

Georgia Department of Natural Resources Incident Action Plan

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Detected in Georgia



Incident Name Georgia Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

Operational Period # 11

Op Period Dates 05-04-2025 to 06-07-2025

Distributed To Georgia Department of Natural Resources

(For Internal Use Only)

Incident Summary Statement

On January 15, 2025, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was notified of an initial reactor screening test for a Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) sample in a hunter-killed free-ranging white-tailed deer harvested on the Berrien-Lanier county line in South-Central Georgia. The sample was then sent to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) for confirmation. DNR received confirmation of positive status on January 22, 2025. On January 23, DNR interviewed the hunter and confirmed the harvest location, and subsequently issued a press release confirming the first case of CWD in Georgia. On January 24, DNR held a press release to answer questions and give further details on the next steps that will be taken. A two-county CWD Management Area (CMA) was established around the positive sample location, as well as a one-mile intensive sampling zone around the positive sample location. Within the one-mile zone, landowners and field staff are cooperating to collect additional biological samples to assess prevalence. Additionally, field operations staff are collecting samples from processors, taxidermists, and road-killed deer. 8 samples from the CMA were sent on 1/31 and negative results received on 2/3. 4 samples from the CMA were sent the lab on 2/5 and negative results were received on 2/6. On 1/31 samples (24) from outside the CMA submitted to the lab were mistakenly prioritized. On 2/28 a total of 6 samples from the CMA were submitted to the lab, all were negative. A total of 23 samples have been collected and tested negative within the CMA, 12 of which inside a 1-mile radius. A 24th sample is pending. As of 3/14 over 40 potential sampling locations have been identified. On 4/4 received notification of initial reactor test on deer collected near the first positive, NVSL confirmation received 4/18. Field staff coordinating with crop damage permit holders (16) to collect additional samples until deer season.

Prepared by Charlie Killmaster

Approved by

Organization Assignment List					
Incident Name	Georgia Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)				
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Op Period Dates	05-04-2025 to 06-07-2025				
Incident Commander and Command Staff			Operations Section		
IC/UC's	Charlie Killmaster		Chief	Kevin Rose	
			Deputy	Alley Philson	
			Staging Area	Home Office	
Deputy	Kevin Rose		Branch		
Safety Officer			Branch Director		
Public Info. Officer	Kaitlin Goode		Deputy		
Liaison Officer			Division/Group		
			Division/Group		
			Division/Group		
Agency/Org Representatives			Division/Group		
Agency/Org			Branch		
GA Dept of Agriculture	State Vet - Hennebelle		Branch Director		
SCWDS	Mark Ruder		Deputy		
			Division/Group		
			Division/Group		
			Division/Group		
			Branch		
			Branch Director		
Planning Section			Deputy		
Chief	Kevin Rose		Division/Group		
Deputy			Division/Group		
Resources Unit			Division/Group		
Situation Unit			Branch		
Documentation Unit			Branch Director		
Demobilization Unit			Deputy		
Technical Specialists			Division/Group		
			Division/Group		
Logistics Section					
Chief	Greg Nelms				
Deputy	Drew Zellner				
Support Branch			Air Operations Branch		
Director			Director		
Supply Unit			Deputy		
Facilities Unit					
Ground Support Unit					
Service Branch			Finance Administration Section		
Director			Chief	Allison Colter	
Communications Unit			Deputy	Matt Goode	
Medical Unit			Time Unit		
Food Unit			Procurement Unit	Ciera Broadnax	
			Comp/Claims Unit		
			Cost Unit		

Operational Period Objectives

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CWD Management Zone Map



Operational Period Objectives

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Objective 1: Continue sampling deer in CMA before hunting season

Objective 2: Establish 15 to 20 self-serve freezer CWD sampling locations in and around CMA by late summer 2025.

Objective 3: Develop and implement education and outreach materials and meeting opportunities for the public for CWD sampling access and resources.

Objective 4: Complete internal education for front line staff prior to deer season.

Objective 5: Expand CWD testing capacity at the UGA Athens Veterinary Diagnostic Lab.

Objective 6: Expand CWD monitoring through environmental surveillance.

Objective 7: Assess human dimensions of risk factors in the CMA and identify mitigation recommendations.

