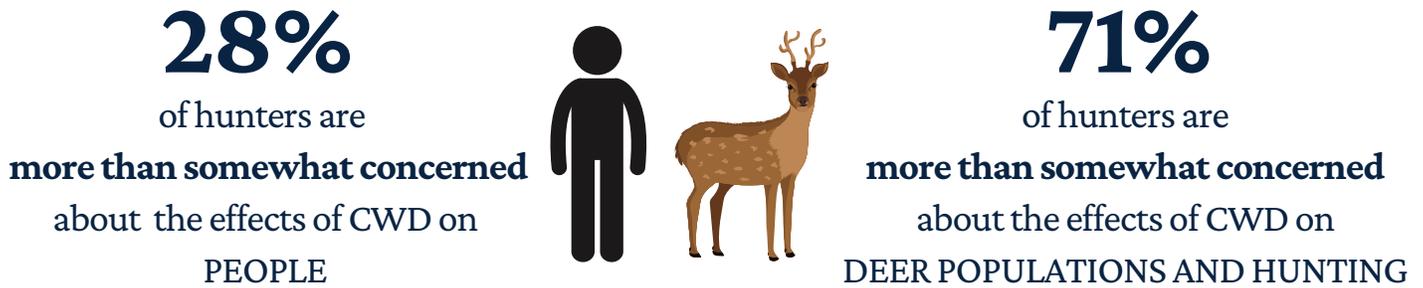


# How concerned are hunters about CWD?

A random sample of 727 North Carolina deer hunters in 2022 found that...



Hunters are **somewhat concerned** about eating deer meat that **WASN'T TESTED** for CWD, but become **very concerned** about meat that tested **POSITIVE** for CWD

Hunters become more concerned about CWD when a positive deer is within

**36 miles**  
of where they hunt



Hunters support changes to deer population management when a CWD positive deer is found

**34 miles**  
from where they hunt



Hunters over 55 have higher concern for the effects of CWD on people

## Recommendations

- Emphasize the impact that CWD can have on deer populations and hunting
- Explore options to decrease turnaround time of test results
- Continue to share the location of current CWD detections with hunters, especially when detections are within 35 miles of their main hunting area
- Communicate to hunters 55 and older that there has not been a documented case of CWD transmitted from deer to humans

# Hunter Behaviors and CWD Management Preferences



NC STATE UNIVERSITY College of Natural Resources

## Hunters are unlikely to change their hunting behaviors if CWD is found in their main hunting area

Hunters are not likely to:

- Hunt more in that area
- Hunt in different NC county/state
- Hunt other species
- Stop hunting completely

30% would not hunt less in that area

40% would not change anything



## Management Preferences

54% of hunters think significantly decreasing the overall deer population is acceptable

30% of hunters think significantly decreasing the overall number of mature bucks is acceptable

>50% of hunters think the agency requiring unused deer parts to be buried, incinerated, or disposed of in a landfill and requiring all hunters to provide a sample for testing is acceptable

<40% of hunters think the agency banning removal of deer skulls and spinal cords from the location where the deer was harvested, banning supplemental feeding/baiting of deer, and doing nothing is acceptable

## Hunting Frequency

If 1 out of every 10 deer in their main hunting area had CWD, 54% of hunters wouldn't change their hunting frequency

If 1/2 of the deer in their main hunting area had CWD, 33% of hunters would stop hunting completely

*This could help the NCWRC encourage hunters to limit the spread of CWD via hunting.*

## Confidence in the NCWRC

>60%

are **VERY CONFIDENT** that the NCWRC will provide truthful, timely, and sufficient information about CWD.



Hunters over 55 and hunters who identify as being politically liberal would be less likely to hunt if CWD was found in their main hunting area compared to their counterparts.



Hunters over 55, hunters who identify as being politically liberal, and hunters who are more formally educated would be more likely to accept agency intervention for purposes of CWD management compared to their counterparts.

# Knowledge of CWD Among NC Deer Hunters

**92%** of hunters had heard of CWD, but most (61%) reported they only knew a little about it

## Percentage Who Answered Correctly

Five statements were presented to test hunters' knowledge on CWD.

Statement	True or False?	% Correct
CWD outbreaks typically occur in late summer to early fall	False	10%
Research suggests CWD has created some human health problems	False	27%
Deer infected with CWD will die only if they experience a severe case	False	47%
A deer that has CWD can still look healthy	True	61%
The importation of whole deer carcasses into NC is prohibited to prevent the spread of CWD	True	74%

Most hunters would prefer to receive new information about CWD through the NCWRC website



[ncwildlife.org/cwd](http://ncwildlife.org/cwd)

## Management Recommendations based on True/False Results

Differentiate between CWD and seasonal diseases (e.g., EHD)

Highlight CWD safety precautions recommended by the CDC and the fact that no cervid to human transmission has ever been documented

Emphasize 100% fatality rate

# WILLINGNESS TO PAY (WTP) FOR CWD MANAGEMENT



WTP is an economic technique used to determine the cost people assign to non-market goods. CWD is a costly disease, with hundreds of thousands of dollars being allocated each year for its management (i.e., getting samples tested, disposing of infected carcasses in a safe way, etc.). About half of the North Carolina hunters sampled are willing to pay for CWD testing or safe disposal.

## Percentage of Hunters Willing to Pay

Testing: **53%**

Disposal: **47%**

>95% hunters said that they would be willing to test a deer they harvested for CWD or safely dispose of the carcass if doing so were **FREE**.

