

**Program Area:** Wildlife Management

**Subject:** Deer Rehabilitation Policy

**Length of Public Input Period:** 21 days

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Orphaned, sick, or injured deer are recovered every year by the public and department staff and placed with wildlife rehabilitators. The Wildlife Rehabilitation Advisory Committee has offered recommendations to the department and the department is considering modifying its guidance for the placement and rehabilitation of those deer in response to three counties in Northeastern Wisconsin being designated as CWD affected counties early this year.

We will solicit comments for 21 days. All comments will be considered, revisions will be made to the guidance documents as needed, and final guidance will be made available to internal and external stakeholders.

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# **DEER REHABILITATION POLICY**

## **(including deer rehabilitation in CWD affected areas)**

May 22, 2014 **Revised February 16, 2016; WRAC Vote March 4, 2016**

Orphaned, sick, or injured deer are recovered every year by the public and Department staff and placed with wildlife rehabilitators. To maximize the well-being and wildness of these deer and to minimize risk from Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) identified in some populations of Wisconsin deer, guidance is required for deer placement and rehabilitation. Deer rehabilitation policy, with specific geographic guidance will be communicated annually by the Department directly to all licensed rehabilitators in the state. Additionally, current information will be available through the Department Wildlife Rehabilitation website and the Wisconsin Wildlife Rehabilitators Association.

**The rehabilitation of deer is PROHIBITED for deer originating from an entire county if requested by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and either:**

1. A bovine tuberculosis (TB) positive domestic, or wild animal has been confirmed in the county, or
2. The county or portion of the county is within a 10-mile radius of a domestic or wild animal that has been tested and confirmed to be positive for bovine TB.

**Where the rehabilitation of deer is PERMITTED, the following conditions must be followed:**

1. When possible, deer in rehabilitation should be in contact only with deer from the same county, or preferably even smaller area of a county. Whenever possible, deer in rehabilitation should be released back to the county, and preferably the specific area, where found. Deer cannot be released on Department lands without permission from the Department.
2. Deer from identified CWD affected areas can only be rehabilitated at a facility in a CWD area and can only be co-mingled with deer also from CWD areas. CWD areas will be defined by the Department; updates on the geographic scope of these areas will be provided annually to rehabilitators in the spring.
  - a. Deer originating from areas of the state where CWD has not been identified ~~cannot~~ **should not** be placed in rehabilitation facilities located in CWD areas, **except in the event that no other option is available.**
  - b. **Deer originating from CWD affected areas as a result of a 'wild' positive should not be co-mingled with deer originating from CWD affected areas so designated because of a 'captive' positive, except in the event that no other option is available.**
3. Decisions about release location for deer from identified CWD affected areas shall be made through consultation between the licensed rehabilitator and the DNR Wildlife Rehabilitation Program Manager, and whenever possible releases should occur in the core, not the periphery, of a CWD affected area.
  - a. **Deer originating from CWD affected areas so designated because of a 'wild' positive shall not be released into CWD affected areas so designated because of a 'captive' positive.**
  - b. **No deer rehabilitated in a CWD affected area, whether so designated because of a 'wild' or 'captive' positive, shall be released into a non-CWD affected area.**
4. All rehabilitated and/or rescued deer held for more than 24 hours shall be identified with at least one plastic ear tag issued by the Department **whenever possible.** (Note: Double-ear tagging recommended in case one falls out). Ear tags shall be labeled by the Department to distinguish them from ear tags used for other purposes. Released deer shall not be identified with any other type of ear tag, such as those visible from a distance commonly used on farmed deer or livestock.
5. All deer (rehabilitated and/or rescued) chemically immobilized or treated with drugs near the time of release shall be identified with an ear tag as required by **the Animal Medicinal Use Drug Clarification Act (AMDUCA)** and the Department's Animal Care and Use Committee and Chemical Immobilization Policy, and these ear tags will advise contacting USDA Wildlife Services before consumption.
6. Deer under a rehabilitator's care will be reported quarterly, using the standard Department wildlife rehabilitation quarterly reporting form.
7. When a licensed rehabilitator receives a deer exhibiting clinical signs compatible with CWD (for example poor condition, neurologic signs, excessive thirst or salivation, difficulty swallowing) and these symptoms cannot be attributed to another health condition, the deer shall be kept separate and not co-mingled with other deer, and shall be euthanized and tested for CWD. If the deer tests positive and was housed with any other deer, the rehabilitator should consider euthanizing the deer it was housed with and submitted for CWD testing. Transportation and disposal of deer carcasses shall follow Department regulations.

**The rehabilitation of deer will be PROHIBITED for at least 5 years\* in the affected enclosure if any of the following conditions occur:**

1. A deer exhibiting clinical signs compatible with CWD or TB, tests positive for CWD or TB while still at a rehabilitation facility.
2. A deer tests positive for CWD between the date the deer was released and the end of the following calendar year.

\* The Department will establish guidelines for the facility during this time.

**The placement of wild deer in deer farms is PROHIBITED.**

Wisconsin Administrative Code states, “No person keeping a herd of farm-raised deer may do any of the following ... take or accept into the herd, on a temporary or permanent basis, any cervid from a free-ranging herd” (s. ATCP 10.46(11)(b)).” Placement of deer that were free-ranging into a captive herd is a violation of these rules and the farm will be placed under quarantine by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.