A “spillover” occurs when a disease-causing microbe crosses from one species to another. Our researchers identified several wildlife species likely responsible for deadly canine distemper virus spillover infections in Siberian tigers. Other researchers found evidence of transmission of respiratory viruses from humans to mountain gorillas. Both studies are helping scientists develop management plans to reduce disease outbreaks in these endangered species.

Few diagnostic tools are available to assess the health of recovering patients at wildlife rehabilitation facilities. Our researchers found that monitoring certain hormones helps track recovery of endangered Kemp’s ridley sea turtles during rehabilitation from cold stunning, a condition caused by sudden seasonal water temperature drops. Hormone monitoring also helps flag turtles in need of more intensive care to improve their chances of returning to the wild.

Lead-contaminated carrion remains a leading cause of poisoning and death in California condors. Our researchers, along with their condor conservation partners, conducted a large-scale data analysis of condor re-introductions, spanning nearly 20 years. The team identified factors that increase these birds’ risk of lead exposure, and how these factors impact their survival in the wild; both critical to improving recovery efforts.

In the last year, Morris Animal Foundation helped researchers around the world:

respond to disease spillovers

improve rehabilitation care for recovering animals

tackle environmental health hazards
OUR INVESTMENT IN WILDLIFE

Morris Animal Foundation supports animal health experts around the world. In 2016, our funding is helping researchers:

- curb bubonic plague outbreaks in **prairie dog** colonies
- save Madagascar’s **amphibians** from a deadly fungus responsible for mass amphibian die-offs worldwide
- reduce transportation-related stress in **sea turtles** to and from rehabilitation facilities and release sites to improve overall health of recovering animals
- assess mortality risk for European **vultures** consuming carcasses contaminated with anti-inflammatory drugs used to medicate livestock.
- identify factors leading to severe and fatal infections in **koalas** and, in a separate study, identify disease-free animals for conservation efforts
- look for genes associated with chondrodystrophy, a lethal dwarfism disorder in **California condors**, the first step toward a genetic screening test
- understand how some **bats** survive white-nose syndrome, a devastating fungal disease of cave-dwelling bats in North America
- examine factors driving hookworm deaths in South American **fur seal** pups
- investigate an emerging fungal disease in **freshwater turtles** that causes debilitating shell lesions and high mortality in affected animals
- develop a rapid age-assessment tool for **Galápagos giant tortoises** to improve conservation strategies
- measure the impact of parvovirus, a highly contagious viral disease, on African carnivores, including **jackals**, **African wild dogs**, **lions**, **cheetahs**, **wolves** and **foxes**.
- investigate the risk of blood bacterial infection spillover from dogs that may cause anemia in endangered **Darwin’s foxes** in Chile
- improve diagnosis of rodent poison exposure in **raptors**
- diagnose and manage bovine tuberculosis in cattle to reduce disease spillover into **African wildlife**

ABOUT MORRIS ANIMAL FOUNDATION:

Morris Animal Foundation is a global leader in funding scientific studies that advance animal health. Since 1948, the foundation has invested more than $100 million in 2,500 studies to improve the lives of animals everywhere. Learn more at morrisanimalfoundation.org.

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