






One Health

a collaborative approach to improving the health
of all species and our environment

Our health is intimately linked to the health of our natural world. We share with animals much of the same biology, diseases, and dependence on a healthy environment—this is the One Health concept.

 Humans depend on nature in many different ways. Being in a natural environment such as a park improves our mental and physical health, and green spaces improve the health of communities as well. Nature provides us food, clean water, and materials such as medicines and clothing. No matter where or how you live, you need nature to survive.

 Nature influences our health in other ways. Because many diseases are part of the ecosystem, changes and disturbances in the environment can influence disease spread and how we and animals get sick, as we have seen world wide with diseases like Ebola, SARS, and closer to home with hantavirus and Lyme disease. We are experiencing unprecedented environmental change as wildlife habitats and natural resources are altered and consumed, whether through land development, climate change, or other processes. Some of these changes to the land, air, and water promote the spread of disease while others compromise the health of the resources we and wildlife depend on for survival.

 When natural resources and other species are directly impacted by development or overexploitation, we are often impacted indirectly, now or in the future. However, if we protect natural resources and ecological processes, we can help protect ourselves and the health of all species.

Because we share so much with other species, when different disciplines work together to promote health the benefits can be seen in multiple species and ways—this is One Health practice. With over 280 million visitors annually, over 400 park units across all 50 states, and a commitment to protect the health of natural resources and humans, national parks offer a unique opportunity to practice and promote One Health. The National Park Service (NPS) is working to improve the health of humans, animals, and the environment while protecting and preserving our natural treasures—this is One Health in action.



How is the NPS implementing One Health?



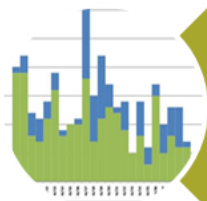
Education

With a commitment to protect and preserve natural resources as well as the health and safety of humans, the National Park Service is working to develop integrated programs and messages that communicate the interconnectedness of the health of all species.



Management Tools

Provide park managers and staff with holistic, ecologically based science guidance for ecosystem, wildlife and visitor health. Potential conflicts between management action to protect visitor health that might negatively impact wildlife can be minimized through an understanding of the inter-connectedness of animals, humans, and the environment.



Disease Surveillance

A combined human and wildlife disease detection program is being piloted to detect disease transmission and outbreaks.



Interdisciplinary Response

A team consisting of a physician, a wildlife veterinarian, and an environmental health specialist is available to provide immediate technical expertise and assistance to parks on human and wildlife disease outbreaks.



Research

National Parks provide a wealth of subject matter and 'living' laboratories to better understand the health and inter-relatedness of different species. Working with University partners and students allows us to train the next generation of stewards in the process.

For more information:

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