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Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

DEER REHABILITATION POLICY

Nuisance, rescued, and sick or injured deer are captured every year by the public and Department staff and placed with wildlife rehabilitators. Rehabilitators commonly care for sick or injured deer and orphaned fawns. The identification of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Wisconsin deer requires appropriate restrictions and guidance for deer placement and rehabilitation to prevent further spread of the disease.

Deer rehabilitation policy, with specific geographic guidance for prohibited and permitted areas 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 (<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/whealth/index.htm>) and the Wisconsin Wildlife Rehabilitators Association.

The rehabilitation of deer is PROHIBITED for deer originating from an entire county if:

1. A CWD zone has been established in the county or a portion of the county, or
2. A CWD or bovine tuberculosis (TB) positive captive or free-ranging, domestic or wild animal has been confirmed since January 1, 1998 from the county, or
3. The county or portion of the county is within a 10-mile radius of a captive or free-ranging, domestic or wild animal that has been tested and confirmed to be positive for CWD or bovine TB since January 1, 1998.

Conditions

- Both injured/sick adults and fawns from any county where deer rehabilitation is prohibited shall be humanely euthanized. Heads from adult deer shall be collected, stored at refrigerator or freezer temperature, and contact shall be made within 72 hrs with local Department Wildlife Management or Warden staff to submit the head for testing.
- Deer from counties where deer rehabilitation is prohibited cannot be transferred to any other county.
- Deer from any other county may not be transported into or rehabilitated in a county where rehabilitation is prohibited.
- Transportation and disposal of deer carcasses shall follow Department regulations; carcasses shall be disposed of in a participating landfill.
- If temporary holding is necessary, the deer from areas of CWD/TB concern shall not have contact with any other deer or be held in a facility or crate where other deer will be held.

The rehabilitation of deer is PERMITTED for deer originating from an entire county if:

1. The county does not fall into any of the categories defined above.

Conditions

- Deer in a wildlife rehabilitator's care, prior to the discovery of CWD or bovine TB in the surrounding area, shall be humanely euthanized if CWD or bovine TB is discovered and the county is subsequently included under a deer rehabilitation prohibition.
- Any deer in Wisconsin over 16 months of age that exhibits symptoms fitting a CWD profile, shall be euthanized. The head shall be collected, stored at refrigerator or freezer temperature, and contact shall be made within 72 hrs with local Department Wildlife Management or Warden staff to submit the head for testing. If temporary holding is necessary, a deer fitting the CWD profile shall not have contact with any other deer or be held in a facility or crate where other deer will be held.
- 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.
- Released deer shall be identified with a metal ear tag issued by the Department. 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.
- All deer chemically immobilized or treated with drugs near the time of release shall be identified with an additional ear tag as required by the Department's Animal Care and Use Committee and Chemical Immobilization Policy.
- Deer under a rehabilitator's care will be reported quarterly, using the standard Department wildlife rehabilitation quarterly reporting form.

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 10.61(10)(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.