



## **Chronic Wasting Disease in Bexar County**

Information provided by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a contagious neurological disease of white-tailed deer, mule deer, and several other deer species. The agent that causes the disease is a misfolded protein called a 'prion'. CWD is a slow acting disease that causes steady neurological decline and death in infected deer. CWD has been found in deer in 30 states, 4 Canadian provinces, as well as Europe and Asia. In Texas, CWD was first found in a mule deer in far West Texas in 2012. As of May 2023, CWD has been found in 23 counties in Texas.

### **CWD in Bexar County**

- CWD was first detected in a white-tailed deer that was tested during the late spring of 2023 as part of a deer overpopulation management program in Hollywood Park.
- 15 deer were tested as part of the management program with 1 deer testing positive for CWD. Hollywood Park has a history of testing deer annually for CWD as part of a deer management program.
- It is unclear at this time how the disease came to Hollywood Park. However, TPWD is developing a plan to evaluate the extent of the disease, contain the spread, and educate the public on best management practices.
- Potential impacts of CWD include long term declines in deer populations and impacts to wildlife viewing and hunting economies.

### **CWD Transmission**

- CWD is primarily transmitted through deer-to-deer contact. However, it can also potentially be transmitted by tires of contaminated vehicles, hunting equipment, supplemental feed, improperly disposed of carcasses, as well as byproducts of taxidermy.
- Supplemental feeding of wildlife can increase the spread of disease and result in habituation to humans. For these reasons, TPWD does not recommend feeding wildlife.
- To date there is no evidence of CWD infecting humans. However, based on recent research the risk is not zero. The Center of Disease Control (CDC) and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) recommends hunters test harvested deer for the disease and not consume meat of infected animals.
- CWD is not known to be transmissible to pets or livestock.
- As an abundance of caution, TPWD recommends the public avoid direct contact with all wildlife including deer, especially diseased animals.

- CWD is a relatively slow acting disease in deer. It can take up to 4 years for a deer to show clinic signs and succumb to the disease. Therefore, it is impossible to look at a deer and determine whether it has CWD.
- TPWD tests for CWD by collecting specific tissues from the head of deceased deer.

### **CWD Management in Bexar County**

- TPWD manages CWD in deer populations through:
  - Surveillance – CWD testing of recently deceased deer.
  - Containment – Stop the movement of live deer (fawns, etc.) and proper disposal of deceased deer.
  - Education – Recommendations to minimize activities which increase the risk of spreading the disease such as unnatural concentrations of deer due to supplemental feeding, improper disposal of deceased deer, movement of contaminated equipment, etc.
- At this time, TPWD does not plan to euthanize deer within the area the disease was found. Initial plans will include developing disease surveillance by testing recently deceased deer (roadkill, etc.) in the area and educating the public about disease management strategies.
- TPWD is currently developing educational presentations to be held in summer and fall of 2023.
- TPWD recommends leaving fawns alone if found in the area. Typically, fawns are not abandoned, and the doe is nearby. Please do not transport a fawn out of the area.
- Please report sick or dying deer to your local TPWD biologist or Game Warden for evaluation and potential testing for CWD. TPWD recommends the public not handle diseased animals.

See the websites below for additional information about CWD.

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/diseases/cwd/>

<https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/what-chronic-wasting-disease>

<https://www.cdc.gov/prions/cwd/index.html>

**HOLLYWOOD PARK RESIDENTS SHOULD NOTIFY RANDY TOMASINI AT 210 213-8823**