



## Michigan Department of Natural Resources Chronic Wasting Disease Frequently Asked Questions

### What is CWD?

Chronic wasting disease or CWD is a fatal central nervous system disease found in cervids (deer, elk, and moose). It is caused by small proteinaceous particles called **prions** that attack the brain of infected animals, creating small lesions in the brain, which results in death.

### Where can I check my deer?

Locations include DNR deer check stations, partnering meat processors and taxidermists, and DNR drop boxes. More information can be found at [www.mi.gov/deercheck](http://www.mi.gov/deercheck).

### What are the carcass transportation restrictions?

Within the Core CWD Area or the CWD MZ:

You can only leave the area (cannot be possessed or transported) if:

- It is deboned meat, quarters or other parts of a cervid that do not have any part of the spinal column or head attached, antlers, antlers attached to a skull cap cleaned of all brain and muscle tissue, hides, upper canine teeth, or a finished taxidermist mount, **OR**
- The hunter has presented the head at a designated drop off location **within 24 hours** after killing the deer (you do not have to check the deer in the Core CWD or CWD MZ deer check locations, you can take the deer to any DNR-designated check station or drop-off location in the state as long as it is done within 24 hours of harvest.)

### Where is the CWD Management Zone?

A **16-county CWD Management Zone** has been created, which includes: Calhoun, Clinton, Eaton, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Ingham, Ionia, Isabella, Jackson, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Ottawa, and Shiawassee counties.

### Where is the Core CWD Area?

A **5-county Core CWD Area** has been created, which includes Ionia, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm and Newaygo counties.

### Do we take the full deer (head intact), with the properly attached deer kill tag, to the check station or just the head (e.g., hunter removes the head)?

The DNR will cut heads off nearly all deer that come in to check stations, so this is standard procedure. Hunters can bring in just the head, if they wish, but for reasons below, it is best to have everything together.

### If we only bring the head, then which portion of the deer keeps the kill tag, the body or the head and how do we transport the other without the kill tag attached?

The tag stays with the carcass for possession/processing. If the head is missing from the carcass and a CO can't identify the sex of the animal, then questions arise if there is not a stub or proof that the animal was submitted for testing at the check station. With proof of submission, suspicion decreases. We know this has been an issue in the past and are working on ways to remedy this, but the standard recommendation is to bring the entire animal to check station, or if just transporting the head after the meat has been processed, bring the tag along with the head.

### Are we supposed bring the head wrapped or seal it in a plastic bag? Should each head be kept separate or placed in separate bags for each deer to minimize cross

**contamination?**

The likelihood of cross contamination is extremely small. Still, it is best if submitting multiple heads to have each one individually wrapped in a bag to further reduce any remote chance of cross contamination. Again, if the entire deer is brought in, the likelihood of cross-contamination is virtually nonexistent since the samples tested are at the base of the head and protected by the cape and muscle tissue of the animal.

**Are there check station locations and drop box locations? Or are these the same place?**

We will have traditional check stations with standard hours that will be publicized. If a hunter wishes to avoid these check stations and working with a Departmental employee, they can visit self-service drop boxes where they submit the entire head and fill out the information for the tag on their own, following the detailed instructions that will be placed at the box's locations. All of these will be highly publicized on our maps. Or, hunters can also go to select processors and taxidermists for sample removal/submission.

**Must the head be turned in during office hours of the designated station (for purposes sample tagging) or will there be drop boxes?**

Check stations will have posted hours. Drop boxes are available for use at any time. Instructions for submission will be provided, but it's worth the hunter knowing or able to answer (when the animal was harvested, exact location-preferably the county, township, range, and section, phone number and contact info of the submitting hunter)

**Will meat processors within or outside of the core / management areas be allowed to process these deer before the lab results are returned or should processing wait until after results are determined?**

Processors make their own decisions on how to process venison. Some wait to process until test results are returned, others move forward with processing in the absence of a testing result. Each decision is personal to the processor, and we expect each hunter to have this conversation with their chosen processor to make sure their values align with the path the processor takes in processing venison.

