

## REGIONAL AFFAIRS IN THE AMERICAS: REPORTING ON DISEASES OF AQUATIC ANIMALS IN OIE MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE AMERICAS

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One of the most important challenges to the Americas is to build capacity to diagnose and report diseases of aquatic animals, as shown in the study reported in this paper. The objective of this study was to determine the capacity of OIE Members in the Americas for reporting OIE listed diseases of aquatic animals.

An analysis was made of the information available on OIE listed diseases for the Americas in the OIE Handistatus II and WAHID databases between 1996 and 2010. The continent was divided into four sub regions: South America from Colombia to Argentina; Central America from Panama to Mexico; the Caribbean including the Greater and Lesser Antilles and North America, comprising Canada and the United States. The data were interpreted in terms of the number of years that a sub region had reported the diagnosis of OIE listed diseases of fish, molluscs, crustaceans and amphibians.

The results showed that North America was the only sub region that maintained disease reporting throughout the 15 years analysed. In South America, five countries maintained disease reporting for periods of 11 – 15 years but seven countries provided no disease reports for aquatic animals. In Central America, four countries maintained disease reporting for 6–10 years and three provided no disease reports for aquatic animals. In the Caribbean, only one country maintained disease reporting for 11–15 years, whereas eight countries had zero participation. The differences in performance are best explained by the small number of professionals trained and engaged in diagnosis of aquatic animal diseases, as well as the lack of reliable laboratories. The potential consequences for biosecurity and trade are emphasised. The OIE project on laboratory twinning is a viable option for building diagnostic capacity, that will contribute to the success of the ‘One World, One Health’ strategic framework as it pertains to diseases of aquatic animals in the Americas.

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