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Lorette Hivert, Timothée Vergne, Manon Tissidre, Anouk Decors, Guillaume Le Loc'h

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Investigating the relevance and feasibility of involving wildlife rehabilitation centres for disease surveillance in France.

Lorette Hivert (1), Timothée Vergne (1), Manon Tissidre (2), Anouk Decors (3), Guillaume Le Loch (1)

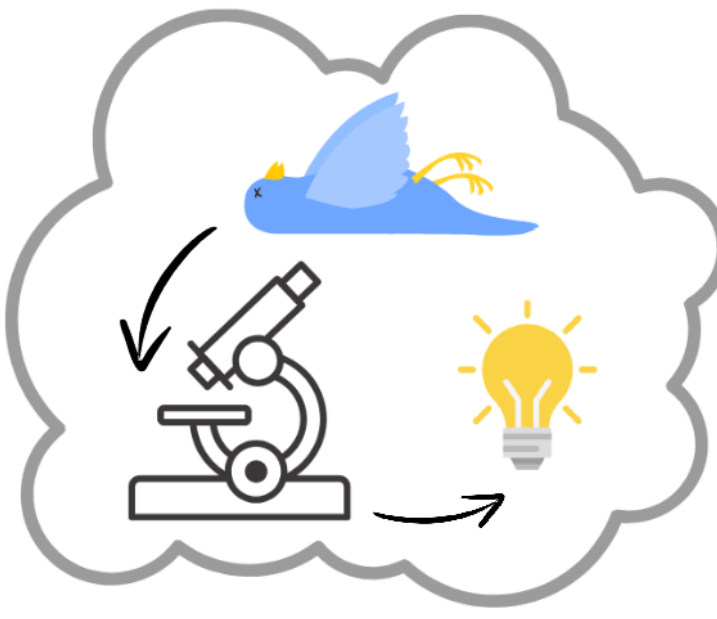
1 Université de Toulouse, ENVT, INRA, UMR 1225, 31076 Toulouse, France
 2 Réseau Centres de soins faune sauvage, 17300 Rochefort, France.
 3 Office Français de la Biodiversité, DRAS, Orléans, France

Once upon a time at the 2024 EWDA conference in Stralsund, Germany

Hi ! I work in a wildlife rehabilitation centre. I was very interested about the results you presented concerning the French SAGIR network. Can you tell me how it works?



Of course ! The SAGIR network is an epidemio-surveillance network of abnormal mortality in wildlife. It's based on the opportunistic discovery of carcasses. Necropsies and complementary tests are performed to determine the cause of death.



Wow that's impressive !

I see ... I wonder whether involving wildlife rehabilitation centres could be usefull. Are you familiar with WRCs ?

