

## *A wild(life) opportunity*



Our language changes each year. New words appear and others rise in popularity. This year saw the introduction of 'COVID-19' into the global vocabulary. It also saw a huge rise in the use of 'lockdown', 'coronavirus', 'key worker', 'self-isolate' and 'social distancing'. Merriam-Webster has just named 'pandemic' as 2020's Word of the Year. What does 2021 have in store for us?

OIE staff experienced massive changes in personal working modalities and event organisation in 2020, but our shared goal to improve animal health worldwide continues. There has been one significant shift – an increased discussion of wildlife health. The OIE Working Group (WG) on Wildlife produced many important documents this year and the new Wildlife Health Management Framework was developed. Next year will be a vital year as we embark on the implementation of this framework.

Concurrently, the Manhattan Principles for One Health (2004) received an upgrade to the Berlin Principles (2020),<sup>1</sup> with a more holistic approach that specifically highlights environmental changes and wildlife exploitation. The Principles advocate addressing ecosystem health and integrity using a One Health approach.

In the Asia and the Pacific region, the OIE is addressing a number of diseases involving wildlife with impacts across boundaries that necessitate a One Health approach. This region has seen in the past the occurrence of emerging zoonoses such as Nipah virus, SARS, and zoonotic influenzas (H5N1 and H7N9). Most recently, of course, there has been SARS-CoV-2.

Staff at both regional offices in Tokyo and Bangkok are working with regional members of the WG on Wildlife and also actively seeking new partners to work in the field of wildlife health, to understand the transmission

dynamics from wildlife to domestic animals and the human population, and to identify risk mitigation measures to prevent its future occurrence. Virtual platforms have enabled our participation in events at veterinary education establishments throughout the region to engage with university students on One Health and wildlife. The Thailand National Wildlife Health Centre (NWHC)/Monitoring and Surveillance Center for Zoonotic Diseases in Wildlife and Exotic Animals (MoZWE) is undertaking a Twinning Project with mentorship from the US Geological Survey NWHC. The ASEAN Center for Biodiversity (ACB) collaborated with the OIE in organising a webinar to promote wildlife conservation to prevent zoonoses from wildlife disease spill-over. Discussions with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in the region and globally identified common ground which we will build on with joint activities in the coming months.

What will 2021 bring? Perhaps the public and scientists alike will understand the concept of One Health better and working together will become accepted as 'the new normal'. Perhaps wildlife will be the key to unlocking the secret of multisectoral collaboration, with monitoring of wildlife health as a sensitive indicator for emerging diseases that may also affect livestock and/or humans. We have high hopes for a more positive Word of the Year in 2021 – let's vote for 'opportunity'.

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■ OIE In-house Times – December 2020

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<sup>1</sup> Gabrysch S., Jetzkowitz J., Lieberman S., Palmer C., Winkler A. & Walzer C. (In press). –The Berlin Principles on One Health– Bridging global health and conservation. Science of the Total Environment.