User Guide:
Creating a WHISPers Morbidity/Mortality Event
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A step-by-step guide to “put a dot on the WHISPers map” by creating an event. Available to users assigned Partner User, Partner Manager, and Partner Administrator roles.

Adding events contributes to a better understanding of wildlife health within the natural resource management community. THANK YOU for participating!

Tip: This a detailed step-by-step guide presented in the same order as the WHISPers data fields. You can choose to enter the information in any order you like, or only enter the required fields.

Tip: See “WHISPers Fast Track Guide to Creating an Event” for a brief 2-page summary quick guide to entering an event.

In a WHISPers event, users can:

- Capture basic information for situational awareness.
- Capture detailed mortality investigation information and epidemiological observations for later use and trend awareness.
- Collaborate with other WHISPers users involved in the event.
- Request diagnostic and field response assistance from specialists at the USGS National Wildlife Health Center.

Tip: If you have an urgent wildlife disease situation requiring immediate diagnostic assistance or field response consultation, please contact the USGS National Wildlife Health Center at 608-270-2480 or NWHC-epi@usgs.gov or Honolulu Field Station at 808-792-9520 or thierry_work@usgs.gov.
“Click” on a table of content entry to jump to that section.

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What is an “Event”? A morbidity/mortality event is a noteworthy occurrence of one or more sick or dead animals clustered in space and time. If it is important to you, it can be entered as an event, even if it involves only one animal. You can enter an event that is actively in progress, or one that has already ended but that you want to document, even if there weren’t any carcasses collected or diagnosis made. One event may include multiple locations.

**Tip:** The person who created the event is the “Event Owner” and their organization “owns” the event. That keeps events accessible to the organization regardless of staff turnover.


Wildlife morbidity/mortality events often occur over several days. Optimally, events will be created shortly after learning of something occurring on the landscape, with more information added as the event progresses. When the morbidity or mortality ends and any diagnostic testing has been finalized, update one last time before changing the event record status to “Complete”.

If the morbidity/mortality has already ended, the WHISPers event can be created and completed in the same session.
Certain fields are required to successfully create and complete events; you will not be able to save an event missing required information. To successfully enter and complete an event, please have the following information available.

Minimum Information to Create an Event:
• Location Start Date – can estimate
• County, State, Country
• Species – at least one
• Number sick or dead – can estimate
• Land Ownership – can enter “Unknown”
• Are the animals “Captive > 72 hours” versus “Wild and/or free-ranging”

Additional Information to Complete an Event:
• Location End Date – can estimate
• Numbers for known or estimated sick and/or dead – finalize these for all species affected
• Species Diagnosis, Significance of Diagnosis, and Basis of Diagnosis – can leave these blank if no diagnosis, or can select “Undetermined” diagnosis
• Event Diagnosis – can select “Undetermined” diagnosis or will default to “Undetermined” if nothing else entered and event is complete

Tip: WHISPers data fields, default settings, and icons

Data fields in this step-by-step guide are bold and underlined e.g., Event Type. Options are bulleted, bold, and in “”, e.g., “Incomplete”

Default Settings- Information pre-entered into the WHISPers data field to facilitate data entry. The default setting is listed next to the data field name in this guide. Default information can be edited at any time.

* Required Fields- Information must be entered in fields marked with an “*” in order save the event. All other fields are “Optional”.

Public Fields- The globe “ ”icon indicates the information is visible to anyone viewing a public event on the WHISPers website. This is basic data such as species, number affected, and county location, necessary for general situational awareness.

All other fields are private and only viewable to users with permission to see the information, e.g., users within your organization or invited collaborators.
**Tip:** This guide contains screenshots of all the major sections of the “Create Event” page. Arrows or red circles are used to highlight certain areas. For ease of use, some fields, such as required fields, are annotated with a bold, colored, capital letter near the field in the screenshot and referenced in the text.

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**Before creating a new WHISPers Morbidity/Mortality Event**

First search WHISPers to make sure that the event has not already been entered by another user.

