
[10] International Whaling Commission
[11] International Union for Conservation of Nature

Annex 1. Agenda

MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COORDINATION GROUP

ON WILLDIFE HEALTH

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 30 June-2 July 2026

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1. Opening remarks
2. Background
3. Identify priority issues
4. Barriers and gap analysis
5. Activities under the workstreams
6. Scope of the activities
7. Assumptions and risks
8. Regional governance and stakeholders mapping
9. Summary of the meeting's outcomes
10. Follow up and next steps
11. Closing remarks by Maria Beatriz Giraudo Gaviglio, President of Argentinian National Veterinary Service (SENASA)

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Annex 2. List of Participants

MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COORDINATION GROUP ON WILLDIFE HEALTH

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 30 June-2 July 2026

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MEMBERS OF THE COORDINATION GROUP

Public sector

Damien Joly (Chair)
National Focal Point on Wildlife
Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative
CANADA

Andrea Marcos
National Focal Point on Wildlife
Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria (SENASA)
ARGENTINA

David Mahabir
National Focal Point on Wildlife
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fishieries
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

WOAH Working Group on Wildlife

William B. Karesh
EcoHealth Alliance
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
(*Absent with apologies. Joined the recap and closing session virtually*)

Marcela Uhart
University of California, Davis
ARGENTINA

Private sector

Iván Espinosa Vázquez
Organización Iberoamericana de Porcicultores (OIPORC)

Hebert Trenchi
Asociación Latinoamericana de Avicultura (ALA)

Expert Network

Claudio Verdugo
Universidad Austral de Chile
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C. LeAnn White
WOAH Collaborating Centre for Research Diagnosis, and Surveillance for Wildlife Pathogens

Civil society

Chris Walzer
Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

OBSERVERS

Lucia Escati
Technical and communication regional officer

WOAH REGIONAL REPRESENTATION FOR THE AMERICAS

Francisco D'Alessio
Regional Representative
Regional Representation for the Americas

Maria Mesplet
One Health regional officer
WOAH's Regional Representation for the Americas

WOAH HEADQUARTERS

Laura Davies
Scientific Coordinator
One Health and Global Frameworks Department

Stephanie Signoret
ZOOSURSY Project Officer
Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Department

Annex 3. Regional wildlife health narrative and work plan

MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COORDINATION GROUP ON WILDLIFE HEALTH

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 30 June-2 July

Americas Regional Wildlife Health Workplan Narrative 2027 -2028

Americas Wildlife Health work plan

World Organisation for Animal Health

Regional Wildlife Workplan for the Americas 2027–2028

Regional Wildlife Workplan for the Americas

2027 – 2028

Introduction

In 2026, WOAH published a new global strategy on Wildlife Health for 2026 – 2030. The strategy aims to strengthen global wildlife health governance, surveillance and risk prevention to protect biodiversity, public health and ecosystem resilience. WOAH's Regional Representations will be critical to the successful implementation of the global strategy at regional level - to ensure regional activities supporting the global strategy effectively reflects the needs of the region, the Americas have developed a Regional Wildlife Workplan.

Background

The OIE Wildlife Health Framework (2021-2025) recognised the urgent need to reinforce the role of wildlife health in One Health. Acknowledging the interdependence of wildlife, domestic animal health, ecosystem integrity and biodiversity, the Framework aimed to improve the management of disease risks at the human–animal–environment interface while protecting wildlife.

Regional wildlife health priorities for the Americas were discussed during a training event for WOAH Delegates and National Focal Points for Wildlife in 2023 in Mexico. The meeting resulted in the development of guidelines for a Regional Wildlife Health Action Plan. Despite these advances and the increasing availability of global and regional guidance, tools and networks, efforts to address wildlife health risks across the Americas remain fragmented. At country level, key challenges include limited institutional capacity within Veterinary Services, insufficient financial and human resources, inadequate legal and policy frameworks, and the limited integration of wildlife health into the broader One Health agenda. At the regional level, there is also a need to further consolidate wildlife health within WOAH's regional agenda, ensuring greater coordination, continuity and alignment of activities with regional priorities and Members' needs.

