

**Georgia Department of Natural Resources Incident
Action Plan**

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Detected in Georgia



Incident Name Georgia Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

Operational Period # 10

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

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)		
Operational Period #	10		
Op Period Dates	04-06-2025 to 05-04-2025		
Incident Commander and Command Staff		Operations Section	
IC/UC's	Charlie Killmaster		Chief Alley Philson
			Deputy
Deputy	Kevin Rose		Staging Area Home Office
Safety Officer	David Gregory		Branch Event 1
Public Info. Officer	Kaitlin Goode		Branch Director David Mixon
Liaison Officer			Deputy
Agency/Org Representatives		Division/Group	
Agency/Org			Division/Group
GA Dept of Agriculture	State Vet - Hennebelle		Branch Branch Director Chris Baumann
SCWDS	Mark Ruder		Deputy
			Division/Group
			Division/Group
			Division/Group
Planning Section		Branch	
Chief	Charlie Killmaster		Branch Director Brian Vickery
Deputy			Deputy
Resources Unit			Division/Group
Situation Unit			Division/Group
Documentation Unit			Division/Group
Demobilization Unit			Branch
Technical Specialists			Branch Director
			Deputy
			Division/Group
			Division/Group
Logistics Section			
Chief	Greg Nelms		
Deputy	Drew Zellner		
Support Branch		Air Operations Branch	
Director			Director
Supply Unit			Deputy
Facilities Unit	GA State Parks		
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

Incident Name Georgia Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

Operational Period 10

Operational Period Dates 04-06-2025 to 05-04-2025

CWD Management Zone Map



Operational Period Objectives

Incident Name	Georgia Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)
Operational Period	10
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Objective 1: Maintain frequent and excellent communication regarding CWD status and ongoing response efforts.

Objective 2: Identify and partner with landowners/hunting clubs to collect 20-30 CWD tissue samples within a 1-mile radius of the CWD positive site.

Actions:

Identify landowners within a 1-mile radius of confirmed CWD-positive sites. *Ongoing*

Prioritize contacting landowners with more than 20 acres of land to educate them about CWD and biological sampling opportunities. *Ongoing*

Discuss with landowners the benefits and process of cooperating with biological sampling efforts, and gauge their interest in participation. *Ongoing*

Facilitate the collection of samples through these partners by coordinating with hunters for late-season submissions. *Ongoing*

Work with impacted area stakeholders to continue cluster sampling where the positive deer was killed. *Ongoing, led to discovery of 2nd positive 4/18.*

Ensure that all landowners who agree to participate in sampling sign the landowner authorization form to allow for biological sampling on their property.

Objective 3: Contact Taxidermists and Deer Processors in the CWD Management Area and collect available CWD tissue samples. *Completed 1/24/2025*

Objective 4: Identify and contact crop depredation permit holders within the CWD Management Area and partner to collect CWD tissue samples.

Actions:

This objective aims to increase cooperation from landowners and local partners, ensuring comprehensive surveillance and data collection for CWD monitoring. *Ongoing, 16 farmers participating as of 4/25. Sampling*

Objective 5: Establish and implement protocol to collect tissue samples from deer killed by vehicles in the CWD Management Area. *Completed and ongoing*

Objective 6: Develop budget impact documents for CWD response efforts.

Completed 2/15. FY26 Budget added \$250k to support management and monitoring.

Objective 7: Identify and establish deer disposal recommendations in the CWD Management Area and statewide.

Actions:

Research and identify local disposal facilities or approved methods for the safe and responsible disposal of deer carcasses in the impacted area. *Ongoing*

Coordinate with local waste management services and landfills to determine available options for deer carcass disposal. *Statewide carcass disposal rule proposed.*

Explore alternative disposal options, such as incineration, in collaboration with state or federal agencies, if applicable. *Ongoing*

Assess the logistics and costs of transporting deer carcasses to disposal sites, and determine the most efficient and environmentally safe methods. *Ongoing*

Establish protocols for the proper handling and disposal of deer carcasses to prevent the spread of CWD, including any necessary training or guidelines for staff and partners. *Ongoing*

Communicate the identified disposal options to landowners, hunters, and local stakeholders, ensuring they are informed about proper disposal procedures. *Statewide carcass disposal rule proposed.*

Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of disposal methods throughout the impacted area, making adjustments as needed to ensure compliance and safety. *Statewide carcass disposal rule proposed*

This objective ensures that proper disposal methods are in place to reduce the risk of spreading CWD and to comply with local regulations and best practices. *Statewide carcass disposal rule proposed.*

Objective 8: Expand CWD testing capacity at the UGA School of Veterinary Medicine (contractor).

Meeting with lab Director scheduled 2/26/2025. *Completed*

Met with SCWDS to develop RT-QuIC environmental sampling protocol. *Completed 3/2/2025*

Update contract with UGA AVDL to purchase additional lab equipment for ELISA and RT-QuIC and increase tech staff. *Received lab equipment quote from AVDL 4/15*

Develop contract with Tifton AVDL to purchase ELISA equipment.

Objective 9: Expand CWD monitoring through environmental surveillance.

Meet with University of Minnesota and Priogen to discuss environmental surveillance with RT-QuIC technology. *Completed 2/13 and 2/18*

Order sampling supplies from Priogen.

Meet with GDA to discuss sampling in deer facility. *Completed 2/21*

Conduct environmental surveillance on deer facilities inside CMA.

Objective 10: Assess human dimensions of risk factors in the CMA and identify mitigation recommendations.

Coordinate with UGA to develop a research proposal to assess CWD risk factors before and after educational campaign. *Completed 2/20 Contract signed 4/23*

Develop and implement educational campaign on CWD risk factors and management.

Objective 11: Establish CWD sampling locations within CMA

Contact taxidermists and processors to encourage participating in sampling. *Ongoing.*

Identify self-serve sampling sites for hunters to leave deer heads in freezers. *12 suitable sites identified as of 4/25*

Order required supplies and equipment for sites. *Ongoing*

Complete signage and instructions for sampling sites. *ETA 7/1*

Complete sampling sites and develop protocol for routine monitoring and sample extraction. *ETA 8/15*

Assignment List

Incident Name Georgia Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)
Operational Period 10
Operational Period Dates 04-06-2025 to 05-04-2025
Operations Section Chief
Branch Director
Divison/Group Supervisor
Resoures Assigned

Resource Identifier	Leader	# of Persons	Contact	Reporting Location
N/A				

Work Assignments
N/A

Special Instructions
N/A

Communications List

Incident Name Georgia Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)
Operational Period 10
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Divison/Section/Group	Position Assigned	Name	Method of Contact
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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
<i>Samples collected in 1-mile radius</i>	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	Results
						<i>(roadkill, hunter harvest, processor, etc.)</i>	
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

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. *Public hearings completed 4/22/25.* No regulation changes required or proposed for CMA counties.

Safety Message

N/A

General

N/A

Prepared by	Charlie Killmaster	Incident Commander
Approved by		