



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

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Wildlife experts join forces to help curb infection

Animal experts are calling for better health surveillance of wild species to help stop the spread of diseases.

Monitoring the health of animals living freely in the wild is crucial for managing infections that can pass into domestic animal and human populations, they say.

It is also important for conserving threatened species and maintaining wildlife diversity.

Many infectious diseases that affect people have a natural reservoir in animal populations. The Ebola virus, for example, responsible for the recent outbreak in West Africa originates in wild fruit bats.

Vets and scientists from around Europe are meeting in Edinburgh to discuss the challenges of gathering health information from animals in the wild.

Researchers will discuss new strategies to monitor and manage disease outbreaks in wildlife to safeguard the health of people and farm animals.

They will also review new diseases that are emerging in the wild. These include an emerging bacterial infection similar to leprosy that is affecting endangered populations of red squirrels in Scotland.

The European Wildlife Disease Association Conference is hosted by The University of Edinburgh. It has been organised by experts at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and Scotland's Rural College.

Professor Anna Meredith, of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, said: "Most infectious diseases that affect people originate in animals, both wild and farmed. Understanding how these diseases spread in wild animals is vital."

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