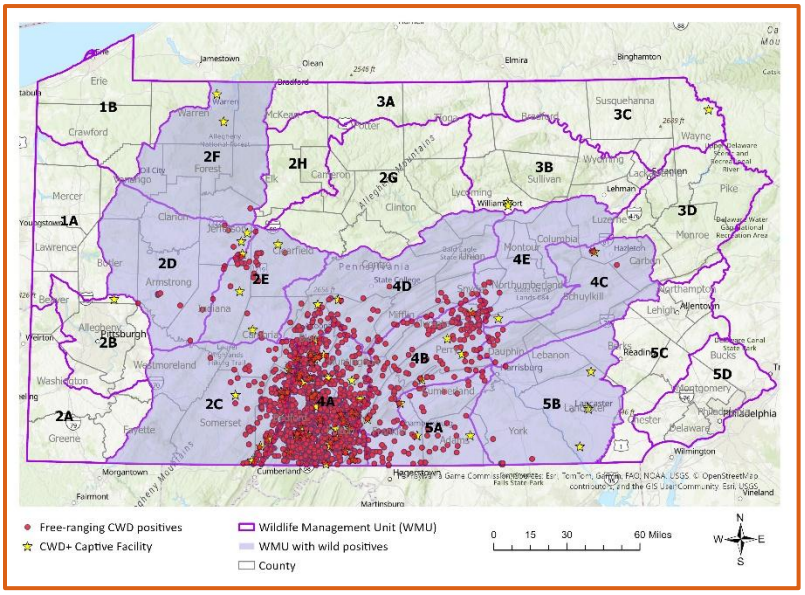
What Hunters Should Know

Hunters play a unique role in wildlife management. By simply hunting and harvesting deer, hunters participate in management.

Hunters also need to be aware of CWD, where it's found, and what regulations apply.

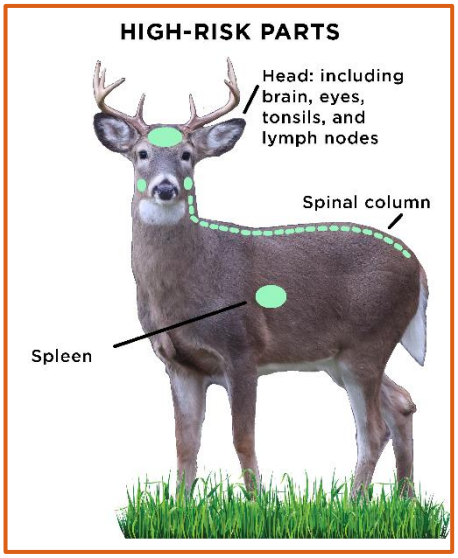
There are currently 11 wildlife management units (WMUs) where CWD has been detected in wild, free-ranging deer: 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E, 5A, and 5B; and 14 WMUs where CWD has been detected in captive facilities: 2B, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F, 3B, 3C, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E, 5A, and 5B. A map showing locations of free-ranging CWD-positive detections can be found at pgcforms.pa.gov/CWDResultsLookup/



The following is prohibited within Pennsylvania:

- Disposal of high-risk parts on the landscape away from the site of kill. Hunters may transport their deer home or to any processor. If home-processed, all high-risk parts must be disposed of with a commercial trash service. This applies to deer transported into Pennsylvania from any other state or country.
- The feeding of wild, free-ranging deer within designated "no feeding" areas.

These measures are in place to prevent human-assisted spread of CWD.



High-Risk Parts

High-risk parts include: the head (including brain, tonsils, eyes and any lymph nodes); spinal cord/backbone; spleen; skull plate with attached antlers, if visible brain or spinal cord tissue is present; cape, if visible brain or spinal cord tissue is present; upper canine teeth, if root structure or other soft tissue is present; any object or article containing visible brain or spinal cord tissue; unfinished taxidermy mounts; and brain-tanned hides.

Cleaning Recommendations



Thoroughly clean hands and processing tools with soap and hot water. Spray all surfaces with 40% bleach (two parts household bleach and three parts water) and allow to air dry. Soak all knives and tools in 40% bleach for a minimum of five minutes. After removing knives and tools from bleach soak, allow to air dry. Once dry, all surfaces, knives, and tools can be rinsed with fresh water.

