



**Report on surveillance  
and control operations**

**CHRONIC  
WASTING DISEASE  
IN CERVIDS**

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**2020**

Following the detection of 11 chronic wasting disease (CWD) cases on a red deer farm in the Laurentides region in 2018, the ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP) has implemented measures to protect wild cervid herds and continues to intervene to minimize the risk of establishment of this disease in wildlife.

The implemented measures are designed to:

- Increase surveillance of the disease to detect outbreaks in the natural environment and intervene quickly;
- Temporarily maintain a low-density deer population in the area where the disease has been detected to reduce contact between wild animals and thus limit the transmission of the disease if an infected animal is in the natural environment;
- Avoid the spread of the disease in other areas of the province.

To this day, no samples coming from wild cervids were found positive. Even though these results are promising, it is impossible to exclude beyond any doubt the presence of the disease in the wild since: 1) it is very difficult to detect CWD when few deer are infected, and 2) tests are not usually effective for detecting the disease in animals that have been infected for less than 12 months. Analyses results since 2018 show that if the disease is present in wildlife, very few animals are affected, and the disease can still be eliminated.

## Chronic wasting disease of cervids

CWD is a contagious disease of cervids that provokes the fatal degeneration of the central nervous system.

No treatment or vaccine is currently available to fight this disease.

There is currently no scientific evidence that CWD can be transmitted to humans.

When well-established in wild cervid populations, CWD is impossible to eliminate.

In the long term, if the disease is left out of control, it could lead to a significant and irreversible decline in wild cervid populations.

## Surveillance results in 2020

3,694 wild cervids analyzed

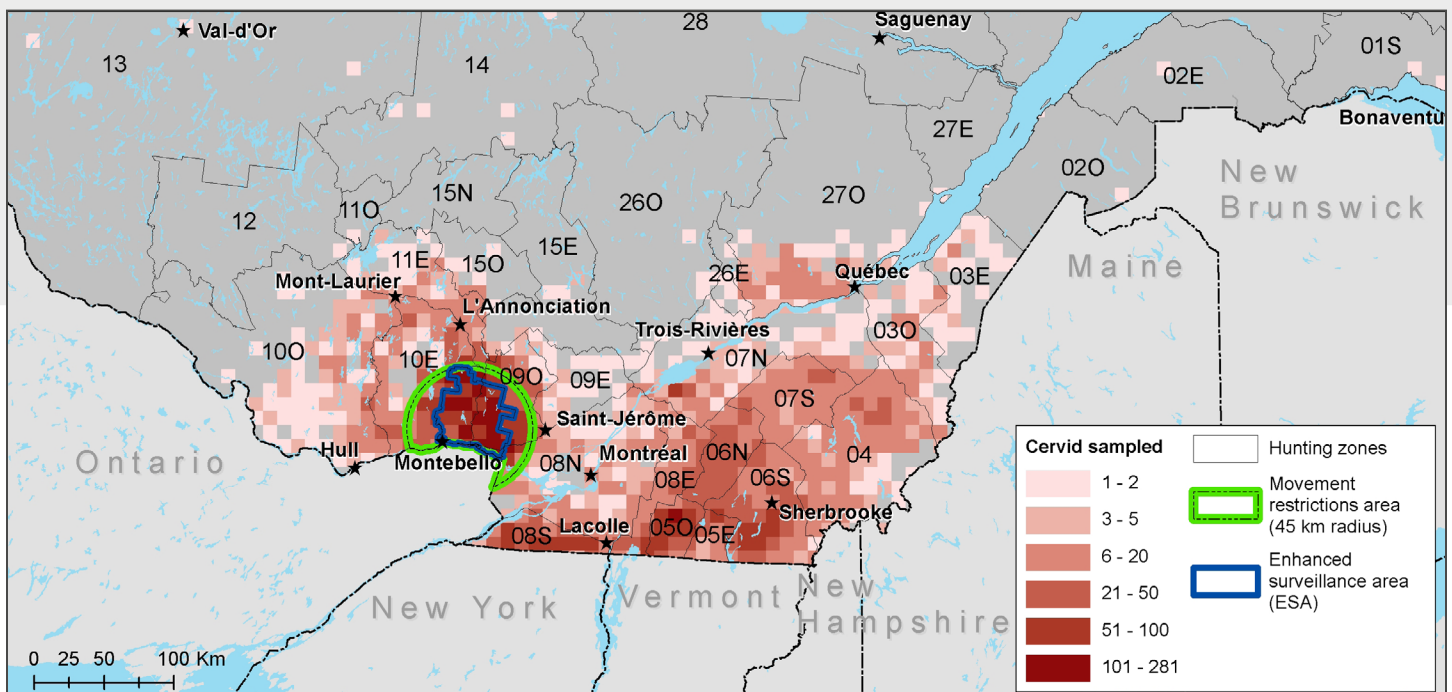
No positive cases

- 455 deer and 20 moose in the enhanced surveillance area
- 3,196 deer, 20 moose and 3 caribou elsewhere in Québec



## Highlights

- All animals at the infected farm were slaughtered in 2018 by order of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The decontamination of the farm's facilities has begun.
  - As soon as the CWD cases were found, the MFFP applied the regulations in effect to avoid the spread of the disease in other regions of Québec:
    - restrictions on the possession of whole carcasses and certain anatomical parts of cervids killed within a 45 km radius of the affected farm;
    - prohibition on the transportation of any cervid kept in captivity within a 100 km radius of the affected farm.
- These restrictions will be effective at least until and including 2023.
- Antlerless deer licences were issued in the enhanced surveillance area (ESA) for the 2020 hunting season to maintain low deer density and obtain enough samples to monitor the area effectively.
  - In 2020, all hunters who harvested a white-tailed deer or a moose over 12 months old in a 45 km radius from the location where CWD cases were detected in 2018 had to have their game tested. As in previous years, samples could be taken by Department staff at registration stations within the 45 km radius. Hunters who registered their game online could also leave the head of their game for analysis at one of the eight participating butcher shops within a 45 km radius, or at one of the seven drop points newly provided for this purpose. Analysis results were available online in the weeks following the sampling.
  - Over 60 butcher shops in nine administrative regions have participated in making sample collecting possible for deer killed in hunting elsewhere in the province.
  - Since the disease was detected on a farm in September 2018, the Department has analyzed more than 12,200 wild cervids in the province, including more than 2,900 in the ESA.
  - No CWD cases have been detected in analyzed wild cervids.



Number of cervids tested for CWD in Québec from 2018 to 2020.



## MFFP actions

Specific measures were deployed rapidly and massively by the MFFP once the first case was confirmed to ensure that the disease was truly absent from wild animals and avoid the transmission of the disease to the rest of the province, should cervids currently carrying the disease were present in the natural environment. Once established in wild populations, CWD is impossible to eliminate. That is why it is important to take all necessary measures to avoid such a situation. In provinces and states where the disease is present, major, irreversible reductions in cervid populations have been observed, causing impacts on hunting activities and associated economic benefits.

In the coming years, the MFFP will continue its actions to prevent and detect CWD. Enhanced surveillance efforts need to be maintained for several years to maximize the possibilities to detect the disease in wildlife and quickly intervene if an infected animal is found. Such a surveillance means that a significant number of white-tailed deer should be analyzed every year near the farm where CWD cases were detected in 2018. In this area, specific hunting measures are put in place to maintain a low deer density.



Learn about procedures and restrictions implemented to your hunting area.

For all the details:

[Quebec.ca/cervidsdisease](https://Quebec.ca/cervidsdisease)

Forêts, Faune  
et Parcs

Québec