1. Click the “Search” button on the left side of the home page.
2. Keep criteria broad and enter information about your event into the following categories—“State” and “Date” range.
3. If no existing event is found, follow the steps below to create a WHISPers event. If you accidentally create a duplicate event, contact whispers@usgs.gov.

**Tip:** You must be logged in to see the “Create Event” button.

**Tip:** Hover your mouse pointer over the “?” icons throughout WHISPers to see descriptions that might help guide you through data entry.
General Event Information

**Event Type**  * Select from dropdown

- **“Mortality/Morbidity”** - Information is about one or more sick and/or dead animals.

- **“Surveillance”** - Future WHISPers development will include a specific template for surveillance event data, e.g., capturing information from apparently healthy animals sampled during a designed surveillance research project with a study plan and sampling protocol. Please contact [whispers@usgs.gov](mailto:whispers@usgs.gov) if you have surveillance data you would like to share on WHISPers.

*Tip:* Please do not combine “Mortality/Morbidity” and “Surveillance” information within the same event.
**User Event Reference**
A name or number that you are using elsewhere in reference to this event. Can leave blank if not applicable.

**Event Visibility** *Default is “Visible to Public”*

- **“Visible to Public”** makes very basic information, such as county, state, and species affected, available to anyone viewing the WHISPers map. Since the main focus of WHISPers is situational awareness, we hope most people will opt to make events public to help natural resource management managers stay better informed. If you are okay with basic information being available to others, continue to WHISPers Record Status.

- **“Not Visible to Public”** selecting this hides the basic public information and a dot will not appear on the public view of the WHISPers map. If you are logged in and have permission to view the event it will appear on the map and be highlighted in red in the table. Can use this if there is an active legal case or the event contains sensitive data. You can still use other features, including adding collaborators, for events that are not visible to the public.

**Tip:** The visibility setting can be changed at any time during the event.

**WHISPers Record Status** *Default is “Incomplete”*

- **“Incomplete”** - data entry is in progress and future updates/edits are anticipated. If this is an event that is in progress, leave as “Incomplete” and return later to update (see “Update and Complete a WHISPers Event User Guide”).

- **“Complete”** - locks the event to further data entry. Select complete once no further updates or changes expected.
Tip: If more edits need to be made after the event was marked “Complete”, the Event Owner, Organization Partner Manager, and Partner Administrator can switch the setting back to “Incomplete”.

Contact Organization *  🌍 Default is your organization, as the event creator

Contact organizations are generally those with management oversight of the location and/or the species involved that people should contact for more information about the event. This is also the organization that gets public “credit” for event.

To change from the default:

1. Click on the contact organization.
2. Start typing in the “Find organization” field.
3. Select the organization from the dropdown menu.

To add additional organizations:

1. Click “Add Contact Organization” button.
2. Start typing in the “Find organization” field.
3. Select the organization from the dropdown menu.

Tip: If the organization is not listed in the dropdown menu, you can request the organization be added to WHISPers through a form on the dashboard.

This completes the “General Event Information” section. Continue to “Event Locations”.

Event Locations

Wildlife morbidity and mortality occurrences that appear to be biologically related, e.g., similar species, clinical signs, field history, in the same general
geographic area and roughly the same time period, can be entered in the same WHISPers event. There are sometimes distinct spatial clusters of morbidity or mortality observations that should be recorded as separate locations within an event. The spatial scale may vary. At minimum, data should be reported by county or equivalent (e.g., parish, borough). Creating one event with multiple locations makes it easier to record information and collaborate with others as it keeps information for an event together in one shared space rather than having it spread across multiple events. However, if the mortality reports do not seem related, e.g., very different time periods, geographic areas, field histories, or suspected causes of death, enter as separate WHISPers events.

**Example 1:** Reports of waterfowl exhibiting paralysis on Lakes A and B that are 5 miles apart could be entered in the same WHISPers event with Lake A as one location and Lake B as a second location.

**Example 2:** Concurrent reports of multiple sick and dead songbirds at backyard birdfeeders across 3 counties could be entered as one WHISPers event with 3 locations, e.g., each location is one county with the species and numbers sick and dead summarized for that county.

**Example 3:** Reports of fresh dead snow geese on a lake around the same time of dead bats found in a cave in the same county would be separate WHISPers events.

