

The carcass of an infected deer can expose other deer to the disease, directly or indirectly. Long after an infected carcass decomposes, the soil may remain infectious for years, possibly exposing other deer to the prions that cause CWD. To avoid this exposure risk, proper disposal methods are recommended.

## PROPER CARCASS DISPOSAL

### BURIAL ON SITE

Whenever possible, deer carcasses should be buried on the property where it was harvested. Burial should be deep enough to prevent exposure to the surrounding environment by scavengers.

### APPROVED, LINED LANDFILLS

Infectious prions are highly unlikely to migrate out of an approved sanitary landfill and infect other deer. Deer remains can be disposed of in household garbage that is hauled to a landfill via regular trash collection.

### LEAVE IN PLACE

If burial is not possible where the deer was harvested, the remains may be left on site. If CWD is already present on the property, it is unlikely to be spread by scavengers to another property where the disease is not found.

## IMPROPER CARCASS DISPOSAL

### DISPOSAL IN WATER

Do not dispose of carcasses in ponds, lakes or waterways. This has the potential to spread infectious prions to areas previously uninfected.

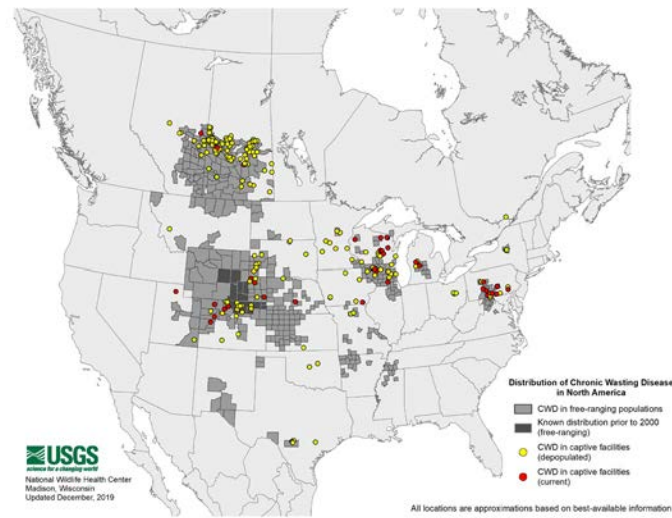
### BURNING

Only closed commercial incinerators are capable of generating enough heat to destroy the prions as well as being the only lawful type of incineration. Leaving the carcass in place is equally effective while not presenting a fire danger or air quality issue.

### TRANSPORT TO ANOTHER PROPERTY

Remains of harvested deer that are transported to a different property for processing should not be dumped on the landscape where it could infect the environment. Instead, the remains should be sent to a landfill. Burial on a different property is acceptable if the remains are buried deep enough so as not to become exposed to the surrounding environment by scavengers, thus making the prion accessible to deer in the area.

## DISTRIBUTION OF CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE IN NORTH AMERICA



## CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE USEFUL LINKS

**CWD Alliance**  
[cwd-info.org](http://cwd-info.org)

**Quality Deer Management Association**  
[qdma.com/cwd](http://qdma.com/cwd)

**Centers for Disease Control**  
[cdc.gov/prions/cwd/index.html](http://cdc.gov/prions/cwd/index.html)

**USGS National Wildlife Health Center**  
[pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/ofr20191109](http://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/ofr20191109)

[wildlifedepartment.com/cwd](http://wildlifedepartment.com/cwd)

### The following restrictions apply to the statewide importation of cervid carcasses or carcass parts

No person shall import, transport, or possess any cervid carcass or part of a cervid carcass from outside the boundaries of Oklahoma. The following items are the only exceptions:

- Antlers or antlers attached to clean skull plate or cleaned skulls (all tissue removed);
- Animal quarters containing no spinal materials or meat with all parts of the spinal column removed;
- Cleaned teeth;
- Finished taxidermy products;
- Hides or tanned products.

# CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Informational Guide For Hunters



[wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com)

# WHAT IS CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE?

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD) IS A FATAL NEUROLOGIC DISEASE OF CERVIDS (DEER, ELK, MOOSE, REINDEER).

IT IS CAUSED BY A MISFOLDED PROTEIN, CALLED A PRION, THAT CAUSES PROGRESSIVE DAMAGE TO THE BRAIN.

