

26th Conference of the WOAH Regional Commission for Africa

Patrick Bastiaensen
Regional Programme Officer
WOAH Representation for
Eastern Africa

Thursday, 6 February 2025
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



World
Organisation
for Animal
Health

Organisation
mondiale
de la santé
animale

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal



Establishing and strengthening aquatic animal health networks in Africa

Patrick Bastiaensen
Regional Programme Officer
WOAH Representation for
Eastern Africa

Thursday, 6 February 2025
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



World
Organisation
for Animal
Health

Organisation
mondiale
de la santé
animale

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal





In general

WOAH standards and guidelines cover farmed aquatic species only, with a few exceptions (capture, cage fishing), mostly in fresh water and brackish water systems.

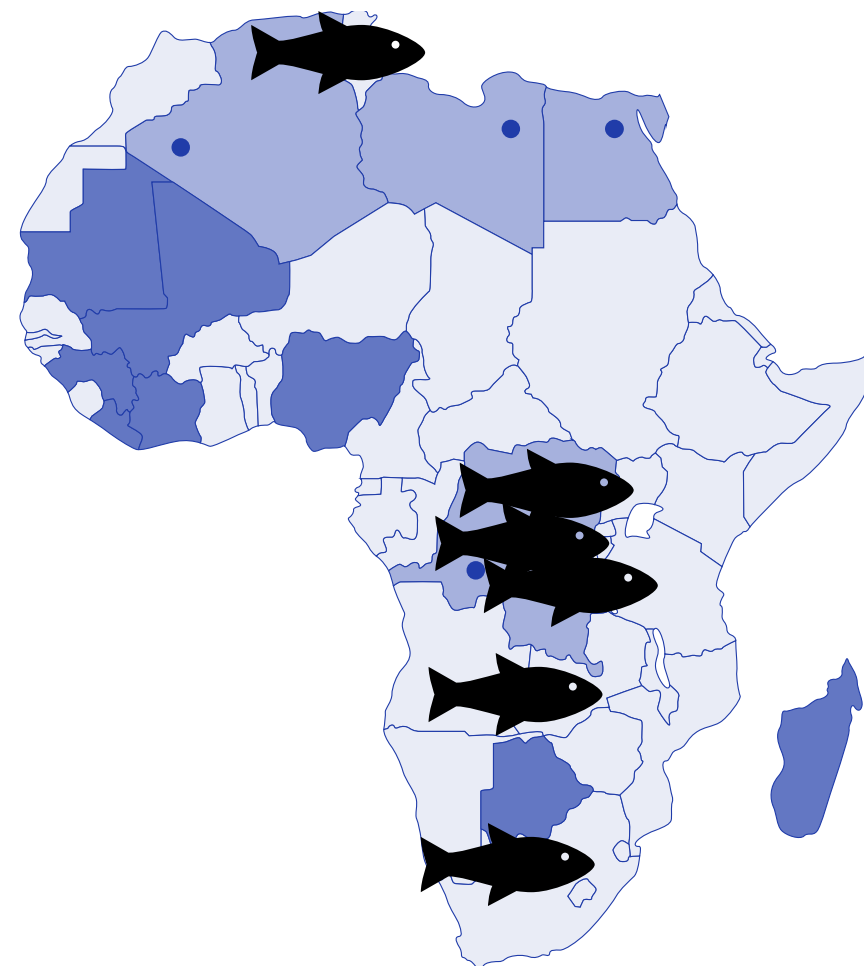
Animals covered by WOAH standards are :

- Finfish
- Crustaceans
- Molluscs
- Amphibians



Overview of WOAHA activities conducted since the last Regional Conference in Gaborone, Botswana (February 2023).

1. Entebbe
2. Kigali
3. Tunis (1)
4. Lusaka
5. Arusha
6. Pretoria
7. Tunis (2)



Development of Guidelines for Use of Veterinary Products in Aquatic animals

Entebbe, Uganda
June 2023

Arusha, Tanzania
September 2024
(Eastern Africa)

Participants were drawn from WOAHA Focal Points for aquatic animals, Focal Points for veterinary products from Eastern Africa (including the host country, Uganda). Fisheries officers from the subregion and six Technical Working Group (TWG) members of the East Africa Mutual Recognition Procedure (MRP) also attended. Challenges related to the use of antimicrobials in aquaculture were discussed, which included the lack of formulations for treatment of fish diseases in Eastern Africa leading to gross estimations or no observations on the withdrawal periods. In addition, the workshop discussed the difficulties in controlling the dosage of Veterinary medicinal products consumed by individual fish during herd treatments.