**Example 4:** A fish die-off is happening in a river that also serves as a state boundary. One state natural resource agency could start the event and record a location for each county where fish are affected in their state, and then invite a WHISPers user in the neighboring state natural resource management agency to collaborate on the event (see “Collaborators” section below) to enter counties affected in that neighboring state.

**Tip:** A single WHISPers event can include multiple locations.

**Tip:** If uncertain whether to create one WHISPers event with multiple locations or multiple WHISPers events, contact the WHISPers service desk at whispers@usgs.gov for assistance.
**Location Details Section** - Information on the site where the event is occurring. There can be multiple locations in one event (see above for examples). There are options for duplicating data from one location to another, (see “Apply species to all locations” below).

**Location Start Date** *  
Best estimated date of when the event started at this location, taking into account environmental factors, postmortem condition, and predators. Can include a comment in a later step on estimating the date.

1. Click the calendar button and select date, or type in date as Month/Day/Year.
**Location End Date** Optional when creating an event, (but required when changing the WHISPers record status to “Complete”. See update/complete event user guide).

Best estimated date of when the event ended at this location. Leave blank if event ongoing.

1. Click the calendar button and select date, or type in date as Month/Day/Year.

**Country** * Default is United States

1. Enter country of the event location if outside of the US.

**State (or equivalent)** * Select from dropdown

1. Enter state of location (or equivalent, such as provinces or territories in Canada). Options presented depend on Country selected.

**County (or equivalent)** * Select from dropdown

1. Enter county of location (or equivalent, such as parish or borough in the United States). Options presented depend on State selected.

If event location crosses a county border, select one county for this location and enter other counties as additional locations.

**Location Name**
Reference name for the location (e.g., lake or town name). Can be as specific or general as you like. Examples: “Magnolia Prairie” or “Smith State Park west end boat dock”.

**Tip:** This location name will appear next to the Location number in the logged-in view of the Event Details record. Example: “Location 1 - Magnolia Prairie”.

**Land Ownership**  * Select from dropdown

Entity that owns the land at this location. Options are:

- "Federal/National" - owned by the federal or national government of a country;
- "State/Province" - owned by the state or equivalent;
- "County or equivalent" - owned by the county or equivalent;
- "Municipal" - owned by a local entity such as a city or township;
- "Tribal/Native Peoples" - tribal land or land held by native peoples;
- "Private" - private property;
- "Other" - a type of land ownership not covered by the other options in the dropdown list for this field;
- "Unknown" - the ownership of the land is unknown.

1. Select the most appropriate option. Choose only one, even if land is owned by more than one entity.

**Latitude and Longitude**

Location measured in decimal degrees WGS84.

1. Enter using a negative symbol as needed (e.g., before the longitude number for the Western hemisphere).

Example: 43.0711°N, -89.3559°W would be entered as 43.0711 and -89.3559.

*Tip:* See websites such as [https://www.ngs.noaa.gov/NCAT/](https://www.ngs.noaa.gov/NCAT/) for latitude longitude conversion assistance.

*Tip:* Events are displayed at the center of the county on the public WHISPers website map, even if a specific latitude/longitude was entered in the data field.
GNIS Standardized Location Name

Standardized location names (e.g., National Wildlife Refuge system names) based on the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS). This will make it easier to find specific locations once “advanced search” functionality is added to WHISPers.

To enter a GNIS location name:

1. Click “Look Up GNIS” button.
2. Start typing the first letters of the formal name for the location to pull up the correct location, e.g., start typing “Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge” instead of starting with “Salton Sea”.
3. If that is not the correct location, you can click the “Clear GNIS entry” button and start again, or skip this field.

To add another location, click “Add New Event Location” and enter data.

This completes the Location section, click “Next” to continue with data entry.
Species Section - Details on the species affected at a location.

Species *  Select from dropdown

**Note:** List species present but not affected in a “Site Description” comment.

To add a species:

1. Start typing the species name and select from dropdown.
2. Click red circle with minus sign to delete the entire species entry.