## WHERE IS CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE?

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been diagnosed in free-ranging and captive deer, elk, and moose in 25 states and two Canadian provinces. It has also been found in captive elk and Sika deer in South Korea; free-ranging reindeer, red deer, and moose in Norway; and free-ranging moose in Finland.

## HOW IS CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE SPREAD?

The disease spreads through direct contact with infected individuals or an environment contaminated with infectious material. Infectious prion has been detected in urine, feces, saliva, and many tissues of infected animals such as muscle.

## CAN CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE BE SPREAD TO HUMANS?

There are no documented cases of CWD infecting people, however, ODWC and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that hunters do not consume animals that test positive for CWD or otherwise appear sick.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE?

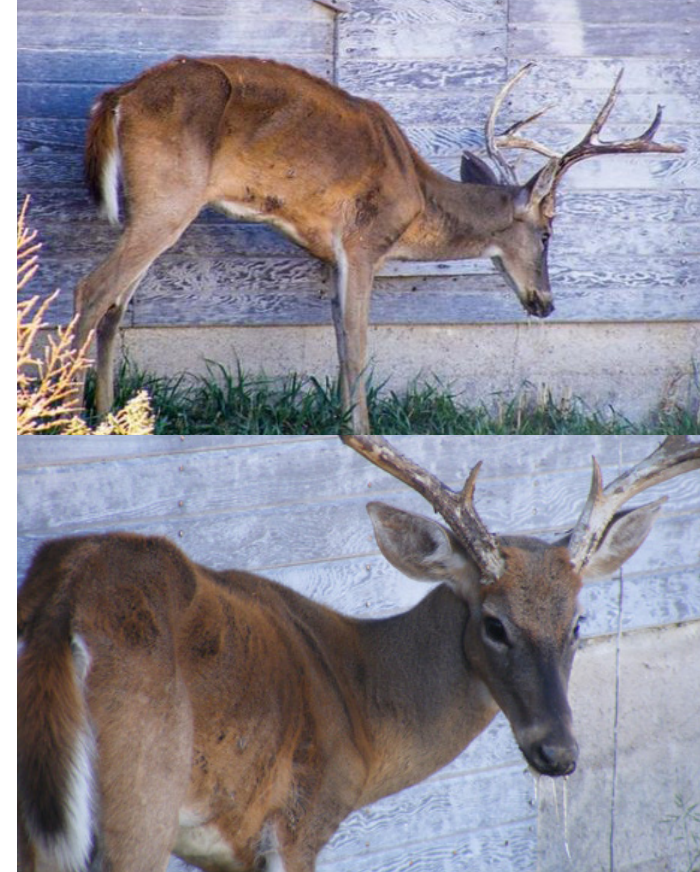
Infected animals gradually lose body condition, becoming emaciated or “wasted.” They may display a wide stance, staggering gait, or inability to keep their head up and have excessive salivation and thirst. However, CWD positive animals may not show symptoms for years.

## HOW IS CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE DIAGNOSED?

Approved tests in free-ranging cervids involve directly testing lymph node and brainstem. For this reason, states with CWD positive animals in wild herds use hunter-harvested animals as the most reliable method for obtaining sufficient numbers for surveillance. ODWC does not currently offer public testing for hunter-harvested animals.

## WHAT IS OKLAHOMA DOING?

As of January 2020, Oklahoma has NOT detected CWD in the 10,000 wild deer/elk tested since 1999, however two captive breeding facilities in central Oklahoma have tested positive for CWD since testing began. Texas, Arkansas and Missouri have detected CWD in multiple wild deer over the same time period. Due to the close proximity of deer that have tested positively for CWD, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation recommends using proper carcass disposal practices to minimize the potential spread of CWD.



A deer exhibiting symptoms of Chronic Wasting Disease. (Mike Hopper/KDWPT)

## WHO DO I CONTACT TO REPORT CERVIDAE DISPLAYING SYMPTOMS OF CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE?

- Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation - Wildlife Division  
**(405) 521-2739**
- Big Game Supervisor - Jerry Shaw  
**(405) 301-6885**
- Big Game Biologist - Dallas Barber  
**(405) 385-1791**
- Your Local Game Warden  
[wildlifedepartment.com/law/game-warden-directory](http://wildlifedepartment.com/law/game-warden-directory)