## Average WTP

Testing: **\$19.26**

Disposal: **\$18.51**



## Importance of CWD Management Attributes

(percentage = number of hunters who deemed attribute important)

### Testing

Accuracy of test results.....	93%
Turnaround time of test results.....	76%
Convenience of submitting a sample.....	74%
Cost of a test.....	71%

### Disposal

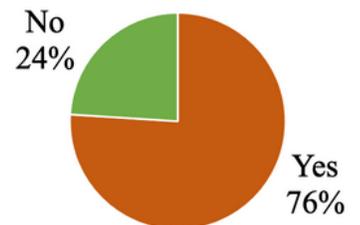
Effectiveness in preventing CWD spread.....	86%
Convenience of disposal.....	80%
Cost of disposal.....	75%
Option for independent disposal.....	62%

## Other Factors to Consider

Hunters who are older, identify as politically liberal, and more formally educated are more likely to be willing to pay for testing and disposal than their counterparts.



If you harvested a deer in a CWD-prevalent county, do you have access to a place where you can sanitarly dispose of it?



Survey period: March-August 2022, Sample: NC deer hunters (n = 1029; 12%)

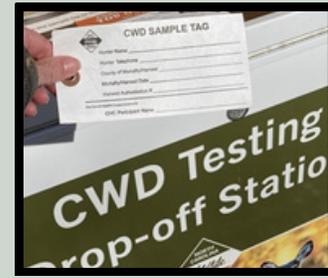
For more information on these findings, please email Catherine Lerosé at [catherine.lerosé@ncwildlife.org](mailto:catherine.lerosé@ncwildlife.org) or Cristina Watkins at [cristina.watkins@ncwildlife.org](mailto:cristina.watkins@ncwildlife.org)

# 2022 NC Successful Deer Hunter Survey: Reasons Why Hunters Did or Did Not Test Their Deer For CWD



## Top Reasons Hunters Tested Their Deer:

1. To contribute to science and deer management
2. To help the NCWRC
3. To do the responsible thing
4. To ensure that they are not eating meat from a CWD-infected deer
5. To know if their harvested deer had CWD



## Recommendations:

- *Stress the important role that hunters play in CWD management*
- *Encourage testing before consumption of meat*

## Top Reasons Hunters Did Not Test Their Deer:

1. CWD was not in their area, so they aren't worried about harvested deer having it
2. They didn't know how to submit a sample
3. Their deer looked healthy
4. They are not worried about eating a deer that might have CWD
5. They are not concerned about CWD

This was a popular reason for all hunters - EVEN THOSE WITHIN SURVEILLANCE AREAS.



## Recommendations:

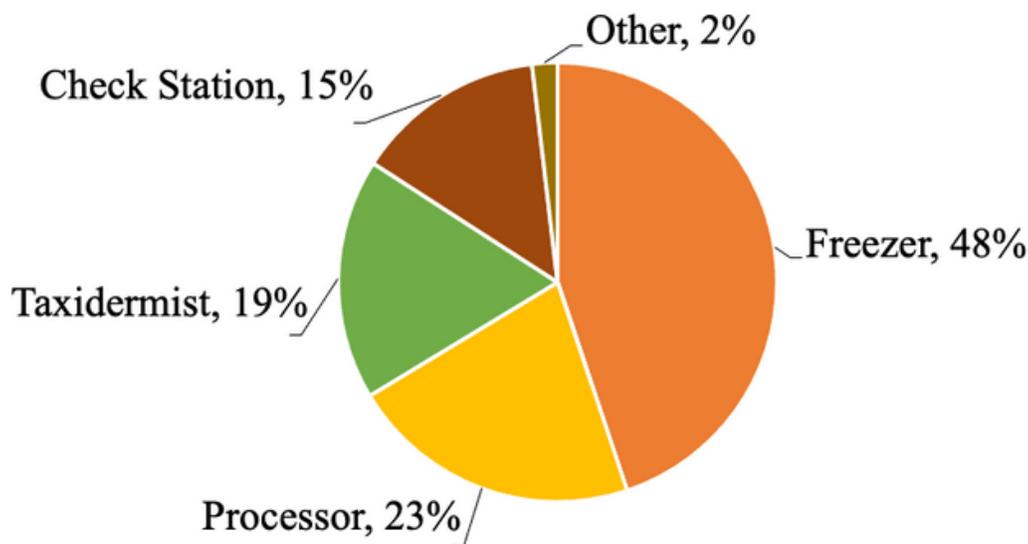
- *Highlight the rapid-spreading nature of CWD and the importance of testing to determine its location*
- *Inform hunters that healthy-looking deer can be infected*



# 2022 NC SUCCESSFUL DEER HUNTER SURVEY: TESTING FOR CWD IN THE SURVEILLANCE AREA



## How did hunters get their deer tested for CWD? (n = 621)



## Why did hunters choose that method to get their deer tested?

### FREEZER

**92%** felt safe dropping off the head at the freezer location

### CHECK STATION

**91%** felt the wait time at the check station was acceptable

## Convenience

### PROCESSOR

**88%** felt it was easy to drop their deer off at a processor

## They were already dropping off their deer

### TAXIDERMIST

**89%** felt it was easy to drop their deer off at a taxidermist

**88%** of respondents said they would use the same method again.

The majority of the information above comes from hunters who had to test at least one of their deer. Therefore, making testing convenient is an important consideration for compliance in the SAs.



# 2022 NC SUCCESSFUL DEER HUNTER SURVEY: CWD TESTING



## #1 REASON FOR TESTING

Inside & Outside of the Surveillance Area (SA)



To contribute to science and deer management

## INSIDE SA

MOST POPULAR TESTING METHOD:

**Freezer**



## OUTSIDE SA

MOST POPULAR TESTING METHOD:

**Processor**



#1 REASON HUNTERS DIDN'T TEST:

**They are not worried about eating a CWD-infected deer**

#1 REASON HUNTERS DIDN'T TEST:

**CWD is not in their area, so they are not worried about deer having it**