

## Maryland White-tailed Deer Experiencing Hemorrhagic Disease Outbreak in Some Areas

Maryland News October 8, 2024 Maryland.gov

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) advises hunters that [Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease](#) (EHD) has been confirmed in Maryland and is the likely cause of death for white-tailed deer reported in numerous counties across the state.

EHD is a naturally occurring disease that affects white-tailed deer and, rarely, domestic livestock. **The disease poses no threat to humans.** EHD is common throughout the eastern United States and outbreaks occur in Maryland annually at differing degrees.

This year, confirmed or suspected cases of EHD have been documented in counties on the Eastern Shore, central and southern Maryland, and as far west as Garrett County. The largest outbreak in the state appears to be in Carroll, Frederick, and Washington counties. The disease has also been reported in the neighboring states of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

EHD is often fatal to deer. The infectious virus that causes EHD typically results in visible sores and secondary infections to the deer. EHD typically occurs from mid-August through October and is caused by a virus that is transmitted to deer through the bite of tiny flying midges (“no-see-ums”). EHD is not transmitted by direct contact between deer and cannot be spread to humans. Humans are not at risk by being bitten by infected midges or from handling or eating the meat of affected deer, but DNR recommends not eating deer that have large, open sores, regardless of the cause.

Deer contracting EHD may exhibit symptoms of lethargy, often salivate excessively, and appear to lose their fear of humans. Hemorrhaging or lesions of the mouth and tongue are a typical symptom. Severe emaciation may be seen in animals recovering from the disease. Dead or dying deer found near water in late summer or early fall are a common characteristic of an EHD outbreak.

Maryland is home to a healthy white-tailed deer population that is routinely subject to EHD outbreaks and easily recovers from the localized effects of the disease. EHD should not be confused with [Chronic Wasting Disease](#), a fatal disease that has been documented in western and central Maryland.

EHD occurs annually but its distribution and occurrence are highly variable. Occurrence may involve a few scattered cases or may appear as dramatic, highly visible, localized outbreaks. The onset of freezing weather typically kills the midges that transmit the virus and brings an end to EHD outbreaks.

Hunters, outdoor enthusiasts, and other citizens who encounter a sick or freshly dead deer should not disturb or remove the animal but are encouraged to contact their local or regional DNR wildlife office to report the location.