Why Should You Shoot More Deer in Unit CWD?

Fewer Deer → Fewer CWD-Positive Deer → Less CWD Transfer

The short answer is an increased harvest will result in fewer deer in Unit CWD, meaning fewer CWD-positive deer, resulting in less deer interactions where disease transfer can occur.

TWRA's goal is to keep CWD from spreading and to keep the number of infected deer to a minimum, reducing infection rates where possible. Hunter harvest is the only feasible way to accomplish this.

An increase in both buck and doe harvest is needed in Unit CWD. Bucks are the most likely to spread this disease since they have larger home ranges than females and testing results show they are twice as likely to have CWD. Increased doe harvest is needed to decrease the deer population so social interactions between deer lessen, which will then decrease the risk of disease spread.

Fayette and Hardeman counties are the most heavily impacted. High disease rates there indicate the environment is a source of infection in addition to animal-to-animal contact. Left unchecked, infection rates will continue to grow, causing a population decline and a younger overall deer population.

Population reduction is also needed in the remaining Unit CWD counties which are either positive with relatively low infection rates (i.e., Chester, Haywood, Madison, Shelby, and Tipton) or are not yet positive but CWD has been detected within 10 miles of the county border (i.e., Crockett, Gibson, Lauderdale, and McNairy). In fact, harvesting more deer in these counties is the best chance we have of containing the natural spread of the disease to other parts of the state.

Hunter harvest is the primary means to best manage CWD in Tennessee, especially at the large geographical scale at which the disease is known to exist in Tennessee.

If we are responsive as hunters and harvest more deer, we will continue to enjoy an overall healthy deer population. But if we don't, CWD will do its dirty work, leaving us and future generations with a mostly diseased, unhealthy deer population in the CWD area. Furthermore, the disease will spread more rapidly potentially affecting new areas of the state and the likelihood of harvested deer being CWD-positive will increase.