





What can be done?

The implementation of surveillance programmes is key to ensure that each country manages its wildlife health risks. Programmes can vary significantly in their breadth and specificity, as well as in the resources required to meet their goals. For example, surveillance may focus on visual identification of disease or involve the collection of biological samples. Several aspects should be considered:

National coordination. A national surveillance system collects information from multiple programmes across the country, and should include:

- The detection and identification of diseases, pathogens and toxic agents.
- Analysis and communication.
- Information management.

Cross-sectoral collaboration. Surveillance requires the combined expertise of people who can respond to observations and detections, carry out investigations, and interpret and communicate findings and implement identified action.

Rangers, hunters, local communities, and Indigenous peoples play a key role in the detection of diseases in wildlife. They are often the first people at the scene, interact regularly with wildlife, and have important understanding of what may be unusual in relation to wildlife health.

Veterinarians, environmental and land use authorities, ecologists, social scientists, information managers, and public health professionals are also important to the process, as well as Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) representatives where

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applicable. WOA National Wildlife Focal Points are also an important resource to include in coordination efforts.

Defining stakeholder roles and responsibilities and establishing a process for **communication between actors on the ground and authorities** is important to create trust and encourage adoption of recommendations from the findings.

Safety. Managing biological risks, such as exposure to pathogens or toxins, is critical throughout surveillance. This can include use of personal protective equipment to protect human and animal health, disinfecting equipment, and appropriate storage of samples. Only veterinary and other qualified and trained professionals should conduct procedures involving wildlife handling and sampling.

Ethical best practices. Surveillance programmes should be **context-specific** to ensure that sampling approaches are safe and appropriate to the environmental, species conservation (including animal welfare) and cultural context and objectives.

Surveillance programmes should be co-developed and co-managed through **direct participation of Indigenous peoples** in activities that affect their lands and territories and the species they utilise and depend upon.

Where can I get more information?

[General Guidelines for Surveillance of Diseases, Pathogens and Toxic Agents in Free-ranging Wildlife \(2024\)](#)