



# **PA Game Commission News Release**

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## **CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE FOUND IN BLAIR AND BEDFORD COUNTIES GAME COMMISSION TO HOLD CWD NEWS CONFERENCE MONDAY, MARCH 4**

HARRISBURG – The Pennsylvania Game Commission today confirmed three hunter-killed deer taken in the 2012 general firearms deer season have tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). Two were from Blair County; the other was from Bedford County.

“These are the first positive cases of CWD in free-ranging deer in Pennsylvania,” confirmed Pennsylvania Game Commission Executive Director Carl G. Roe. “The disease was first documented in early October, 2012, by the state Department of Agriculture in a captive deer on an Adams County deer farm.”

The three hunter-killed deer tissue samples were collected by Game Commission personnel during annual deer aging field checks during the general firearms season for deer. The samples were tested and identified as suspect positive by the Department of Agriculture as part of an ongoing annual statewide CWD surveillance program. The tissue samples were confirmed to be positive for CWD by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa, as part of an established verification process.

“The three CWD-positives were part of 2,945 deer sampled for the disease statewide,” explained Roe. “To date, we have received test results from 1,500 samples, including these three positive samples. Results from the remaining samples should be available in the next few weeks.”

An additional 2,089 deer were sampled and tested from within the designated Disease Management Area in Adams and York counties; CWD was not detected in any of those deer samples.

Since 1998, the Game Commission has gathered and submitted more than 43,000 samples from wild deer and elk for CWD testing. The three CWD-positives announced today are the first to be confirmed in 15 years of testing. “Pennsylvania has an active Interagency CWD Task Force and a dynamic CWD surveillance program,” Roe noted, “and we will continue to be vigilant and initiate steps included in the Commonwealth’s CWD Response Plan. We will continue to work diligently with the Department of Agriculture and other members of the task force to better manage the threat of this disease to the state’s captive and wild deer populations.”

The Game Commission is working to identify and engage the hunters who harvested these CWD-positive deer to confirm where the whitetails were killed. A meeting of the Interagency CWD Task Force is being convened this afternoon to discuss the new CWD-positive deer and possible additional actions to determine the prevalence and distribution of the disease within Pennsylvania, as well as to contain its spread.

The latest information and updates to existing CWD information can be accessed on the Game Commission’s website ([www.pgc.state.pa.us](http://www.pgc.state.pa.us)). Public meetings will be held in the Blair-Bedford County area in coming weeks to share what we know about these CWD-positive deer and CWD in Pennsylvania, and to answer questions the public might have about this disease. How these latest developments may influence hunting regulations and other deer policies are at this time still contingent upon the results of ongoing testing of samples from hunter-killed deer, additional surveillance and fieldwork, and Game Commission and task force deliberations.

CWD is a degenerative brain disease that affects elk, mule deer and white-tailed deer. It is transmitted by direct animal-to-animal contact through saliva, feces and urine. CWD is fatal in deer and elk, but there is no evidence that CWD can be transmitted to humans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and The World Health Organization.

Signs of the disease include weight loss, excessive salivation, increased drinking and urination, and abnormal behavior such as stumbling, trembling and depression. Infected deer and elk also may allow unusually close approach by humans or natural predators. There is no known treatment or vaccine.

CWD was first discovered in Colorado captive mule deer in 1967, and has since been detected in 22 states and Canadian provinces, including Pennsylvania’s neighboring states of New York, West Virginia and Maryland.

## **GAME COMMISSION TO HOLD CWD NEWS CONFERENCE MONDAY, MARCH 4**

Pennsylvania Game Commission Executive Director Carl G. Roe and other Commonwealth officials will hold a press conference to discuss Chronic Wasting Disease 2 p.m., Monday, March 4, in the auditorium of the Game Commission's Harrisburg Headquarters, 2001 Elmerton Avenue. To keep Pennsylvania hunters and other residents informed on this breaking story, the press conference also will be webcast through the agency's website ([www.pgc.state.pa.us](http://www.pgc.state.pa.us)) beginning at 2 p.m. Background on CWD and its limited history in Pennsylvania can be found on the Game Commission's [CWD Info Page](#).

For more information on CWD from the departments of Agriculture and Health, visit:

- [www.agriculture.state.pa.us](http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us) (click on the "Chronic Wasting Disease Information" button on the homepage), and
- [www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us) (click on "Diseases and Conditions")