Alabama DOT
DCNR And Chronic Wasting Disease Seminar

Chuck Sykes
Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Director
Marriot Shoals Hotel and Spa
August 2, 2018
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

- State Lands Division
- State Parks Division
- Marine Resources Division
- Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division
Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division

- WFF comprises three sections
  - Wildlife
  - Fisheries
  - Law Enforcement

- Manages, protects, conserves, and enhances the wildlife and aquatic resources of Alabama for the sustainable benefit of the people of Alabama

- Funding is derived from the sales of hunting and fishing licenses and the federal excise tax (Pittman/Robertson and Dingell/Johnson) placed on hunting and fishing supplies.

- Receives no allocation from the state general fund
Special Opportunity Areas

- 6 public hunting areas that offer hunting opportunities not found on a typical WMA.
- Each Special Opportunity Area (SOA) is managed individually and may offer deer, turkey, small-game, waterfowl, youth-only, and mentored hunts to the public.
- Many SOA’s were purchased through a partnership between WFF and Forever Wild.
- Registration for deer hunts will close on August 21st.

Special Opportunity Areas

NO HUNTING, TRAPPING, GUNS, BOWS, TRAPS OR DOGS WITHOUT VALID PERMITS.

ALABAMA DIVISION OF WILDLIFE & FRESHWATER FISHERIES
ALABAMA FOREVER WILD LAND TRUST
Alabama Adult Mentored Hunting Program

- Adult Hunters are paired with a mentor from our staff.
- Hunts take place on Cedar Creek and Portland Landing SOAs in Dallas County and the Frey and Russel Road tracts in Mobile County.
- Over 100 individuals, ranging in age from 19-75, applied for the limited deer hunting slots during 2017.
- Deer, Squirrel, Rabbit, and Turkey hunts are scheduled for 2018.
Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

- CWD is one of a family of diseases known as Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE).
- Similar to CJD in humans, Scrapie in sheep, and BSE in cattle.
- Results from an infectious agent termed a prion. Prions are made of protein material that becomes misfolded in such a way that it becomes infectious, negatively affecting other proteins.
- Affects members of the Family Cervidae (deer), including reindeer, moose, elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer etc.
Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

- Not endemic to the South.
- Is infectious, communicable and always fatal.
- There is no known vaccine to prevent it or avenue to cure it at this time.
- CWD does not go away. The prions that cause the disease persist indefinitely.
- No effective way to sanitize infected facilities, soil, etc., exists.

Alabama Hunters!

CWD

DON'T BRING IT HOME!
CWD Clinical Symptoms

- Emaciation
- Abnormal Behavior
- Poor Coordination
- Excessive Drooling, Drinking & Urination
- Decreased Wariness
- Drooping Posture
Sources of Exposure

Two primary sources:

1. CWD-Infected Deer
   - Direct animal contact with an infected deer (alive or carcass) will likely be the initial source of contamination.

2. CWD-Infected Environment
   - As CWD becomes established in an area, the contaminated environment may become the primary route to exposure.
   - No known methods of mitigating this risk once an area has been contaminated
To date, there have been no reported cases of CWD infection in people.

Current research indicates there is a strong species barrier that prevents CWD from being readily transmitted to other animals, but there remains uncertainty.

In areas where CWD is known to be present, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that hunters strongly consider having those animals tested before eating the meat and not consume any meat from a CWD-positive deer.
Disease Confusion: HD and CWD

Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease & Bluetongue Virus

- Viruses that cause HD are transmitted by biting midges
- Annual late summer/early fall outbreaks
- Outbreaks end at the onset of cold weather
- Symptoms
  - Excessive salivation and thirst
  - Loss of appetite resulting in weight loss
  - Loss of wariness
  - Those without resistance can die
Similar Symptoms of Other Diseases

- Brain Abscesses
  - Responsible for approximately 10% of natural deaths of whitetail males in the Southeastern U.S.
  - Pedicel damage results in malformed antlers
  - More prevalent in areas of increased densities of older aged males
CWD Occurrence Expansion

CWD emerges in captive mule deer at a research facility in Ft. Collins, CO.

