

Michigan Surveillance Plan

In light of CWD in Wisconsin, Michigan will be increasing CWD testing for both free-ranging and privately-owned cervids. The DNR has proposed a wildlife surveillance that would test 4,000 deer and 100 elk annually. The plan targets the locations of past and present deer research facilities, locations of privately-owned cervid facilities and the appropriate sample needed for statistical analysis. The proposed surveillance of free-ranging animals will coordinate with efforts to increase surveillance of privately-owned cervids by the Michigan Department of Agriculture. MDA requires that all privately-owned cervids over 16 months of age that die of unknown reasons be tested for CWD.

CWD Prevention

Michigan is taking several steps to prevent the occurrence of CWD in the state. The importation of privately-owned cervids has been banned. A contingency plan to manage CWD in the event of its discovery in Michigan has been developed by veterinarians and biologists. The DNR and MDA are working to increase the level of public education and awareness of the disease by educating hunters at public meetings and appearances and through The Michigan Surveillance and Response plan, available on the State of Michigan website at the DNR website.

Recommended CWD Websites

Michigan DNR:

www.michigan.gov/chronicwastingdisease
Check your CWD testing results here.

CWD Alliance: www.cwd-info.org

Wisconsin DNR: www.dnr.state.wi.us

CWD web discussion forum:

www.michigan-sportsman.com/forum/



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CWD has not been found in Michigan. But what precautions should hunters take with the carcass of a deer or elk taken in areas where the disease has been found?

According to public health officials, there is no evidence that CWD can be transmitted to humans. Although there is no evidence that CWD affects humans, the DNR advises hunters to take simple precautions:

- Wear rubber gloves when field dressing carcasses, minimize handling brain or spinal cord tissues and wash hands thoroughly afterwards.
- Hunters should bone out carcasses or at least avoid consuming brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen and lymph nodes of harvested animals.
- Hunters should not handle or consume wild animals that appear sick or act abnormally, regardless of the cause.



For questions about Chronic Wasting Disease: DNR's Wildlife Disease Lab at (517) 373-9358
TTY-hearing impaired ...711 (Michigan relay center)

If a deer or elk is observed exhibiting clinical signs of CWD, particularly poor physical condition, behavioral changes such as loss of fear and incoordination, contact:

**DNR RAP Line at
1-800-292-7800**

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Chronic Wasting Disease

Michigan Department of
Natural Resources

Wildlife Division



Photo: Dr. Mike Miller, Colorado Div. of Wildlife

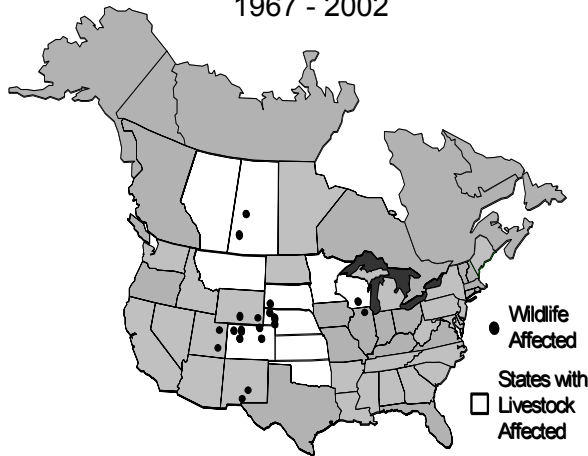
Deer infected with Chronic Wasting Disease in Wyoming



Chronic Wasting Disease

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a transmissible neurologic disease of elk and deer characterized by loss of body condition, behavioral abnormalities, and always resulting in death. CWD was first diagnosed in a research facility in Colorado in 1967. CWD has been diagnosed in wild mule deer, white-tailed deer and elk. As of summer, 2003, the disease has been discovered in free-ranging cervids in Colorado, Illinois, Nebraska, New Mexico, South Dakota, Utah, Wisconsin, Wyoming and the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. As of summer, 2003, it has been diagnosed in privately-owned cervids in Colorado, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and in Saskatchewan and Alberta provinces.

Occurrence of CWD in North America 1967 - 2002



Prevalence of the Disease

Since free-ranging deer and elk in north-central Colorado and southeast Wyoming have been surveyed for CWD, the annual prevalence rates have ranged from 1 to 15%. The overall prevalence rate of CWD in the endemic areas is approximately 5% in mule deer and less than 1% in elk. Prevalence in some mule deer hunt areas is as high as 15%. The prevalence rate is greater in deer 2 ½ years and older and in elk 1 ½ years and older. Prevalence rates in other CWD positive states have been extremely low.

Cause

Prions are the disease-causing agent associated with CWD. Prions are mutant versions of proteins that occur normally in the body. The mutant proteins are found on the membranes of nerve cells (neurons). Prions are not destroyed by cooking, formaldehyde, alcohol, or UV light.

Clinical Signs

CWD in deer and elk is characterized by loss of body condition (emaciation), drooling, behavioral abnormalities and death.



Photo: Dr. Elizabeth S. Williams, University of Wyoming

Testing

CWD is diagnosed through various techniques on dead animals. There is no practical live animal test at this time.

Treatment

There is no treatment for a deer or elk that has CWD. An animal displaying clinical signs consistent with CWD should be euthanized. Removing the animal may help prevent the spread of the disease.

Transmission: Animal to Animal

There is no evidence at this time that CWD can be naturally transmitted to animals other than deer and elk. Transmission of the prion from an infected animal to uninfected animal in deer and elk is implicated by both circumstantial and experimental evidence. This occurs via contact between adult animals, contamination of feed or water sources with saliva, urine, and/or feces, or contact with an infected facility or area; and more rarely by maternal to offspring contact. From the time an animal is infected to the time it shows symptoms is a minimum of 18 months, but can be as long as 6 to 7 years.

Transmission: Animal to Human

To date, there is no evidence that CWD can be transmitted to humans. There is no evidence that the agent that causes CWD occurs in venison. Researchers have concluded that there is a "substantial barrier" to CWD transmission between animals and people.

Supplemental Feeding

Providing a supplemental food or water source could increase the likelihood of transmitting this as well as other diseases. It is suspected that if CWD is transmitted animal to animal either by direct contact or environmental contamination then artificial feeding stations for wild cervids could be accelerating the problem on a local level.



Michigan's Wildlife Surveillance

In 1998, the DNR tested 459 white-tailed deer in the northeast Lower Peninsula for CWD. During 2002, 4,349 white-tailed deer and 117 elk were tested from throughout Michigan. The majority of samples were obtained from hunter-harvested deer and elk. In addition, targeted surveillance has been conducted on cervids displaying symptoms of CWD. All deer and elk sampled as of the summer 2003 have tested negative for the disease.

Michigan's Livestock Surveillance

MDA has tested over 1,300 privately-owned deer and elk and all were negative.