

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: Commitment from Wisconsin's hunters leads to increase in CWD samples received in 2016

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Contact:

Tami Ryan, DNR Wildlife Health Section Chief
(608) 266-3143

MADISON — The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources sampled more than 6,000 deer for chronic wasting disease statewide in 2016, nearly doubling the number tested in 2015. There were 447 positive detections, primarily within the endemic area in southern Wisconsin.

The number of deer sampled, analyzed and determined positive for CWD by each [management zone](#) is as follows:

- **Central Farmland Zone:** 1,230 sampled, 1 positive;
- **Central Forest Zone:** 533 sampled, 4 positives;
- **Northern Forest Zone:** 578 sampled, 0 positive; and
- **Southern Farmland Zone:** 3,708 sampled, 442 positives.

In 2016, focus was placed upon deer population segments within locations deemed most likely to harbor the disease as well as other surveillance areas of interest. The 2016 CWD sampling period ended April 1, 2017. Disease prevalence is calculated for each individual surveillance area within sampling zones – for this reason,

prevalence is not calculated on a statewide level.

Prevalence trends are estimated for a number of study areas in southern Wisconsin – this information is available at dnr.wi.gov, keyword “[CWD](#).”

The department has monitored trends in chronic wasting disease distribution and prevalence within Wisconsin since its discovery in 2002. To date, nearly 200,000 deer have been sampled for CWD in Wisconsin.

DNR staff continue to work to make testing easier for hunters through the use of self-serve kiosks and enhanced communication and outreach efforts in 2016. Kiosks provide a 24/7 drop-off option for hunters to help enhance sampling numbers, provide for ease of use, and increase options in the world of electronic registration. Overall feedback from hunters during the 2016 deer season reflected an appreciation for the kiosk option.

“We are exploring ways to make sampling easy for hunters with the implementation of electronic registration and will work closely with them to make it even more convenient in years to come,” said Tami Ryan, DNR wildlife health section chief. “Once again, hunter cooperation has been outstanding – on behalf of our whole department, I want to thank hunters for their continued role in providing samples and helping us monitor this disease within Wisconsin.”

With more samples collected in 2016, the turnaround time for hunters receiving test results also improved. The average statewide turnaround time during the 2016 deer season for test results was just over nine days (weekends included), compared to just under 14 days in 2015. The department will continue efforts to lower the turnaround time by becoming more efficient with cost and time.

For 2016 sampling and prevalence data and more information regarding chronic wasting disease, search keyword “[CWD](#).”