

New York State Wildlife Health Program

Annual Report 2025-2026

A close-up photograph of a possum hanging upside down from a thick, mossy tree branch. The possum's body is covered in dark brown fur with long, white-tipped guard hairs that fan out. Its face is light-colored with a pink nose and dark eyes. Its limbs are extended, showing its claws. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a forest setting.

Promoting the health and long-term sustainability of wildlife populations by advancing scientific tools and sharing knowledge to protect and improve the health of native wildlife populations



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ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

The New York State Cooperative Wildlife Health Program (WHP) is a partnership between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Cornell University’s College of Veterinary Medicine Wildlife Health Lab (CWHL) that works to safeguard the long-term health of wildlife in New York. Initiated in 2011, the program is responsible for monitoring wildlife disease and toxin impacts on species statewide, staff training and support, policy input, and research.

This report represents the body of work for the last year of our 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. The four key areas for the next phase of WHP development were: communications & outreach, applied research & data analysis, diagnostic tools, and operational integration. We accomplished several long-standing goals in teaching our own in-house chemical immobilization workshops and facilitated specialty oil spill response training. Communication has been a major focus and we have made tremendous strides in offering a variety of materials through traditional and online platforms.

Much of this year was devoted to finalizing the new 2026-2031 Strategic Plan where we built on DEC’s mission to safeguard the long-term health of wildlife populations in New York. Most notable in this past year has been the release of Corvus, our new wildlife health information system, custom designed by and for the WHP. This framework integrates multiple systems into one and leads to increased efficiency, improved situational awareness, and better overall understanding of emerging wildlife health issues. Concurrent with Corvus, we updated the Cornell Wildlife Health Lab website to house our online resources and inform the public. We also released a revision of the Interagency CWD Response Plan, a collaborative effort between DEC, NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, and Cornell Wildlife Health Lab.

As a leader in the wildlife health field, we continue to engage in regional and national efforts and learning opportunities. Notably, we received a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Multistate Conservation Award to synchronize moose health across North America. We continue to support other agencies through the Surveillance Optimization Project for Chronic Wasting Disease (SOP4CWD). Supporting agency efforts across jurisdictions strengthens our wildlife health knowledge and network for population sustainability.

In recognition of the importance of wildlife health and the progress the WHP has made incorporating health concerns into all aspects of wildlife management, the DEC has elevated the Wildlife Health Unit to the *Wildlife Health Section*. This section will be under a newly formed Bureau of Fish and Wildlife Health that will include the Wildlife Health Section, Fish Health Unit, and the Environmental Monitoring Section. This new management structure will better serve the DEC in protecting the health of NY’s fish and wildlife and the environment they inhabit by fostering collaborative efforts and advancing our interdisciplinary One Health approach.

As we look back at the many accomplishments over the last year, we must thank the biologists in the field who continue to raise questions, notice new situations, and ask for tools to help them do their jobs better. Looking ahead, we have been planning new and updated facilities at both the Wildlife Health Section in Delmar and the Animal Health Diagnostic Center in Ithaca. Both the quality of human and physical resources will enable the WHP to continue improving in the years to come.

This report covers WHP activities for DEC fiscal year 2025-2026 and case submissions are summarized for the calendar year January 1- December 31, 2025.

Cover photo: Virginia opossum

Inside front cover photo: Wild turkey hen by Art Kirsch

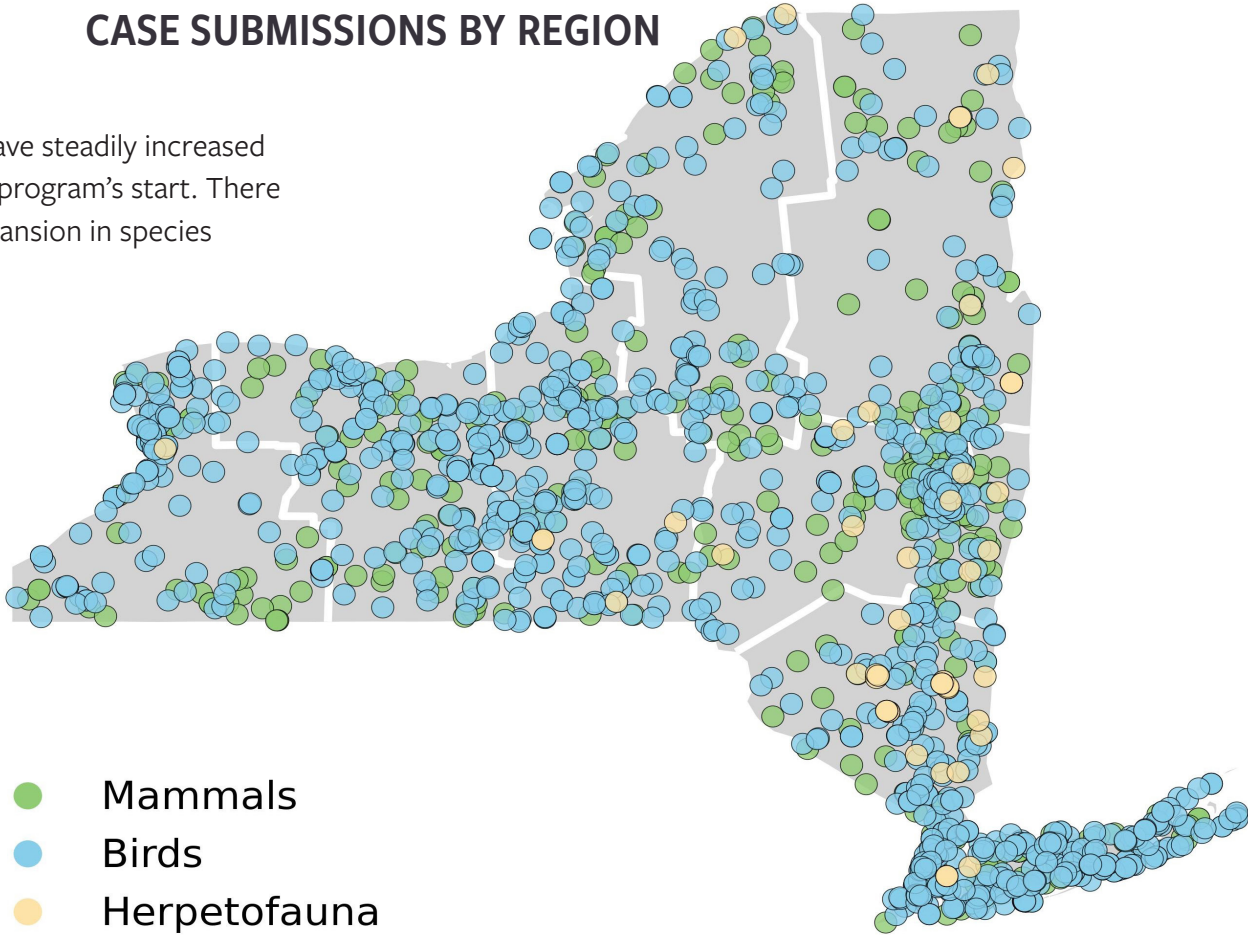
Back cover photo: Great blue heron by Art Kirsch