**Tip:** If the species is unknown, can use broader categories e.g., “Unidentified Waterfowl” or “Unidentified Frog”.

**Tip:** To request a species be added to WHISPers, complete the dashboard “request” form.
* It is required to enter a number in at least one of the following sick or dead fields. Can leave some of these blank.

**Known Dead**

Exact minimum count of dead animals at the location over the entirety of the event. Does not include euthanized animals.

1. Enter a number or click the up/down arrows.

**Estimated Dead**

Best guess of the maximum number of animals that died at this location during the event. Does not include euthanized animals.

1. Enter a number or click the up/down arrows

**Known Sick**

Exact minimum count of animals exhibiting clinical signs of illness at this location. If site is repeatedly visited, use number remaining sick/injured plus the number of animals that recovered from being sick/injured. Include euthanized animals.

1. Enter a number or click the up/down arrows

**Estimated Sick**

Best guess of the maximum number of animals at the location showing clinical signs of illness. If site is repeatedly visited, use number remaining sick/injured plus the number of animals that recovered from being sick/injured. Include euthanized animals.

1. Enter a number or click the up/down arrows.

**Tip:** If both known and estimated numbers are entered, then estimated sick should include known sick and estimated dead should include known dead.

**Tip:** If you do not have data for a sick/dead field, leave it blank rather than entering zero.
**Tip:** Avoid re-count of animals, especially if there are repeated visits to a location to assess wildlife health. Consider whether animals initially observed sick were later counted as dead; if so, only count them as dead.

**Tip:** If you don’t have a breakdown by number for each species, you can divide the number across the species and make a note in the Location Comments section. E.g., enter 10 estimated dead Green-winged Teal and 10 estimated dead Blue-winged Teal and put Location Comment of “20 dead Green and Blue-winged Teal reported, exact species pick up numbers not provided so listed as 10 each”.

**Population**

Estimate of the maximum number of individuals from this species at this location. Include live, sick, and dead.

1. Enter a number or click the up/down arrows

**Age Bias**  Select from dropdown

Age bias in the affected species at this location. Can leave blank.

Options are:
- “No noticeable bias”
- “Unknown”
- “Mostly Young”
- “Mostly Adult”

**Sex Bias**  Select from dropdown

Sex bias in the affected species at this location. Can leave blank.

Options are:
- “No noticeable bias”
- “Unknown”
- “Mostly Male”
- “Mostly Female”
**Captive**  🕰️ Default is “Wildlife and/or free-ranging”

Captive animals include zoo animals, domestic animals, and wildlife that have been rehabilitated for > 72 hours.

**Tip:** If you know you’ll be adding more locations that will include this species, click the “Apply species to all locations” button ( ![Icon](image) ) and it will prefill the species name (only) when you create the new location(s). This functionality is only available during event creation.

To add more species to the location:

1. Click the “Add Species” button to enter another species.
2. Repeat as often as needed to add all affected species at this location.

This completes the Species section, click “Next” to continue.

**Tip:** Can click the numbered tabs instead of back or next to navigate between sections.
Species Diagnosis Section

**Species Diagnosis** Select from dropdown

The primary suspected or known cause of death or illness for that species at a given location, or other diagnoses deemed significant by the user (e.g., reportable diseases). Can add multiple diagnosis for a species. If left blank, the diagnosis will appear as “Pending” or “Undetermined”, depending on the event status being “Incomplete” or “Complete”, respectively.

**Tip:** Can enter a presumptive cause of death based on clinical signs, event history, or other factors and update once have more definitive information.

**Tip:** Laboratory diagnostic reports may contain detailed information including incidental findings. It is not necessary to enter every finding for every specimen. You can focus on the main cause of illness and death for the species overall.

**Tip:** Select a combination of disease type and body system if that is all that is known (e.g., “Bacterial Infection (integumentary)” or “Viral Infection (respiratory)”)

**Tip:** For help determining the diagnosis to select, or to request that a new diagnosis be added to WHISPers, complete the dashboard “request” form.
To enter a diagnosis:

1. Click “Add Diagnosis” for a species listed.
2. Click on the “Species Diagnosis” line and start typing the disease of interest.
3. Select from dropdown.