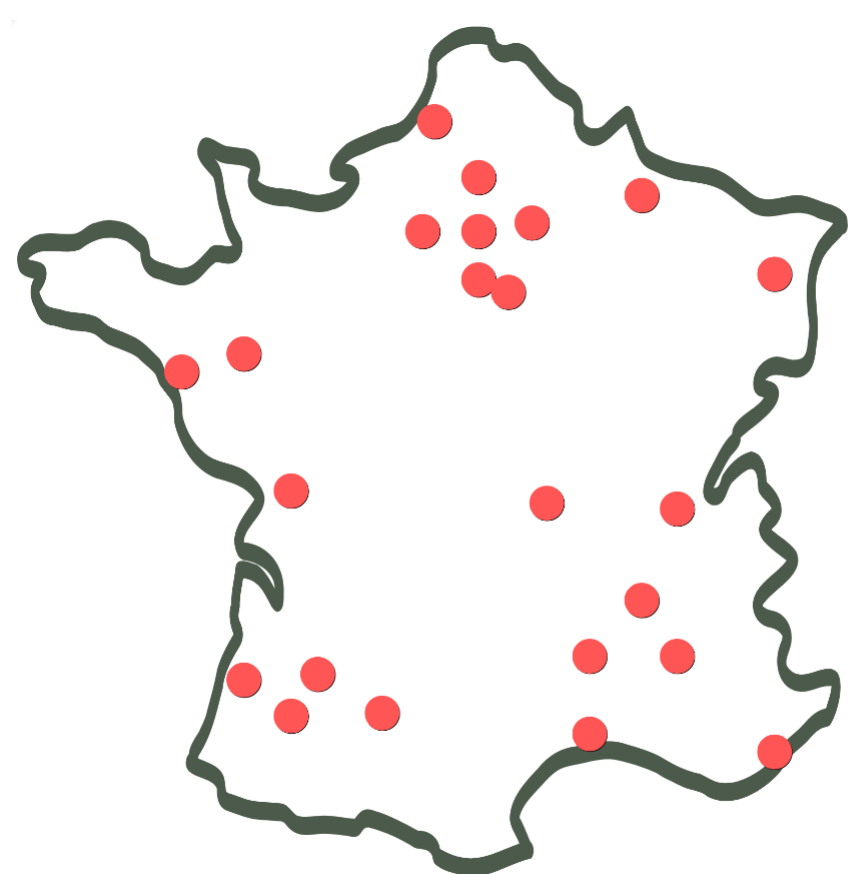
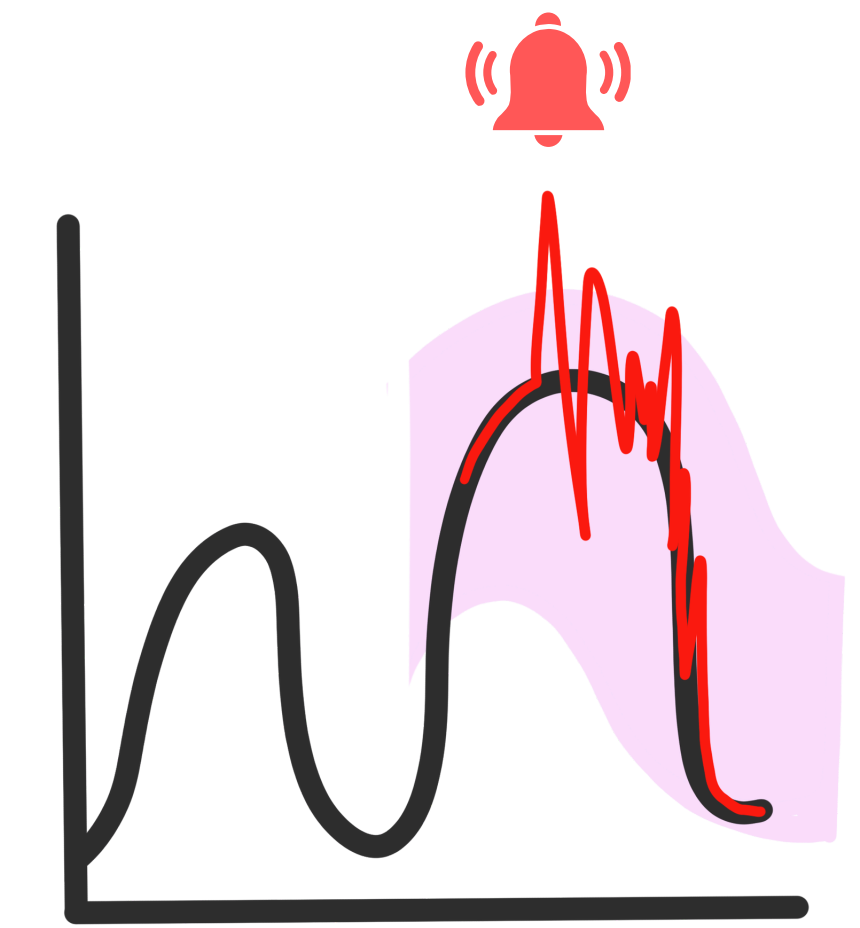
Thanks ! It has proved to be efficient, but unfortunately, it's not as adapted to detect non lethal health events, and sometimes to detect small size species mortality.

No, I'm not.

WRCs are facilities admitting distressed wildlife and providing the necessary care to release them into the wild. There are many complementarities between WRCs and the SAGIR network.

Maybe WRCs could help reinforcing wildlife disease surveillance, particularly regarding non lethal health events.

We could model the admission profile to predict future admissions. Thus, we could early detect abnormal health events causing a change in the admission profile.



Approximately 100 WRC ...