Report designed by Jennifer Peaslee

HEALTH & DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

CASE SUBMISSIONS BY REGION

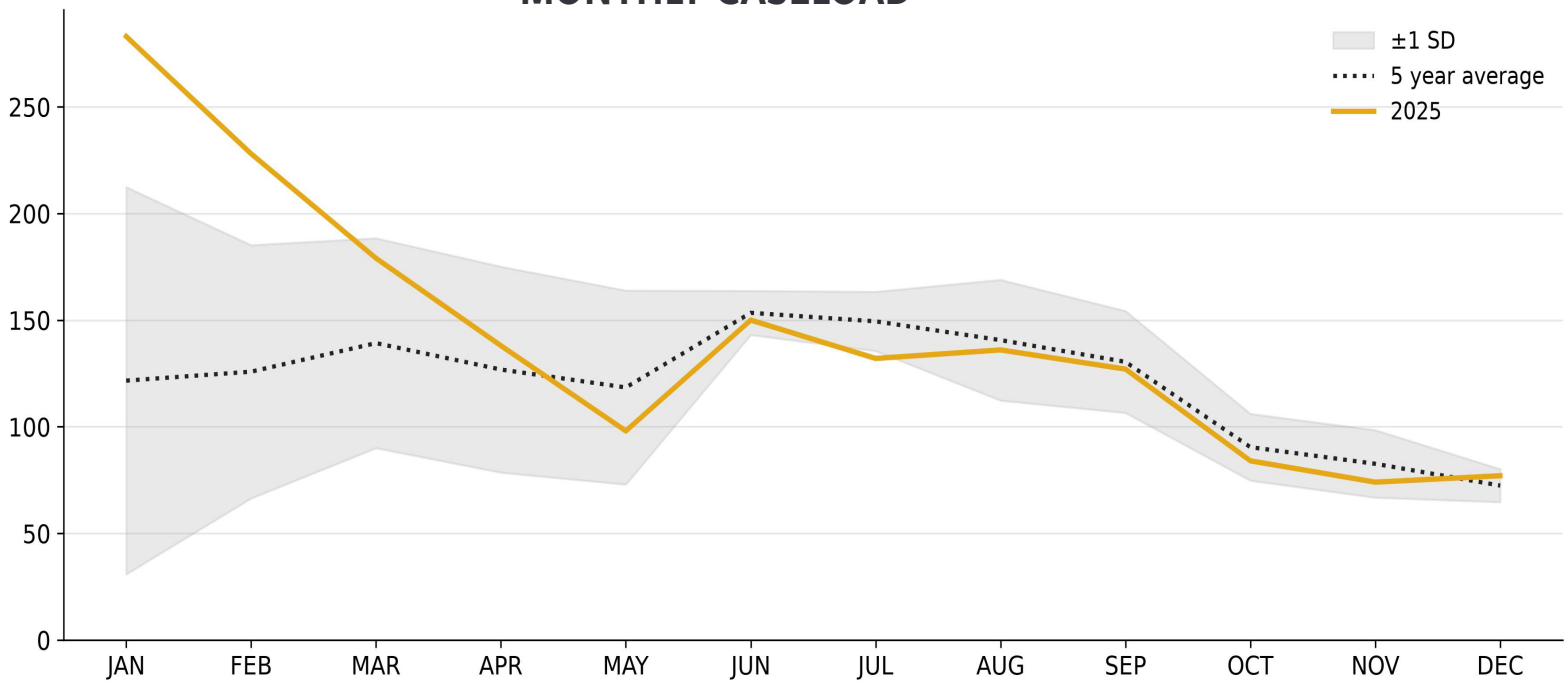
Case submissions have steadily increased each year since the program's start. There is also a notable expansion in species diversity in cases.



