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Press release

**Wildlife surveillance:
ANSES and the ONCFS consolidate their partnership**

On 26 February 2018, Roger Genet and Olivier Thibault, respectively Directors General of ANSES and the National Office for Hunting and Wildlife (ONCFS), signed the third framework agreement for the partnership between the two institutions. The renewal of their collaboration shows that greater consideration is being given to wildlife in animal and public health issues.

The consolidation of the partnership between ANSES and the ONCFS reflects the determination of the two organisations to pursue and strengthen their alliance around common topics of concern in animal and public health, in order to deal with emerging diseases originating in wildlife. This collaboration can be considered as a major contribution to public policies in these areas, after recent outbreaks of avian influenza for example or in the event that France would have to manage cases of African swine fever.

Since the 2000s, the 'One Health' concept developed by the WHO, FAO and OIE has promoted a systemic view of public, animal and environmental health. In this context, the surveillance and management of diseases are to be put into a holistic perspective, taking into account humans, farm animals, and wildlife.

Over the past few years, ANSES has included wildlife in its work on animal diseases and toxic phenomena, while the ONCFS has developed and diversified its monitoring and support activities for the management of wildlife health issues. The two organisations have a long-standing partnership in the areas of surveillance, expert appraisal and research, supporting the French Ministry of Agriculture. For example, ANSES's Laboratory for Rabies and Wildlife works with the Epidemiological surveillance network for wild terrestrial mammals and birds in France (SAGIR) - originally created at the initiative of the ONCFS and the National Hunting Federation (FNC) - monitoring the health of wild mammals and birds in France for over 40 years.

Moreover, the ONCFS regularly relies on ANSES's capacities to investigate complex cases of animal mortality. The Office is also involved in other programmes run by ANSES, in particular the surveillance network for lyssaviruses causing rabies in bats, which provides the surveillance network for abnormal bat mortality (SMAC) with significant organisational support. Through the partnership with the SAGIR network, it also provides input for the phytovacovigilance scheme implemented by ANSES, by detecting cases of wildlife poisoning. These results have enabled unintentional effects of plant protection products on wildlife to be identified.

The collaborative efforts of the two organisations to help manage the outbreak of brucellosis in ibex in the Barge Massif demonstrated the complementarity of their approaches. The two institutions (epidemiologists, ibex specialists, operational field teams, the National Reference Laboratory, risk assessment experts, computer modellers, etc.) worked together to propose management scenarios for this completely unexpected re-emergence of brucellosis within a protected species.

There are other topics of concern common to ANSES and the ONCFS, including bovine tuberculosis, avian influenza and swine fever – all national priorities to which the two partners are particularly committed. Bovine tuberculosis is a good example of a disease giving rise to collaborative work on several levels:

- surveillance and analytical reference with the Sylvatub scheme for tuberculosis surveillance in wildlife, deployed in the framework of the National Platform for Epidemiological Surveillance in Animal Health (ESA),
- expert appraisal and risk assessment,
- research, with two study proposals, one on the oral vaccination of badgers and the other on the mapping of interfaces between wildlife and cattle,
- risk management with the supervisory ministries.

The National Office for Hunting and Wildlife is a leading public agency for the sustainable management of wildlife and its habitats. Its missions involve the following: surveillance of wildlife and its habitats; implementation of the regulations on environmental and hunting control; conducting studies, research and experiments for the conservation, restoration and management of wildlife and its habitats; and technical support for the public authorities for assessing the status of wildlife and monitoring its management.

ANSES contributes to safeguarding human health in the areas of the environment, work and food, as well as protecting animal health and welfare, and plant health. *Via* its Nancy Laboratory for Rabies and Wildlife, it works on certain pathogens common to wildlife and domestic animals, and studies and assesses the role of wildlife in the circulation of pathogens endangering the health of humans or domestic animals.

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