



Brian Bird, DVM, MSPH, PhD

Dr. Bird is a farm-kid from Tennessee who received a Masters in Public Health from the Johns Hopkins University in 2000 with a focus on hantavirus ecology. He then became a Peace Corps volunteer at the Kazakhstan School of Public Health teaching courses on zoonotic diseases and health promotion. In 2008-09, he received a DVM and PhD from the University of California, Davis, leading to position at the CDC Viral Special Pathogens Branch where he led efforts to develop animal models, vaccines, and countermeasures for a variety of high-consequence viral pathogens including Rift Valley fever, Ebola, Marburg, Lassa fever, and Lujo viruses. While at CDC, he participated in numerous field and viral hemorrhagic fever outbreak responses throughout Africa. In 2014-2016 during the West African Ebola epidemic, he was an early-stage lead of the CDC Emergency Operations Center Laboratory task-force, and then later lead of the CDC field-diagnostic laboratory in Sierra Leone, that successfully and safely tested over 27,000 specimens from suspect Ebola virus disease patients.

He is now a research virologist at the University of California, Davis School of Veterinary Medicine One Health Institute where he leads Ebola-related surveillance activities as part of the USAID funded PREDICT program consortium. This work is the largest single effort of its kind to identify new and emerging zoonotic pathogens spanning nearly 30 countries throughout Africa and Asia. Dr. Bird's work has a particular focus in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia to identify the animal reservoir origins of ebolaviruses, and to determine if spill-over into other animal species occurred during the recent devastating regional outbreak.

He is also co-Principal Investigator the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA) funded Preventing Emerging Pandemic Threats (PREEMPT) project where he leads in-depth investigations of Lassa fever virus ecology, genomics, and spillover dynamics from rodent reservoirs into humans in West Africa. With a multi-disciplinary team of collaborators, this work supports the development of complex mathematical models to predict outbreak capable virus mutations and to tailor novel vaccine approaches aimed at reducing the health impact of this high-consequence pathogen.

His personal passions are finding the joy in every day, riding horses, hiking, kayaking, and IPAs.