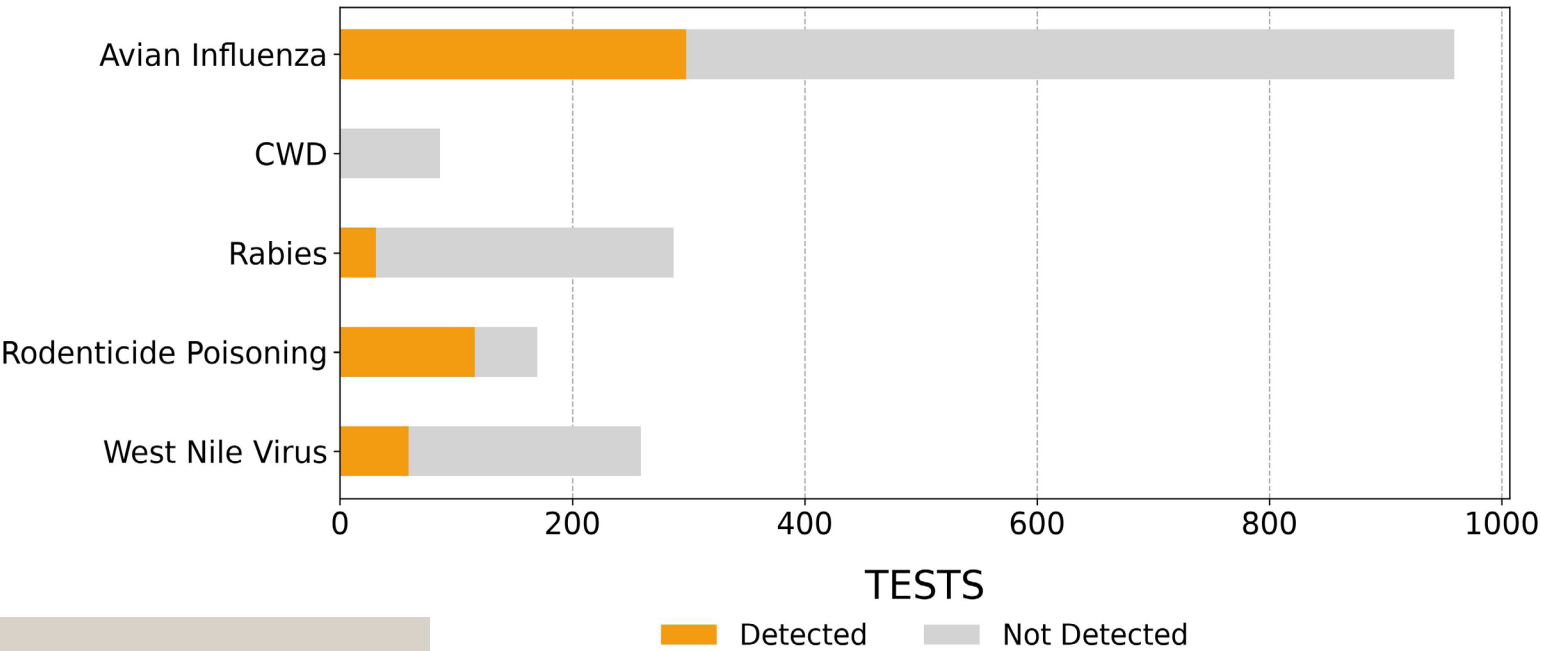
- Mammals
- Birds
- Herpetofauna

1176 necropsies performed

MONTHLY CASELOAD



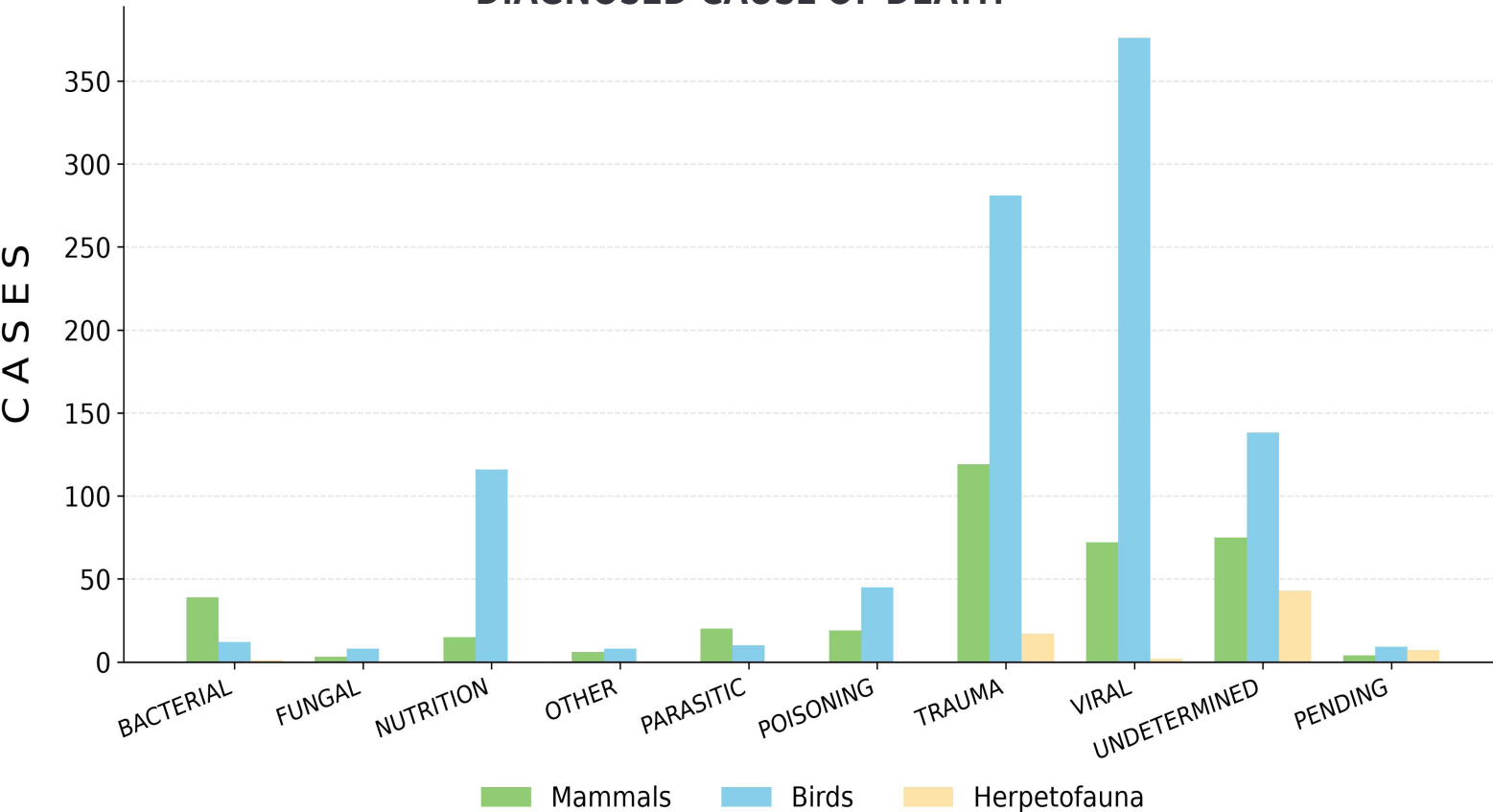
TARGETED DISEASE SURVEILLANCE



1706 animals submitted
40 forensic examinations

1195 birds **88** species
435 mammals **37** species
76 herpetofauna **18** species

DIAGNOSED CAUSE OF DEATH



EMERGING & SIGNIFICANT DISEASE ISSUES

NEW WORLD SCREWWORM

The reemergence of New World screwworm (NWS; *Cochliomyia hominivorax*) in the United States in 2026 serves as a reminder that this devastating parasite remains a significant threat to animal health. NWS is a parasitic fly whose larvae feed on living tissue, causing rapidly expanding wounds that can lead to severe illness or death if left untreated. The flies lay their eggs in body orifices and open wounds as small as a tick bite. NWS can affect a wide range of wildlife species, including mammals and birds. In 2016, NWS was detected in the endangered Key deer in the Florida Keys, in addition to multiple domesticated animals and other wildlife. As a result, 135 Key deer, representing 15% of the population, died, highlighting the potential consequences of NWS introduction and the need for vigilance and collaboration among One Health partners for surveillance and response.

Federal and state agencies are actively working to contain the outbreak in the southern US through surveillance, domestic animal movement restrictions, and sterile insect release programs. While the outbreak is currently limited to Texas and New Mexico, animal movements, both natural and human-driven, could spread the fly to new regions. The USDA is tracking new cases in domestic animals and wildlife on this online dashboard.

Although NWS has not been detected in New York, preparedness is essential. As frontline observers of free-ranging wildlife, wildlife rehabilitators, veterinarians, biologists, and other wildlife professionals play a critical role in early detection. Recognizing suspicious wounds containing larvae, reporting suspect cases immediately, and following established response protocols are vital. Prompt reporting can help wildlife, agricultural, and public health agencies respond quickly and prevent establishment of this devastating parasite. The WHP created a [NWS disease fact sheet](#) and shared guidance to NYS licensed wildlife rehabilitators through our rehabber listserv.

RABIES

The WHP collaborates with the NYS Dept. of Health to monitor rabies throughout the state. Since rabies is a viral disease that can affect any mammal from beavers to bear cubs, most mammals that come through the WHP are tested for rabies. Species that tested positive for rabies over the past year through the WHP included raccoons, red and gray foxes, bats, skunks, bobcats, fishers, coyotes, and white-tailed deer.

