

Hemorrhagic Disease



WILDLIFE HEALTH PROGRAM

What is Hemorrhagic Disease?

Hemorrhagic Disease (HD) is a disease caused by the epizootic hemorrhagic disease virus or the bluetongue virus. The disease can lead to significant population declines, particularly during outbreaks.

How is Hemorrhagic Disease spread?

The viruses that cause HD are transmitted by biting midges (tiny flies) whose populations peak in summers with a lot of early rainfall followed by dry weather, creating ideal environmental conditions for their reproduction.

What are the symptoms of Hemorrhagic Disease ?

Symptoms can include depression, difficulty breathing, lameness, and swelling of the head, neck, or tongue. Affected deer often develop a fever and seek out water to drink and cool off, which is why many deer with HD are found dead near water sources.

Does Hemorrhagic Disease pose a risk to people or other animals?

There is no evidence to suggest that HD viruses can infect humans. While the midges that carry these viruses can infect cattle and sheep, the transmission of the disease from deer to livestock has not been reported. Elk are also susceptible to HD viruses and can become infected, but they are not as vulnerable to the disease as white-tailed deer.

Can Hemorrhagic Disease Be Prevented?

There is little that can be done to prevent HD, but the first hard frost will kill the midges that transmit the disease, effectively stopping the outbreaks. Some deer survive HD and develop immunity, which they can pass on to their fawns, providing them with temporary protection.

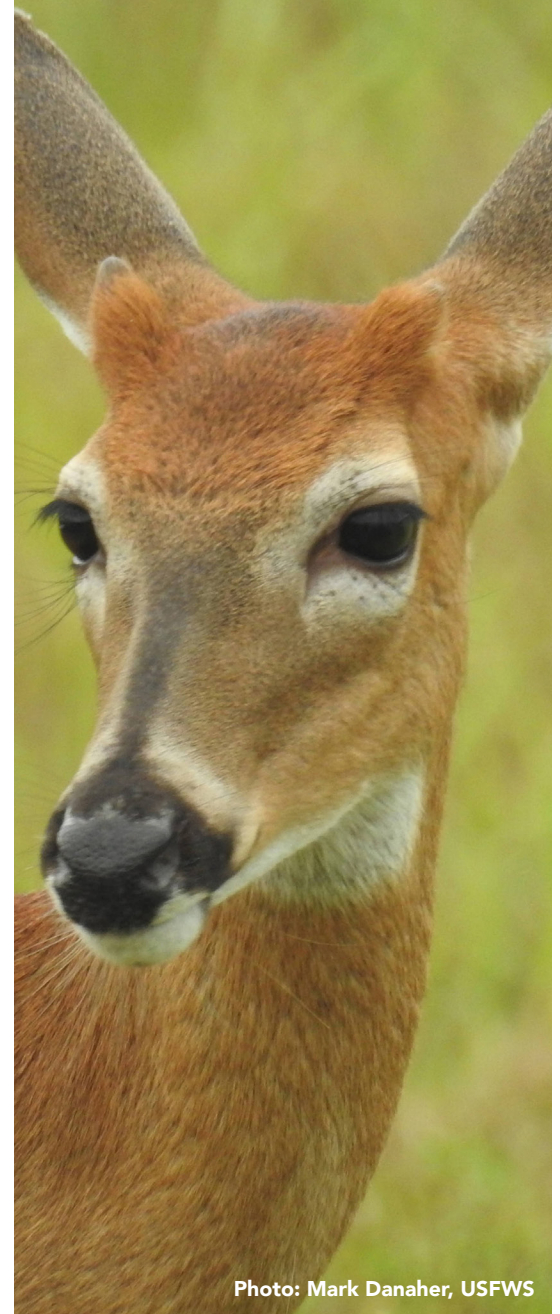


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