**The Hunting Digest speaks to disposing of carcass parts in an approved landfill. The question has come up, what's an "approved" landfill?**

There is no formal definition of "approved" landfill, though one that is lined would be preferable. The intent of this language is that any landfill that is used by residential or commercial refuse companies would be preferred, rather than a shallow hole in the back yard. Knowing that not every refuse service will collect carcass parts, the DNR is offering dumpsters at DNR facilities where hunters can dispose of leftover deer carcasses.

**What should I do with the carcass?**

Off-site disposal (preferred)

- Take directly to an appropriate landfill or use your regular trash pick-up that will be taken to the landfill.

On-site disposal

- If necessary to bury carcass, do as close to the kill site as possible and deep enough to prevent scavengers digging it up.
- This method does not prevent future infections on that location but minimizes the change of moving CWD prions across the landscape to areas that have not been infected.

**If I submit my deer head for testing, how long does it take to get test results back?**

Depending on the time of the year, test results may take 7 to 14 business days.

**Where has CWD been found in Michigan?**

Since May 2015 when the first CWD deer was found in Michigan, CWD has been confirmed in free-ranging white-tailed deer in the Lower Peninsula from Clinton, Ionia, Ingham, Jackson, Kent, Gratiot, Eaton, and Montcalm counties. As of October 2018, a CWD positive deer was found in the Upper Peninsula in Dickinson County. CWD was also found in August 2008 at a Kent County deer farm facility and in January 2017 in two captive deer that were from a deer farm facility in Mecosta County

**Can I use natural cervid urine-based lures and attractants?**

Yes, if they approved by the Archery Trade Association (ATA). Otherwise, effective immediately there is a **statewide ban** on the use of all natural cervid urine-based lures and attractants that are not approved by the ATA.

**Are mineral blocks/licks considered bait?**

Yes.

**Can I bait?**

There is an immediate baiting and feeding ban in the 16-county CWD Management Zone. There was already a baiting ban in place in Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency and Oscoda counties (Core TB Area) due to bovine Tuberculosis.

After Jan. 31, 2019, no baiting or feeding will be allowed in the Lower Peninsula.

**Exception:** Hunters with disabilities who meet specific requirements use not more than 2 gallons at a time of single-bite baits, which include shelled corn, nuts, beet pulp, deer feed or pellets, or wheat or other grain, in the CWD MZ and Core TB area during the Liberty and Independence hunts. After Jan. 31, 2019, hunters with disabilities in the other areas in the Lower Peninsula can use bait during the Liberty and Independence hunts (regular baiting restrictions will apply – not the single-bite restrictions).

What is this exception?

- To qualify as an individual, you must fit one of the following criteria:
- Be a veteran who has been determined to have 100-percent disability or is rated as individually unemployable by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Have been issued a permit by the DNR to hunt from a standing vehicle.
- Have been issued a permit by the DNR to hunt using a laser-sighting device.
- Be blind. "Blind" means an individual who has visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correction or has a limitation of his or her field of vision that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angular distance not greater than 20 degrees, as determined by the Commission of the Blind.

**Are food plots banned?**

Food plots are considered an agricultural practice and separate from baiting. They are legal throughout Michigan.

**Can I feed birds or other wildlife?**

In areas where feeding is banned, yes, you can feed birds and other wildlife if done in such a

manner as to exclude wild, free-ranging white-tailed deer and elk from gaining access to the feed. If a deer can eat the feed, that would be considered feeding deer and could be illegal depending on the area you are in.

### **Are Antler Point Restrictions in place in CWD MZ?**

No; not during the 2018 deer hunting season. The commission signed resolutions that encouraged:

- An experimental mandatory antler point restriction regulation in a five-county CWD Core Area, including Ionia, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm and Newaygo counties. The restriction would begin in 2019, provided a survey of hunters shows support for the requirement and specific department guidelines are met. This is intended as a tool to evaluate the effects of antler point restrictions on the spread and prevalence of CWD, along with population reduction.