... treat around 100 000 wild animals each year



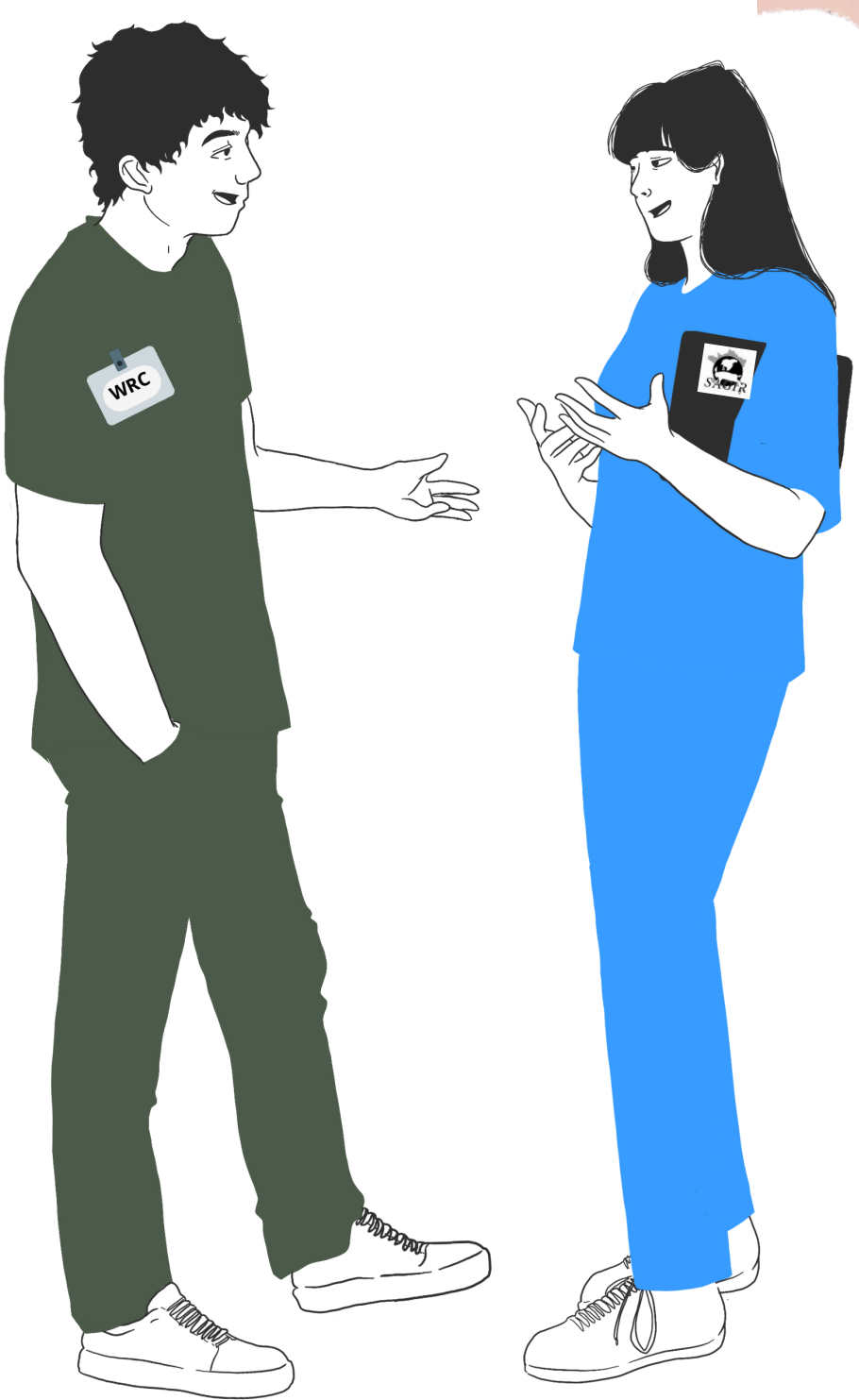
WRCs	SAGIR
Live animals	Dead animals
Small animals	Large animals
Urban and periurban areas	Rural areas

SAGIR also has a reinforced program for a few diseases, like highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). In times of crisis, carcasses of specific species are systematically tested to detect the virus in with the aim of detecting early new outbreaks.

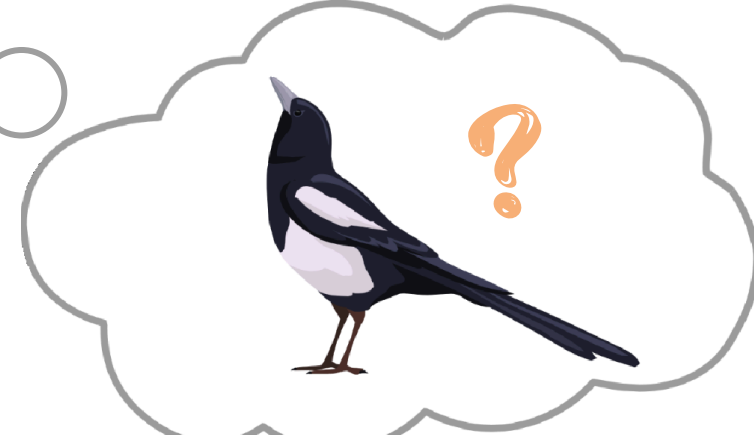
In such a situation, do you think early detection would be possible by screening some birds for HPAIv in WRCs ?

