

## INFORMATION FOR HUNTERS

If you encounter a research deer (collared and/or ear tagged) while hunting, **it should be treated the same as any other legal deer**. Harvesting these deer will not interfere with the research being conducted.

A CWD sample is a critical step of this research. If a research deer is harvested, **save the head and call the number located on the ear tag for more information** related to CWD sampling of your harvested deer.

Hunters harvesting deer within a CWD disease management area that are **not part of this research project** can submit the head of their harvest for free CWD testing using a PA Game Commission provided head collection bin. Head bin locations and more information on testing can be found at [www.arcg.is/1G4TLr](http://www.arcg.is/1G4TLr).



## WHICH DEER HAS CWD?

It could be **BOTH!** While the deer on the left is displaying typical late-stage CWD signs, the deer on the right could be in the pre-clinical phase of CWD. Deer may show no outward signs of CWD for up to **18 to 24 months** while being infected and spreading the disease. Laboratory testing is needed to know if a deer is positive for CWD.

## PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

### State Headquarters

2001 Elmerton Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797  
717-787-4250

### Region Offices

All region offices can be reached at :

**1-833-PGC-HUNT**  
(1-833-742-4868)

Or

**1-833-PGC-WILD**  
(1-833-742-9453)

*Managing and protecting wildlife and their habitats while promoting hunting and trapping for current and future generations.*

## QUESTIONS?

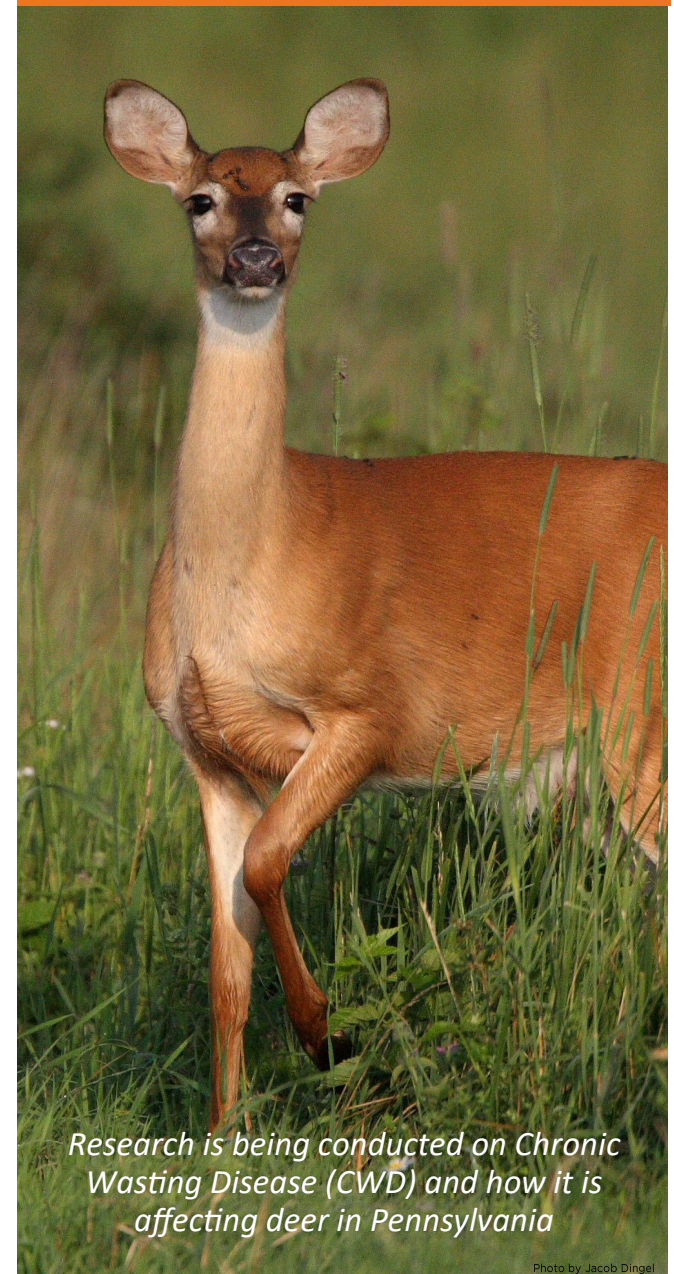
**1-833-INFOCWD**  
or  
**infocwd@pa.gov**



