

Venison and CWD What Hunters Should Know

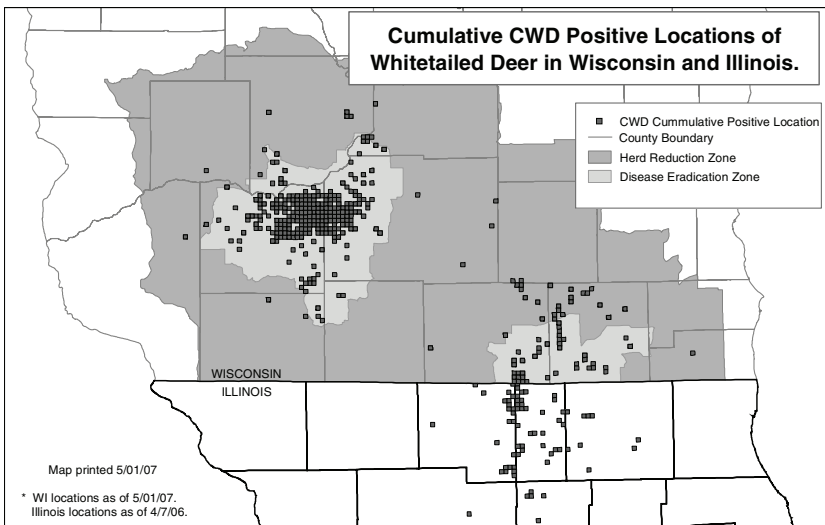
Information from the Wisconsin Division of Public Health

Chronic Wasting Disease is a fatal disease that affects the nervous system of deer and elk. The disease is caused by an abnormal protein called a prion, which can survive cooking temperatures. Prions concentrate in certain tissues, such as brain, spinal cord, lymph nodes, and spleen. There is new evidence that they may also be present in low concentrations in muscle tissue. The World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control agree that there is currently no scientific evidence proving that CWD can cause disease in humans. However, in the interest of safety, these organizations advise that people not consume meat from deer, moose, or elk which are known to be positive for CWD.

In keeping with this recommendation, the Wisconsin Division of Public Health recommends that venison from deer harvested within the CWD Eradication Zones or the Herd Reduction Zone not be consumed or distributed to others until CWD test results on the source deer are known to be negative. The areas in Wisconsin and Illinois where deer tested positive for CWD are indicated on the map below.

Venison from multiple deer should be kept separate and labeled before freezing, so that you will know which deer was the source of the meat.

For more information about CWD and its implications for human health, call the Wisconsin Division of Public Health at (608) 267-9003 or visit: dhfs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/communicable/factsheets/creutzfeldt.htm



To see updated Chronic Wasting Disease maps, visit:
dnr.wi.gov/land/wildlife/whealth/issues/cwd/maps.htm

Chronic Wasting Disease Update

The discovery of CWD in southern Wisconsin represents a significant threat to the state's white-tailed deer population and the culture of deer hunting in the state. Wisconsin has more than 700,000 deer hunters who have harvested an average of 460,000 deer annually during the past decade. Deer hunting contributes more than 7 million days of recreation each year. Deer hunting annually generates more than \$500 million dollars in retail sales and nearly \$1 billion in total impact to the state's economy.

An extensive CWD surveillance program has been conducted in Wisconsin since 2002. Through May 2007, over 129,000 deer have been tested from across the state. Sample intensity has been sufficient in the majority of the state to have a high degree of confidence that CWD would have been detected if it exists at 1% prevalence.

As of May 2007, a total of 853 free-ranging deer have tested positive for CWD. Of these, 799 were from the Disease Eradication Zones and 54 were from the Herd Reduction Zone. The southeast cases are adjacent to an outbreak in northeastern Illinois where 167 CWD positive deer have been found since 2002.

Analysis of the sex and age composition of positive deer has shown that very few fawns are infected; only 20 out of more than 12,500 tested positive. Disease prevalence increases with age and the rate of increase is faster in males than in females. Only 2–3% of yearling females and males from the core area in southern Wisconsin have tested positive for CWD. This increased to 4–5% of females and 10% of males for deer 2 years old or older.

