



## IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

### **November 2025 Commission Meeting**

**Agenda Item No.: 12**

**Agenda Item:** Hemorrhagic Disease in North Idaho White-tailed Deer

**Supervisor Approval:** SR

**Presented by:** Jana Ashling and Nathan Floyd

**Position/Title:** Regional Wildlife Manager, Regional Wildlife Biologist

### **Background:**

During late summer and early fall 2025, the Clearwater and Panhandle Regions experienced a widespread outbreak of Hemorrhagic Disease in white-tailed deer. Hemorrhagic Disease is a naturally occurring viral disease transmitted by biting midges (aka no-see-ums). Outbreaks typically occur in late summer when midge activity is high and subside after the first hard frosts. Infected white-tailed deer usually die within days of infection, and outbreaks often result in noticeable mortality events in localized areas, especially where deer densities are high. Bluetongue, a disease caused by a related virus that is transmitted by the same midges, was also detected in white-tailed deer in north Idaho this year. Both diseases cause similar clinical signs in deer, neither pose a threat to humans or pets, but bluetongue may cause illness in livestock.

The first detection of the year occurred on August 13, following a report of three dead deer found in an irrigation canal south of Lewiston (GMU 11). Field necropsies showed signs consistent with hemorrhagic disease and samples submitted to the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (WADDL) tested positive for EHD. Additional samples submitted by the Panhandle Region in September tested positive for both EHD and Bluetongue viruses.

To assist in monitoring the outbreak, IDFG relied on an online reporting form, phone calls, and emails from officers and the public to track suspected cases. As of October 20, biologists in the Clearwater Region had received 1,079 reports of suspected EHD-related deer mortalities, most from GMUs 8 and 8A and fewer from GMUs 11A, 14, and neighboring units. During the same period, the Panhandle Region received 384 reports, primarily from GMUs 5 and 6. The total number of deer lost during the outbreak cannot be accurately estimated, however reports and field observations suggest that losses were significant in localized areas.

Outbreaks of EHD have occurred previously in the Clearwater Region, most notably in 2003 and 2021. The 2025 outbreak appears similar in overall severity to the 2021 event. However, the 2021 outbreak was centered near Kamiah/Kooskia (GMU 11A) and downstream along the Clearwater River (GMUs 8 and 10A), while the 2025 outbreak has been concentrated farther north around Deary (GMUs 8 and 8A) in the Clearwater region and near St. Maries (GMUs 5 and 6) in the Panhandle region.



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At this time IDFG is not recommending any changes to current white-tailed deer seasons. While EHD has caused localized losses, primarily on private lands, white-tailed deer numbers across north Idaho remain strong. EHD outbreaks are often most severe where deer densities are highest. Before this outbreak, GMU 8A and northern portions of 8 supported some of the highest whitetail densities in the Clearwater Region. Although these events can cause visible losses in localized areas, white-tailed deer reproduce quickly and habitat conditions are generally favorable in north Idaho. Populations typically recover within three to five years under these conditions. IDFG will closely monitor hunter harvest results this year and will evaluate the overall impact of the 2025 outbreak on white-tailed deer populations to ensure future seasons and bag limits remain sustainable.

### **Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:**

Idaho Code 36-103 charges the Commission and Department with preserving, protecting, perpetuating, and managing the state's wildlife. Idaho Code 36-104(2) grants authority to the Commission to determine when an open season may be declared for the taking of wildlife.

### **Public Involvement Process:**

This presentation is for Commission information. The public has the opportunity to comment during the Commission public hearing.

### **Justification:**

This presentation is designed to provide the Commission with information on Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) and its recent impact on the white-tailed deer population in north Idaho so that they may incorporate this information in their decision making and public interactions.

### **Staff Recommendation:**

N/A. This agenda item is for Commission information only.