

# Panorama

Bulletin 2023-2

Editorial  
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## Improving aquatic animal health and welfare worldwide



World Organisation  
for Animal Health  
Founded as OIE

[bulletin.woah.org](https://bulletin.woah.org)

*Aquatic animal diseases that are new to science emerge regularly, some with rapid and extreme impact. The emergence of new diseases is expected to increase with growing aquaculture production and the impact of climate change. The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission (the Commission) assesses diseases at their meetings to determine whether they meet the definition of an emerging disease. This information is provided to WOA Members to alert them to the potential impact of the disease(s) and advise them that control measures may be necessary.*

The Commission evaluates all available evidence against the definition of an emerging disease and determines whether the disease has a significant impact on farmed or wild populations of aquatic animals. This can be due to a change in geographical spread of a disease, its detection in a different species, or the identification of a newly recognised or suspected pathogenic agent.

If the disease meets the definition, Members are informed of the assessment and the requirement to notify, through the report of the Commission. The disease is [listed on the WOA website](#), included in the [World Animal Health Information System \(WAHIS\)](#) and a technical disease card is developed to support Members. Any detection of a disease that is recognised as an emerging disease must be reported to WOA, in accordance with Article 1.1.4. of the [Aquatic Animal Health Code](#).

The Commission continues to review the scientific evidence regarding the disease over time to determine whether it continues to meet the definition. If there is sufficient evidence to fulfil the criteria for listing, the disease will be presented to Members for consideration. If it no longer meets the definition, the disease is removed from the WOA website and Members are no longer required to notify.

Assessing diseases as emerging diseases allows additional epidemiological information to be collected through the notifications to WOA. Members can use this information to become aware of geographical spread and potential impacts, allowing them to assess the risk to their country and implement risk mitigation measures.

<https://doi.org/10.20506/bull.2023.2.3408>

## PERSPECTIVES

### ▶ WOA ACTIONS

## Assessment and listing of emerging diseases

### KEYWORDS

#Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission, #disease reporting, #Emerging disease, #WAHIS

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**WOAH (founded as OIE) is a global organisation, working to ensure the health of animals across the world. Since 1924, we have focused on the complexities of animal health. We disseminate information on animal diseases and use science-based strategies to limit their potentially negative impact on society.**

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