Expanded Hunting Opportunities

An extended antlerless-only firearm season in January is offered in certain wildlife management units. This season provides more hunting opportunity and increases hunter efficiency. It also allows those harvesting CWD-positive deer more time to use a replacement license. Seasons can be viewed in the hunting digest.

What To Do if You See a Sick Deer While Hunting

If you encounter a visibly sick deer while hunting and have the opportunity and license to harvest it, please do so. Then contact the Pennsylvania Game Commission to surrender the deer for testing and receive a replacement harvest tag.



Getting Your Deer Tested

During the hunting seasons, deer hunters can voluntarily submit heads to CWD head collection bins for free testing. The head should have your completed harvest tag affixed to the deer's ear and be bagged. You'll be notified when your sample has been submitted to the lab with instructions on how to look up test results. Results are generally available two weeks after samples have been submitted to the lab, but testing time may vary.

If you wish to keep your deer head but still want it tested, you can have it sampled by a certified CWD technician (fee may apply) or sample it yourself using this instructional video Place the sample in a container with your completed harvest tag and deposit it in a head collection bin as noted above. NOTE: If the wrong tissue is submitted, CWD test results will be inconclusive. If you have questions about sample submission or testing, please contact our CWD hotline at 1-833-INFOCWD (1-833-463-6293).

If CWD is detected in your deer, the Pennsylvania Game Commission will notify you via a letter with additional information.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends not eating meat from an animal that tests positive for CWD.

Hunters can also submit harvested deer to the Pennsylvania Animal Diagnostics Laboratory Systems for CWD testing for a fee.

Head Collection Bins

CWD head collection bin locations are shown on the interactive map (bit.ly/PGC-CWDMap). Head bin locations also are posted on the Pennsylvania Game Commission's website. These samples provide data on the CWD sample prevalence within a given area. This allows the Pennsylvania Game Commission to track prevalence trends and assess management strategies.

Find Your Test Results



Successful hunters who submit their deer head for testing in a CWD head collection bin will receive notice when the sample has been submitted to the lab.

Results are generally available two weeks after samples have been submitted to the lab, but testing time may vary.

Hunters will need to provide their CID number and date of birth to obtain CWD results for their deer.

CWD test results can be obtained online, by phone, or by email:

- Online: CWD Testing Results Dashboard (pgcforms.pa.gov/CWDResultsLookup/)
- Phone: 1-833-INFO-CWD (1-833-463-6293)
- Email: infocwd@pa.gov

Feeding

Feeding can spread disease. Artificial feed sites congregate wildlife in unnaturally small areas and encourage animals to revisit the same place. Many wildlife diseases, including CWD, are spread from animal to animal by direct contact, through respiration droplets, saliva, urine, and feces, or by contaminated feed or soil. These areas can expose wildlife, people, and pets to diseases. CWD, hair loss, and Bullwinkle syndrome can all be spread by deer at feed sites. Research shows that high levels of gastrointestinal parasites are found at artificial salt licks. Feeding increases the environmental load of gastrointestinal parasites; and CWD prions contaminate deer feeders and expose deer and other wildlife.



Unnatural congregation leads to overcrowding. And overcrowding leads to high stress. Larger and more aggressive animals often exclude younger and weaker animals. Stress weakens immune systems making animals more vulnerable to disease. Stress also can result in injuries or even death for some individuals.



Wildlife used to feeding can become aggressive. These situations pose a threat to the health, safety, and well-being of humans and pets.

Feeding can cause environmental damage and impact non-target species. Feeding increases browse pressure in surrounding area. Feeding also reduces home ranges concentrating deer into smaller areas. Ground nesting birds experience increased predation around feed sites as well.

Deer are adapted to their environment and the food it provides. Deer rely on microorganisms in their gut to help their digestion. These microorganisms change throughout the year with changing available food sources. Lactic acidosis is the fatal disruption of the body's acid-base balance in the rumen caused by eating foods for which the rumen is not currently adapted, such as corn. Cases of lactic acidosis are documented in Pennsylvania annually.

Deer do not need supplemental feeding or minerals to survive. It's normal for deer to lose weight in winter. Deer voluntarily reduce food intake in winter regardless of what's available. They can find what they need in the wild without help from people.