That's not a problem. First, we could also sample species that are not usually included in the surveillance of HPAI. It would help us identify relevant species for HPAI surveillance in WRCs.

On paper, I think so, yes. The only trouble is, WRCs may not necessarily admit many specimens of the species surveyed by SAGIR HPAI reinforced program, for example swans or ducks.



I get it ! The relevant species are those which participate in the circulation of the virus, and are admitted in sufficient numbers in WRCs !

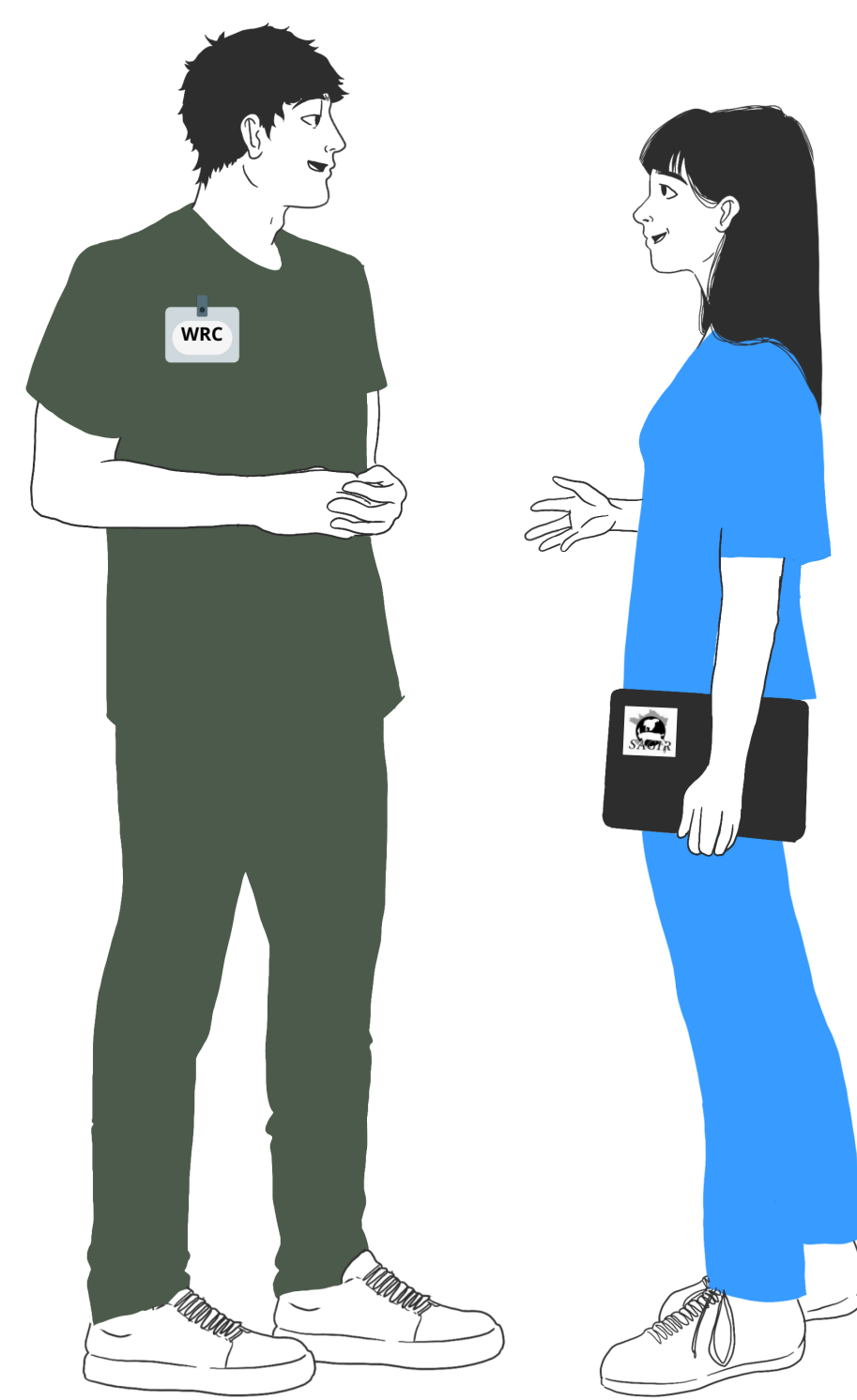


I have to say, I am surprised there's no formal disease surveillance program in WRCs in France.