**Species Diagnosis Suspect** Default is checked, adding the word “suspect” to the diagnosis.

1. If the diagnosis has not been confirmed by a diagnostic laboratory, leave as suspect and continue to next step.
2. If the diagnosis has been confirmed by a diagnostic laboratory, uncheck the “Species Diagnosis Suspect” box. The laboratory will be entered in a later step.
**Tip:** If different specimens of the same species at the same location are diagnosed with both suspect and confirmed versions of the same diagnosis, then uncheck the “**Suspect**” checkbox.

**Tip:** The “Undetermined” diagnosis can not have the word “suspect” appended to it, so users will be instructed to uncheck the “suspect” box if they select “Undetermined” as the diagnosis.

### Basis of Diagnosis
Optional when creating an event, (but required when changing the WHISPers record status to “Complete”. See update/complete event user guide). Select from dropdown.

How the species diagnosis was determined.

**Tip:** To provide better situational awareness to others looking at WHISPers, you can input a suspect diagnosis and select “Basis of Diagnosis” as “Circumstances such as site history, physical evidence, and/or clinical signs” while awaiting more definitive lab results.

Options are:

- “Circumstances such as site history, physical evidence, and/or clinical signs”
- “Necropsy conducted by a wildlife health professional”
- “Necropsy and/or ancillary tests performed at a diagnostic laboratory” if selected, you are required to enter a “Diagnosing Lab”.
- “Unknown”

### Significance of Diagnosis for Species
Optional when creating an event, (but required when changing the WHISPers record status to “Complete”. See update/complete event user guide). Select from dropdown.

Provides context for the importance of the diagnosis in this species. If “Species Diagnosis Suspect” box is checked, “Suspect” will appear in the diagnosis significance options.
Options are:
• “(Suspect) Cause of Death”
• “(Suspect) Cause of Sickness”
• “(Suspect) Incidental Finding”
• “Unknown”

Number Assessed
Number of individuals examined or tested for the specific diagnosis entered in the previous step. This evaluation can occur in a diagnostic laboratory or in the field.

Example: Species diagnosis entered = Avian Cholera. As per the diagnostic laboratory report, bacterial cultures were performed on 5 snow geese submitted to laboratory. Number assessed = 5.

Example: Species diagnosis entered = Trauma. Eight House sparrows examined in the field, 7 of 8 had broken wings. Number assessed = 8.

1. Enter a number or click up/down arrows.

Number with this Diagnosis
Number of individual specimens with the selected diagnosis (can be suspect).

1. Enter a number or click up/down arrows. Number entered cannot be higher than the number assessed.

Diagnosing Lab
Select from dropdown
Diagnostic laboratory(ies) that examined/tested the sick or dead animal.

1. Click “Add Diagnostic Lab”.
2. Start typing the laboratory name.
3. Select from dropdown.
4. Repeat as needed to add additional diagnostic labs.
5. Clicking the red circle with minus sign will delete the laboratory entry.
6. Click “Add” button (lower right) to save the diagnosis entry.
7. Can click “Add Diagnosis” to add another diagnosis for the same species.
To enter a diagnosis for a new species at the same location.

1. Select the species. (H)
2. Repeat steps above to add one or more diagnosis for that species.

**Tip:** To request a laboratory be added to this list, complete the dashboard “request” form.

**Tip:** Once the diagnosis is saved, you can edit suspect, the number assessed, number confirmed, basis of diagnosis, significance, and laboratory but you can not edit the “Species Diagnosis”. Must delete it and add a different “Species Diagnosis”

This completes the Species Diagnosis section, click “Next” to continue.
Comment Section

Fields for capturing epidemiological information specific to the location.

* It is required to enter at least one word in at least one of the following fields.

**History**
Chronological description of observations leading up to the event, plus historical information of past events at this location.

**Example:** “1000 mallards migrated through in May. Drought this summer resulted in dropping water levels. Approximately 100 dead fish noticed 4 days ago. Avian botulism outbreak occurred here in July 2017.”
Site Description
Animal/human land use (e.g., other species present, agricultural activities, presence of hunters), habitat types (e.g., vegetation, water bodies, human presence), nearby structures (e.g., buildings, power lines, wind turbines), public health warnings, or other major characteristics of the area.