CWD detected in game farm elk in SK; confirmed in wildlife in CO, WY.
In 2000, CWD detected on game farms in MT, OK, SD, NE, SK; spillover to wildlife confirmed in SK

CWD on game farms in KS, MN, WI, NY, MI, AB; in wildlife in NE, SD, WI, IL, NM, UT, NY, WV, KS, AB

CWD now in 24 states and 2 provinces; continues to grow, spread, persist, and evolve
CWD Current Distribution

Also Norway (wild reindeer) and Finland (wild moose)

Disease Distribution:

- Total:
  - 25 States
  - 2 Canadian Provinces
  - South Korea

- Wild:
  - 22 States
  - 2 Canadian Provinces

- Captive:
  - 15 States
  - 2 Canadian Provinces

- First recognized in 1967 in captive mule deer in Colorado
Mississippi Detection
Potential Impacts of CWD Detection

- Reduced sales of hunting licenses and hunter participation in the infected areas

Economic Impacts
- Rural Vendors
- Land Lease Values
- Cultural Shift
Laws and Regulatory Actions

- Movement of live cervids, whole carcasses, and high-risk body parts (e.g., brain, spinal cord, neurological tissues) from infected areas is a well-documented cause of accelerated spread of CWD into uninfected populations.

- DCNR continuously evaluates and takes measures to lessen the likelihood of CWD reaching Alabama by implementing regulatory measures.

  - Ala. Admin. Code Rule 220-2-.25 - **Imported Game Birds, Game Animals, and Raw Furs Subject to State Law**
  
  
  - Ala. Admin. Code Rule 220-2-.138 - **Licensed Game Breeders**
  
  
  - Ala. Admin Code Rule 220-2-.157 - **Definition of Area Regulation.**
Laws and Regulatory Actions

Home Zip Codes of hunters harvesting deer in Dane, Iowa, Richland and Sauk Counties, Wisconsin, 2016-2017

Data: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

>32,000 deer represented
Alaska (26 deer) and Hawaii (2 deer) not shown

USGS
science for a changing world
Relevant Case: Skinner Illegal Import Case

- 6 live deer from Indiana were imported into Alabama.
- In addition to violations of state law, Lacey Act (federal) violations were made.
- A federal judge sentenced Skinner to pay $750,000 ($650,000 to WFF and $100,000 to the Lacey Act Fund) in restitution monies for the possible introduction of CWD to the native deer herd, surrender all animals, and forfeit his game breeder license.
- USDA in partnership with WFF will depopulate the breeding facility as well as the enclosure, and all deer were tested for the presence of CWD and other diseases.
Relevant Case: Canned Hunt Case

- A canned hunt for a captive buck purchased from a licensed game breeder.
- The buck was advertised and sold on Facebook as a guaranteed hunt.
- The deer was accidentally overdosed when being moved to the shooting pen, placed in a cooler, and propped up for a staged spot and stalk archery hunt.
- Three men were arrested in the case of the Popsicle buck.
Relevant Case: Canned Hunt Case

- Multiple violations of 9-11-.501 and 9-11-.502
  - Hunting of a tame game animal for a fee.
  - Hunting of a game animal within 10 days of release.
  - Hunting of a game animal without a reasonable chance of escape.

- Violations of 9-11-.501 and 9-11-.502 are misdemeanors and, upon conviction, first offense carries a fine of no less than $2000 nor more than $5000 and no more than 30 days in jail for each offense.

- They were fined $750 by the local judge, and the Department was ordered to return the antlers.
CWD Surveillance Strategies & Actions

- Active surveillance for CWD in Alabama was initiated in the 2002-03 hunting season following confirmation of CWD in Wisconsin in early 2002.