Rabies cases continued to be detected over the past year on Long Island in raccoons and stray cats in both Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Before 2024, raccoon rabies had not been detected in Nassau County since 2007 and in Suffolk County since 2009.

New World Screwworm

College of Veterinary Medicine

BASICS

The New World screwworm (NWS), *Cochliomyia hominivorax*, is a parasitic fly whose larvae feed on live tissues, causing harm to and potentially death of the host.

The female fly is attracted to the scent of open wounds or other orifices (e.g., mouth, genitalia, umbilicus) and lays its eggs at that site.

NWS may infest any bird or mammal species, including **HUMANS**. Wild animals, livestock, and pets are susceptible. Open wounds and injuries are preferred locations for infestation, but NWS is also attracted to animals that have recently given birth or undergone surgery.

CLINICAL SIGNS in affected animals include lethargy, depression, head shaking, and biting at the wound. Collections of fly eggs or larvae may be observed near a wound or body opening and are often associated with a foul odor.

Secondary infections can occur after NWS infestation, potentially leading to **DEATH**.

TRANSMISSION occurs when a female fly lays eggs in a wound or body orifice. The eggs develop into larvae that feed on live tissue and cause extensive damage. Those larvae fall off the host and then develop into adults that continue the cycle.

DIAGNOSIS is confirmed by parasite experts by identifying specific morphological characteristics. Typically, the larvae are assessed, but eggs or adult flies may also be useful in diagnosis.

TREATMENT includes removing larvae, wound care, analgesics, and local or systemic antiparasitic medications. The environment should also be decontaminated when appropriate.

NWS is a **REPORTABLE** disease. Veterinarians should contact their State Animal Health Official and USDA if NWS is suspected in an animal. Suspect human cases should be reported to the local or state health department.

The NYS Wildlife Health Program | [cwhl.vet.cornell.edu](#)

A partnership between NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation and Cornell Wildlife Health Lab



TULAREMIA

Tularemia is a zoonotic disease caused by the bacterium *Francisella tularensis*. It can affect wide variety of animals, but most commonly affects rabbits and rodents. It can cause serious disease in people and can be transmitted through tick or deer fly bites, by direct contact with infected animals, or through contaminated water or food. Tularemia is highly infectious and can be transmitted with just a few bacteria from an infected animal, but can be treated successfully with antibiotics when diagnosed early. Tularemia is also considered a “select agent”, which means it has the potential to pose a severe threat to public health and safety as a bioweapon according to the federal government.