Development of the 2027-2028 Regional Wildlife Workplan for the Americas

Considering the above, during its meeting at the 92nd General Session in May 2025, the WOAH Regional Commission for the Americas agreed to establish a Regional Coordination Group (RCG) on Wildlife Health in the Americas, to support the Regional Commission in guiding WOAHs work in the region in this domain. The RCG was tasked with developing, supporting the implementation and monitoring of a Regional Wildlife Health Action Plan.

The RCG held a first virtual meeting in December 2025 before meeting in Buenos Aires in June 2026 for a guided workshop on the development of a new workplan. The group identified the priority issues involving wildlife health in the Americas, the drivers of the issues and effects, key stakeholders and relevant activities to tackle these issues. This information was then used to develop the regional workplan.

Workplan overview

The period of the global wildlife strategy (2026-2030) will be covered by two regional workplans (covering a period of two years each). The 2027-2028 workplan will focus on the following priority wildlife health issues identified by the group:

- Avian influenza
- African Swine Fever
- New World Screwworm
- Rabies

Harmful algal blooms (HABs) were identified by the Group as an important emerging wildlife health issue in the Americas that deserves greater attention. However, as HABs are not currently addressed within WOAH's global wildlife health work, no specific HAB-related activities have been included in the 2027–2028 Regional Workplan at this stage. Instead, the Group will be invited to develop an internal technical paper describing the issue and outlining the relevance and impact of HABs on wildlife health in the Americas. The paper will be submitted to WOAH Headquarters for further consideration as a potential area for future work.

The Regional Wildlife Health Workplan for 2027–2028 is structured around four workstreams that provide the framework for WOAH's wildlife health activities in the Americas Region:

- Standards, Guidelines and Governance

- Capacity Building and Training

- Communication and Partnerships

- Evidence, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

The Workplan presents a consolidated set of regional activities organised by workstream, while maintaining their links to the priority wildlife health issues identified by the Group.

The Workplan is intended to guide WOAH's wildlife health efforts in the Americas during 2027–2028. As it is not yet associated with a predefined funding structure, it will serve as a tool for resource mobilisation, planning and partnership development rather than a fixed plan of action.

Activities will be implemented progressively as resources, funding opportunities and partnerships become available. This flexible approach will allow implementation to be adapted to available financial, human and technical resources, while maintaining the regional priorities identified by the Group.

The Workplan is aligned with the Global Wildlife Health Strategy (2026–2030), with each activity contributing to one of its three outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Governance, communication and learning
- Outcome 2: Data systems, reporting incentives, data analysis
- Outcome 3: Operational delivery at regional and national level

Annex 1

Americas Wildlife Health Workplan – 2027- 2028

Americas Wildlife Health Workplan

	Activities	
	Year 1	**Year 2**
Workstream 1 (Standards and Governance)	**W1.1**. Develop practical guidelines for wildlife sample collection, preservation, handling and transport, including guidance on the use of RNA preservation solutions for avian influenza samples.	**W1.2** Based on gaps identified through the regional diagnostic capacity assessment (W5.3), identify and facilitate practical measures to improve access to avian influenza diagnosis for wildlife across the Americas.
		W1.3– Develop, through relevant partnerships, evidence-based guidance for vampire bat rabies prevention and control, including risk awareness, risk-based livestock vaccination and sustainable bat population management, prioritising non-lethal interventions where appropriate.
Workstream 2 (Capacity building and training)	**W2.1** Deliver two targeted online learning activities for Wildlife Focal Points and Veterinary Services on priority technical topics identified through the regional planning process, including sessions on**:** • **WOAH Collaborating Centres:** purpose, areas of expertise in the region and how to engage with them.	**W2. 2** Deliver a regional training series for Wildlife Focal Points on wildlife disease risk analysis and environmental threats, combining online and in-person training and including engagement with WOAH Collaborating Centres. Including: - NWS, Bat rabies, ASF and AI

