



DEC Asks Bowhunters to Report Deer that May Have Died from EHD

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Southern Zone Bowhunting Season Starts Oct. 1 and Hunters May Encounter More Dead Deer Afield in Certain Regions Due to EHD

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) today asked bowhunters who may encounter deer affected by Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) this fall to report the find to DEC. EHD is a viral disease of whitetail deer that cannot be contracted by humans. Reports from hunters help DEC track the disease's potential spread.

Archery seasons for whitetail deer and black bear begin Thursday, Oct. 1, in the Southern Zone and more hunters will be in remote forests, fields, and waterways and may come across deer that died of EHD. Hunters are encouraged to report any deer suspected of dying from EHD to the nearest DEC regional wildlife office. A [directory is available on the DEC website](#).

DEC wildlife biologists have been receiving reports of dead and sick deer this fall and collected carcasses for testing at DEC's Wildlife Health Unit in Delmar, Albany County. Tissue samples have been sent to the Animal Health Diagnostic Center at Cornell University to confirm the presence of EHD.

To date, EHD has been confirmed in portions of Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Ulster, and Westchester counties, and DEC has received reports of approximately 750 dead deer. Though the current outbreak appears concentrated in the lower Hudson Valley, EHD may have spread elsewhere in New York.

While EHD outbreaks can remove a number of deer from a localized population, they do not have a significant long-term impact on deer populations. Deer populations throughout the currently impacted region are robust. DEC does not plan to reduce harvest in areas affected by EHD at this time.

The EHD virus is carried by biting midges, small bugs often called no-see-ums or 'punkies.' Outbreaks are most common in the late summer and early fall when the midges that carry the virus are abundant. Once infected with EHD, deer usually die within 36 hours. The disease is not spread from deer to deer or from deer to humans. Symptoms in deer include fever, hemorrhage in muscles or organs, and swelling of the head, neck, tongue, and lips. A deer infected with EHD may appear lame or dehydrated. Frequently, infected deer will seek out water sources and many succumb to the disease near a water source. There is no treatment for nor means to prevent EHD. The dead deer do not serve as a source of infection for other animals.

The EHD virus affected New York deer in 2007 in Albany, Rensselaer, and Niagara counties, and in Rockland County in 2011.

EHD is endemic in southern states where there are annual outbreaks, so some southern deer have developed immunity. Generally, in the northeast, EHD outbreaks occur sporadically and deer in New York have no immunity to this virus. Consequently, most EHD-infected deer in New York are expected to die. In the north, the first hard frost kills the midges that transmit the disease, ending the EHD outbreak.

Hunters should not handle or eat any deer that appears sick or acts strangely. DEC continues to monitor the EHD outbreak. In addition, the State Department of Agriculture and Markets has alerted deer farmers and veterinarians throughout the state to be aware of the disease and to report suspicious cases.

For [more information on EHD and helpful related links](#), visit the DEC website.

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/press/press.html>