



# **Report: Emergency Response to Disease Outbreaks in Wildlife**

Covering the Period July 1, 2024 –June 30, 2025

As required by Minnesota Session Law 2023, Chapter 60

07/24/2025

## Report to the Minnesota Legislature

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
500 Lafayette Road  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155  
651-259-5237  
[kelly.straka@state.mn.us](mailto:kelly.straka@state.mn.us)  
[mndnr.gov](http://mndnr.gov)

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 3.197, we estimate that it cost approximately \$320 produce this report. This includes staff time for drafting and reviewing the report.

*Upon request, this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, Braille or audio recording. Printed on recycled paper.*

## DNR CWD Spending Legislative Report

This report fulfills the reporting requirement of Minnesota Session Law 2023, Chapter 60, Article 1, Section 3, Subdivision 6 (Table 1). Specifically:

(b) \$982,000 the first year and \$982,000 the second year are from the general fund and \$1,675,000 the first year and \$1,675,000 the second year are from the game and fish fund for statewide response and management of chronic wasting disease. The commissioner and the Board of Animal Health must each submit annual reports on chronic wasting disease activities funded in this biennium to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources and agriculture. The general fund base for this appropriation in fiscal year 2026 and beyond is \$282,000.

(c) \$5,150,000 the first year and \$3,250,000 the second year are for inspections, investigations, and enforcement activities taken for the white-tailed deer farm program and for statewide response and management of chronic wasting disease. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2029.

(d) \$8,546,000 the first year and \$8,546,000 the second year are from the deer management account for the purposes identified in Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.075, subdivision 1.

## CWD Activities, July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) spent \$3,097,484 during FY25 on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)-related activities (Table 2). This spending includes staff salary for CWD management work, invoices for agency culling activities (including dumpsters, diagnostic testing, fleet, contracts, and meat processing), partner sampling program payments to taxidermists, and CWD-related research projects. Additional activities that occurred focused on compiling data for surveillance planning for fall 2025, development of the hunting regulation book and deer rule, and planning outreach strategies to engage hunters. A detailed list of activities include:

- From July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, a total of 12,970 samples were collected and submitted for CWD testing:
  - Opportunistic sampling: 267 samples collected statewide; none were detected for CWD.
  - Voluntary submissions from hunters: 3,204 samples collected from either hunter mail-in kits, partner sampling program, or walk-in appointments at area office; three were detected for CWD, all from the partner sampling program.
  - Agency culled: 200 samples collected from 3 areas of the state; 1 was CWD positive.
  - Hunter-harvested: 12,503 samples collected during all active deer hunting seasons throughout the state from within both our CWD management and surveillance zones; 95 tested positive for CWD.
- DNR contracted with USDA-Wildlife Services for \$626,808 to conduct targeted culling in CWD management zones in the south metro, Grand Rapids, and near Merrifield, MN from January – March 2025. In total, 200 deer were removed and 1 tested positive from the Grand Rapids focus area. Numerous advancements occurred within the project this year, including expanding the use of cellular trail cameras and implementing clover traps in the Grand Rapids and Merrifield areas. Clover traps proved to be an effective tactic that likely contributed to the exceptional numbers of deer removed.

- Recent research using data from southeast Minnesota suggests a removal of at least 20% of the deer population is required to have a measurable impact on disease prevalence (Sergey Berg, unpublished data). Beneath this threshold, culling is minimally effective at reducing apparent prevalence. As such, we decided to cull in an area only if we had access to at least 30% of the available deer; if we were not able to meet this threshold, culling would not occur. To determine the number of available deer in each focus area, we counted deer via helicopter. Targeted outreach was directed at landowners whose property had deer observed on it during the survey via an initial letter and follow-up phone call. Once we determined adequate access to 30% or more of the available deer was achievable, we made the formal decision to move ahead with culling. We used agency culling in all 3 areas surveyed, with 107 deer removed near Merrifield, 19 removed in the south metro, and 75 removed in Grand Rapids.
- A total of 12,970 deer were tested for CWD between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, with 96 new detections of the disease. Nearly all positives were found in areas with persisting infections (i.e., south metro and southeast), except 3 new cases were detected; 1 near Wheaton in DPA 271, 1 near Hawley in DPA 266, and 1 near Greenfield in DPA 701 (Figure 2; Table 3).
- We held meetings with tribal biologists to discuss plans for fall 2025 surveillance efforts across the state. Federal funding was again available to support collection and testing efforts for tribal hunters and were coordinated through University of Minnesota staff. MNDNR did assist Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe with grant funds in their CWD surveillance and management efforts at their request. Approximately 567 samples were collected by Tribes in Minnesota during fall 2024; all were not detected for CWD.

