



# Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



## 2012-2013 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET

### Wildlife Health

**Expenditures: \$975,000 FY 2012 / \$975,000 FY 2013**

**(General Fund)**

#### **It is needed because**

Wildlife health issues have recently become more prevalent in and around Minnesota and threaten to impact both recreational opportunities and commercial poultry and cattle operations in the state. The first confirmed case of chronic wasting disease (CWD), a fatal disease of deer, elk, and moose, was detected in the state's wild deer population near Pine Island in southeastern Minnesota in the fall of 2010. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has initiated a significant management response within the area. Chronic wasting disease (CWD) was also confirmed on a captive cervid farm in Olmsted County in 2009, prompting DNR to conduct surveillance in that area for a 3-year period to ensure the disease has not spilled over into wild deer. This is the fourth time a captive cervid farm has been found with CWD in Minnesota and DNR has responded with increase surveillance in wild deer. DNR also will continue to periodically conduct surveillance along the border with Wisconsin, which has endemic CWD in wild deer.

Since its initial discovery in cattle and wild deer in 2005, bovine tuberculosis (TB) has been confirmed in 27 deer, all located within a relatively small core area near Skime, Minnesota. DNR has been monitoring deer for bovine TB, reducing deer numbers through hunting, landowner shooting, and intensively removing deer from the core area by sharpshooting. Currently, DNR has a signed Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Minnesota Board of Animal Health to conduct surveillance for bovine TB in deer at least through 2014.

DNR also monitors and manages disease in waterfowl and other wild birds, including monitoring for avian influenza as part of a national initiative to detect highly pathogenic strains if they occur in North America. DNR monitors and manages Newcastle Disease Virus (NDV)

in wild birds that also has the potential to affect commercial poultry operations.

Further, DNR is currently involved in a study to monitor the health of the wolf population through disease screening of depredating, vehicle-killed, and radio-collared wolves.

#### **Major program elements**

Key measures of performance will be:

- Collecting sufficient bovine TB and CWD samples to meet statistical goals of sample size and distribution;
- Completing diagnostics on all samples collected;
- Conducting surveillance to determine the spatial distribution and infection rates,
- Providing liaison with other collaborators;
- Purchasing sampling and other supplies, and incur travel and miscellaneous expenses;
- Removing infected species, where necessary;
- Promulgating and enforce rules which prevent spread of disease; and
- Promulgating special hunting seasons and limits.

#### **Project locations**

The wildlife health program supports statewide resources.

#### **Key measures and outcomes**

- More than 1,500 hunter-harvested samples collected for bovine tuberculosis testing in deer in northwestern Minnesota each fall;
- Successful monitoring of the health of wild birds through morbidity and mortality surveillance;
- Diagnostic screening results for sick wildlife, which includes all game species;
- Education and outreach to agency staff and the public about wildlife health issues;

- Updated wildlife health information on DNR's website, keeping the public informed of surveillance efforts and general wildlife health issues; and
- Extensive hunter-harvested samples collected for chronic wasting disease testing within the CWD management zone in southwest Minnesota during calendar years 2011 and 2012.

**Financial Implications (if appropriate)**

This initiative would provide a one-time appropriation from the general fund of \$975,000 each year in FY 2013-13 for monitoring and managing wild animal health issues throughout Minnesota.

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