

Webinar for World Wildlife Day in Asia and the Pacific
“The evolving role of veterinarians in wildlife health for One Health”

Summary of discussion points

Speaker session

- The OIE provides guidelines and standards, while countries themselves undertake the actual field work. Other organisations such as FAO may support such work.
- Ecotourism has both advantages and disadvantages for wildlife. Tourists may bring infectious diseases—such as chytrid fungus, influenza virus or SARS-CoV-2—into ecosystems, and may stress animals by disturbing their feeding or resting. However, income generated by ecotourism may help maintain protected areas.
- Training animals for reintroduction focuses on providing the right environment and challenges to encourage them to express natural behaviour and wild-type skills. For example, orangutans in rehabilitation centres need a complex forest-type habitat to train skills such as nest-building and foraging for natural food items.

Panel discussion

- **Panellist introductions**

Ms Myounghyun Kwon is a final year veterinary student at Kagoshima University in Japan. Dr Sashikala Gamage is a wildlife veterinarian working for Elephant Transit Home, Udawalawe, Sri Lanka. Dr Alison Clarke is currently completing a clinical residency and Master of Veterinary Science at Massey University’s Wildbase Wildlife Hospital and Wellington Zoo. Dr Pakeeyaraj works at Sunway Lagoon Wildlife Park in Peninsula Malaysia.

- **Skills for working with wildlife**

Veterinary school includes training for zoonoses and One Health, including companion and farm animals, but often there is little or no specific training on wildlife. It was agreed that empowering undergraduate students to gain practical experience with wildlife would be useful. Panellists obtained much of their wildlife experience by volunteering and self-learning.

It was noted that many skills taught at universities are transferable to wildlife – such as risk management, disease investigations and management. Epidemiology is also very useful. It is possible to approach wildlife/zoo animal medicine by using first principles.

Specific skills highlighted to be important in this field were:

1. Communication – e.g. building relationships, conflict resolution
2. Problem solving
3. Strategic planning
4. Decision making
5. Research skills including publishing.

- **One Health approach**

Again, communication skills were highlighted for working in a multisectoral environment. Planning, data analysis, and program design were also noted as useful skills.