There are consequences to not attempting to control the disease or an inadequate response: the prevalence and geographic distribution of CWD will increase as will the impacts on the deer hunting culture of Wisconsin and related industries and businesses. The results of ongoing research studies are needed to better understand the dynamics of the disease, its pattern of increase and spread, the role of environmental transmission, and the effect of management actions on the disease.

Beginning in the summer of 2007, we are embarking on an extensive public involvement effort to include the public in helping us establish the next phase of CWD management in Wisconsin. The dialogue will engage the multiple and diverse interests potentially affected by the department's disease and deer herd management decisions.

The goal of the CWD dialogue is for the public and the DNR to reach decisions on how to manage chronic wasting disease to minimize the impact of the disease on Wisconsin's free-ranging deer population, the habitats and biological systems that include deer, the economy, hunters, landowners and others that benefit from a healthy deer herd. Changes in management as a result of the public dialogue are expected to be in place for the 2008 deer seasons.

We have created a separate section on our CWD web pages that we will use to keep you informed of the progress of this effort. For those that have internet access we encourage you to visit the site often during the course of the coming year: dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/whealth/issues/CWD/dialogue.htm. If you don't have internet access, please consider calling our CWD information line (1-877-WISC-CWD) to learn more.

Successfully managing CWD in Wisconsin will require a sustained effort over many years, necessitating cooperation and communication among natural resource and agricultural agencies, hunters, landowners, farmed cervid producers, and the many citizens of the state who benefit from a healthy deer herd.

We appreciate the passion that comes with deer hunting and deer management decisions in Wisconsin and look forward to harnessing that passion and our best understanding of this disease to shape the next phase of CWD management in our State.

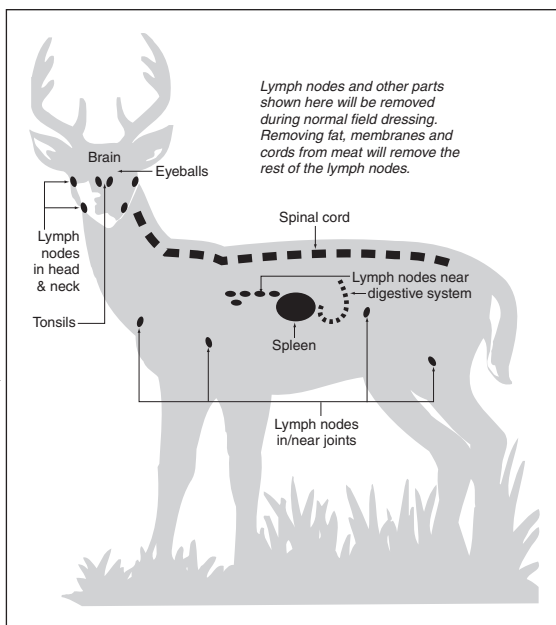
Safe Handling of Deer

General Precautions

- Do not eat the eyes, brain, spinal cord, spleen, tonsils or lymph nodes of any deer.
- Do not eat any part of a deer that appears abnormal.

Hunters

- **Wear rubber or latex gloves** when field dressing carcasses.
- **Bone out the meat** from your animal.
- **Remove** all internal organs.
- **Minimize the handling** of brain, spinal cord, spleen and lymph nodes (lumps of tissue next to organs or in fat).
- **Do not use** household knives or utensils.
- **Use equipment dedicated** to field dressing only.
- **Clean knives and equipment** of residue and sanitize with household bleach. Use a solution of equal parts chlorine bleach and water. Wipe down countertops and let them dry. Soak items like knives one hour. When through, dilute the solution further and dump it down a drain.
- **Request that your animal be processed individually** and not combined with meat from other animals.
- **Avoid use of saws.** Do not cut through spine or skull except to remove the head. Use a knife designated only for this purpose.



More information can be found regarding deer processing at: datcp.state.wi.us/ah/agriculture/animals/disease/chronic/pdf/venison_safety_2side.pdf.