



NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission

"Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893"

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 22, 2013

TAHC REMINDS MULE DEER HUNTERS OF CWD TESTING REQUIREMENTS & CHECK STATIONS

AUSTIN – Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) officials are reminding mule deer hunters and landowners in far West Texas about the protocols developed as part of the TAHC's Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) management plan. The plan includes mandatory check stations for harvested mule deer taken inside the CWD Containment Zone, which covers portions of Hudspeth, Culberson, and El Paso counties. See map of CWD zones below or at www.tahc.texas.gov.

The management plan was implemented after CWD was detected in tissue samples from two mule deer in far West Texas during the summer of 2012. Those were the first cases of CWD detected in Texas deer.

CWD is a neurological disease of deer, elk, sika and other members of the deer family, known as "cervids." CWD has never been shown to affect people or domestic livestock. The progressively fatal disease causes chronic weight loss and abnormal behavior such as disorientation. Prions (the infectious agent of CWD), are present in the body fluids of infected animals, and can be shed onto the soil where they may remain infectious to other susceptible animals for many years. For this reason the TAHC rules apply to land, as well as cervids where CWD has been found or is likely to be found.

In 2012, the TAHC and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) developed a cooperative CWD management plan, which jointly created zones to protect captive and free-ranging cervid populations from CWD. The TAHC classified El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson and portions of Reeves counties into two zones to prevent unnatural movement of elk or mule deer from either area. In addition, TPWD created a third "buffer zone" in other surrounding counties to encourage voluntary surveillance of cervids. Information on this third zone can be found at TPWD's website www.tpwd.state.tx.us/cwd.

Nearly 300 tissue samples were collected from hunter harvested mule deer from the Trans Pecos ecoregion during the 2012-13 season for CWD testing. The Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) and National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) confirmed CWD in four of those samples. All CWD-positive deer found during last year's hunting season were harvested within the CWD Containment Zone.

"The TAHC will continue to work closely with TPWD and the CWD Task Force to protect the health of the entire Texas cervid population," said Dr. Dee Ellis, State Veterinarian and TAHC Executive Director. "This ensures a coordinated effort between the TAHC and TPWD to control and contain CWD in the Hueco Mountains of far West Texas, where it was previously discovered."

What are the TAHC Zones and their Boundaries:

The **Containment Zone (CZ)** is a geographic area where there is a high risk of CWD existing. The CZ is defined as follows; beginning in Culberson County where State Highway 62-180 enters from New Mexico and thence in a southwesterly direction to the intersection with State Highway 54 and thence following that in a southwesterly direction to the intersection with IH 20 and thence following it in a westerly direction until Ft. Hancock to State Highway 20 and thence following it a westerly direction to Farm Road 1088 (east of Ft. Hancock), and thence following it in a southerly direction to the Rio Grande River to where it enters the state of New Mexico.

The **High Risk Zone (HRZ)** is an area which serves as a buffer (surveillance) zone between the Containment Zone and the rest of Texas. The HRZ is defined as follows: beginning in Reeves County where the Pecos River enters from New Mexico and meanders in a southeasterly direction as the boundary between Reeves County and Loving and Ward Counties to the intersection with IH 20 and thence following it in a westerly direction until the intersection with State

Highway 54 and thence following it in a northwesterly direction until the intersection with State Highway 62-180 and thence in a northeasterly direction to the border with the state of New Mexico and Culberson

Restrictions:

No susceptible cervid species may be trapped and transported alive from within either zone to another location. No susceptible species may be introduced into a herd within the HRZ or the CZ that does not participate in the TAHC Monitored Herd Program. No susceptible species may leave a herd within either zone until it has achieved Year 5 or higher status. No part of a carcass (excluding bones with no tissue attached) of a susceptible species (killed or found dead), within the HRZ or CZ may be removed unless a testable CWD sample from the carcass is collected by or provided to the TAHC or TPWD.

These requirements can be found in Title 4 of the Texas Administrative Code Chapter 40, Section 40.6 and entitled “CWD Movement Restriction Zone”, and can be viewed at <http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/regs/code.html>. For more information visit www.tahc.state.tx.us or call 1-800-550-8242.

Mandatory Check Stations:

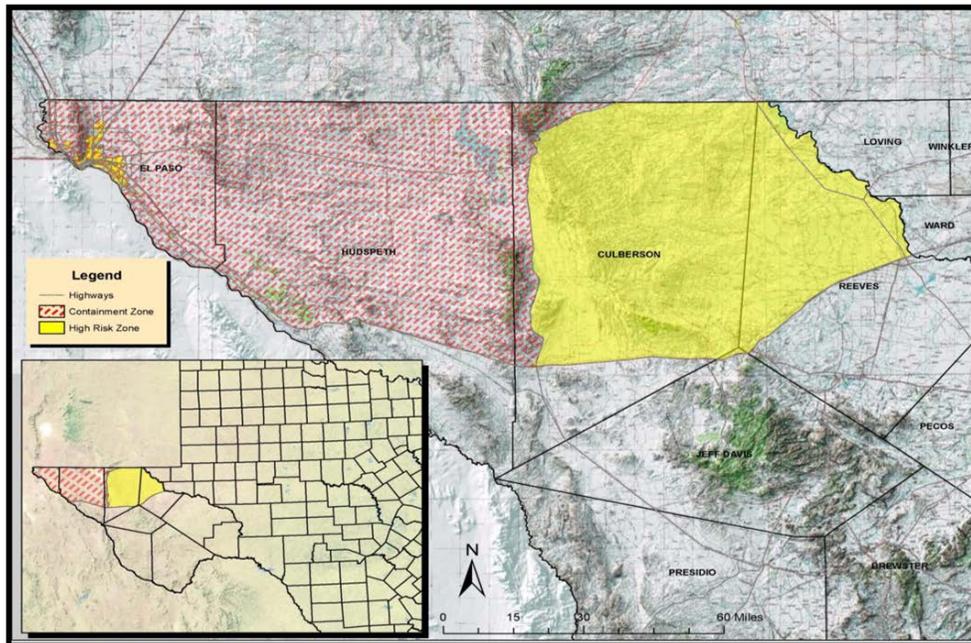
Hunters taking mule deer inside the Containment Zone during the 2013 general mule deer hunting season, Nov. 29 – Dec. 15, are required to submit their harvest (unfrozen head) for CWD sampling at mandatory check stations within 24 hours of harvest. Mandatory check stations will be open daily Nov. 29 – Dec. 16 in Cornudas and in Van Horn.

Hunters who harvest deer in the Containment Zone outside the general season under the authority of MLDP (Managed Lands Deer Permits) will need to call TPWD at (512) 221-8491 the day the deer is harvested to make arrangements to have the deer sampled for CWD.

Voluntary check Stations:

In addition to the mandatory check stations, TPWD has established check stations for voluntary CWD sampling for deer harvested in other parts of West Texas. These stations are located in Midland, Bakersfield, Sanderson, and Alpine.

For additional information regarding the CWD check stations and TPWD’s CWD Management Plan, visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us/cwd .



Founded in 1893, the Texas Animal Health Commission works to protect the health of all Texas livestock, including: cattle, swine, poultry, sheep, goats, equine animals, and exotic livestock.

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