

Chronic Wasting Disease in Wisconsin Deer 2015

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The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) 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. Since 2002 over 193,700 deer have been tested in Wisconsin for CWD, with 3,131 testing positive as of March 2016.

The 2015 season was the first season for full implementation of electronic registration. CWD sampling was still available at various locations throughout the state. Some of the sampling stations also offered resources for completing electronic registration. As is always the case, hunter cooperation was outstanding and hunter service testing remains a priority. Our sample total is reduced from previous years which was not unexpected with the first year of electronic registration implementation.

In 2015, focus was placed upon deer population segments within locations deemed most likely to harbor the disease. The majority of samples were received in southern WI where the disease is endemic. Monitoring efforts also included ongoing surveillance within a ten mile radius of each new CWD positive wild deer found in 2012 in Juneau, Adams and Portage counties in central Wisconsin. Since then, eight additional positives have been found in Adams and Portage counties. Surveillance was also conducted surrounding CWD-positive captive deer facilities in Marathon and Eau Claire counties, with no wild CWD-positive deer detected.

Efforts in 2015-16 marked the fourth year of CWD surveillance in Washburn County, following the 2012 discovery of a CWD-positive adult doe near Shell Lake in northwest Wisconsin. Following recommendations from a local community action team, local landowners and hunters helped the department sample over 2,000 deer in the area over the last four years. No new positives have been detected. Based on four years of sampling, all information has indicated the disease is not widespread in the Washburn area, and occurs at a very low prevalence rate.

Since 2002, CWD prevalence within our western monitoring area has shown an overall increasing trend in all sex and age classes. Since 2002, CWD prevalence within our western monitoring area has shown an overall increasing trend in all sex and age classes. During the past 14 years, the trend in prevalence in adult males has risen from 8-10 percent to about 30 percent and in adult females from about 3-4 percent to nearly 15 percent. During that same time, the prevalence trend in yearling males has increased from about 2 percent to about 10 percent and in yearling females from roughly 2 percent to about 8 percent. It is important to keep in mind that annual prevalence estimates are subject to sampling variation, and that trends over time give better information.

Table 1. *Wisconsin CWD Surveillance in 2015-2016.*

DNR Zone	# Sampled	# Analyzed	Positive for CWD
Central Farmland Zone	552	551	0
Central Forest Zone	251	251	2
Unknown Zone	8	8	0
Southern Farmland Zone	2,148	2,143	293
Northern Forest Zone	164	164	0
Total Sampled Statewide	3,123		
Total Analyzed Statewide		3,117	
Total Positive Statewide			295