	• **NWS:** recognition, susceptible wildlife species, detection, reporting and response, and the role of the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) in prevention and control. • **ASF:** role and management of wild boar hunting within prevention, preparedness and response strategies. • Bat rabies and AI	**W2.3** Build hunters' capacity to contribute to wildlife disease surveillance and early detection, including recognition and reporting of suspected cases, safe handling of wildlife carcasses, and appropriate biosecurity measures (including ASF-specific activities). **W2.4** Conduct targeted capacity-building activities for pork producers on ASF risks associated with the wildlife–domestic pig interface and relevant prevention and biosecurity measures.
Workstream 3 (Comms and partnerships)	**W3.1** Identify and pursue funding and partnership opportunities to support the implementation of priority regional wildlife health activities, including opportunities for private-sector engagement. **W3.9** Promote and facilitate the identification of qualified institutions in Latin America as WOAH Reference Centres in relevant wildlife health areas, with the aim of strengthening regional technical expertise, scientific collaboration and access to specialised support to the subregion, particularly in Spanish.	
	W3.2 Establish and strengthen partnerships with scientific institutions, WOAH Collaborating Centres and other relevant technical organisations to support the generation of evidence and address priority regional wildlife health knowledge and data gaps. (Linked to W5.2)	**W3.6** Develop targeted awareness and risk communication activities for priority stakeholders on priority wildlife health issues, including disease recognition, reporting, prevention and appropriate risk-reduction behaviours (including AI-related awareness for hunters, fishers and other wildlife-

	W3.3 Strengthen regional and international networks and partnerships to promote information exchange, technical cooperation and coordination on priority wildlife health issues, including: • Establishing a regional vampire bat rabies network. • Establishing or strengthening a regional wildlife network on New World screwworm (NWS). • Strengthening collaboration and technical exchange with ASF networks and partners in Europe and Asia.	facing stakeholders, and rabies risk awareness for populations and stakeholders at increased risk)
	W3.4 – Map priority stakeholders relevant to wildlife disease prevention, surveillance and early detection to identify opportunities for engagement and collaboration across the priority wildlife health issues, including priority stakeholders for AI and ASF.	**W3.7 –** Strengthen partnerships with hunting organisations to support wildlife disease surveillance, early detection and implementation of relevant prevention and biosecurity activities for priority wildlife health issues (including ASF surveillance and early detection).
	W3.5 – Explore partnerships with citizen science initiatives and open biodiversity data platforms (like e-bird) to support detection and reporting of wildlife mortality events and improve access to spatial	**W3.8 –** Engage with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to explore how their knowledge and observations could contribute to wildlife disease surveillance and early detection across priority

	biodiversity data relevant to wildlife disease surveillance and evidence generation	wildlife health issues (including NWS surveillance and early detection)
Workstream 5 (EMEL)	**W5.1** Collect and consolidate regional data, evidence and lessons learned from the implementation of the 2027–2028 work plan to inform the development of the 2029–2030 work plan.	
	W5.2 Generate, consolidate and analyse evidence to address priority regional wildlife health knowledge and data gaps, in collaboration with relevant scientific and technical partners. Priority areas include: • **AI:** assess impacts on wildlife populations, including recovery and resilience. • **Rabies:** improve understanding of the drivers of vampire bat distribution and expansion and associated rabies risk. • **ASF:** develop risk maps integrating wild boar distribution and domestic pig production, and assess risks associated with illegal movements of pork and pork products. • **NWS:** synthesise and analyse available data, identify key drivers, and develop predictive models and simulations.	
	W5.3 Assess and map regional laboratory capacity for avian influenza diagnosis in wildlife to identify diagnostic gaps and opportunities to strengthen access to testing	

Link to the WOAH Global Strategy:

Outcome 1 - Governance, communication and learning

Outcome 2 - Data systems, reporting incentives, data analysis
Outcome 3 - Operational delivery at regional and national levels