

CERVID HEALTH COOPERATOR PROGRAM

TAXIDERMISTS:

Help protect North Carolina's deer herd and earn money by collecting Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) samples from North Carolina deer!

The Cervid Health Cooperator certification program is a partnership between the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) and N.C. taxidermists to increase disease surveillance in our state and monitor the health of our deer herd. Taxidermists enrolled in the certification program will learn how to obtain samples and earn money for submitting samples for testing.



How to Become a Cervid Health Cooperator?

To become a CHC, contact your local District Biologist (contact information can be found at www.ncwildlife.org/taxidermist). A one-on-one or small group training will be scheduled, which will include a hands-on demonstration on collecting the medial Retropharyngeal Lymph Nodes (RPLNs). Only certified collectors will be paid. After successfully completing the training, CHCs will be certified to harvest samples from North Carolina deer and receive a free CHC cap!

Why Collect Medial Retropharyngeal Lymph Nodes?

RPLNs are collected to test for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). CWD is a fatal neurological disease in cervids (e.g. deer, elk, moose, and reindeer/caribou). The source of the disease is an abnormal prion (a form of protein) that collects in the animal's lymph nodes and brain cells. The brain cells eventually burst, leaving behind microscopic empty spaces in the brain matter that give it a "spongy" look. However, it can take over 16 months for obvious signs of CWD to develop, meaning cervids can appear to be healthy yet still have the disease. RPLNs are used to test for CWD, even prior to physical signs developing in the animal.



For more details, visit www.ncwildlife.org/taxidermist or call 919-707-0075.

IMPORTANT: CWD was first detected in North Carolina in 2022. For an updated list of affected counties visit ncwildlife.org/cwd.