### **Is there a change to muzzleloader season?**

In the CWD MZ, you can now use any legal firearm during muzzleloader season.

### **How many licenses can I buy in the CWD MZ?**

There is a purchase limit of 10 private-land antlerless licenses per hunter in this area.

### **What licenses are available in Core CWD Area and CWD MZ and what can I harvest with those licenses?**

- **In the Core CWD Area**, during all deer seasons, you can use a single deer license or combination license to harvest a doe or a buck with at least one three-inch antler. Also, hunters can purchase private land or public land antlerless licenses for each county to harvest an antlerless deer during all deer seasons.
- **In the CWD MZ**, during archery season, you can use a single deer license or combination license to harvest a doe or a buck with at least one three-inch antler. During the two firearms seasons, you can use a single deer license to harvest a buck with at least one three-inch antler, or you can use a combination deer license and harvest a buck with at least one three-inch antler on both of those kill tags. Hunters can purchase county specific private land or public land antlerless licenses to harvest an antlerless deer during all deer seasons.

Hunters also have an option of purchasing an antlerless license good for any private land in the CWD MZ. This license is discounted 40% and good for any private land with in the CWD MZ; however, if you purchase this license it will expire on November 4<sup>th</sup> (this is a tool that we hope will help hunters harvest more antlerless deer earlier in the season.)

### **Do I have to choose between the discounted CWD license or the regular antlerless license?**

No; you can purchase both licenses. Just remember that one expires, and one can be used in all deer seasons. The special CWD license (exp. Nov 4) will print on the standard antlerless deer license form. Please note, these special tags are just another OTC leftover antlerless hunt choice (hunt# - 2CWD) that go on sale Sept 10 at 10am.

**What counties are in the early and later antlerless seasons?**

**Early antlerless firearm deer season** on privately owned lands within Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Arenac, Bay, Benzie, Calhoun, Clare, Clinton, Eaton, Genesee, Gladwin, Grand Traverse, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Huron, Ingham, Ionia, Iosco, Isabella, Jackson, Kent, Lapeer, Leelanau, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Midland, Monroe, Montcalm, Montmorency, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oakland, Oceana, Osceola, Oscoda, Ottawa, Presque Isle, St. Clair, Saginaw, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties and upon privately owned lands within that portion of Charlevoix county within deer management unit 015.

**Late antlerless firearm deer season** on privately owned lands within Alcona, Allegan, Antrim, Alpena, Arenac, Barry, Bay, Benzie, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Clare, Clinton, Eaton, Genesee, Gladwin, Grand Traverse, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Huron, Ingham, Ionia, Iosco, Isabella, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Lapeer, Leelanau, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Midland, Monroe, Montcalm, Montmorency, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oakland, Oceana, Osceola, Oscoda, Ottawa, Presque Isle, St. Clair, St. Joseph, Saginaw, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola, Van Buren, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties, and upon privately-owned lands within that portion of Charlevoix county within deer management unit 015.

**What can I bring back if I'm hunting cervids (such as deer, elk, or moose) out of Michigan?**

You can only bring back the following:

- Hides
- Deboned meat
- Quarters or other parts of the cervid that do not have any part of the spinal column or head attached
- Finished taxidermy products
- Cleaned teeth
- Antlers attached to a skullcap cleaned of brain and muscle tissue

If you are notified by another state or province that a deer, elk, or moose you brought into Michigan has CWD, contact the [DNR Wildlife Disease Laboratory](#) within two business days at 517-336-5030 and provide details.

**How can cervids get CWD?**

CWD can be transmitted through direct animal-to-animal contact, or by contact with saliva, urine, feces, blood, and infected water, carcass parts of an infected animal, infected plants or infected soil.

