



**Wildlife Health Australia:
Sustaining the national wildlife
health network**

Joe Cashmore

WOAH East Asia Wildlife Health Network
September 2025



Artwork by Lani Balzan

Wildlife Health Australia recognises the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia.

We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuing connection to land, sea, wildlife and community.

We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to their Elders past and present.

I live and work on Gubi Gubi Country.

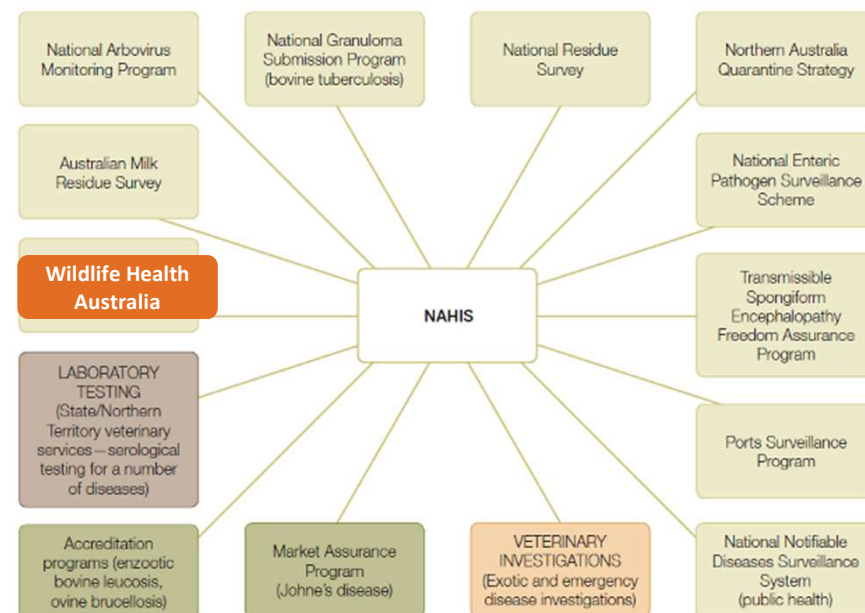
Activities relating to wildlife health

- **Licensed volunteers rehabilitate injured & orphaned native wildlife.**
- **Veterinary clinics provide triage and ongoing treatment of injured, orphaned & sick wildlife.**
- **Government agencies, ecologists and vertebrate pest professionals undertake wildlife management and feral animal control.**
- **Government agencies, veterinarians & government, university diagnostic laboratories support disease investigations & pathogen specific surveillance (e.g. avian influenza in wild birds)**

feed
into

Australia's Wildlife Health System

**Australia's Wildlife Health System is integrated into
Australia's Animal Health Information System**



Australia's Wildlife Health System

Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) - the national non-government body that advances wildlife health for a healthier future for all

Established in 2002 as a National initiative of the Australian Government. Funded through a cost-shared model from Australian federal and state and territory governments.

WHA's activities include:

- coordinating national wildlife disease surveillance information
- communication about wildlife disease and emerging incidents
- Input into national & regional strategies for wildlife health emergency preparedness and response
- facilitating, monitoring and supporting field investigations of disease incidents
- advancing education and training in wildlife health
- publishing fact sheets about diseases of national importance in wildlife



