



Press release

Fight against avian influenza: Ceva Wildlife Research Fund and the Francophone Association of Zoo Veterinarians are implementing a pilot project in six French zoos

Libourne, January 27, 2026

Avian influenza also threatens zoological collections

In response to the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) epidemic affecting Europe, Ceva Wildlife Research Fund (Ceva WRF) and the ‘Association Française des Vétérinaires de Parcs Zoologiques’ (AFVPZ) are working together to strengthen the protection of birds in zoological parks against this disease.

Zoos are home to many species of birds, often with high conservation value because they are endangered in their natural habitat. Exposed to the risk of avian influenza through direct or indirect contact with wild birds, they must be protected by innovative solutions to prevent this disease. The use of vaccines is a solution that helps prevent this disease and is compatible with the welfare of birds by not restricting their freedom of movement.

A vaccination campaign backed by a scientific research project

Under the aegis of the AFVPZ and carried out in collaboration with zoological parks, Ceva WRF: an endowment fund dedicated to the field of wildlife health, supports the implementation and monitoring of a vaccination campaign against avian influenza in exotic birds. This scientific research project aims to **assess the protection provided by the vaccine by collecting data on the immune response** of the species involved.

Until now, French zoos only had access to one vaccine. Changes in national regulations, which came into force this summer, now give them access to an innovative vaccine developed by Ceva Santé Animale (Ceva), thereby paving the way for this research project.

This program builds on the recognized expertise of the veterinary laboratory Ceva in the field of avian influenza, as well as on the **promising results of similar projects already conducted by Ceva WRF** in zoos in Belgium and Hungary, and in the wild in the French Southern and Antarctic Lands, in partnership with the CNRS (*French National Centre for Scientific Research*)-CEFE. In these contexts, the Ceva vaccine, initially designed for domestic and farmed species, demonstrated **a good immune response and safety** in several wild species studied.

Based on these results, this latest-generation vaccine, adapted to currently circulating virus strains, is likely to be effective across multiple species.

These initiatives in zoological parks are essential for improving prevention strategies while preserving individuals of high conservation value.



“This vaccination program reflects the commitment of Ceva Wildlife Research Fund to protecting wildlife, relying on scientific research to better anticipate and prevent the health risks facing exotic birds.”

— Pierre-Marie Borne, Director of Ceva Wildlife Research Fund

6 parks involved, 3 bird groups targeted

Six French zoological parks are taking part in this research project: « le Parc zoologique de Paris (Musée Nationale d'Histoire Naturelle - MNHN) », « le Safari Parc de Planète Sauvage », « la Réserve Zoologique de la Haute-Touche (MNHN) », « le Zoo de la Palmyre », « le Parc Zoologique et Botanique de Mulhouse » and « le ZooParc de Beauval ».

Around twenty bird species have been vaccinated, divided into three main groups: **spheniscidae** (penguins), **ratites** (ostriches, emus, etc.) and **birds of prey**. Their selection is based on three criteria: sensitivity to the disease, conservation value and the need to expand available scientific data.



@F. Perroux/Zoo de la Palmyre

Scientific and technical collaboration

Within this project, **Ceva WRF** provides scientific expertise, manages logistics and supplies vaccines. The **zoological parks** select the birds, ensure their monitoring and appoint the responsible veterinarians, while the **AFVPZ** provides scientific and technical support, particularly for the implementation of vaccination protocols and compliance with operational conditions. Ultimately, the scientific data collected and analyzed will enable the potential benefits of this vaccine technology for conservation medicine to be objectively assessed.



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About Ceva Wildlife Research Fund

Ceva Wildlife Research Fund is an independent endowment fund, dedicated to the field of wildlife health by supporting applied research projects and providing expertise to preserve biodiversity and promote the One Health approach.

The Fund's main missions are to contribute to the preservation of animal biodiversity, to investigate interactions between wildlife, humans and domesticated animals, and to understand, monitor, and tackling emerging diseases, including zoonoses.

Ceva Santé Animale, the world's 5th largest animal health company, whose mission is to provide innovative health solutions for all animals in order to ensure the highest level of care and well-being, created Ceva Wildlife Research Fund to specifically support the health of wild animals.

<https://www.ceva.com/wildlife-research-fund/>

About AFVPZ

Founded in 1995, the Association Francophone des Vétérinaires de Parc Zoologique (AFVPZ) now has more than 330 French-speaking members. All these members are veterinarians who work or have worked in the care of captive wild animals. The AFVPZ is made up of salaried veterinarians – sometimes also directors and/or qualified practitioners – as well as private practitioners based near an animal park, veterinary schoolteachers and more.

<https://afvpz.com/>

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