Example: “Lake is heavily used for boating and fishing. People feed ducks near the boat dock. Algae has increasingly been an issue this summer. Approximately a dozen summer cabins and one farm with cattle in pens and corn fields on the west side of the lake. Most of the adjacent land is state forest. Closest town (Hamletburg) is 5 miles away.”

Environmental Factors
Storms, precipitation, temperature changes, migrations, toxins, or other factors that may contribute to stress in the animals at this location.

Example: “No rain for the past 8 weeks. Temps in the 80s-90s. Water is stagnant with increasing algae. Decreasing water levels over the past few weeks leaving small pools of water along the shoreline.”

Clinical Signs
Any unusual behavior or physical appearance in the animals.

Example: “Affected birds appear paralyzed and unable to swim or fly.”
Additional Comment

Any additional comments that do not fit in one of the categories listed above.  
**Note:** Text entered here does not count toward the required commenting.

_Tip:_ If estimates were entered for any fields, you can enter a comment on how you arrived at the estimate, e.g., “Event started midmonth, entered July 15th.”

_Tip:_ If the event is over at the time you are creating the WHISPers event it can be helpful to record a comment to indicate why the event ended when it did (Management action? Environmental change? Migration? Etc.)

_Tip:_ Once the created event is saved, a “Comment Timeline” tab will appear in the Event Details when you are logged in. Clicking this tab will show all the comments entered for an event, the comment type, date created, and the user that added the comment.

This completes the Comments section, click “Next” to continue.

Contacts Section  Optional

An “address book” of people who may have relevant information pertaining to the event at this location. Contacts do not have to be WHISPers users.

_Tip:_ Adding a contact to an event does not add the person as a collaborator, nor does it give them access to private event details.

_Tip:_ The contact list you see in the dropdown are all the entries in your organization’s “address book”.

To add a contact:

1. Click “Add Contact”.
2. Click on the **Contact Person** line and start typing the person’s first or last name (but not both).
3. Select the name from the dropdown.
   (If the person is not listed, skip ahead to “Create New Contact”, then return to “Add Contact”.)

**Contact Type**  Select from dropdown

Person’s role at this location. Options are:

- “Field” person has information about what is going on in the field.
- “Diagnosis” person has information about the diagnostics.
- “Media” person is a news/media/outreach professional.
- “Private” person is not affiliated with an agency (e.g. private citizen).
To view contact details:
1. Click the person icon.

To add contact to all event locations:
1. Click the stack of paper icon.

To delete contact entry:
1. Click the red circle with minus sign.
To create a new contact:

1. Click “Create New Contact”.
2. Enter **First Name** *
3. Enter **Last Name** *
4. Enter **Email Address** *
5. Remaining fields are optional.
   a. **Phone Number**
   b. **Title**
      Prefix to name, e.g., Dr., Special Agent.
   c. **Position**
      Job position, e.g., Refuge manager
   d. **Organization** Select from dropdown
      Organization where contact works. If not listed, enter free text in the Company/Business/Affiliation field, or complete dashboard “request” form.
   e. **Company/Business/Affiliation**
      Company or other affiliation if not listed in Organization above.
6. Click “Save” in lower righthand corner.
7. After adding new contact in the address book, the contact will appear in the “Contact Person” drop down (S) for you to select as per “Add Contact” steps above (e.g., click “Add Contact” (R) and search by first or last name).

This completes the Contact section, click “Next” to continue.

**Tip:** To add a collaborator, see the “Add Collaborator” section below.
**Review Section**

System check of required (*) data fields. If a red “missing information” message appears under the blue check mark, the information must be entered before the event can be saved.

To resolve review check errors:

1. Read red error message(s).
2. Return to the appropriate section by clicking on section tabs (e.g., Location Details, Species, etc.) and add the missing information.
3. Click “Review” to see if there are any other errors.
4. Repeat data entry and review steps until there are no missing information messages.
5. If no errors, can continue to “Add Event Location” to add the next location or skip to “Add Event Diagnosis”.

