

Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

Natural Resources Department

Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation & Conservation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday September 24, 2026

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CSKT Wildlife Management Program Confirms Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) on white-tailed deer mortalities from the Flathead Indian Reservation

A hemorrhagic disease (EHD) caused by biting midge flies has been confirmed to be the source of mortalities in white-tailed deer from the areas surrounding Polson, Ronan, St. Ignatius, Hot Springs and Mission Valley. Though it is a viral disease, it is not contagious to humans but can influence deer and elk species. Outbreaks tend to occur near water sources in late-summer and early fall when certain small fly species emerge. The disease can persist in an area for 2-3 years after an initial outbreak, and will likely subside after the first few frosts of the season.

CSKT Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation staff are continuing to monitor the situation. It is not necessary for the public to report additional dead deer suspected of EHD in these areas, but potential outbreaks observed in new areas of the Reservation should be reported by emailing Wildlife@cskt.org or calling the Wildlife Conflict Call number at 406-275-2774.

It is important to note that, while the disease can cause significant die-offs in localized deer populations, the outbreaks are usually short-lived and not wide-spread. Effected areas are generally localized and not spread across large areas. Meat from animals that appear healthy at the time of harvest remain safe to eat when properly cooked, though please consider having any harvested animal tested for Chronic Wasting Disease.

Attention Hunters, Anglers, Recreators: Carcasses tend to be concentrated around water sources, in particular, and can be creating an attractant for bear. Both grizzly and black bears are eating excessively to prepare for hibernation. Deer can be a nice boost for their hungry appetite, but also a potential place for a negative interaction between recreation and wildlife. Please carry bear spray and use extreme caution when recreating.



DIVISION OF FISH, WILDLIFE,
RECREATION & CONSERVATION

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WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

EHD ON THE RESERVATION

EHD is a viral disease that is transmitted through biting midges. Outbreaks tend to happen near water sources in late-summer and early fall when these midges emerge. The first frost will cause the outbreak to end. 2025 was a particularly active year for Hot Springs and multiple Mission Valley areas, and it is likely to return this year.

While this disease can cause significant die-off's, the outbreak is short-lived and localized. Please only report very recently deceased deer or new outbreaks by email or phone call.

**EHD ONLY EFFECTS RUMINANTS (DEER,
ELK, ETC.) THERE IS NO HUMAN OR PET
RISK**

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EHD AND CWD

EHD (Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease)

- Lethargy
- Foaming at the mouth
- Swollen/blue tongue
- Infection is rapidly fatal, it is common to see group die-offs in small, localized areas

CWD (Chronic Wasting Disease)

- Droopy ears, neck and head
- often walking in circles
- Excessive drooling
- Extremely emaciated (ie. can count ribs and see hip bones)



Wildlife@cskt.org



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