**What does a CWD deer look like?**

Infected animals may not show any symptoms of disease for a long period of time, even years. The later stages of the disease in infected animals include loss of body condition, change in behavior such as a loss of fear of humans, loss of bodily control or movements, excessive drooling and salivating.

**What should I do if I find a dead deer or very sick deer?**

Accurately document the location of the animal. Contact your local [DNR Wildlife Office](#) to report it or after business hours contact Report All Poaching hotline at 800-292-7800. Do not contact, disturb, kill, or remove the animal without DNR permission.

### **What are the impacts of CWD?**

There is no treatment or recovery; it is always fatal. CWD on the landscape could significantly reduce the number of deer and/or depress older age classes, especially mature bucks. Therefore, CWD could negatively impact Michigan's hunting traditions. Michigan has about 600,000 deer hunters who harvest about 430,000 deer annually. Hunting generates more than \$2.3 billion annually to Michigan's economy. Without management of CWD, disease may spread across the state.

### **Has CWD been found in the Upper Peninsula?**

Yes, a CWD positive deer has been discovered in Waucedah Township in Dickinson County.

### **Where has CWD been found nationally?**

[View the USGS map](#) for locations of CWD in North America. For the latest testing numbers, and a listing of counties and townships where CWD has been found in free-ranging deer, please click [here](#).

### **Is CWD transferable to cattle, pets, livestock, and other animals?**

Only four species of the deer family are known to be susceptible to CWD: elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer and moose. The transferability to other members of the deer family and other wildlife species is not entirely known; however, ongoing research is being conducted.

### **Where did the mutation first originate? Can it occur spontaneously? From bacteria? From genetically altered crops?**

Although the origin of CWD is unknown, it was first recognized in captive mule deer at wildlife research facilities in Colorado during the late 1960's. CWD was not actually identified as a Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy or TSE until the 1970's.

### **Is it safe to eat meat from CWD positive deer? How can we be sure there is no cross contamination in meat processing?**

It is not recommended to eat the meat from known CWD infected animals. Hunters located in CWD areas are advised to debone their meat and not to consume parts where prions will likely accumulate.

### **Why would you ban baiting and feeding?**

Our current CWD Surveillance and Response plan identifies the prohibition of baiting and feeding practices where CWD is identified. Most researchers and biologists agree that anything that congregates animals will increase the likelihood of spread of disease.

Note: Baiting and feeding are immediately banned in the 16-county CWD MZ. However, there is a later start date, effective January 31, 2019, on this regulation for the rest of the Lower Peninsula to allow bait producers and retailers time to adjust to the new rule.

### **What are the regulation regarding wildlife rehabilitators and CWD?**

- All wild deer, except fawns, positively confirmed to be from inside a county with a confirmed case of CWD shall not be possessed unless:
  - Euthanized and sent or taken at the earliest possible time to the wildlife disease laboratory by direct arrangement with the wildlife disease laboratory or by arrangement with a local conservation officer, or
  - Obtained by a permittee located inside a county with a confirmed case of CWD who humanely euthanizes the animal within 24 hours of receipt
- All wild fawns positively confirmed to be from inside a county with a confirmed case of CWD shall be possessed and released only if the capture and release point of the wild fawn is within a 10-mile radius of a licensed permittee
- All deer, except fawns, located outside of a confirmed county with CWD shall not be possessed unless:
  - Euthanized and sent or taken at the earliest possible time to the wildlife disease laboratory by direct arrangement with the wildlife disease laboratory or by arrangement with a local conservation officer, or
  - Obtained by a permittee located outside of a county with a confirmed case of CWD who humanely euthanizes the animal within 24 hours of receipt
- All wild fawns located outside of a confirmed county with CWD shall not be moved to a county with a confirmed case of CWD and shall only be released in the county of origin
- All deer shall be released by October 1

### **What are disease control permits?**

These are permits available to landowners who own 5 or more acres within certain CWD areas. [More information here.](#)