Tularemia is rare in New York. The first case in a person was identified in 1927 and linked to rabbit consumption. There were 30 cases of tularemia in people from 1993-2023, with the highest number of cases documented in Suffolk County.

In 2025, three beavers with tularemia were diagnosed by the WHP. In April, two of these beavers were found dead along a hiking trail near a creek in Chautauqua County. Necropsy revealed multifocal pale white (necrotic) foci throughout lymph nodes, lungs, spleen, and liver in both beavers. The constellation of changes observed on gross necropsy and histopathology were consistent with tularemia and tissues were positive via PCR for *F. tularensis*. In August, multiple beavers were found dead near a creek in Cattaraugus County and one was submitted for testing. There were similar findings to the first cases at necropsy and the beaver also tested positive via PCR for *F. tularensis*. Before these cases in 2025, the last time the WHP documented tularemia in a beaver was 2004.

The DEC shared disease information and provided recommendations for trappers and hunters in the DEC Delivers “Hunting and Trapping” newsletter. The Department of Health also issued a similar [press release](#) in that county.



TEST DEVELOPMENT

RT-QuIC CAPACITY BUILDING

This year, we focused on expanding our chronic wasting disease (CWD) testing capacity and addressing bottlenecks in our real-time quaking-induced conversion (RT-QuIC) process. This test, while not yet approved for diagnostic use by the USDA, is quite sensitive and can be used for more tissues and environmental samples. We purchased two more RT-QuIC plate readers, allowing us to increase the number of samples run at one time. We also conducted preliminary testing to reduce the run-time of the lengthy test, without compromising sensitivity. These changes allowed us to double our previous testing capacity so we are better prepared to respond to the research and surveillance needs of NYS. Planning is underway to conduct capacity testing to see how many samples our staff could run in a week's time to have a better idea of how much we would need to scale up if we were to do higher numbers of surveillance testing.

RODENTICIDE BIOMARKER

We are currently in the second year of a grant through the Cornell K. Lisa Yang Center for Wildlife Health's Catalyzing Conservation Fund to develop a better way to detect anticoagulant rodenticide (AR) poisoning in birds of prey. ARs, which are commonly used to control rodents, can unintentionally harm hawks, owls, eagles, and other birds that consume poisoned prey. Diagnosing the health impacts of AR exposure in wildlife remains challenging. Existing tests are often unreliable in live birds, and postmortem testing can confirm exposure but cannot determine whether the poison was responsible for illness or death. Because ARs interfere with the body's ability to form blood clots, our project focuses on identifying a blood-based protein that indicates when the clotting system has been affected by these toxins. In collaboration with the AHDC Coagulation Lab and Janet L. Swanson



Above: RT-QuIC plate readers ready for capacity testing

Wildlife Hospital, we are collecting blood and liver samples from hospitalized raptors that are being humanely euthanized due to severe injuries or illnesses unrelated to this study. By comparing blood test results with liver concentrations of rodenticides, we hope to better understand how AR exposure affects blood clotting in wild birds. Our ultimate goal is to develop a rapid diagnostic test that wildlife veterinarians and rehabilitators can use to identify AR poisoning in live birds, improving treatment decisions and helping to better understand the impacts of rodenticides on wildlife populations.

HELLBENDERS

DEC regions 4, 8, and 9 have worked with CWHL to explore new environmental DNA (eDNA) detection methods to detect the cryptic hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*). Due to limited detection success with published protocols in previous sampling seasons, we trialed different water filtration methods to determine whether we could capture more free hellbender DNA in water samples if we altered our methods. Modifications we tested included using self-contained filter capsules and novel passive filtration techniques. Our testing showed that self-contained filter capsules offered more efficient filtration, allowing for greater filtration volumes and reducing time demand from DEC personnel.

FINDING PRIONS IN FECES

With financial support from the CWD Alliance, we developed methods to use deer fecal samples to better understand the relationship between deer genetics, deer gut bacteria, and chronic wasting disease (CWD) across North America. We found that real-time quaking-induced conversion (RT-QuIC) methods had high specificity for detection of CWD from fecal samples; if the tool reported a positive test result, in 93% of cases it was a true positive detection. However, RT-QuIC sensitivity for detection of CWD in fecal samples is relatively low; CWD was correctly identified in only 57% of samples. We found that deer genetics varied across the landscape at sites associated with CWD. The majority of sampled animals carried the default (also called "wild type") gene sequence at coding region (codon) 96; this sequence has been associated with higher susceptibility to CWD.

Importantly, we also found animals with the less frequent gene sequence at codon 96 in three different states across the U.S. Though the less common codon 96 gene sequence is thought to make a deer less susceptible to CWD, one of these animals tested positive for CWD, demonstrating this gene did not confer genetic resistance to the disease. We also found that the communities of bacteria living in deer digestive tracts varied by geographic location, but were largely unaffected by CWD status of the tested animal. There is only one bacterial species, *Clostridium*, present at significantly higher levels in CWD-positive animals. This may suggest a novel risk factor for acquiring CWD infection.



eDNA AMBYSTOMA SPECIES COMPLEX

A multi-year collaboration with the University of Maine has produced an assay capable of detecting and differentiating between multiple members of the *Ambystoma lateral-jeffersonianum* complex at once. This species complex comprises three separate species including the unisexual *Ambystoma* lineage, Blue-spotted salamander, and Jefferson salamander. This species complex