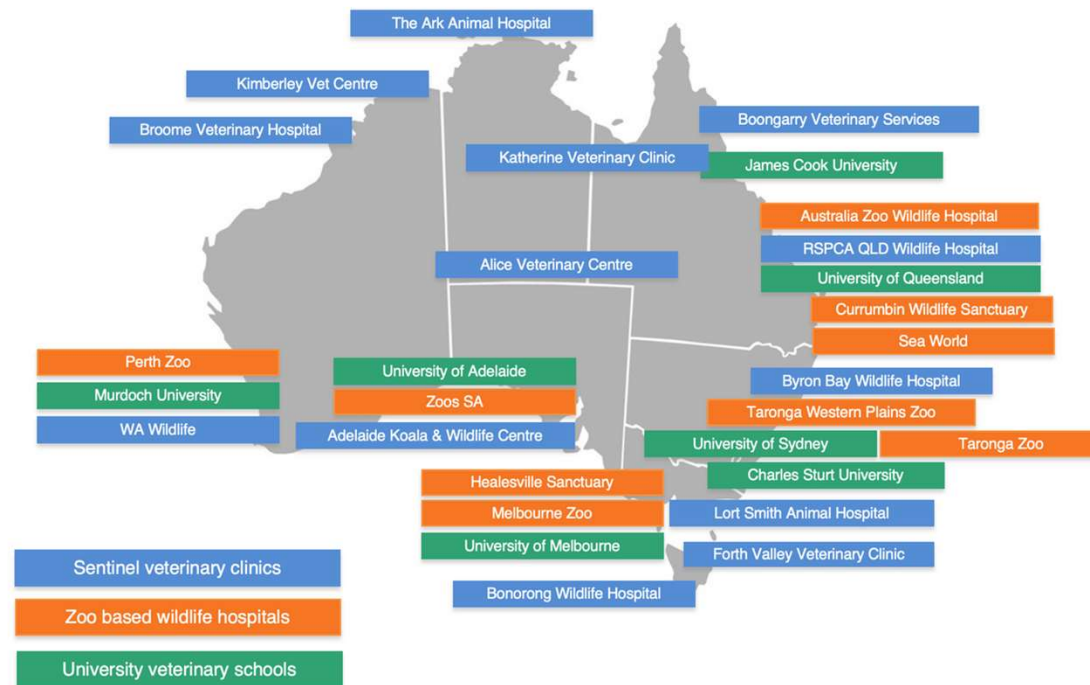
Surveillance Program

- **General surveillance programs**

- Wildlife Health Australia Coordinators & Environment Representatives
- **Sentinel Surveillance Program**
 - **est. 2010** Zoo, Vet Clinics, Universities

- **Targeted surveillance & monitoring**

- **National Avian Influenza in Wild Birds Program (NAIWB)**
 - Avian influenza in wild birds
- **Bat Health Focus Group**
 - **est. 2004** Australian Bat Lyssavirus Focus Group



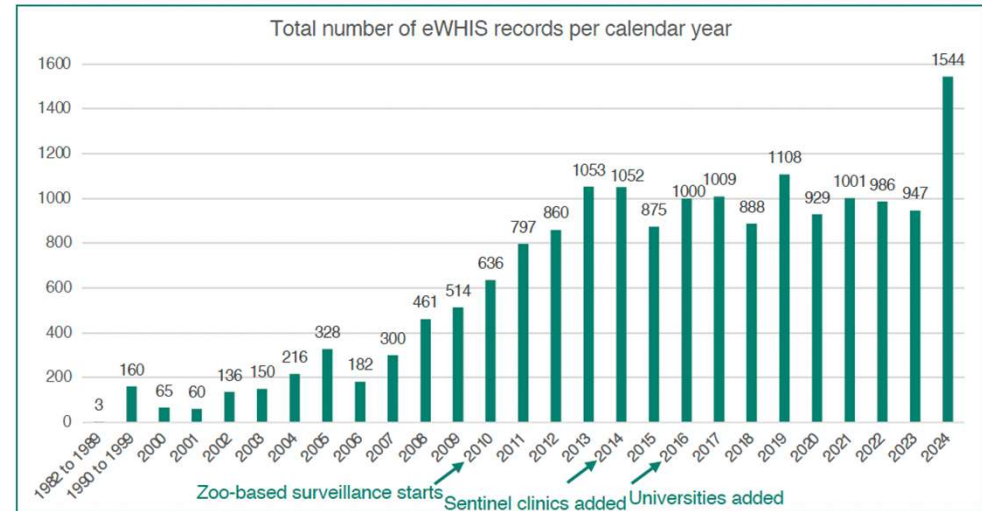
Sustaining Networks - Trust

Confidentiality

- Ownership of data in eWHIS = the data submitter
- WHA Confidentiality Principles & Data Management Policy apply
- Confidentiality/access level selected for each record in eWHIS
- WHA seeks approval before publication of specific information
- WHA Confidentiality Principles & Data Management Policy is available online.

