

**CWD UPDATE**  
**February 12, 2003**

The New Mexico Game and Fish Department reports three additional positive mule deer from the White Sands Missile Range base housing herd. These positives are from the same area as their previous single positive. In December, the agency collected tonsil biopsies from several animals and submitted them for testing. The three positives are a result of this sampling effort and the collection of other samples during the fall.

Nebraska has confirmed the twelfth positive from the 2002 hunting season. The latest report is from an adult whitetail male in northern Sioux County. This brings the total number of positives from Sioux County to sixteen, six from the 2002 season and ten from previous surveillance. Previously reported positives from this round of tests in Nebraska include 3 from Morrill County and 3 from Kimball County.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has released an Environmental Impact Statement on Rules to Eradicate CWD from Wisconsin's Free-Ranging White-tailed Deer Herd. This EIS is the result of thousands of hours of work by biologists in the agency and contains some excellent information on the situation in Wisconsin and CWD in general. Sections on depopulation herd reduction and baiting and feeding give the most up-to-date information on these issues. The draft EIS is available on the Wisconsin DNR website at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/Whealth/issues/Cwd/eis.htm>

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks report an additional two deer have tested positive for CWD. The latest findings are from one hunter harvested whitetail buck in Fall River County and a road killed whitetail buck in Pennington County. Both of these deer are from areas where CWD has been confirmed through previous tests. South Dakota collected a total of 1,950 deer and elk for testing during the fall of 2002 and all but 4 deer and 1 elk have been tested. The total CWD positives from South Dakota now stand at 9 deer (Fall River, Custer and Pennington Counties) and 1 elk (Wind Cave National Park).

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries report that there were no positives among 1,100 samples collected during the fall hunting season and submitted for testing.

Montana initiative I-143 was passed on a ballot initiative a couple of years ago. This initiative bans hunting behind high wire, new permits for game farms and transfer of currently permitted game farms. The Montana legislature is considering HB 379, a bill that would overturn this initiative. However, after a massive lobbying effort, the bill in question was sent back to the House Agriculture Committee for reconsideration. Legislators are now thinking of buying out the remaining game farms instead of legalizing them.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources reports that results of tests on 4,415 of the state's captive and free-ranging deer and elk have failed to turn up any cases of CWD. The tests were conducted on 3,773 free-ranging deer and 83 free-ranging elk. An additional 559 captive deer have been tested with no positive results.

The Alberta Fish and Wildlife Agency is planning to collect 300 free-ranging deer in the vicinity of two captive facilities that had elk test positive for CWD last fall. The goal is to determine if CWD is present in the wild cervid population of the Province. If the opportunity presents itself, some elk may also be taken and tested.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife report that they have received the results of 1,500 of the 2,000 deer and elk collected during the hunting season for CWD testing. They are happy to report that there were no positives in the 1,500 results returned to date.

It has been reported that the National Beef Cattle Association and McDonalds Corporation are funding a study to determine if the CWD prion can be detected in the meat of animals that have the disease.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife and others are beginning new research to investigate the effect of therapeutic agents on CWD infected animals. They will also be looking at the epidemiology and ecology of CWD on a landscape scale. Another new project will be analyzing the role of human land use and density on prevalence of CWD.