



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES COMMISSIONER WILTON SIMPSON

Chronic Wasting Disease Detected in Holmes County, Florida

October 7, 2025
(updated information in blue font)

In June of 2023, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) confirmed the first confirmed case of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in Florida. The disease was detected in a 4.5-year-old road-killed female white-tailed deer, sampled during routine FWC surveillance, in Holmes County. A second confirmed positive case of CWD was reported by FWC on October 6, 2025. The second case was detected in a road-killed 1.5-year-old female white-tailed deer in Holmes County near the location of the first CWD positive case.

What is CWD?

CWD is a fatal, neurological illness occurring in North American cervids (members of the deer family), including white-tailed deer, red deer, sika deer, mule deer, elk, muntjac reindeer, and moose. Since its discovery in 1967, CWD has spread geographically and increased in prevalence locally. CWD is believed to be caused by a naturally occurring protein, called a prion, that becomes misfolded and thus resists being normally broken down by the body. When these misfolded proteins are introduced into a healthy member of the deer family, they multiply and begin damaging the animal's nervous system. CWD can be transmitted directly through animal-to-animal contact or indirectly through contaminated soil, plants, or other materials. There is currently no vaccine, treatment, or cure for CWD. Similar diseases in other species include Scrapie in Sheep and Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis (BSE) in cattle.

What are the signs of CWD?

Signs of the disease usually appear 1.5 to 3 years after initial exposure so deer can be infected and shedding prions (infectious to others) but look normal. Typically, CWD is characterized by extreme weight loss and abnormal behaviors such as listlessness, lowering of the head, inattentiveness toward people, walking in circles, staggering, and standing with a wide stance. Death usually occurs within four months of the onset of clinical signs, although some animals may survive for up to a year. CWD is fatal once the deer is infected.

Can livestock get CWD?

Currently, there are no reported cases of natural transmission of CWD from infected elk or deer to domestic non-cervid livestock. However, the disease has been experimentally reproduced in cattle by the direct injection of the infectious agent into their brains. Several investigations are currently underway to further study this question.

Can CWD affect pets?

There is no evidence that CWD will affect your pet.

Can CWD impact people?

Currently, there is no scientific evidence that CWD can be transmitted to humans under natural conditions. However, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) do not recommend consuming meat from animals that test positive for CWD or from any sick animal. The FWC provides information about precautions people should take when pursuing or handling deer that may have been exposed to CWD.

Who to contact:

Anyone who sees a sick or abnormally thin deer or deer dead of unknown causes, is asked to report its location to the CWD hotline, (866) CWD-WATCH (293-9282). Since 2002, FWC has tested over 17,500 hunter-killed, road-killed, and sick or diseased deer for CWD. Learn more about the FWC's [CWD monitoring program](#).

If you are a permitted captive cervidae premises and have any questions regarding CWD, please reach out to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Animal Industry, at (850) 410-0900.

Resources:

For more information about CWD: 1) visit [MyFWC.com/CWD](#), 2) read the article titled “Reducing the risk of CWD spreading into Florida through requirements on importing deer carcasses,” and 3) check out the following infographics, which are available at [MyFWC.com/CWD](#) (under the subhead “Additional information and resources about CWD”).

- [What is CWD?](#)
- [How CWD is transmitted](#)
- [Map of states and provinces affected by CWD](#)
- [Precautions when pursuing or handling deer that may have been exposed to CWD](#)
- [Deer carcass disposal tips](#)
- [USDA APHIS | Cervids: Chronic Wasting Disease](#)
- [Chronic Wasting Disease \(CWD\) | Prion Diseases | CDC](#)
- [What is chronic wasting disease? | U.S. Geological Survey \(usgs.gov\)](#)
- [CWD-INFO.ORG – Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance](#)