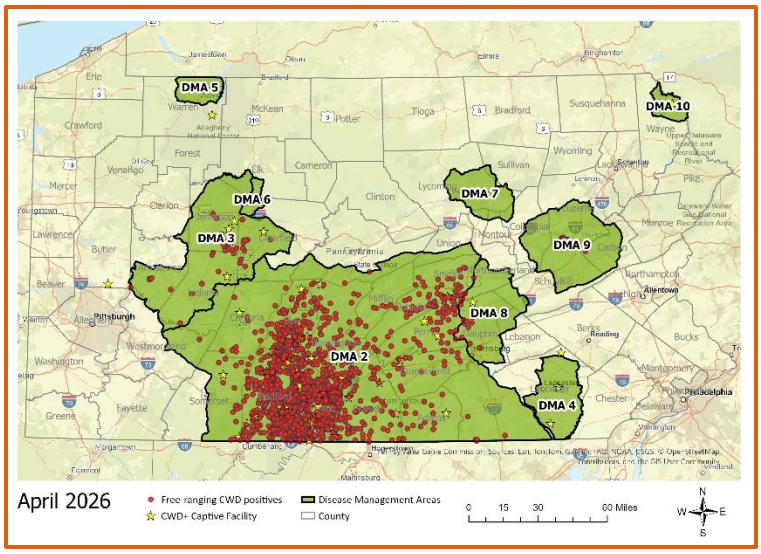
History of CWD in PA

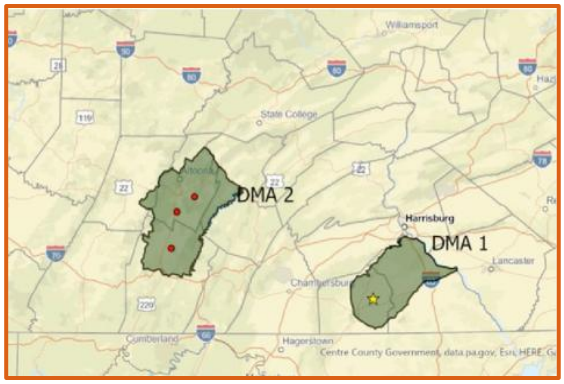
The Pennsylvania Game Commission began testing deer and elk for CWD in 1998, 14 years before it was first detected in the Commonwealth. In 2003, a CWD Interagency Task Force was established, and the first CWD Response Plan was developed for the Commonwealth. The plan was later updated in 2005 and 2011. In 2006, transfer of authority over the captive cervid (e.g., deer, elk) industry from the Pennsylvania Game Commission to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) divided cervid management between two agencies. Prior to being detected in Pennsylvania, CWD was detected in the neighboring states of New York and West Virginia (2005), Virginia (2010), and Maryland (2010).



Due to regulation changes in 2026, DMAs are no longer used to define CWD management actions in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Game Commission is now managing CWD at the Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) level.

Historic CWD surveillance data can be found on the CWD Dashboard at pqcdatacollection.pa.gov/CWDResultslookup

Disease Management Area 1



In October 2012, CWD was detected in a captive white-tailed deer facility in Adams County. The facility was quarantined by the PDA and depopulated, and samples were tested for CWD. Results revealed one additional positive in the captive herd. At the same time, Disease Management Area 1 (DMA 1) was created. The Pennsylvania Game Commission implemented a ban on removing high-risk parts from DMA 1, a ban on the feeding of deer, and a ban on use of natural urine-based lures within DMA 1. The Pennsylvania Game Commission enhanced disease surveillance through road-killed deer collection and increased sampling of hunter harvested deer. In 2017, after no additional CWD-positive deer were detected after five years of disease surveillance, DMA 1 was dissolved. When it was dissolved, DMA 1 covered approximately 600 square miles.

Disease Management Area 2



In November 2012, CWD was detected in free-ranging deer within Pennsylvania for the first time. Three hunter-harvested samples from Bedford and Blair counties within WMU 4A led to the establishment of DMA 2. The same DMA-wide restrictions and enhanced surveillance that had been implemented to DMA 1 were put in place. Also, Pennsylvania Game Commission staff recommended reductions in deer abundance in the area through increased antlerless allocations. Reductions were not implemented.

CWD was not detected in a captive facility within DMA 2 until 2016. Since then, CWD has been detected in dozens of captive cervid facilities within or adjacent to DMA 2.

Depopulation has occurred within some of those infected facilities. The remaining facilities still house captive deer.

