



Haemorrhagic Disease (EHD) Surveillance in Alberta 2014

An outbreak of epizootic haemorrhagic disease (EHD) occurred in southern Alberta north of the US border in September 2013. The disease could strike again, depending on local weather and climate conditions in later summer 2014.

The following outlines possible steps to enhance surveillance for carcasses associated with EHD outbreaks:

When to look?

Mortality in wild deer is a seasonal event in late summer/early fall. This generally means early August through to end of September in Alberta.

EHD events occur in northern states earlier than in southern Canada. Thus monitoring events in Montana and N Dakota in August may give us a heads-up that EHD virus could be coming our way.

The virus is transmitted by tiny biting midges (no-see-ums) and its occurrence in southern AB is associated with strong winds from the south that bring infected midges from areas where the virus is active in the US. So a good time to look for carcasses is after a day of southern winds.

How to look?

Often carcasses are the first sign of an EHD event. Sick deer become feverish and seek open water sources. Thus carcasses may be clustered in or around sloughs, dugouts, & reservoirs.

What to look for?

The virus tends to quickly overwhelm infected animals and thus the clinical signs are limited. Sudden death is a cardinal indication of EHD virus.

But some individuals may display redness of the skin and mucous membranes, swelling of the face and neck, bloody diarrhea, lethargy, incoordination, salivation, lameness, or respiratory distress. Those that survive may have over-grown or cracked hooves or perhaps abnormal antler growth.

Who should look?

Anyone with the opportunity to visit or fly over open water sites in south central or south eastern Alberta in late summer is best suited to find dead deer.

What to do?

Anyone who finds a cluster of dead deer or pronghorn should note the specific location and contact any Fish and Wildlife office (office phone numbers are available at esrd.alberta.ca/about-esrd/contact-esrd/fish-and-wildlife-area-office-contacts). Office staff can then contact the Wildlife Disease Unit in Edmonton for further direction.

Information distribution

Landowners, bow hunters, municipal field staff, Fish and Wildlife officers, wildlife biologists, local residents.