

CASE STORY 1: BOLIVIA – INTEGRATED DISEASE PREVENTION FOR LIVESTOCK, PEOPLE AND CONSERVATION

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Domestic animal diseases have the potential to significantly affect wildlife populations and human livelihoods, either as a result of direct impacts on their health, or by decreasing the amount of game available for subsistence hunters. The closer the contact between domestic animals, wildlife, and human populations, the bigger the risk of disease transmission becomes. Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has a long-term presence in the Takana communities of Bolivia, working in alliance with the Takana People's Indigenous Council to develop capacity for them to sustainably manage their territory. The core of WCS's approach is to provide a framework for attaining governance, while offering support for community-based sustainable resource management initiatives. These include a wildlife monitoring system which tracks sustainability of subsistence hunting, and a wildlife health program focused on improving domestic animal health and husbandry. By fostering community-based sustainable natural resource management initiatives, we also expect environmental impacts to be reduced. The overall goal of our health program is to promote human/wildlife conflict resolution and biodiversity conservation, focusing on key aspects of ecosystem health. The strategies have been to: (1) create capacity in animal husbandry and disease management; (2) establish a surveillance network for domestic and wild animal diseases; (3) set up husbandry records; (4) implement communal veterinary pharmacies; (5) provide on-site technical assistance for communal livestock rearing projects; and (6) identify and promote the use of native medicinal plants as alternatives to pharmaceuticals. After five years, positive outcomes include improved health care for domestic animals, increased demand for training and medicinal plant studies, and availability of information on disease outbreaks in remote areas. Observed benefits for the wellbeing of indigenous peoples comprise steadily available sources of protein, diversification of income sources, reduction in the prevalence of zoonotic diseases, and promotion of sustainable management of natural resources.

