

## 15-Year CWD Response Goal

### **Minimize the area of Wisconsin where CWD occurs and the number of infected deer in the state.**

This 15-year goal for managing CWD will drive the DNR's response approaches. This goal will focus on minimizing (defined as reducing to the smallest possible number, degree, or extent) the area affected by the disease and reducing the number of deer infected. This goal means currently accepting an area of CWD infection in southern Wisconsin and focusing CWD control efforts on limiting CWD to southern Wisconsin.

Even with active, successful management, some growth in the size of the affected area and the intensity of disease may occur during the next 15 years. However, significant progress in CWD control will have been achieved during this period if the population goals are reached or exceed, and thus, in theory, the growth of the affected area and disease intensity within the affected area are less than would have occurred in the absence of active management. Ultimately, the goal of Wisconsin's CWD program will be to lower disease prevalence and decrease the affected area of the state. Achieving this goal will be a long-term commitment necessitating actions beyond the 15-year scope of this plan.

Because we cannot know with certainty how quickly the distribution and severity of CWD would change in the absence of management, it will be difficult to directly measure effectiveness of control actions over limited time spans. Such an evaluation will have to be based not only on data from Wisconsin but will also have to consider results of management and monitoring efforts in other states and provinces that have CWD in wild cervid populations.

Ultimately, assessment of the effectiveness of control actions for CWD must be based primarily

on documentation of changes in the prevalence and geographic distribution of the disease. Because CWD is a slowly progressive disease and difficult to accurately measure at low prevalence levels, significant changes in distribution and prevalence in free-ranging deer populations will likely occur over a protracted time scale.

Advances in understanding about the ecology and epidemiology of CWD in Wisconsin have contributed significantly to informing our management actions; however, there is not yet a clear prescription for managing CWD. The DNR will need to continue to intensively monitor CWD prevalence and distribution in order to make decisions on CWD management using an adaptive response approach. We believe that the results of our ongoing monitoring of CWD in the state's wild deer along with advances from research into the epidemiology of the disease will allow the state to better evaluate the effectiveness of management actions on controlling CWD.



Photo by Jerry Davis

*Deer with CWD will appear healthy until the late stages of the disease.*