The workshop in 2024, in Tanzania, was aimed at finalising a draft document on registration of veterinary products for use in aquatic animals while developing guidelines for use of antimicrobials in aquatic animals. This workshop was aligned with the recommendations of the Focal Points training for Veterinary Medicinal products held in Malawi in 2023, to facilitate their implementation regarding aquatic animals.



Focal Points' training (cycle IV)

Kigali, Rwanda
October 2023

(English)

Tunis, Tunisia
July 2024

(French)

The training was held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 2 to 4 October 2023 and was attended by 24 WOAHA Focal Points for aquatic animals from 24 (English-speaking) African countries. Close to 40% of focal points were newly appointed, or were appointed since the 2018 III cycle training in Dar es Salaam.

The preliminary discussions led by the various experts decided to take a horizontal approach to delivering the training content on “standards development” and “standards implementation,” which are tools available from WOAHA to support the implementation and compliance with standards, the global framework provided by the Global Strategy.



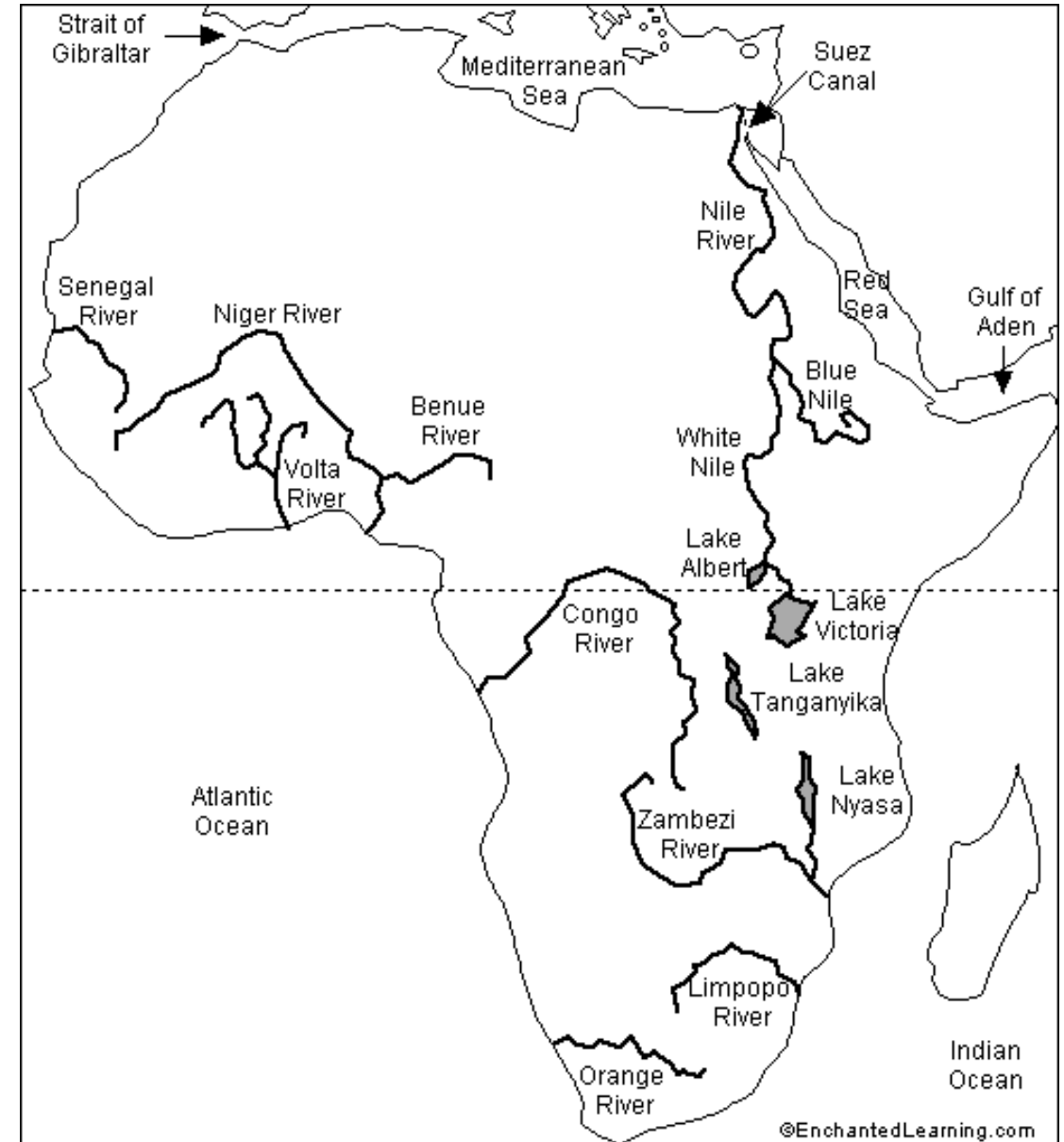
The training was held in Tunis, Tunisia, from 8 to 10 July 2024 and was attended by 16 WOAHA Focal Points for aquatic animals from 16 (French-speaking) African countries.

