

## Natural Deer Urine Attractants Illegal in Virginia

**Effective July 1, 2015, it will be illegal to possess or use deer scents/lures that contain natural deer urine or other bodily fluids while taking, attempting to take, attracting, or scouting wildlife in Virginia.**

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) poses a significant risk to the long-term health and stability of the Virginia white-tailed deer populations. Since it was first found east of the Mississippi in Wisconsin in 2002, CWD has been found in a total of eight eastern states, including Virginia. To date, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) has spent over one million dollars on CWD monitoring and management efforts. Importation bans on whole carcass and certain carcass parts (i.e., brain and spinal cord) from high-risk CWD areas (including areas or states infected with CWD or any North American enclosure intended to confine deer) are already in place in Virginia, along with a ban on interstate movement of captive deer and elk. Reducing the use of natural deer urine attractants by prohibiting the possession or use while afield for the purposes of taking or attempting to take, attracting, or scouting will further minimize the risk of introducing CWD into a new area of Virginia.

### **Why is the use of deer urine attractants risky?**

The infectious proteins (i.e., prions) known to transmit CWD have been found in the urine, feces, and saliva of infected individuals. To make these commercial scents, urine from captive elk and/or deer kept outside of Virginia is collected over a grate system that does not prevent contamination from either feces or saliva. The “urine” product is not treated chemically or with heat to kill the infectious proteins because these treatments would also secondarily destroy the desired scent characteristics. The infectious proteins causing CWD are extremely resistant to degradation and may persist in the environment for years in contaminated soil, thereby posing a disease transmission risk to deer for extended lengths of time. Additionally, many of the facilities are located in areas or states with CWD. Deer in Virginia that taste or sniff these products may actually be exposing themselves to CWD harbored by deer living hundreds of miles away that were used to collect the infected urine.



### **Why did the Department decide to ban these urine-based products?**

The VDGIF is taking a pro-active approach on this issue and has banned possession and use until it is proven that prions are not spread in commercial deer urine products, rather than continue to risk introducing CWD to new areas until it is confirmed that urine attractants do spread prions. VDGIF's intent with this regulation is to protect our deer hunting heritage by ensuring that future generations have the same opportunities to deer hunt as are available to Virginians today and to protect the long-term health and stability of the Virginia deer herd. Both of these goals can be achieved, in part, by trying to minimize the areas in Virginia infected with CWD.

### **What does “possess or use” a natural deer urine attractant mean?**

It will still be legal for products that contain natural deer urine or other bodily fluids to be purchased and sold in Virginia. However, it will not be legal for individuals to have these products in their possession or

on their person while afield for the purposes of taking or attempting to take, attracting, or scouting any wild animal in Virginia.

**Can I collect and use urine and/or tarsal glands from deer I kill in Virginia?**

You cannot use these fluids afield anywhere in Virginia. Possession or use of any natural deer urine, feces, blood, gland oil, or other bodily fluid while afield for the purposes of taking or attempting to take, attracting, or scouting any wild animal becomes illegal in Virginia starting July 1, 2015.

**Are there any legal alternatives to natural deer urine lures?**

Yes, there are synthetic products that can be used to attract or lure deer but do not pose any secondary risks for CWD transmission to Virginia white-tailed deer. These products are readily available at sporting goods stores and online retailers.



**Why should I worry about CWD in Virginia?**

Population models predict that CWD will lead to significant declines in deer populations over time. Current research in Wyoming suggests that white-tailed deer numbers are significantly lower in diseased areas than in areas where CWD has not yet been diagnosed, and CWD infection prevalence has risen to nearly 25 percent in adult bucks in some areas of Wisconsin since the initial discovery of CWD in 2002.

Not only are deer an important part of Virginia’s natural heritage, they are also important to the economy. Deer hunting in Virginia generates over \$600 million in economic activity, according to data from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation for Virginia. Over 20,000 jobs were related to hunting in Virginia in 2011, according to a report by the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

This prohibition on the possession or use of deer urine attractants while afield was enacted in order to protect Virginia’s deer populations and our Virginia deer hunting heritage by ensuring that future generations have the same opportunities to deer hunt as are available to Virginians today. For more information on CWD, visit our website at: <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/diseases/cwd/> .