Additionally, two targeted removals of free-ranging deer were performed in 2017 and 2018. These actions removed less than 100 deer near CWD-positive captive facilities in Fulton and Franklin County. Those actions resulted in the removal of one additional CWD-positive free-ranging deer.

Efforts to reduce deer abundance were not adopted until the 2020-21 hunting season. By that time, additional positives had expanded the boundaries of DMA 2 to an area nearly eight times its original size. In 2026, when DMA boundaries were dissolved, DMA 2 covered approximately 9,600 square miles.

Disease Management Area 3



DMA 3 was established in 2014 after CWD was detected in two captive cervid facilities in Jefferson County. These facilities applied for federal indemnity and were depopulated. An additional 12 CWD-positive deer were detected. DMA-wide restrictions and enhanced surveillance were put in place. Surveillance efforts increased in the following years. In 2017, three free-ranging deer in Clearfield and Jefferson counties tested positive for CWD. Subsequently, DMA 3 expanded to cover more than 2,000 square miles. Increased antlerless allocations were adopted prior to the 2018-19 hunting season. Additionally, targeted removal occurred in Clearfield County in an area surrounding a CWD-positive clinical suspect deer. This action removed 123 deer - none of which tested positive for CWD.

In 2019, DMA 3 was expanded when a Clearfield County captive cervid facility tested positive for CWD. The deer had been transferred from a Fulton County captive facility within DMA 2. This highlighted the urgent need to work with the PDA. That same year, CWD was detected in four free-ranging deer across Indiana and Jefferson counties. In 2026, when DMA boundaries were dissolved, DMA 3 covered approximately 2,000 square miles.

Disease Management Area 4

DMA 4 was established in 2018 after CWD was detected in a captive cervid facility in Lancaster County. The PDA oversaw depopulation of the facility. The Pennsylvania Game Commission introduced DMA-wide restrictions and enhanced CWD surveillance. Three additional captive cervid facilities tested positive for CWD in 2019, 2021, and 2025. To date, no CWD detections have been found in free-ranging deer in DMA 4. In 2026 when DMA boundaries were dissolved, DMA 4 covered 600 square miles.

Disease Management Area 5

DMA 5 was established in 2021 after CWD was detected in a captive facility in Warren County. The PDA oversaw depopulation of the facility. The Pennsylvania Game Commission introduced DMA-wide restrictions and enhanced CWD surveillance. To date, no CWD detections have been found in free-ranging deer in DMA 5. In 2026, when DMA boundaries were dissolved, DMA 5 covered approximately 200 square miles.

Disease Management Area 6

In 2021, a free-ranging deer tested positive for CWD in Jefferson County on the boundary of DMA 3. DMA 3 was expanded following standard procedures. However, DMA 6 was created in the eastern portion because of the proximity to the elk range (less than 2 miles). DMA 6 prevented movement of high-risk parts from DMA 3 into the elk management area. In 2026, when DMA boundaries were dissolved, DMA 6 covered 100 square miles.

Disease Management Area 7

DMA 7 was established in 2022 after CWD was detected in a captive facility in Lycoming County. The Pennsylvania Game Commission implemented DMA-wide restrictions and enhanced CWD surveillance in the area. To date, no CWD detections have been found in free-ranging deer in DMA 7. In 2026, when DMA boundaries were dissolved, DMA 7 covered approximately 460 square miles.





Disease Management Area 8

DMA 8 was established in 2023 after CWD was detected in a free-ranging road-killed deer in Dauphin County. This was the first detection on the east side of the Susquehanna River. The Pennsylvania Game Commission introduced DMA-wide restrictions and enhanced CWD surveillance in this area to monitor the wild cervid population. In 2026, when DMA boundaries were dissolved, DMA 8 covered approximately 840 square miles.

Disease Management Area 9

DMA 9 was established in 2025 after CWD was detected in a captive cervid facility, a free-ranging hunter-harvested deer in Luzerne County and a free-ranging deer in Carbon County. The Pennsylvania Game Commission implemented DMA-wide restrictions and enhanced CWD surveillance in the area. In 2026, when DMA boundaries were dissolved, DMA 9 covered approximately 1,100 square miles.

Disease Management Area 10

DMA 10 was established in 2025 after CWD was detected in a captive cervid facility in Wayne County. The Pennsylvania Game Commission implemented DMA-wide restrictions and enhanced CWD surveillance in the area. To date, no CWD detections have been found in free-ranging deer in DMA 10. In 2026, when DMA boundaries were dissolved, DMA 10 covered 150 square miles.