The footprint of CWD has expanded in Minnesota, with the discovery of three new cases; 1 near Wheaton in DPA 271, 1 near Hawley in DPA 266, and 1 near Greenfield in DPA 701, which will create three new CWD management zones (DPA's 601, 666, and 671) for fall 2025. A total of 11 zones (9 management, 2 surveillance) are included in the fall 2025 CWD surveillance efforts (Figure 3). The majority of CWD samples will be collected through mandatory sampling during firearms opening weekend. Voluntary sampling opportunities will be available across the state and provided free-of-charge for interested hunters that harvest deer outside of the firearms opening weekend.

Table 1. Chronic Wasting Disease Appropriation Allocation FY25.

Fund	FY25 Appropriated
General Fund - CWD	982,000
Game and Fish- Emergency Response	1,675,000
General Fund – Farmed Deer & CWD	3,250,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,907,000</b>

Table 2. Detailed spending by expense type for Chronic Wasting Disease Appropriation, July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Other*</u>	<u>Game and Fish- Emergency Response</u>	<u>Gen'l Fund - CWD</u>	<u>Gen'l Fund - Farms &amp; CWD</u>	<u>Total Spend**</u>
Salary	5,345	910,925	-	190,302	1,106,572
Dumpsters	-	455,018	58,660	-	513,678
CWD Sample Testing	-	-	248	336,551	336,799
USDA-Culling Contract	-	181,279	117,500	8,103	306,883
Equipment	-	12,996	168	199,732	212,896
Travel/Fleet	5,252	44,958	114,460	1,410	166,080
Printing & Advertising	-	-	157,726	59	157,785
Taxidermist Partner Program	-	-	84,216	-	84,216
Contracts: CWD Tissue Sampling	-	-	63,086	-	63,086
Supplies	-	28,874	29,748	275	58,897
Other	62	200	27,492	27,611	55,364
CWD Office - Rushford	-	-	35,228	-	35,228
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,659</b>	<b>1,634,249</b>	<b>688,532</b>	<b>764,044</b>	<b>3,097,484</b>

\*Other includes Game and Fish Operating Account, Deer Management Account, Deer/Bear Account, Cervid Health Account, and Heritage Fund.

\*\*As of 7/16/2025, anticipate total spending to increase slightly with pending invoices yet to be processed.

Figure 2. Total samples (n=12,970) collected for chronic wasting disease (CWD) testing in Minnesota from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

