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DGIF REPORTS 28 NEW CWD-POSITIVE WHITE-TAILED DEER IN NORTHWEST VIRGINIA

RICHMOND—Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was confirmed by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) in 26 deer from Frederick County and two deer from Shenandoah County during 2018. Twenty-six of the CWD-positive deer were harvested by hunters and showed no symptoms of the disease. Two infected deer were showing signs of the disease prior to death and were reported to the Department by members of the public.

Over 1,550 deer from Frederick, Clarke, Warren, and Shenandoah counties were tested for CWD during the 2018 hunting season. DGIF appreciates the assistance of deer hunters in this area for their excellent cooperation during CWD sample collections this past fall. Additional appreciation is due to road-kill contractors, deer processors, and taxidermists from these four counties who also assisted with CWD sampling this fall. Since 2009, 66 CWD-positive deer have been confirmed from Frederick (61) and Shenandoah (5) counties. All CWD-positive deer have been harvested located west of Interstate 81.

In addition to the sampling effort in Frederick, Clarke, Warren, and Shenandoah counties, DGIF partnered with dozens of taxidermists to enhance CWD surveillance throughout the remainder of Virginia. This partnership proved effective in securing over 1,500 samples from across the state. The results of this effort are currently pending and will be released when they are received from the laboratory.

CWD has been detected in 26 states and three Canadian provinces. The disease is a slow, progressive neurologic (brain and nervous system) disease found in deer, elk, and moose in North America, which ultimately results in death of the animal. It is spread through urine, feces, and saliva. Symptoms do not appear for several years and include staggering, abnormal posture, lowered head, drooling, confusion, and marked weight loss. There is no evidence that CWD can be naturally transmitted to humans, livestock, or pets, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advise hunters to test all deer harvested from known CWD-positive areas and to not consume any animals that test positive for the disease.

Regulations pertaining to CWD, maps of affected states, and more information about the disease and what DGIF is doing about it can be found on the DGIF website at: www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/disease/cwd

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