**ALABAMA COALITION ON WILDLIFE HEALTH & ZOONOSES SYMPOSIUM**

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**Title:** Alabama Wildlife Biologists’ Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices on Wildlife Health and Zoonoses

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**Abstract:**

Wildlife is a critical reservoir for emerging zoonotic diseases with implications for agricultural, domestic animal, and public health. Within a One Health framework, professionals such as wildlife biologists, veterinarians, and physicians collectively influence decision-making processes that shape zoonotic disease dynamics and wildlife health outcomes. Despite their key role in surveillance and prevention, the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of wildlife biologists regarding zoonoses remain largely unexplored in Alabama. This study aimed to assess these factors to inform targeted educational and disease prevention strategies. A structured survey was distributed remotely between May 10 and September 15, 2024, to wildlife biologists aged over 19 years who live or work in Alabama. We evaluated the KAP of 155 respondents who completed at least 60% (35/58) of the questions surveyed. Respondents represented a range of affiliations such as state (29.0%) and federal (15.5%) government, academia (25.5%), and private industry (16.1%). Across sectors, most participants were primarily engaged in land and wildlife management (52.3%) or research (25.9%) activities. Survey results revealed moderate knowledge gaps related to zoonotic diseases with a median score of 60% and no respondent achieving a perfect score. Participants most commonly identified academic publications (26.3%) and state wildlife agencies (20.3%) as their primary information sources. Although 63.2% of respondents agreed that personal protective equipment (PPE) is necessary when handling wildlife, only 53.5% reported using PPE consistently (at least 75% of the time). While 83.0% supported requiring wildlife health education for biologists, 61.2% had never taken such a course and only 31.6% had done so within the past five years. Notably, 90.4% expressed interest in further education on wildlife health in Alabama. These findings highlight the need for enhanced educational initiatives and interprofessional collaboration under a One Health approach to improve zoonotic disease preparedness and public health resilience in Alabama.