

*The following is a news release that was issued by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.*



The Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife is advising hunters and other outdoors enthusiasts in the East Amwell, Hopewell and Hillsborough areas of west-central New Jersey to be alert for white-tailed deer that wildlife biologists believe are experiencing symptoms of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD), a localized virus that spreads among deer through the bites of midge flies.

EHD is not a public health issue. It cannot be transmitted to people, and humans are not at risk by handling infected deer, being bitten by infected midges, or eating infected deer meat - though the Division of Fish and Wildlife strongly advises against consuming meat from any game animal that appears ill.

Although livestock can be infected with EHD, the disease is relatively benign in livestock and is likely to go unnoticed.

"A number of people have reported seeing deer that exhibit signs of EHD," said David Chanda, director of the DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife. "The Division is asking the

public to report any deer showing symptoms of the disease to help us monitor the impact on the local deer herd."

EHD is a common viral disease in deer that is contracted from the bite of a species of midge known as *Culioides sonorensis*. It does not spread from deer to deer. EHD outbreaks end with the onset of colder weather, which will kill midges that spread the disease.

New Jersey has documented occasional, localized outbreaks of EHD in different parts of the state for more than 50 years. The last occurred in the fall of 2010 in Salem County.

Deer typically die within 5 to 10 days of infection. Infected deer initially lose their appetite and fear of people. They grow progressively weaker and often salivate excessively. As the disease progresses, infected deer breathe heavily and develop a fever. Fever-ridden deer may go to water to drink or in an attempt to cool off. Eight to 36 hours following the onset of observable signs, the infected deer pass into a shock-like state, become prostrate and die.

Deer exhibiting signs of EHD, such as difficulty standing, drooling, emitting foam from the mouth or nose, or dead deer with no apparent wounds, observed in or near water should be reported to the Division's Office of Fish and Wildlife Health Forensics by calling Bill Stansley at (908) 236-2118 or Carole Stanko at (908) 735-704.

Livestock infected with EHD may show clinical signs similar to a number of other livestock diseases. People suspecting these diseases should test their animals and can seek information from the State Veterinarian's Office at (609) 292-3965.