Trust is the cornerstone of the integrity of the Wildlife Health Network

Number of eWHIS records per calendar year



Wildlife Health Australia (2024) Sentinel Surveillance Program
Annual Report 2024.



Sustaining Networks - Mutually Beneficial Relationships



Funding

- National Significant Disease Investigation Program
- WHA Wildlife Disease Investigation Fund
- One Health Investigation Fund

Strong Network = Stronger Resilience

- Network benefits through collaboration opportunities and information sharing facilitation
- A stronger network bolsters preparedness activities and disease outbreak resilience



Sustaining Networks - Communication

Points of Contact

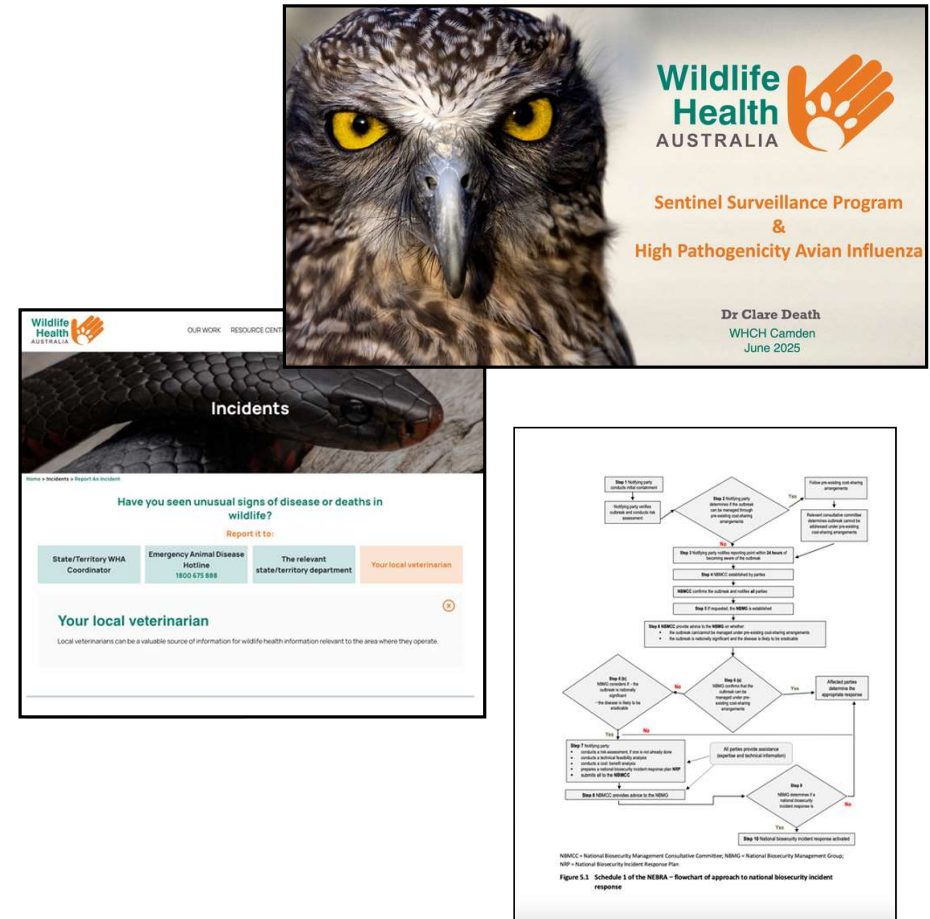
- **Group Chair (WHA staff) act as coordinator and first point of contact for relative group, with help from WHA support staff**

