

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 over 152,000 deer have been tested in Wisconsin for CWD with 1,172 testing positive. Surveillance has been continually conducted in the southern portions of the state as well as rotating statewide surveillance. CWD positive wild deer have been found in 12 southern counties to date. 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. No positives have been found outside of the CWD zone.

Over 12,000 wild deer have been tested during the 2008-2009 CWD year. Currently 181 deer have tested positive during this season (see Table 1). Also this season the WDNR finished the second round of statewide sampling by collecting samples in the 18 northern counties. Surveillance began last season when wildlife and other staff took tissue samples from road kill deer. To obtain a statistically valid sample a total of 8,000 deer, about 500 per county, were needed. All deer from the northern region tested negative.

The DNR has recently developed a draft 10-year CWD management plan. The main goal of the plan is to minimize the area of Wisconsin where CWD occurs and lower the number of infected deer in the state. The goal, objectives, and management actions in the plan were developed based on the best scientific information currently available as well as built upon the work of the stakeholder advisory group which met throughout last year.

Table 1. *Wisconsin CWD Surveillance in 2008-2009:*

DNR Zone	# Sampled	# Analyzed	Positive for CWD
Remainder of Wisconsin	6,128	6,091	0
CWD Management Zone	6,158	6,142	181
Unknown Zone	43	43	0
Total Sampled Statewide	12,329		
Total Analyzed Statewide		12,276	
Total Positive Statewide			181

For more detailed and updated CWD information please view the Chronic Wasting Disease in Wisconsin internet pages.