VISIT US ONLINE AT  
[PA.GOV/PGC](http://PA.GOV/PGC)



## Using Research to Understand Chronic Wasting Disease in Pennsylvania



*Research is being conducted on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and how it is affecting deer in Pennsylvania*

Photo by Jacob Dingel

## WHAT IS CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE?

A threat to deer and elk, chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a contagious, always fatal brain disease. Caused by a misshapen prion protein, CWD is incurable and untreatable. It affects deer and elk and was first described in a Colorado research facility in 1967. CWD was detected in Pennsylvania for the first time in 2012.

CWD is similar to other diseases like scrapie in sheep, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (also known as mad cow disease) in cattle, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) in humans.

## HOW IS CWD SPREAD?

CWD is spread through direct animal-to-animal contact as well as indirectly through prion-contaminated environments.

CWD-infected individuals shed prions, the infectious agent of CWD, through saliva, urine, and feces. Infected carcasses also contribute to environmental contamination. Once in the environment, CWD prions may remain infectious in the soil for years.



## WHERE IS CWD RESEARCH TAKING PLACE IN PA?

The PA Game Commission, in cooperation with Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Penn State and the Wildlife Futures Program at Penn Vet, is conducting a multi-year CWD Research project from 2023 to 2026. Research will include fieldwork to trap and collar deer with GPS collars. Data collected will help the PA Game Commission understand the difference in the movements, behavior, survival, and causes of mortality between deer infected and not infected with CWD.

This research is being conducted where CWD was first detected in free-ranging deer in 2012 and where about 90% of known CWD positive deer are found in the state. Currently, nearly 1 in 3 hunter-harvested adult deer from this area are CWD positive.

Because of this, we are focusing our efforts in Bedford and Fulton counties. Collaring deer in these areas will allow us to study and compare movements, behavior, and survival between infected and uninfected animals. A CWD sample from any hunter harvested deer is crucial to this research. If you harvest a research deer, contact the number on the ear tag for more information.

### WHAT WILL RESEARCH DEER LOOK LIKE?

Deer used for this research study will be equipped with a GPS collar around their neck and ear tags in their ears. Collars may differ from those shown below.



## WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT CWD?

CWD is a threat to deer and elk in Pennsylvania. Because much is still unknown about CWD, limiting exposure of all species to a known pathogen is essential. The PA Game Commission was created to protect Pennsylvania's wildlife resources and manages wildlife for and in cooperation with the public. You can play an active role in reducing the risks associated with this disease by doing the following:

- **Do not feed or use attractants for deer**—supplemental feeding and attractants concentrate and attract wildlife to one location facilitating the spread of disease.
- **Report visibly sick deer to your regional office; OR if you are hunting and have the opportunity and license to harvest the animal, please do so and report it to receive a replacement tag.**
- **Continue to hunt in areas where CWD has been found and submit your harvest for free testing**—reducing deer numbers is currently the best way to slow the spread of CWD.

## HOW CAN I TELL IF AN ANIMAL HAS CWD?

**CWD-infected animals may not show signs of disease for 18 to 24 months post-infection.**

During this period, animals look and act normal but are infectious and spreading the disease. Clinical signs of the disease include lowered head, lowered ears, progressive weight loss, rough hair coat, excessive salivation, excessive thirst, excessive urination, and other behavioral changes including loss of fear of humans and predators.

It is important to note that these symptoms are similar to other deer diseases. Confirmation that an animal is infected with CWD requires laboratory testing.