

# CWD

Truths & Myths & Facts & Lies

## CHAPTER 2 “Common Sense is on Vacation”

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**S**ometimes the truth you experience in life is crazier than you could ever dream or write in a fictional story. The ongoing CWD drama is just like that. You could not write a more incredulous script than what has played out in real life.

After my last story about CWD, a trusted wildlife colleague approached me and she challenged me about how serious CWD is. I knew when I wrote the story about CWD, that it was a deadly disease and how serious it was to a deer AND how insignificant it was to the total deer population in America. The press and all the “Deer Darwin’s” have been scaring everyone for 48 years about the coming wildlife holocaust that was just around the corner with the CWD plague. WHY????? Why should I write a single word about what CWD is or what it

does....every article written by the Government and the press ends with a standard CWD disclaimer. Here it goes.... “CWD is deadly to Cervids and has not killed humans so far,...but might have a serious impact to humans in the future” blah, blah, blah. Some claims are more serious than others, but it must be some kind of “press card prerequisite” to put some scary disclaimer on every CWD story. It seems that if you don’t put that disclaimer in your story, then you don’t get to attend their annual BBQ or award

ceremony. Gosh...I just wish some of these people would leave their city offices and go into the rural areas to do some honest to goodness investigation about the facts!!!! Like...how did CWD get to southern New Mexico? How did CWD get to Oklahoma? Huh???? It was NOT a deer breeding operation, which seems to be the favorite whipping post for every story about CWD. The press is all too quick to play the "Blame Game" when CWD is concerned.

What is serious though... is the impact these reports have on our country and our way of life. People are being scared and misled by these "reporters of the news". The real impact....people are not taking their families on trips to the country to go camping, people are not taking their kids hunting, people are afraid of catching CWD.

I had an intern that worked for me last summer. He call a few weeks ago and said that his college roommate would not eat any of his deer venison because he was afraid of catching CWD. Now where in the hell did he get that idea? What professor or magazine told him that? I emailed him a copy of my recent CWD article, they read the article and they both later enjoyed a tasty venison dinner. Another friend near Dallas called recently and said his best hunter was not coming to his ranch this year and when pressed why...he stated that he was afraid of catching CWD. I also had 2 families that came hunting this fall and they left their kids at home in Arkansas.

When pressed why the kids did not come, they admitted they did not want them to catch CWD. Congrats to all the writers and reporters....you have repeated your propaganda and it is now impacting the economy...in a negative direction. No telling how many others have been led astray by CWD stories and what will be the long term impact on camping and hunting in America.

Let's go over the facts one more time. 48 years after creating and finding CWD at a research facility in Colorado,..... not a single person has died from CWD. Let me repeat that FACT for the folks that have written articles about CWD. Millions and millions of hunters have entered the woods and taken home venison to eat and not a single person has died from CWD. They may have put too much garlic on their meat and suffered from indigestion, but NO ONE has ever died from CWD. How can we say that any differently? Since 1965 not a single human in the United States of America has died from CWD. NOT ONE PERSON. Why do I continue to write this fact...because people continue to tell me that they are afraid of "catching CWD and getting seriously ill". Where did they get this idea? Who is spreading this lie and why? It is the great myth.

I recently attended a presentation by the State Parks and Wildlife division to get an updated story on CWD in Texas. They reported several more mule deer had been found in Far West Texas near El Paso with CWD. They had tracked their movement from

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southern New Mexico. Their presentation indicated that several cervids (primarily deer and elk) had been found with CWD in southern New Mexico. That was interesting....and I asked how did CWD get to southern New Mexico? We were told that mule deer were brought down from Northern Colorado (CWD Ground Zero) years ago to help the declining deer population in New Mexico. Duh! And now these infected deer were finding their way into the mountains of Far West Texas. We later heard alarming facts of the CWD infection rates and the declining mule deer population in New Mexico.

At this point I do have to apologize to Texas Parks and Wildlife. I previously wrongly accused them of sending out a letter scaring hunters about CWD in Texas. However, I was right when I said that CWD was a Political Disease. They agreed that CWD was a political disease. Several other states contacted the State of Texas last year and asked for a list of hunters from their state. Texas replied with the information and pleaded with them not to send negative information to their hunters. Four states black-balled Texas and went on their own political/economic campaign to keep their state's hunters from going hunting in Texas. The hunters from Arkansas received a letter telling their citizens not to bring their deer back to Arkansas. Let's summarize here....2 mule deer near El Paso, Texas, were found with CWD and the State of Arkansas warned their hunters

## HOW HAS CWD REALLY SPREAD?



not to bring deer back from their Texas hunts to the state of Arkansas for fear of spreading CWD. I wonder if they also sent a letter out warning them of the CWD found in Wisconsin, New Mexico, Colorado, Pennsylvania, etc, etc. Nope....it was just a jealous political swipe at their neighbor to the south. Politics....just plain politics.

I walked out of the presentation a bit worried. Later I heard information that Mule Deer populations are declining all across the western United States. The majority of these areas have never recorded a case of CWD. Hmmmmm...my common sense would tell me that an increase in

predators and continued drought were the main reasons for the declines in the mule deer herds. Then I was shocked to hear a remarkable report of a park in South Dakota, that had a long time history of CWD in their elk herds and they were trying to move their overpopulated elk herd to a neighboring park that had a declining elk herd (which had no record of CWD). Helicopters were employed to herd the elk to the neighboring park. What?!?! Did my ears and eyes just deceive me? Everywhere we turn there are reports of various state agencies blaming CWD on Deer Breeders and Private Property owners and threats

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made to shut us down in order to maintain balance in their native deer herds.... then we have South Dakota State Parks herding 'CWD infected elk' to other parks because they did NOT see a negative impact on their cervid herds. Who is right? Wisconsin has seen the same impact as the number of whitetail deer previously found in the 'CWD infected areas' are flourishing. These realities go on and on, but are only reported in a negative way to gain political capital.....to scare the people.

Here's the deal. Little is really known about CWD. In the last 12 months I've read CWD stories that claim it is spread from animal contact from old deer/elk hides left on the ground, or from crows that eat the infected animal and fly to another location. Next we will blame the Easter Bunny for spreading the disease. In reality it

impacts a very small portion of the cervid (deer/elk) population. I have not heard from a single person that actually saw a deer die from CWD in the wild or in a private breeding facility. However, I have watched way too many videos of State Agencies shooting healthy deer in search of CWD. I have seen numerous videos and pictures of deer and elk being killed by wolves, coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions and automobiles. Most deer/elk die from other causes, but we seem focused on CWD...why?

I do believe that logical research needs to be performed by qualified institutions to validate the CWD data. New non-lethal tests need to be approved for CWD testing. Right now you have to cut the head off of a deer or elk to test for CWD. Too many healthy animals have died in the name of testing for CWD.

Too many irresponsible claims are being made about CWD and too much money and time spent battling over CWD. Some prestigious associations and institutions are using CWD to spread fear in order to gain power and funding. We now have serious government budget shortfalls and our legislator's time is precious. America needs to spend time on the really serious issues in our country. Not something that affects less than 1/10 of 1 percent of the cervid population. Let's put things in perspective and use a little common sense. Take a deep breath and discern what issues are really having an impact on our cervid population and put them in priority. While the experts spend precious time gnashing their teeth about CWD or Deer Breeding or 200-year-old wildlife models, hundreds of thousands of deer and elk are dying from EHD, Pneumonia, Predators and Automobiles every year.