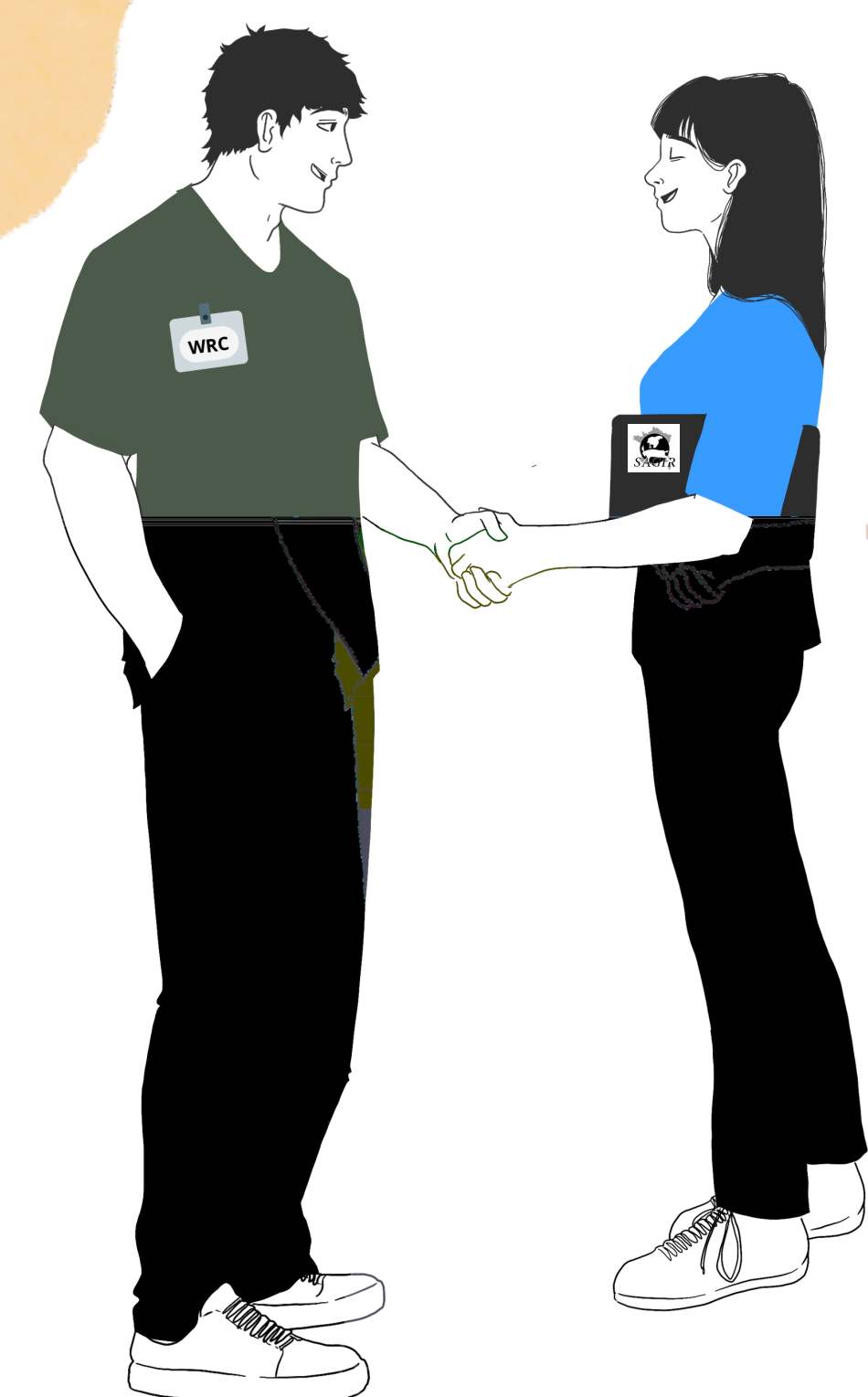
I wonder how this new, additional mission would be perceived by my fellow WRCs.

I think we're onto something here: including WRCs in wildlife disease surveillance would complement disease surveillance by monitoring different species, and detecting non lethal health events with potential impacts on wildlife conservation, domestic animal health and public health.

Well, their primary missions are the individual care of distressed wildlife and raising awareness on wildlife pre- servation. In addition, they have a lot on their plates.



Good point. It's important to assess the acceptability and the feasibility of a new surveillance program before its implementation, to maximize its efficiency in the long run.



Well said ! Now, let's get cracking !

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Any questions ?
lorette.hivert@envt.fr