- Minimum statewide sampling goals are based on a 95% probability of detecting the disease at a 1% level of infection within a population.

- Sampling is conducted at the county level, and the number of samples per county is based on a relative risk assessment\(^1\) for having CWD-positive animals:
  - Estimated county-level deer density
  - Number of licensed deer breeder facilities within the county
  - Number of deer hunting enclosures
  - Proximity to CWD positive states

\(^1\)Risk assessment follows similar protocols to those used by TX, MS, and other state wildlife agencies.
CWD Surveillance Strategies & Actions

- WFF tests approximately 500 hunter-harvested or road-killed deer throughout the state each year for multiple diseases.
- Nearly 8,000 deer have been tested with no CWD detected in Alabama.
- WFF has partnered with the Department of Agriculture to purchase a diagnostic machine to specifically test for CWD.
- Radio, social media, billboard, and magazine advertisements are used to educate hunters about the dangers of CWD to the Alabama deer herd.
- WFF works closely with neighboring states to ensure the safety of the Alabama deer herd.
ADCNR Chronic Wasting Disease Strategic Surveillance and Response Plan (SSRP)

- Developed by our staff in 2012 and updated in 2018. Our staff has a tremendous network of professionals who provide updated scientific, regulatory, and policy information to aid in our decisions while crafting the SSRP.
  - SCWDS Steering Committee and Technical Working Group
  - SEAFWA Wildlife Resources Committee, Cervid Working Group, and Wildlife Health Working Group
  - AFWA Executive and Wildlife Resources Policy Committees
  - Wildlife Management Institutes’ Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance
  - Archery Trade Association’s Deer Protection Oversight Committee
SSRP Goals & Objectives

- **SSRP Goal** is to minimize risk of CWD introduction or spread into Alabama’s white-tailed deer population.

- **SSRP Objectives**
  - Prevent introduction of CWD through public education efforts, enforcement of laws and regulations to prevent such an occurrence.
  - Establish and maintain prudent CWD surveillance in cooperation with hunters, landowners, and other stakeholders.
  - Minimize direct and indirect impacts of CWD to hunting, hunting-related economies, and natural resources.
SSRP Actions

- SSRP goals and objectives are accomplished through:
  - Laws and regulatory actions
  - Active CWD surveillance to monitor for disease presence
  - Focused response to CWD-positive detections to reduce impacts of disease spread
- SSRP is intended to be dynamic; management strategies described within are likely to change as both epidemiology and management of CWD becomes better understood over time.
SSRP Questions and Comments

- You can find a copy of the SSRP posted on our website at www.outdooralabama.com/sites/default/files/Hunting/CWD/WFF-CWD-Response-Plan-5-10-13_0.pdf.

- Frequently asked questions concerning CWD can be found on our website at http://www.outdooralabama.com/deer-hunting-alabama/chronic-wasting-disease-what-you-should-know.

- If you have questions concerning the SSRP or would like to offer comments that will be shared with this stakeholder group, you can email me at dcnr.wffdirector@dcnr.alabama.gov.
Since the State in its sovereign capacity occupies the attitude of guardian and custodian of the people's welfare, it is therefore the duty of the State, by enactment of appropriate legislation, to endeavor to extend adequate protection to those resources in which the people have collectively a natural right. Wise and discreet individuals who feel no inclination to make assaults on Nature's store-house should have their rights protected by the enactment of strong laws to restrain the hands of the wanton and reckless, whose vandalism would annihilate every visible thing of fin, fur or feather, to gratify their savage instincts.

John H. Wallace, Jr.
State Game and Fish Commissioner, 1908.
How Can You Help?

- Report any suspicious activity concerning live deer transport, carcass importation, or sick or abnormally acting deer

- Contact WFF at:
  - (334)242-3469 M-F 8a.m.-5p.m.
  - after hours 1-800-272-GAME (4263)
  - Email -
    DCNR.SickDeerReport@dcnr.alabama.gov