

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

RECISSION OF RABBIT HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE –
DESIGNATION OF DISEASE MANAGEMENT AREA #1

EXECUTIVE ORDER

WHEREAS, Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD) is a rapidly spreading, fatal disease in lagomorphs and is considered a foreign animal disease in the United States; and

WHEREAS, RHD has been designated a “dangerous transmissible disease” of animals by order of the Secretary of Agriculture under the provisions of the Domestic Animal Law (3 Pa.C.S.§§ 2301 et seq.) at 3 Pa.C.S.§ 2321(d); and

WHEREAS, Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Serotype 2 (RHDV2), a unique variant of RHD, has been detected in the United States in recent years and can infect all ages of a wide range of domestic and wild lagomorphs, including North American wild species of hares, jackrabbits, and cottontails; and

WHEREAS, In August 2022, RHDV2 was detected in a domestic rabbit facility in the City of Uniontown, Fayette County, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, On September 28, 2022, the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Game Commission (Commission) issued an executive order titled “RABBIT HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE – DESIGNATION OF DISEASE MANAGEMENT AREA #1” to mitigate risks to wild lagomorphs within the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, The Commission’s RHD Management Plan states “[i]f no additional RHDV2 detections occur *throughout the entire* [RHD-Disease Management Area] for 12 consecutive months, the RHD-DMA may be dissolved”; and

WHEREAS, The Commission has recognized no additional RHDV2 detections within RHD – DISEASE MANAGEMENT AREA #1 for the 12 consecutive months; and

WHEREAS, The Game and Wildlife Code (34 Pa.C.S. §§ 101, et seq.) and regulations promulgated thereunder (58 Pa. Code §§ 131.1, et seq.) collectively provide broad authority to the Commission to regulate activities relating to the protection, preservation, and management of all game and wildlife and their respective habitats (C.f. 34 Pa.C.S. §§ 322, 2101, and 2102); and

WHEREAS, Section 137.34 of the Pennsylvania Code (58 Pa. Code § 137.34) provides specific emergency authority to the Executive Director of the Commission to mitigate risk factors and determine the prevalence and geographic distribution of transmissible wildlife diseases of wild birds and mammals, excluding those species under Federal jurisdiction, if the introduction or spread of such diseases poses a threat to human, domestic and wild animal, or environmental health and safety within or adjacent to this Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, The Commission has determined that rescission of the executive order creating RHD – DISEASE MANAGEMENT AREA #1 is necessary to implement the Commission’s RHD Management Plan.

NOW THEREFORE, I, BRYAN J. BURHANS, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Game Commission, pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Code and regulations promulgated thereunder, do hereby order and direct that the previous executive order titled “RABBIT HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE – DESIGNATION OF DISEASE MANAGEMENT AREA #1” is hereby rescinded in its entirety.

2. This Order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect until replaced by subsequent order.

Given under my hand and seal of the Pennsylvania Game Commission on this 15th

day of September, 2023.

Attest:

Elizabeth J. Mays

Bryan J. Burhans
Bryan J. Burhans
Executive Director