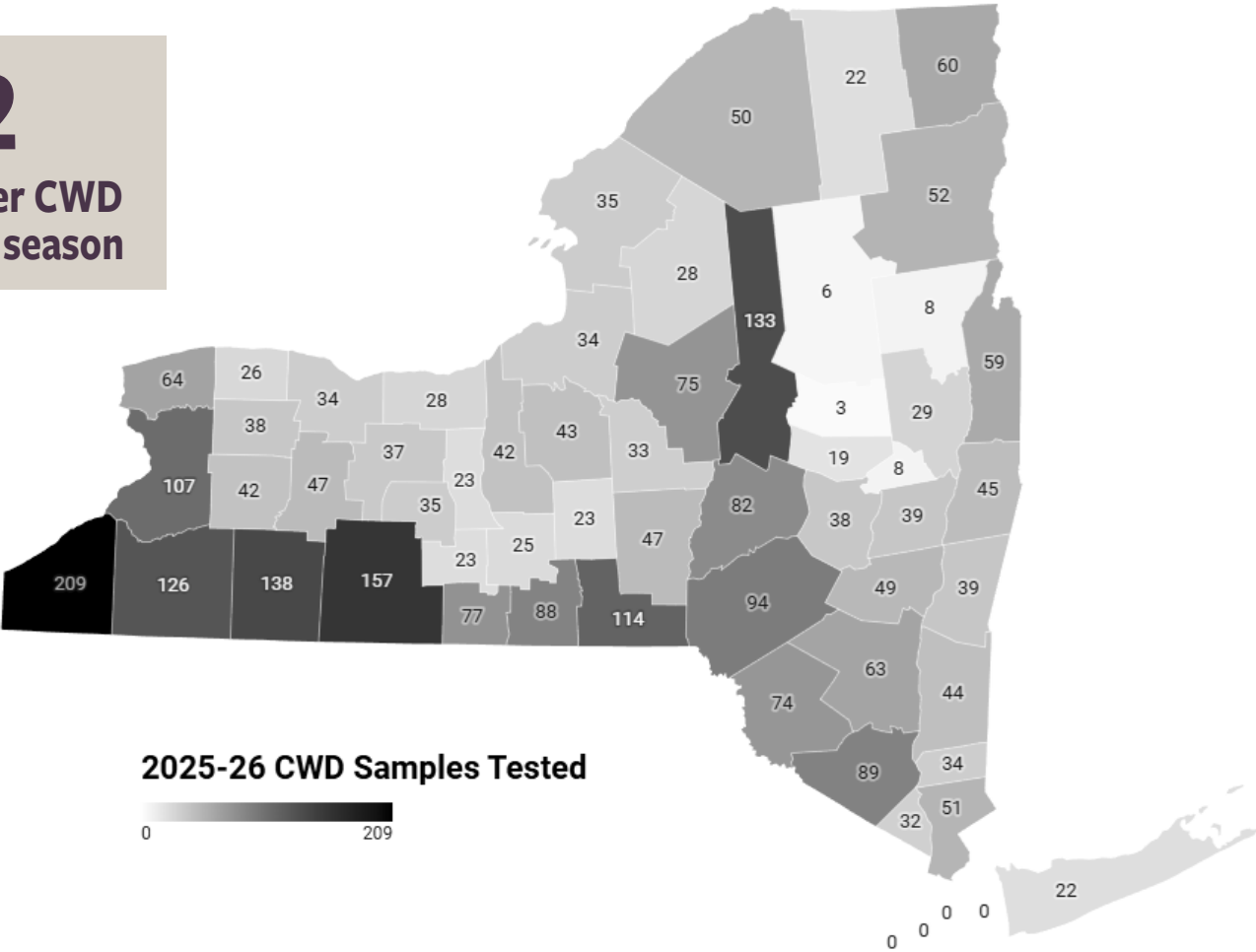
is challenging to identify with traditional field ID or even molecular genetics methods because it includes an ancient unisexual lineage that practices kleptogenesis or the stealing of reproductive material from other species of salamander within the shared *Ambystoma* genus. Typically, in unisexual animals the stolen reproductive material is used to stimulate development of eggs, then discarded, but sometimes it is incorporated into the offspring's DNA! Despite the messy genetics of this complex, this assay is able to distinguish between the asexual lineage, Blue-spotted, and Jefferson salamanders and has been used to identify sites where one or more of these species coexist. This tool can be especially helpful in places where one member of the species complex is of particular conservation concern, so it is important to know which specific species are present.

CWD SURVEILLANCE

During the 2025-2026 hunting season, we tested 3,009 hunter-harvested deer for CWD. We also examined 83 susceptible deer with clinical signs during the reporting period. We have successfully engaged taxidermists to expand our surveillance efforts; during the 2025-2026 sampling season, 986 of the CWD surveillance samples were collected by trained taxidermists through our Taxidermist Partnership Program.

Since 2002, DEC has collected and tested more than 72,000 deer for CWD. No positive cases of CWD have been detected in wild deer since 2005, but we are concerned about recent CWD detections in Pennsylvania that are close to the NY border and potential spillover from the red deer herd in Herkimer County.

3092
white-tailed deer CWD
tests in 2025-26 season



CAPTIVE RED DEER CWD INVESTIGATION

To further investigate the occurrence of CWD in the Herkimer County red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) herd, we were awarded a U.S. Department of Agriculture – National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant. This funding will allow us to conduct RT-QuIC testing on additional tissues collected during depopulation of the herd to trace the pathogenesis of the disease. We also will examine the soil to see if the environment had become contaminated with prions. We hope to evaluate the genetic composition of this herd as it had been closed to new animals for a number of years. Detections on CWD in red deer have been uncommon so this is a unique opportunity to learn more about this emerging disease.