**Add Event Location**

Multiple locations of the same outbreak can be captured in one event.

1. Click “Add Event Location” button and repeat data entry steps above.

This completes the Event Location section. Continue to Event Diagnosis.
Event Diagnosis

The overall main reason(s) for the mortality/morbidity or surveillance event across all locations and species. All the species diagnosis entered across all locations in the event are available as dropdown menu options for the event diagnosis(es).

*Tip:* Selecting the event diagnosis(es) can be a bit subjective. Consider:
- What condition(s) affected the majority of the animals?
- What condition(s) are most notable to other wildlife managers for situational awareness?
- Are any of the diagnoses emerging diseases or significant to human health or domestic animal health?
- How would you summarize this event to others?

*Tip:* If no event diagnosis is selected, it will default to “Pending” for “Incomplete” events and “Undetermined” for Complete events.

**Example:** 4 snow geese diagnosed with avian cholera and 1 with wing trauma and aspergillosis. Event Diagnosis = Avian Cholera

**Example:** A variety of diagnostic findings across several specimens without a clear reasonable explanation for the overall mortality. Event Diagnosis = Undetermined

**Example:** History and clinical signs suggestive of avian botulism but no carcasses submitted for diagnostic evaluation. Event Diagnosis = Botulism suspect

**Example:** Avian cholera and lead poisoning occurring in the same event. Event Diagnoses = Avian Cholera and Toxicosis (Lead)
Event Diagnosis  🐸 Defaults to “Pending” on home page map if nothing selected

To add an event diagnosis:

1. Scroll to the “Event Diagnosis” header and click the “Add Event Diagnosis” button.
2. Click on the Event Diagnosis line to view all the species diagnosis entered for the event. “Undetermined” can be selected.
3. To enter another event diagnosis, click the “Add Event Diagnosis” button and select a diagnosis.
4. Repeat as needed.

This completes the Event Diagnosis section. Continue to Event Comments.

Event Comments

Information that applies to the event in general, across all locations. Optional. If you do not have an event comment to add at this time, proceed to the next section.
To add an event comment:

1. Click the “Add Comment” button.
2. Click on the Comment line and enter information.
3. Tag comment with a comment “Type”.

**Comment Type**  Defaults to “Field Update”. Select from dropdown
Dropdown options:
- “Field Update” observation from the field while the event is ongoing.
- “Management” disease management actions considered or performed.
- “Epidemiological” epidemiologic context or patterns.
- “Diagnostic” laboratory diagnostic updates.
- “Other” comments that do not fit in any of the previous categories.

Repeat steps to add another event comment.

**Tip:** Once the event is saved, a “Comment Timeline” tab will appear in the Event Details header when you are logged in. Clicking this tab will show all the comments entered for an event, the comment type, date created, and the user that added the comment.

This completes the Event Comment section. Continue to Service Request.
Service Request

Refers to requesting diagnostic and/or consultative services (e.g., specimen submission, outbreak management suggestions, etc.) from the USGS National Wildlife Health Center. Optional.

*Tip:* Service requests are automatically routed to the Madison laboratory or the Honolulu Field Station based on the event location.

*Tip:* If you have an urgent wildlife disease situation requiring immediate diagnostic assistance or field response consultation, please contact the USGS National Wildlife Health Center at 608-270-2480 or NWHC-epi@usgs.gov or Honolulu Field Station at 808-792-9520 or thierry_work@usgs.gov.

*Service Request* default is “No services needed at this time”.

If services are not needed, continue to the next section.

To request services:

1. Check one of the following options

   - “Request diagnostic and consultative services” user has specimens that require diagnostic evaluation and they would like information on disease management, personal protective gear, etc.
“Request consultative services ONLY” user does not have specimens they want to submit for diagnostic evaluation but would like advice on disease management, personal protective gear, etc. from the USGS National Wildlife Health Center.

