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MINUTES OF THE 2005 WILDLIFE DISEASE ASSOCIATION SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING

28 June 2005

A special joint business meeting of the Wildlife Disease Association (WDA) and WDA Australasian Section was called to order at 9:00 PM by WDA President T. Mörner. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss integration between the sections and the WDA. The WDA Constitution states that sections are for members of WDA; however, the European and Australasian sections exist separate from the Association. The Australasian Section was the first (1972) section, and remains the largest.

T. Portas reported that discussions have been occurring between WDA and the sections since T. Mörner attended the Australasian Section meeting last year. T. Mörner has discussed with sections the idea of membership fees being paid to WDA with redistribution to sections. The sections would then spend funds as they saw fit. The amount of funding back to the section could be based on number of members. The Australasia Section will make a decision when a formal proposal from WDA is made. All section members are in agreement that to make WDA more relevant to them, they need to become more active by becoming full members and publishing in the *Journal of Wildlife Diseases*. S. Wright added that having T. Mörner as President has shown the Association the importance of international involvement on Council also. He encouraged all section members to become active WDA members through serving on Council, committees and other activities.

E. Addison stated that over 85% of WDA membership is from North America. Therefore, a bias exists in the way "the membership" views issues, including the expense to attend meetings. L. Skerratt added that the WDA needs to address the issues of why more Australasia Section members are not WDA members. In addition to the long distance and expense to attend annual meetings, there are other issues such as the expense of publishing in the *Journal* and the type of material in the *Journal*.

E. Addison noted that there is some immediacy to resolving the issue of interaction with sections so that we are fully following our Constitution and Bylaws. Council is aware of some of the difficulties because of the vagueness of the Bylaws regarding how much and how support is provided to the sections. All seemed to agree that discussions over the last few days had been fruitful and had helped give us a clearer way forward. It was determined that the Australasia Section did not need to make a decision during this meeting as was planned. Instead, section chairs will continue to work with, and make a recommendation to, Council.

Discussion then turned to other sections. The idea of a North American Section has been proposed and discussed by Council. Currently, the primary WDA focus is on North America and a section does not seem warranted; however, the idea should be revisited again in the future. At the Nordic Section meeting this year, those who were not members of WDA added $22 to their registration to become WDA Associate Members. For the European Section, language is a bit of a difficulty and not a lot of wildlife disease work is done. This section is rather young and loosely organized but, like the Australasian Section, is working toward appropriate interaction with WDA.

It was noted that finances rather than ideological differences were the main issue of concern for the sections. This is particularly true for members in developing countries and for students. The Australasian Section focuses on students and recruits many members as students. About half of the regular modest section membership is students. E. Addison noted that the cost of the *Journal* is the main reason for the added cost of WDA membership. The *Journal* and annual conference are the primary products of the WDA, but there is also the web site and on-line services. Perhaps an on-line newsletter should be considered as another product in the future. An additional cost to non-USA members is the currency exchange rate. The idea of changing the location of publication was raised but it was noted that we receive very good service from Allen Press and that all management services are provided through the agency. On-line–only access to the *Journal* is an option for the future, but the Editors and Council believe that we are not quite ready for it yet.

Discussions will continue, so section members were encouraged to contact T. Portas or E. Ågren with input. The goal is to finalize

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a plan for WDA–section interaction this fall. Participants were thanked and the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret A. Wild,
Secretary

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