During the meeting, participants were able to share their experiences through group discussions, which were held for the first time to account for the concept of shared water bodies. This gave the participants an opportunity to discuss the consequences of introducing a disease in water bodies shared with neighboring countries, through self-declaration mechanisms. To supplement the discussions, the WOAHA Observatory Annual Report 2022 was used as information source.



Main (transboundary) waterbodies in Africa

- Congo river basin
- Gulf of Guinea
- Okavango delta / L. Nyassa
- Orange river
- Mediterranean basin
- Mozambique canal
- Niger river / delta / Benue river
- Nile / L. Albert / L. Victoria
- L. Tanganyka
- Limpopo river
- Red Sea
- Senegal river
- Volta river
- Western Indian Ocean
- Zambezi / L. Kariba / Chobe /



Joint training on antimicrobial resistance and use in aquaculture

Kigali, Rwanda
October 2023

(English)

Tunis, Tunisia
July 2024

(French)

The first training was held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 4 – 6 October 2023 and in Tunis, Tunisia, from 10 to 11 July 2024, and was attended by WOAHA National Focal Points for Aquatic Animals and National Focal Points for Veterinary Products/AMR National Contact Points from African countries

The workshops' main objective was to engage with the (a) National focal points for Aquatic Animals and (b) National focal points for Veterinary Products or AMR National contact points, to discuss progress made in incorporating AMR in aquaculture into AMR NAPs while taking stock of the commitments made in the previous meeting(s) in Durban (2019) and Maputo (2022).



Moreover, this meeting was an opportunity to share the advances made by the Quadripartite in addressing AMR in aquaculture, including highlighting AMR in the environment while emphasising the need for proper waste management from aquaculture establishments. Participants engaged in 3 working group sessions, focusing on:

- Gaps, needs and opportunities related to AMR in aquaculture
- Inclusion of aquaculture in National Action Plans for AMR
- Current situation in member countries
- Prioritisation exercise: for each activity the priority, timeline, funds, stakeholders and capacity needs were defined.



Establishment of regional aquatic animal health networks for

North Africa
Tunis, Tunisia
April 2023

Southern Africa
Lusaka, Zambia
July 2023

In April 2023, the Sub-Regional Representation for North Africa of the, in collaboration with the African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), organised a workshop to establish and operational a RAAHN in North Africa as a strategy for strengthening the implementation WOAH aquatic standards and improving biosecurity control, market access and safe intra-regional fish trade. The same was repeated in July 2023 for the member countries of the Southern Africa region, essentially the SADC Member States. The former was attended by (all) 6 countries and the latter by 14 (out of 16) countries.

Through the Launch of the *Regional Aquatic Animal Health Networks* (or RAAHN, under FishGov II), IBAR and WOAH aimed –through a subgrant agreement with IBAR- to create an inaugural platform where the public sectors and private stakeholders can share information and network to collectively develop, implement and monitor aquatic animal health strategies coherently.

Whereas WOAH took the lead in facilitating the network in North Africa, it is the SADC Secretariat that took the lead, wishing to embed it into the fold of the *Fisheries Technical Committee* (FTC).