## Minnesota Wild Deer CWD Surveillance & Management 2024-25

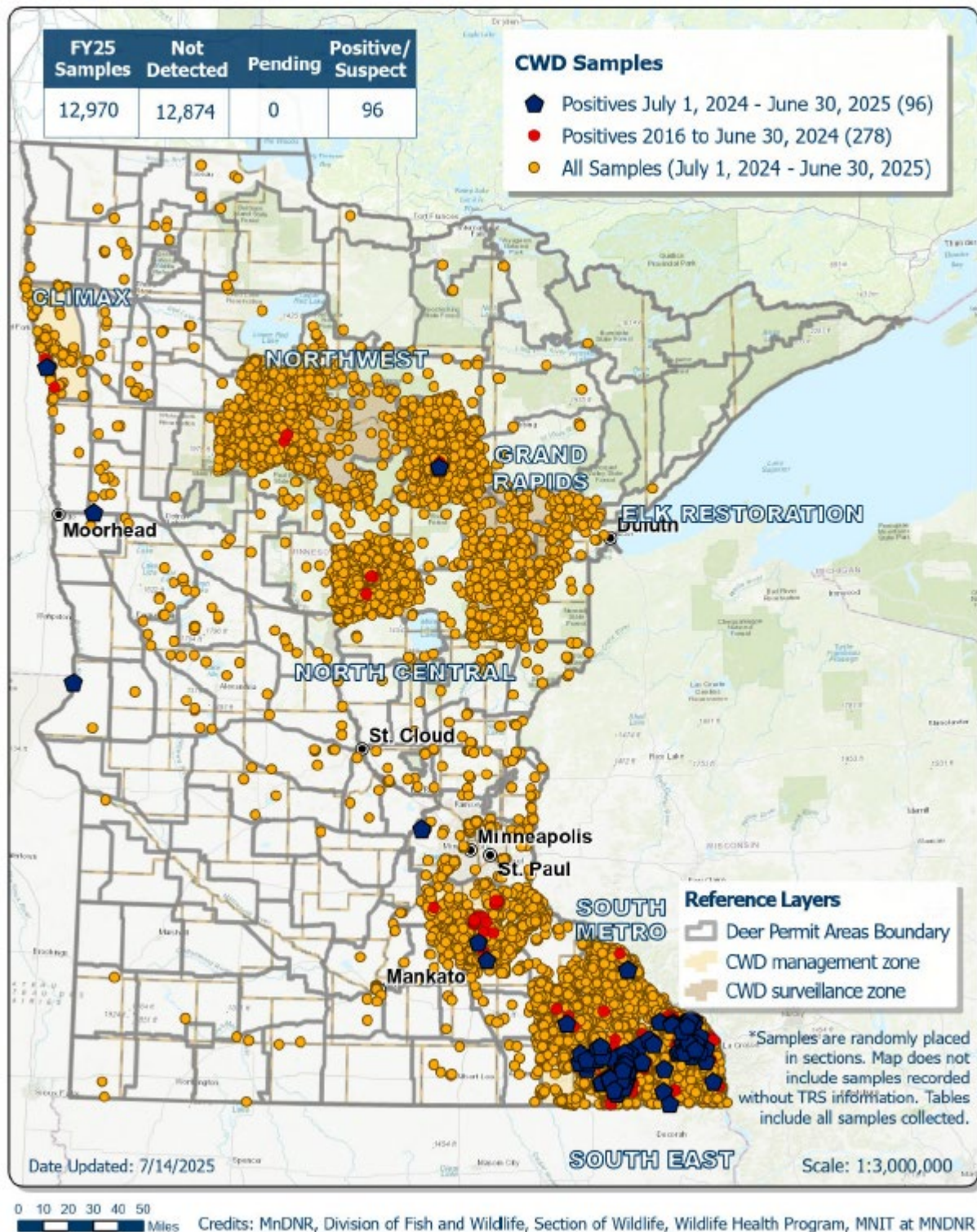




Table 3. Chronic wasting disease (CWD) samples collected in Minnesota from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

Designation	Deer Permit Area	Sample Acquisition	Number of deer sampled	Positive Results
Surveillance Zone (Northwest)	197	Hunter Harvested	242	0
Surveillance Zone (Elk Restoration)	156, 173, 181, 199	Hunter Harvested	870	0
Management Zone (Grand Rapids)	679	Hunter Harvested	601	0
		Agency Culled	75	1
Management Zone (Northwest)	684	Hunter Harvested	1,087	0
Management Zone (North Central)	604	Hunter Harvested	979	0
		Agency Culled	106	0
Management Zone (Climax)	661	Hunter Harvested	187	1
Management Zone (South Metro)	605	Hunter Harvested	806	2
		Agency Culled	19	0
Management Zone (Southeast)	642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 655	Hunter Harvested	4,527	89
Opportunistic	Statewide	Voluntary Submission	3,204	3*
Opportunistic/Other	Statewide	Includes: Reported sick, found dead, shooting permit, vehicle killed	267	0
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>12,970</b>	<b>96</b>

\*Of the three opportunistic positives, all were hunter-harvested, one each from DPAs 266, 271, and 701.

Figure 3. Locations of chronic wasting disease management and surveillance zones across Minnesota, fall 2025.