HISTORICAL CWD IN NORTH AMERICAN MOOSE

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been reported in moose (*Alces alces*) in the United States, Canada, and Scandinavia. Former CWHL employee, David Dayan, gathered historical data on CWD surveillance in moose conducted by 32 state, provincial, and territorial wildlife agencies in North America. From 1998 through 2023, agencies tested at least 12,498 moose for CWD and found 63 positive cases across five jurisdictions (Alberta and Saskatchewan in Canada, and Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming in the US). Most CWD-positive moose were hunter-harvested adult males. Though descriptions from North American CWD-positive moose were limited, patterns of prion detection in various tissues appeared different than described in Scandinavia. Fortunately, no moose in NYS have tested positive for CWD. This data synthesis is beneficial for understanding transmission and persistence of CWD in moose populations or between sympatric cervids. Our recent award of a 2026 Multistate Conservation grant is working toward standardization of moose sample collection methods and data recording for improved data infrastructure across jurisdictions.

SURVEILLANCE OPTIMIZATION PROJECT FOR CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (SOP4CWD)

[The Surveillance Optimization Project for Chronic Wasting Disease \(SOP4CWD\)](#), started in 2020, continues to grow and generate new information and tools to improve CWD surveillance planning nationwide.

Responding to CWD Coast-to-Coast

We have brought together 25 agencies and two Canadian provinces in an effort to synchronize and standardize CWD surveillance across North America. Most recently, a number of agencies in the western United States have joined, making this effort truly continental.

Novel Approaches for Better Results

SOP4CWD has led to the development of novel mathematical approaches to understand and characterize the disease. Most recently, SOP4CWD partners developed a new model to quantify CWD introduction risk to better target CWD surveillance efforts, particularly in Western states and provinces that are concerned about rapid spread due to cervid migration, and transmission between cervid species. This model, called Hazard 2, is built on a framework previously developed by the WHP for planning surveillance in New York State. More information about Hazard 2, as well as numerous other models developed through the SOP4CWD partnership, can be found at the [SOP4CWD website](#).

CWD Meets Big Data

SOP4CWD has also led to broad data sharing among participating agencies and researchers. The CWD Data Warehouse, the online platform that these agencies use for sharing, managing, and analyzing CWD-related data, has test results from over one million CWD tests from six species.

Looking Ahead

The SOP4CWD team recently received a grant from the U.S. Geological Survey to include a structured decision making (SDM) model in the CWD Data Warehouse. Based in decision theory and risk analysis, an SDM model is helpful to agencies because it allows them to take informed action to produce the most desirable outcome, given management objectives, current data, and unavoidable uncertainty.

TRAINING & TEACHING

OIL SPILL RESPONSE

In February 2026, the WHP hosted the [Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research, Inc. \(TSBRR\)](#) team for an in-depth educational course on how to respond to an oiled wildlife event. TSBRR has been responding to oiled wildlife events for 50 years and is among a small handful of approved organizations capable of responding to a major spill.

The 8-hour workshop provided DEC staff with the skills of how to properly respond to wildlife affected by an oil spill. Lecture topics included notification procedures, regulations and agencies, integration of the wildlife branch into the Incident Command structure, human health and safety, field and transport operations, data collection and chain of custody, response facility requirements, and animal care.

Practical exercises included using bird carcasses to simulate the oil decontamination process. With appropriate PPE, participants learned how to clean oil off affected birds. At decontamination stations, multiple baths were provided, each with temperature-specific water and soap concentrated for the type of oil. Demonstrations incorporated steps that help minimize stress and prevent harm to affected birds.



WORKSHOPS & STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

Jenny Bloodgood attended the DEC Waterfowl Banding Workshop at the DEC Brownville office and Perch River WMA in September 2025 with Wildlife Health Veterinary Interns Dario Marquez and Julia Utting. Jenny gave presentations on safe handling, animal care, euthanasia, common diseases, and field sampling of waterfowl. The workshop also included hands-on live animal handling and banding.

This past year, our program hosted several training opportunities for students. In October, Therese McNamee lectured at Camp DEC, discussing the NYS Wildlife Health Program mission at the Five Rivers Education Center. Jenny led two outbreak response labs, including one on chytrid fungus for the Cornell Zoo and Wildlife Society (ZAWS) in November 2025 and one on avian influenza for the Cornell University One Health Symposium in March 2026. Students learned proper communication, biosecurity, sampling, and testing protocols.

In February, Jenny helped lead a chemical immobilization darting lab for ZAWS students which teaches safe equipment handling and use. Krysten led a CWD sampling lab, also in February, to give student experience with collecting the proper samples for diagnosis.

CWHL student, Dante Napoletano presented a poster on *Characterizing Alphaherpesvirus in Diamondback Terrapins* at the Cornell Biotechnology Resource Center User Trainee Poster Symposium.

Kevin Hynes led a white-tailed deer necropsy demonstration at the New York Chapter of the Wildlife Society Annual Meeting in March 2026.

GUEST LECTURES & MORE

Jenny Bloodgood and Krysten Schuler co-taught an Avian Influenza Outbreak Response Lab for undergraduates and vet students for the Raptor Biology and Management curriculum. Krysten also lectured on CWD for the SUNY-ESF Adaptive Peaks Seminar Series.



The SUNY Cobleskill Wildlife Damage Management class had their annual visit to the WHU in September 2025 for a presentation and necropsy demonstration by Kevin Hynes.

Kevin provided wildlife health and forensic training to ECOs at their annual HAZWOPER refresher trainings in April and May 2025. Kevin also presented on furbearer diseases and performed a necropsy demonstration at the SUNY-ESF Fur School.

Jenny presented at the annual Avian Health Advisory Council Meeting-Avian Influenza-HPAI H5N1 in NY Wildlife. Its members include representatives from NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets, USDA, NY poultry producers and industry representatives.

Left: The Oil Spill Response Workshop included lectures and practical exercises on handling birds affected by contaminants.

Right: During the Avian Influenza Outbreak Lab, following steps during specimen collection and handling helps protect wildlife professionals. This exercise included checking hands for 'infection' using a black light and Glo-Germ gel.