Establishment of regional aquatic animal health laboratory network for

Africa
Pretoria, South Africa
December 2023

The launch of a third network, the continental laboratory network for the Africa region (RAAHLN-AF), aimed to ease the main technical constraint which is the diagnostic capacity of national laboratories and laboratories with a regional outreach agenda. This justified the support to the establishment of this third network, specifically directed at uniting diagnosticians from WOAHL Reference Laboratories (and Collaborating Centres) with a limited number of interested countries and diagnostic facilities in Africa, with a view – again – of scaling up its range at a later stage.

The third meeting, commissioned by AU-IBAR was hosted by the Agricultural Research Council of South Africa (ARC) and its Onderstepoort Veterinary research Institute (OVI) from 5 – 7 December 2023, and brought together four existing accredited WOAHL Reference Laboratories, for diseases, relevant for the Africa region and located in : Australia (CSIRO), Norway (NVI), United Kingdom (CEFAS) and the United States (University of Arizona). Six (6) National Reference Laboratories with demonstrated experience in the diagnosis of one or more aquatic animal disease and the interest to play a regional role as regional service laboratories : Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Tunisia and Zambia.



Upcoming activities



1. The implementation of the WOAHA Aquatic Animal Health Strategy remains a priority
2. RAAHNs : limited success so far in setting up follow-up meetings and operations to formalise the networks
3. Other RAAHNs can be established with the support of AU-IBAR (Central Africa, West Africa, Eastern Africa), driven by the Regional Economic Communities (e.g. ECOWAS, ECCAS, EAC).
4. Cycle V of the training of WOAHA Focal Points (English) to be organised in 2025 or 2026, by the Nairobi office, and for French speakers, in 2026, by the Tunis office.

Upcoming activities

1. [The implementation of the WOAHA Aquatic Animal Health Strategy remains a priority](#)
2. RAAHNs : limited success so far in setting up follow-up meetings and operations to formalise the networks
3. Other RAAHNs can be established with the support of AU-IBAR (Central Africa, West Africa, Eastern Africa), driven by the Regional Economic Communities (e.g. ECOWAS, ECCAS, EAC).
4. Cycle V of the training of WOAHA Focal Points (English) to be organised in 2025 or 2026, by the Nairobi office, and for French speakers, in 2026, by the Tunis office.
5. [World Aquaculture Safari 2025 | World Aquaculture Society \(24 – 27 June 2025, Kampala, Uganda](#)



Upcoming opportunities

The third African Union CAADP strategy for the continent's agricultural development 2026 – 2035 outlines various priorities relating to aquaculture and aquatic animal health :

1. Train aquaculture (...) farmers on proper feed and fodder management practices to optimize **fish** and **animal health** and productivity.
2. Support (...) small-scale **aquaculture** (...) and fisheries production.
3. Enhance (...) aquatic **animal health** management and governance systems.
4. Invest in sustainable science-based productive and efficient aquatic systems through improved zoning, management of transboundary resources and promotion and enforcement of **biosecurity** and environmental standards.



Useful links




1. [Kigali hosts the 4th cycle training of Aquatic Animal Health Focal Points in Africa - WOAHAfrica](#)
2. [Tunis hosts the 4th cycle training of Aquatic Animal Health Focal Points in Africa - WOAHAfrica](#)
3. [Tunisia hosts WOAHA workshop on AMR in Aquaculture for French-speaking Africa - WOAHAfrica](#)
4. [Launch of the Regional Aquatic Animal Health Network \(North Africa\) - WOAHAfrica](#)
5. [Launch of the Regional Aquatic Animal Health Network \(Southern Africa\) - WOAHAfrica](#)
6. [Launch of the Regional Aquatic Animal Health Laboratory Network for Africa - WOAHAfrica](#)
7. [Keeping pace with the rapid growth of the aquaculture sector in Africa - WOAHAfrica](#)
8. [African Union adopts third CAADP roadmap for the continent's agricultural development by 2035 - WOAHAfrica](#)



Thank you

12, rue de Prony, 75017 Paris, France
T. +33 (0)1 44 15 19 49
F. +33 (0)1 42 67 09 87

rr-africa.woah.org
[@woah-africa](#) 



World
Organisation
for Animal
Health

Organisation
mondiale
de la santé
animale

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal

