

March 19, 2010

## **New cases of chronic wasting disease found in wild deer**

### ***Hunters continue to play important role in disease surveillance***

*Edmonton...* Twelve new cases of chronic wasting disease have been identified in wild deer as a result of Alberta's fall surveillance program. Hunters have submitted more than 4,800 wild deer heads for testing since September 1, 2009.

One new case was detected south of Highway 1, 25 kilometres south of Medicine Hat. Another case was found just east of Highway 884 along the Red Deer River. These cases mark the furthest south and west locations where chronic wasting disease has been detected. The remaining 10 cases were detected near past positive cases. Eleven of the 12 new positive cases were mule deer and nine of the hunter-killed cases were adult males, including an adult male white-tailed deer. The chronic wasting disease hunter surveillance program for 2009-2010 cost \$500,000.

Sustainable Resource Development continues to talk with stakeholders and landowners in the area to discuss plans for management. Current strategies for monitoring the spread of chronic wasting disease include maximizing the harvest of deer in risk areas and continuing to test for the disease. This includes testing road-kill and any wild deer that may show symptoms of chronic wasting disease, which includes loss of coordination, weight loss, excessive salivating and isolation from other deer.

The 12 new cases, along with an emaciated deer found in June, bring the total to 13 new cases of chronic wasting disease found in 2009. Since the first case of chronic wasting disease was detected in 2005, there have been 74 cases of the disease detected in wild deer in the province. Ongoing surveillance of wild deer and elk in Alberta began in 1996. There is no scientific evidence to suggest that chronic wasting disease can affect humans. For more information on the chronic wasting disease program, visit [www.srd.alberta.ca/BioDiversityStewardship/WildlifeDiseases](http://www.srd.alberta.ca/BioDiversityStewardship/WildlifeDiseases).

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**Backgrounder:** Map of chronic wasting disease cases in wild deer in Alberta.

### **Media inquiries may be directed to:**

Darcy Whiteside  
Communications  
Sustainable Resource Development

780-427-8636

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

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