Addressing conservation challenges, such as CWD, requires active involvement of those with a passion for our rich natural resources. A primary goal of CWD response and management efforts is to determine the geographic extent and prevalence of the disease. MDWFP asks hunters to aid in this effort by submitting deer for testing during the 2022–2023 white-tailed deer hunting season. The test used to determine the presence of CWD requires a portion of the deer’s brainstem or lymph nodes. Harvested animals should remain cool or be frozen until testing to reduce decomposition and provide accurate results.

Further, hunters and landowners can help monitor for CWD by actively looking for and reporting potential diseased or sick deer. For more information, visit MDWFP.com/cwd.
CWD BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The following Best Management Practices (BMP) are recommended for minimizing potential environmental and human exposure to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) while handling carcasses and processing the meat from white-tailed deer. These BMPs are established on a foundation of abundant caution given the many unknowns regarding CWD. For more information about CWD, please visit mdwfp.com/cwd.

SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING AND CARCASS TRANSPORTATION BAN

• Supplemental feeding is banned in any CWD Management Zone (salt licks, mineral licks, and feeders). Direct contact with prions is the most effective means of transmitting CWD. Research indicates saliva may have the highest concentration of prions. Thus, to minimize concentration of deer and potential spread of CWD, supplemental feeding is banned within any CWD Management Zone.

• Carcasses may not be transported outside of any CWD Management Zone. Research has shown that decomposed carcasses of infected animals can also contribute to transmission when prions bind to soil and plant material. Thus, movement of carcasses may introduce CWD into previously unaffected areas. Only the below products may leave the CWD Management Zone:
  - Cut/wrapped meat (commercially or privately)
  - Deboned meat
  - Hides with no head attached
  - Bone-in leg quarters
  - Finished taxidermy
  - Antlers with no tissue attached
  - Cleaned skulls or skull plates (no brain tissue)
  - Hunters may transport a deer head to a permitted taxidermist participating in the CWD collection program. A CWD sample number must be obtained from the participating taxidermist prior to transporting the deer head outside of the MDWFP-defined CWD Management Zone.

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

• Inspect body condition of each deer at the time of harvest. Do not consume any part of animals exhibiting clinical symptoms of CWD, including extreme weight loss, excessive salivation, or erratic behavior.

• Please report any deer that appears to be diseased by completing a diseased deer report on the MDWFP app, at mdwfp.com/cwd or call 1-800-BE-SMART.

• Avoid using natural deer urine attractants, as they may carry prions from infected deer. Hunters who prefer to use lures or attractants may wish to select an artificial or food based scent.

• To minimize direct contact with infectious prions, it is recommended to not establish feeders, bait sites, mineral sites, or otherwise cause unnatural concentration of deer.

CARRYING OUT THE GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

Field Dressing:

• Wear rubber or latex gloves when handling carcasses.

• When field dressing an animal, leave internal organs and inedible parts at the site of harvest.

• Avoid sawing through bone, spinal cord, brain, lymph nodes, or spleen.

• Store all portions of the animal to be transported in a container such as a cooler, bin, or bag that will not leak bodily fluids into the environment.

Meat Processing:

• Do not process a deer that appears to be diseased.

• Process all deer individually, package separately, and label uniquely.

• Debone meat from deer and remove all fat, connective tissue, and lymph nodes.

• Avoid sawing through bone, spinal cord, brain, lymph nodes, or spleen.

• Avoid eating/handling the eyes, brain, spinal cord, spleen, and lymph nodes.

• Limit the amount of bodily fluids going to an area, such as a floor drain, that cannot be properly sanitized after use.

Disposal:

• Deer parts should not be rendered for use in feed for other animals, or used as compost.

• Recommended disposal methods for unwanted portions of carcasses (bones, organs, etc.) are:
  - Leave at the harvest site;
  - Double-bag and send to an approved, lined landfill; or
  - Deep burial (8 feet or deeper).

Equipment Cleaning:

• Clean processing equipment between each deer.

• Thoroughly sanitize all equipment and workstations with a 50:50 solution of bleach and water.

• Soak tools for one hour in the bleach solution, and then rinse thoroughly with hot water.

CWD-Positive Deer by County, Since 2018
**Chronic Wasting Disease Management**

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was first detected in Mississippi in February 2018 and is recognized as the primary threat to wildlife in the state. The CWD Management Plan establishes a framework for the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks to implement management strategies to prevent and mitigate the spread and transmission of CWD in Mississippi. Current management strategies are based on the best available science and with input from a variety of subject matter experts. The nature of CWD mandates a long-term, adaptable approach to management. To that end, below are changes for the 2022–2023 hunting season:

**CWD Management Plan Update**

The updated Mississippi Chronic Wasting Disease Management Plan was approved by the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks during April 2021. Important changes include:

- Following a confirmed CWD positive within an existing positive county or a new county, all counties within 10 miles of the positive, including the county containing the positive, will be placed in a CWD-MZ for a minimum of 3 years.
- Only bone-in leg quarters*, deboned meat, antlers, cleaned skull or skull plates, finished taxidermy, cleaned teeth, hides and tanned products may leave the CWD-MZs.
- Ban supplemental feeding of wildlife.
- Delineated using county boundaries.
- CWD-Positive Detection Management Zone (CWD-MZ)

**2022–2023 White-tailed Deer Hunting Season**

**Deer Management Units**

- Rename “Deer Zones” to “Deer Management Units”
- Renaming “zones” to “deer management units” (DMUs) will minimize confusion with CWD-MZs.

**North Central DMU**

- Establish the “North Central Deer Management Unit”
- DeSoto, Tate, Marshall, Benton, Tippah, and Alcorn counties.

**Private Lands within North Central DMU**

- Increased buck bag limit from 3 to 4.
- No antler criteria for 4-buck bag limit.
- Increased antlerless bag limit from 5 to 10.

**Holly Springs National Forest within North Central DMU**

- 3-buck bag limit with no antler criteria.

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*Please refer to the carcass transportation ban section on page 2 for transporting to a permitted cooperating taxidermist.

*Change from 2020–2021 hunting season.
MDWFP has established collection sites across the state for the general public to deposit deer heads for testing. All season long, freezers will be at each site for depositing deer heads. Hunters should preserve the head with at least 6 inches of neck attached. Antlers and skull plate may be removed without affecting the lymph nodes used for testing. If antlers are not removed, they cannot be returned to the hunter.
CWD is one of many conservation challenges that has arisen over the last century. Hunters are vital to successfully managing CWD and ensuring healthy white-tailed deer herds for future generations. MDWFP thanks all hunters for continuing to stay actively engaged in this conservation effort!

MDWFP’s Private Lands Program is ready to assist you in managing wildlife and habitat on your land. To learn more go to: MDWFP.com/privatelands

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