

MDC Needs Your Help With Finding CWD

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) needs the help of deer hunters to keep the deadly deer disease called chronic wasting disease (CWD) from spreading to more deer in more areas of Missouri.

MDC will be conducting mandatory CWD sampling of harvested deer in 25 counties opening weekend of the fall firearms deer season, Nov. 11 and 12. Hunters who harvest deer in any of these select counties of MDC's CWD Management Zone during opening weekend **MUST** present their harvested deer at one of the Department's 56 CWD sampling stations so staff can collect tissue samples to test the animals for CWD.

The 25 mandatory CWD sampling counties are: Adair, Barry, Benton, Cedar, Cole, Crawford, Dade, Franklin, Hickory, Jefferson, Knox, Linn, Macon, Moniteau, Ozark, Polk, St. Charles, St. Clair, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve, Stone, Sullivan, Taney, Warren, and Washington.

The 25 mandatory sampling counties include ones recently added to the CWD Management Zone after cases of CWD were found there in 2016-2017, counties with previous CWD positives, and counties very near where cases of CWD have been found.

Find mandatory sampling stations online at mdc.mo.gov/cwd, and in MDC's 2017 Fall Deer & Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information booklet, available where permits are sold.

MDC is also offering voluntary CWD sampling throughout the entire deer hunting season at more than 55 participating taxidermists and designated MDC offices in and around the CWD Management Zone. Find voluntary sampling locations online at mdc.mo.gov/cwd.

INFO TO KNOW FOR MANDATORY SAMPLING

- Sampling locations will be open from 7:30 a.m. until at least 8 p.m.
- Deer must be presented by the hunter who harvested the animal.
- Hunters will be asked to identify the location within the county the deer was harvested.
- Deer may be field dressed before being taken to a sampling station.
- Hunters can also present just the deer head with about six inches of neck attached.
- For bucks bound to a taxidermist, the cape may be removed prior to being taken to a sampling station as long as about six inches of the neck is left attached.
- For bucks bound to a taxidermist, hunters may also leave the deer intact and inform staff the deer is bound for a taxidermist. Staff will complete paperwork and inform the hunters about participating taxidermists taking CWD samples.
- Hunters will be given information on getting free test results for their deer.

TIME-SAVING TIPS

- Telecheck deer before going to a sampling location.
- Have completed permit information ready.
- Be prepared to locate the harvest location on a map.
- Position deer in the vehicle so the head and neck are easily accessible.
- Have the detached head or cape with about 6 inches of neck ready for sampling.

CWD sampling takes only a few minutes and consists of cutting an incision across the throat of harvested deer to remove lymph nodes for testing. Tissue samples are sent to an independent lab for testing.

EMPHASIS ON OPENING WEEKEND

Opening weekend of the firearms season is the most popular two hunting days for most deer hunters in Missouri. During those two days, hunters take about a third of the state's total annual deer harvest of about 275,000 animals.

“Focusing on this key weekend gives us the best opportunity to collect the most tissue samples during a very concentrated time period,” explained MDC Wildlife Disease Coordinator Jasmine Batten. “Prior to conducting mandatory sampling for the first time last year, we collected about 7,600 tissue samples through voluntary sampling over the entire deer season. Thanks to deer hunters, last year we collected 19,200 samples during opening-weekend mandatory sampling.”

Batten added the increased number of samples collected gives MDC scientists a much better understanding of the distribution and prevalence of the disease -- where it is and how many deer may have it. It can also help find new cases in new areas.

Find more information on CWD from the MDC website at mdc.mo.gov/cwd.