2. **Note:** If you select “diagnostic and consultative services” You will be prompted to add further information that will help the epidemiology team at NWHC determine if you should send in your specimens.
   a. Review the information provided including the “Suitable Specimen Criteria”.
   b. Click “Add Comment” and enter:
      i. Species and number of FRESH carcasses
      ii. Whether carcasses are chilled or frozen
      iii. Whether the carcasses were euthanized and how

**Tip:** If you enter a service request, a notification will automatically be sent to the USGS National Wildlife Health Center Epidemiologists as soon as the event you are creating is saved (i.e., when you see an “event created” message with a WHISPers event number). You will receive an email reply and WHISPers notification within 24-48 hours during business days.

**Tip:** You can return to an event any time after it has been created and send a service request to the USGS National Wildlife Health Center.

This completes the Service Request section. Continue to Collaborators section.
Collaborators

WHISPers users outside of your own organization that you invite to see the “privileged” or non-public event details and collaborate with you on the event by granting them either “Read Only Access” or “Read and Write Access”. Optional.

**Tip:** This is helpful when different organizations are working together on an event, as each person can add their information to the event. It is also a way to keep colleagues informed about events of mutual interest.

**Tip:** You can return to an event any time after it has been created and add collaborators.

**Tip:** WHISPers users with appropriate permissions can send you “Collaborator Requests” to ask to be added to an event.

**Tip:** If you want to add someone who is not a WHISPers user, share the WHISPers link ([https://whispers.usgs.gov](https://whispers.usgs.gov)) and encourage them to sign up!

Options are:

- **“Read Only Access”** Invited user(s) can view private event details but not add information.
- **“Read and Write Access”** Invited user(s) can view private event details and add or edit information but will not be able to delete any information.
- **“Add Individual”** to add WHISPers users one at a time.
- **“Add Circle”** to add a predefined group of WHISPers users all at once.
To add an individual collaborator:

1. Scroll to Collaborators section.
2. Click the “Add Individual” button under “Read Only Access” or “Read and Write Access”.
3. A pop-up box will appear. Enter the individual’s email address on the Email Address line and click “Search” to see if they are an enrolled WHISPers user.
4. If you don’t know their email address but think they are in your Contacts list, enter their name in the Contact field and select their name from the dropdown. That will prefill the “Email Address” line then click “Search”.
5. If the person is an enrolled WHISPers user, a “User Match Found” message will appear with an “Add as Collaborator” button.
6. Click “Add as Collaborator”. The WHISPers user name and organization will now be listed in the collaborators section.
7. Repeat as needed.

**Note:** If the person is not an enrolled WHISPers user, they will need to register for a user account before they can be added as a collaborator. You will have to contact the person outside of WHISPers to invite them to enroll.

**Tip:** A “Circle” is a self-selected group of WHISPers users, such as two or more people that you frequently work with or share similar interests, e.g., non-game colleagues in other organizations within your state, or biologists at national parks or national wildlife refuges in your region.

**Tip:** Circles are created on your dashboard. (See the “User Guide to WHISPers Collaboration Features” for more details.)

To add a “Circle” or group of collaborators. Select from dropdown

1. Scroll to Collaborators section. (DD)
2. Click the “Add Circle” button under “Read Only Access” or “Read and Write Access”.
3. Click the “Circle” line to see a list of your previously created “Circles”.
4. Select a Circle from the dropdown.
5. Click “Done” to add the Circle to the event.
6. All of users in the Circle will now appear in the collaborators section.
Tip: Once the created event is saved, an “Alert Collaborators” tab will appear on the Event Details page when you are logged in to WHISPers. This will allow you to send an immediate email and WHISPers notification to one or more of your collaborators.

(See the “User Guide to WHISPers Notifications” for more details.)

This completes the Collaborators section, continue to Save Event.

Save Event

Click the “Save Event” button, on the lower left, below the collaborators section. A list of any missing required information will appear in red at the bottom of the page. Errors will be relayed in a pop-up message in a black box at the bottom of the screen. Return to the appropriate field, add the missing information or correct errors, and click “Save Event” again.

When the event is saved successfully, a pop up will appear with the WHISPers Event ID number.

Tip: The “event id” number will also appear on your WHISPers dashboard under the “Your Events” tab.

Congratulations! You have added a “dot on the map” and contributed to better awareness of wildlife morbidity and mortality for the natural resource management community and others interested in wildlife health. Thank you!