	Assignment List			
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Operations Section Chief	Kevin Rose			
Branch Director				
Divison/Group Supervisor				
Resoures Assigned				
Resource Identifier	Leader	# of Persons	Contact	Reporting Location
Work Assignments				
	<u>Objective 1</u>			
Alley Philson/contractor	Continue coordinating with landowners inside 1-mile radius to complete cluster sampling. Goal 30 samples			
Alley Philson/contractor	Coordinate with crop damage permit holders to collect samples with priority inside 5-mile radius. Sample as many as feasible.			
	<u>Objective 2</u>			
Alley Philson	Work with local government, municipal, taxidermists and processors to set up freezers where hunters can leave deer heads for testing. Sites must include power, water, and paved surface.			
Zach Stevens	Inquire with ABAC professors about seasonal help from students for transporting heads, samples, and tissue extraction.			
Alley Philson	Procure supplies (bags, sample tags, zip ties, gloves, knives, bone saws) for sampling locations.			
Alley Philson	Create a plan to monitor sampling sites, transport heads to Grand Bay, and transport samples to lab. Identify seasonal staffing/contractor needs.			
CEO Section	Create signage and instructions for sampling locations by mid summer.			
Greg Nelms/Drew Zellner	Establish sample processing station at Grand Bay WMA check station by ordering incinerator, canopy cover for incinerator, identify or create covered and paved work area, order 4 sanitizable work tables.			
	<u>Objective 3</u>			
Allison Colter	Create a statewide list of taxidermists and processors participating in sampling.			
Rebecca Kresin	Create online dashboard to look up CWD test results by Game Check confirmation number.			
CEO Section	Create informational handouts for taxidermists and processors.			
CEO Section	Create informational placards for hunters that businesses can post.			
CEO Section	Create CWD website/QR code business cards and distribute to front line staff mid summer.			
Charlie Killmaster	Schedule webinar for taxidermists and processors statewide for late August.			
Charlie Killmaster	Schedule in person public meeting for taxidermists and processors in and around CMA for the week of August 18th.			
Charlie Killmaster	Schedule public meeting in CMA for sampling access in August.			
Rebecca Kresin	Create statewide CWD sampling progress dashboard for public.			
	<u>Objective 4</u>			
Kevin Rose	Develop talking points for Game Wardens and WRD staff by mid summer.			
Kevin Rose	Send Deer Program staff to LED region meetings for Q&A			
Alley Philson/CEO Section	Identify staff that need CWD sample collect training.			
Alley Philson/CEO Section	Schedule recurrent training on sample collection for GM staff.			
	<u>Objective 5</u>			
Charlie Killmaster	Update contract with UGA-AVDL to purchase additional lab equipment for ELISA and RT-QuIC and increase tech staff.			

Charlie Killmaster/ Rebecca Kresin	Continue working with VetView to create database API to automate CWD test notification system.
Charlie Killmaster/ Rebecca Kresin	Develop contract with Tifton AVDL to purchase ELISA equipment.
	<u>Objective 6</u>
Charlie Killmaster/ Alley Philson	Conduct environmental surveillance on deer facilities inside CMA.
	<u>Objective 7</u>
Charlie Killmaster/ Matt Goode	Coordinate with UGA to implement research project
Charlie Killmaster/ Kaitlin Goode	Develop and implement educational campaign on CWD risk factors and management.

Special Instructions
N/A

Communications List			
Incident Name	Georgia Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)		
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Divison/Section/Group	Position Assigned	Name	Method of Contact
N/A			

Incident Accomplishments

Field Response

The Operations team has been contacting landowners within a 1-mile radius of the positive sample site to inform them of the CWD positive sample, and to work with them to gain additional samples to determine CWD prevalence via landowner permit. Field staff have also collected samples from processor and taxidermists, road-killed deer, and sick deer within the CMA.

Table 1. Summary of CWD related field response by DNR Staff since start of incident

Contact Type	Totals
Deer Depredation Permit Holders Contacted	16
Deer Processors Contacted	6
Taxidermists Contacted	4
Landowner Permits Issued	8
Total Samples Collected in CMA	26
Samples collected in 1-mile radius	14

Table 5. Summary of samples collected by sample type and location within the CMA.

