

November 4, 2005

No chronic wasting disease found in latest culled deer

Edmonton... Chronic wasting disease (CWD) was not found in any of the 29 wild deer culled in October near Oyen.

As a follow up to three previous cases of CWD found in deer in the Oyen area, Sustainable Resource Development staff conducted intensive herd reduction during mid-October. Deer numbers in a five-kilometre target circle were successfully reduced.

"We are pleased to see that no further cases of CWD were found during this latest effort," said David Coutts, Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. "With the co-operation of local landowners, staff are making good progress with the provincial response plan for this disease."

Following the discovery of the first case of CWD in a wild deer near Oyen on September 2 of this year, a number of actions have been taken as part of the response plan, including greater hunter participation.

- Meetings with local residents held to communicate departmental efforts.
- A cull of 133 wild deer conducted in mid-September; two additional deer with CWD were found among the deer collected.
- Another meeting held in mid-October with local residents to announce the results and the plans for a second cull in mid-October; no deer found with CWD in the 29 collected.
- A plan to further reduce deer in target areas involving hunter support (Backgrounder attached).
- An updated departmental website on chronic wasting disease provides a single source for current information to Albertans, visit <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/fw/diseases/CWD/index.html>.

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Media inquiries may be directed to:

John Lear
Communications
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Ph. (780) 427-8636

Dr. Margo Pybus
Fish and Wildlife Division
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
(780) 427-3462

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

Backgrounder

Licensed hunters encouraged to help reduce some deer herds this hunting season

Alberta relies on hunter harvest during the fall hunting season to help reduce deer populations and provide heads for CWD surveillance testing. Similar to last year, target areas along the Saskatchewan border and in central Alberta are set up for CWD surveillance. Increased draw licences are available in most wildlife management units along the eastern border and additional quota licences for antlerless mule deer and white-tailed deer are available in specific areas.

New This Year

Hunters who provide their contact information and submit heads of adult deer or elk harvested in a CWD surveillance area will receive notice of test results. If a hunter has submitted an infected deer or elk sample, they will be notified by phone. Those who submit deer that test negative for CWD will receive a letter in the mail about a month after the head is received.



How Can Hunters Participate?

Frozen heads can be dropped off at any Fish and Wildlife office or at 24-hour freezers located in the target surveillance areas. Hunters play an important role in CWD surveillance and those who submit a head will have their name placed in a prize draw as a means of encouraging participation.

Specific details regarding draw licences, quota licences, targeted surveillance areas, and freezer locations are available from any Fish and Wildlife office, or visit the wildlife disease website of Sustainable Resource Development <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/fw/diseases/CWD/index.html>.

Additional Hunts

Quota hunts will be available in specific portions of wildlife management units 150 and 151 (hunt runs from Dec. 1 to Dec. 20) and wildlife management unit 234 (hunt runs from Nov. 15 to Dec. 20). Hunters can harvest two antlerless white-tailed or mule deer. The quota hunts are limited to Alberta residents, who must purchase a quota hunt licence to participate. To purchase a licence, hunters must first have a licence request approved at a Fish and Wildlife office by providing written permission from at least one landowner before purchasing the licence at an issuer. Heads from deer harvested in quota hunts must be submitted for CWD testing.

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