Database use and training

- New members are provided training on reporting guidelines and database use
- Every report is moderated by a member of the surveillance team
- Reports will be followed up on if further information is required

Ongoing Communication

- **Monthly Newsletter**
- **Network regularly updated during wildlife disease events**



Sustaining Networks - Active Engagement

In person and online meetings

- WHA regularly attend conferences and events
- WHA administered groups meet online through the year
- WHA staff regularly take the opportunity to meet network partners when possible individually and at events
- In some cases WHA sponsors attendance to events

Engagement and Capacity Building

- Indigenous community
- Wildlife Rehabilitators
- Invasive Species Managers



Joint WHA Coordinator and
Sentinel Surveillance Partner
meeting - July 2024



Surveillance Partners at Byron Bay
Wildlife Hospital with WHA Senior Project
Officer Clare Death



WHA Staff at WDA International 2024



Sustaining Networks - Productive Resources

Data Contributes to...

- National & international reporting
- Emergency disease response
- Publications e.g. Animal Health Surveillance Quarterly, ABLV Bat Stats, Wild Bird News
- WHA fact sheets

WHA resources

- Incident information pages and preparedness materials
- Fact Sheets
- Wildlife Health Australia Website
- Wildlife Health Australia Newsletter
- Bat Stats and Bat News

Wild Bird News

National Avian Influenza Wild Bird Surveillance Newsletter - June 2021



Avian Influenza Virus

To date, 16 haemagglutinin (HA; H1-H16) and 9 neuraminidase (NA; N1-N9) subtypes are recognised in birds. Waterfowl and shorebirds are the main natural reservoirs and rarely show signs of disease. Avian Influenza Virus (AIV) can cause significant infectious disease in domestic poultry and can also



High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) and Wildlife in Australia

A RISK MITIGATION TOOLBOX FOR WILDLIFE CARE PROVIDERS WITH A FOCUS ON HPAI H5 2.3.4.4b

Version 1.0 May 2024

Shearwater mass mortalities

Fact Sheet
November 2024

Key points

- Mass mortalities or "wrecks" of migrating seabirds occur regularly, generally in spring, along the coastlines of Australia.
- These mass mortalities are considered a by-product of long migration, starvation and exhaustion, exacerbated by severe weather conditions. Climatic conditions, ocean temperatures, food resources and ingestion of marine debris may also play a role in these events.
- The numbers of carcasses visible may vary from small numbers to hundreds or even

ABLV BAT STATS

Australian Bat Lyssavirus Report - December 2024

Cases of ABLV infection - January to December 2024

Table 1: ABLV infection cases by month

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2020	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



In this issue:

- Updates on recent WHA activities
- Links to news and information on wildlife health
- Information on Avian Influenza, Wildlife Toxicology and One Health
- Links to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and information and National Reconciliation Week
- Upcoming conferences and events
- ...and much more

Sustaining Networks - Strategic Leadership



Photo © Arthur Ferguson

OUR 2050 VISION:
Healthy wildlife,
healthy planet

OUR PURPOSE:
To advance wildlife health
for a healthier future for all



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2025 - 2050

The Strategic Framework will be implemented through a series of time bound plans that drive the national agenda.



ENABLERS



Sustaining Networks - One Health Connectivity

Collaboration opportunities

- Unique opportunities for multisectoral collaboration on wildlife health projects and investigation
- WOAHC Collaborating Centre for Wildlife Health Risk Management

Coordination of One Health Projects

- Bat Health Focus Group
- National Avian Influenza in Wildlife Bird Steering Group
- Koala Health Project
- Wildlife Disease Risk Analysis Course

WOAH Collaborating Centre for
Wildlife Health Risk Management

Collaborating Centre  World Organisation
for Animal Health
Founded as OIE





Thank You!

www.wildlifehealthaustralia.org.au