Samples collected in CMA							
Harvest Date	Sample Number	County	Inside 1 mile radius	Sex	Age	Sample Type (roadkill, hunter harvest, processor, etc.)	Results
11/30/24	R6G1114	Lanier	Yes, Index Case	M	2.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Positive
12/7/24	DM1670	Berrien		M	3.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
1/7/25	DM1654	Berrien		M	5.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
1/8/25	R6G1459	Lanier		M	3.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
1/15/25	R6G1460	Lanier		M	4.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
1/15/25	DM1669	Lanier		M	2.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
1/24/25	R6G1458	Berrien		M	3.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
1/28/25	R6G1409	Berrien	Yes	F	3.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
2/1/25	R6G1461	Berrien		M	3.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
2/2/25	7287	Berrien	Yes	M	1.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
2/2/25	7274	Berrien	Yes	M	1.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
2/2/25	7275	Berrien	Yes	M	1.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
2/11/25	R6G1408	Berrien	Yes	M	2.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
2/11/25	R6G1411	Berrien	Yes	M	3.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
2/11/25	7276	Lowndes/ Grand Bay		F	2.5	Roadkill	CWD Not Detected
2/13/25	R6G1412	Berrien	Yes	F	2.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
2/14/25	R6G1410	Berrien		F	2.5	Roadkill	CWD Not Detected
2/16/25	R6G1414	Berrien	Yes	F	4.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
2/23/25	R6G1413	Lanier		M	4.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
2/24/25	R6G1415	Berrien		F	2.5	Roadkill	CWD Not Detected
2/22/25	R6G1417	Berrien	Yes	F	3.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
2/22/25	R6G1418	Berrien	Yes	F	2.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected

2/22/25	R6G1419	Berrien	Yes	F	3.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
2/22/25	R6G1384	Berrien	Yes	M	1.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Not Detected
3/3/25	R6G1385	Berrien	Yes	M	4.5	Hunter Harvested	CWD Positive
4/9/25	DM1711	Lanier		M	1	Roadkill	Pending

Potential CWD Freezer Locations

Business Name	Address	City	County
Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge	307 Ga-122	Lakeland	Lanier
Banks Lake Outdoors	307 Ga-122	Lakeland	Lanier
Lanier Forestry Commission	Next to 168 N Brantley St	Lakeland	Lanier
Hunt's Deer Processing	79 Bolling Ln	Ray City	Lanier
Berrien Forestry Commission	13836 Co Rd 129	Nashville	Berrien
Ford Taxidermy	520 Jn Ford Rd	Nashville	Berrien
Owen Farm Deer Processing	366 Junebug Lane	Alapaha	Berrien
Enigma Fire Department	324 S Main St	Enigma	Berrien
Tattooed Butcher 'Wild Game Cuts' LLC	969 Fire Tower Road	Enigma	Berrien
Henderson deer processing	256 Corbitt Rd	Homerville	Clinch
Lowndes County Forestry Unit	3011 US-84	Valdosta	Lowndes
K&K Deer Processing	6749 Good Hope Rd	Naylor	Lowndes
Bullard Deer Processing	6980 Val Del Road	Adel	Cook

Completed Actions

Sampling contractor hired for collecting samples from crop permit holders.

Freezers for sampling sites ordered.

Completed proposal for statewide deer carcass disposal rule.

Contracted with UGA to develop a research project to assess CWD risk factors before and after educational campaign.

Completed agency funding request for FY26 to fund disease management and monitoring.

Completed and distributed fawn rehabber guidance on handling fawns from CMA.

Communications Accomplishments

[Press Release outlining confirmation of first positive case of CWD in Georgia 01/23/2025](#)

[Wildlife Resources Division's Updated CWD Webpage](#)

Board of Natural Resources updated 01/24/2025

Press Conference 01/24/2025

Social Media Posts created & shared by DNR-WRD and GA DNR Accounts

Staff Guidance and FAQs created and shared with all DNR staff

CWD informational presentation & Q&A presented to DNR staff 1/24/2025

[Georgia House Game, Fish and Parks Committee Briefing 1/27/2025](#)

[Georgia Senate Natural Resources and the Environment Committee Briefing 1/27/2025](#)

Held 4 Public Information Sessions:

Adel, Ga 2/4/2025 - 45 attendees

[Virtual 2/6/2025 - approximately 10,000 views as of 2/11/25](#)

Lakeland, GA 2/8/2025 - 33 attendees

Valdosta, GA 2/8/2025 - 7 attendees

Press Release confirming 2nd CWD positive deer 4/22/25

Executive Orders/Regulations
Statewide deer carcass disposal rule proposed. <i>Public hearings completed 4/22/25.</i> No regulation changes required or proposed for CMA counties.

Safety Message

N/A

General		
N/A		
Prepared by	Charlie Killmaster	Incident Commander
Approved by		