

Chronic Wasting Disease in Wisconsin Deer

By Erin Larson

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) began monitoring the state's wild white-tailed deer for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in 1999. Three positive deer were identified from Dane County through random testing of hunter harvested deer in November 2001. These Wisconsin index cases represented the first cases of CWD detected in wild white-tailed deer east of the Mississippi River. Since 2002 almost 139,000 deer have been tested in Wisconsin for CWD with 989 testing positive. Surveillance has been continually conducted in the southern portions of the state as well as rotating statewide surveillance. The majority of the positives remain in a small 126-mi² area bounded by Spring Green, Mazomanie, Black Earth, Mount Horeb, and Ridgeway in Dane and Iowa counties. Of the 989 positives 64 have been found in the herd reduction zone, bringing the total number of southern counties with a CWD positive wild deer to 12. No positives have been found outside of the CWD zones.

To date, over 8,000 wild deer have been tested during the 2007-2008 season. Currently 133 deer have tested positive during this season (see Table 1). For this season nine positives have been identified in the herd reduction zone. Five of these positives were found in northern Rock and Walworth counties. Three were found in the Devils Lake State Park area in Sauk county and the last was found on the western border of Iowa county.

This season the WDNR moved forward with an extensive public involvement effort that would collaboratively engage the public in managing CWD in Wisconsin. The goal of this process was to engage a diverse group of people in a dialogue to guide the department in future management of the disease. The group looked at factors such as the economy, hunters, landowners, and other impacts Wisconsin's free-ranging deer herd has on the state in regards to CWD management. The recommendations that came out of this process were submitted to the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board along with the WDNR recommendations for the 2008 season structure. Both will help the board determine a season structure for the 2008 deer hunting season in the CWD zones.

Table 1. *Wisconsin CWD Surveillance in 2007-2008:*

DNR Zone	# Sampled	# Analyzed	Positive for CWD
Disease Eradication Zone	5,068	5,023	124
Herd Reduction Zone	2,046	2,045	9
Remainder of Wisconsin	1,157	1,154	0
Unknown	10	10	
Total Sampled Statewide	8,281		
Total Analyzed Statewide		8,232	
Total Positive Statewide			133

For more detailed and updated CWD information please view the [Chronic Wasting Disease in Wisconsin](#) internet pages.