For Immediate Release: 11/06/2026

Contact: Jeff Wernick | (518) 402-8000

DEC ANNOUNCES CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE FOUND IN LIVINGSTON COUNTY WILD DEER

Positive Result Found During DEC Monitoring Efforts

All Deer Harvested in the Towns of Conesus, Groveland, North Dansville, Sparta, Springwater, and West Sparta Must Submit Samples for Testing

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) today announced it identified a positive case of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in a wild deer harvested in the Town of Sparta, Livingston County. This is the first occurrence of CWD in a wild deer in New York State since 2005.

The positive sample was from an adult female white-tailed deer tested as part of DEC's statewide annual wild deer surveillance program. The sample tissue was tested and retested at the New York State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at Cornell University, with additional testing now underway by the United States Department of Agriculture's National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa.

This discovery will trigger implementation of New York's CWD Response Plan developed jointly by DEC and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM). The plan outlines the steps both agencies will take to determine prevalence of the disease on the landscape and additional sampling and containment actions DEC intends to implement.

In light of ongoing and upcoming deer hunting seasons, New York State will first rely on hunter-obtained samples to determine the extent of the outbreak and prevalence of CWD within wild deer in the area. Results from initial sampling will inform DEC's disease management and containment efforts.

Containment Area Established

New York State is establishing a containment area to include the towns of **Conesus, Groveland, North Dansville, Sparta, Springwater, and West Sparta.** DEC may expand or add containment areas based on the locations of any new positive detections.

In accordance with the response plan, DEC will require hunters to submit a tissue sample from all deer harvested in the containment area. Furthermore, hunters may not transport whole deer out of the containment area. A transport permit provided by DEC is required for all deer harvested within the containment area and taken to a processor or taxidermist outside the containment area.

DEC encourages all hunters and processors to tag deer harvested from the containment area with paper carcass tags or change of possession tags to confirm the location of harvest.

Collection Stations

DEC is establishing collection stations within the containment area for successful hunters to submit samples from their harvested deer. DEC will begin collecting on-site samples on November 12. Location and hours of operation for these collection stations and additional collection information will be made available on DEC's website. Hunters that harvest a deer in the containment area prior to collection stations opening should save the head and email DEC at cwd.response@dec.ny.gov. Hunters that report a harvest in the containment area may be contacted by DEC.

DEC is also working with local meat processors and taxidermists to collect samples. Hunters will be notified if their deer tests positive for CWD and DEC will request collection of the venison for proper disposal.

DEC and AGM will also contact and request records from all captive deer herds in the area. The public is encouraged to report any sick or dying deer to DEC for possible collection and testing. Once the extent of the CWD outbreak and prevalence within the wild deer herd is determined, DEC and AGM will determine how best to proceed with a disease management strategy.

DEC will file a notice in the Environmental Notice Bulletin (ENB), implementing aspects of CWD-related regulations (6 NYCRR Part 189) to ensure the proper handling of live captive deer, deer carcasses, and deer rehabilitation to prevent further spread of CWD across the landscape. **DEC's CWD regulations will:**

- Prohibit the movement of high-risk animal parts out of the containment area, such as brain, spinal cord, spleen, and eyes;

- Establish mandatory hunter sample submission for any deer harvested in the containment area;
- Prohibit possession of any deer killed by a motor vehicle in the containment area;
- Prohibit the collection, sale, possession or transport of deer or elk urine taken from the containment area; and
- Prohibit rehabilitation of wild white-tailed deer from and brought into the containment area.

DEC will host a virtual informational session to inform stakeholders and deer enthusiasts on the disease and to discuss future management and containment plans. The webinar will be held on Tuesday, November 17, at 7:00 pm. **Register for the webinar online.** Additional in-person public outreach opportunities will be hosted in Livingston County and details will be available on DEC's website once they are scheduled.

About Chronic Wasting Disease

CWD is an always fatal transmissible disease that affects the brain and central nervous system of deer, moose, and elk.

DEC began CWD monitoring efforts in 2002. In 2005, CWD was confirmed in both captive and wild deer in Oneida County – the first incidents of the disease in New York State. In 2024, CWD was confirmed in a captive red deer herd in southern Herkimer County. Since 2002, DEC has tested over 70,000 wild deer statewide with no additional cases being discovered.

There is no evidence that CWD is linked to disease in humans, domestic dogs or cats, or domestic livestock other than deer, moose and elk. However, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends not consuming the venison from any deer known to have CWD. Visit the CDC website for additional details on CWD. To protect domestic animals from any disease, keep them from scavenging or coming into contact with sick or dead wildlife and report suspected exposures to your veterinarian.

Hunters that harvest a deer in New York outside of the containment area can pay to have their deer tested. To learn more, visit the Cornell University Wildlife health lab website at https://cwhl.vet.cornell.edu/article/hunter-cwd-testing.

More information on CWD in New York State can be found on DEC's website at https://dec.ny.gov/nature/animals-fish-plants/wildlife-health/animal-diseases/chronic-wasting-disease.