

Hemorrhagic Disease in Deer – Frequently Asked Questions

What is EHD or “Bluetongue”?

Hemorrhagic Disease results from naturally occurring viruses that affect deer. It is transmitted through the bite of a midge (gnat) that carries the virus, and not directly from deer to deer. After receiving reports of unexplained dead and sick deer in August 2017, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife submitted tissues from some of the sick deer observed, and confirmed the presence of the Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) virus.

Are humans at risk?

No. This virus does not affect people, so it cannot be contracted by eating meat from infected deer. The Department always recommends harvesting and consuming only healthy deer. Use disposable gloves to field dress game and to process raw meat, which help prevent food-borne illnesses in general.

What about my pets and livestock?

Pets are not susceptible. Livestock can be exposed, but do not usually die.

Where is the outbreak occurring?

Most reports in summer 2017 have come from eastern Kentucky (east of I-75). Here’s a [Map of EHD Reports in KY](#) from 2017, which is updated weekly.

Will this affect the 2017 deer hunting season?

No. The Department encourages people to still [go deer hunting](#) statewide. Remember, most deer will not be affected and after the first hard frost the virus outbreak will stop. Harvest and consume only healthy-looking deer and enjoy the deer season as usual!

What should I do if I find sick or dead deer?

Report it to Fish and Wildlife using this [online form](#).

How many deer will be affected this year?

KY has deer affected by EHD every year, with more severe outbreaks occurring every 5 to 7 years. Outbreaks can be major, but the population rebounds quickly. Only a fraction of the deer population is affected even in years with major outbreaks. Some deer will contract the virus and survive.

What can be done?

Nothing can be done to prevent or treat the disease. The Department [tracks reports](#) from the public and tests sick deer for the virus when possible.

When will it end?

The first hard frost will kill the gnats and stop the outbreak.

What should I do with a deer carcass that I find?

Please report unexplained deer deaths or sickness using this [online form](#). If near a home or business, you can bury it or cover it with lime to reduce the smell. Remove it from any body of water that is a drinking water source.

Will Kentucky Fish and Wildlife remove the carcass?

No. Landowners may leave carcasses to decompose naturally or dispose of them if they wish to. If you see a carcass on a road or roadside, please contact the county road department.