Landon Miller and Therese McNamee hosted several technicians and interns from the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation for a necropsy demonstration and pathology discussion in August 2025. In addition, the WHU hosted several pre-veterinary students for wildlife necropsy shadowing experience.

The New York State chapter of The Wildlife Society implemented a new mentor/mentee program, “A Day in the Field with a Wildlife Professional,” where students or early career professionals shadow established biologists to learn what their jobs consist of. In November 2025, Melissa Fadden hosted two SUNY-ESF students for a day with CWHL, giving a programmatic rundown, a lab tour, and necropsy demonstrations.

In January, the CWHL’s Jennifer Peaslee and Melissa hosted high school student, Jack Aronian, who was working on a school project called the [H5N1 Prevention Initiative](#). His goal was to show the impact of H5N1 on wildlife population health through photographing species directly affected by HPAI, producing a short film to raise awareness and funds for wild bird organizations.

Above: Raptors laid out for necropsy demo for TWS mentor program.

Chemical Immobilization practical exercises included:

Learning how to place a gastric tube on an anesthetized deer (below), dart preparation and projector use and handling (top right), and case review on appropriate drug administration by scenario and species (bottom right).



CHEMICAL IMMOBILIZATION

In March 2026, the New York State Wildlife Health Program hosted its second annual Wildlife Chemical Immobilization Training for DEC biologists and Environmental Conservation Officers. The two-day training, led by Jenny Bloodgood and DEC biologists, combined classroom instruction at Cornell University’s College of Veterinary Medicine with hands-on experience at Reynolds Game Farm.

Participants learned why and when chemical immobilization is used to safely capture and handle wildlife, as well as the regulations governing controlled substances, commonly used drugs and calculations, equipment operation and maintenance, animal welfare considerations, and human safety protocols. During the practical training, attendees gained experience using specialized darting equipment and pole syringes, safely handling and loading darts, and performing basic emergency medical procedures.

The training also included small-group discussions focused on real-world scenarios. Participants worked through decisions such as whether chemical immobilization was appropriate, how to minimize risks to people and animals, and what equipment and drugs would be most effective in each situation. By combining classroom learning with hands-on practice, the program helps ensure that wildlife professionals are prepared to respond safely and effectively when wildlife capture and handling are needed.

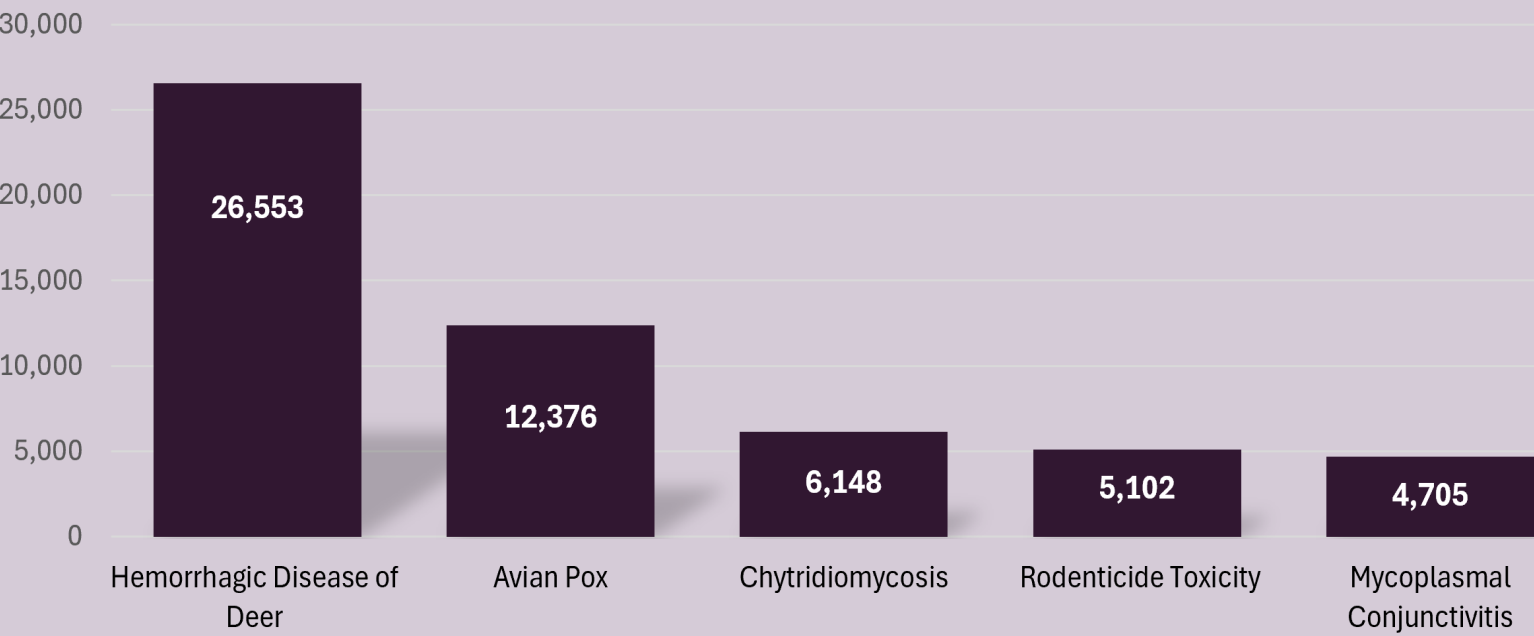


WEBSITE ANALYTICS

The CWHL website remains a valuable resource for wildlife health information and is popular among DEC staff and the public. With website visits averaging over 2,200 per week, and scaling up to over 230,000 page views per year. Targeted engagement events exceeded 800,000 interactions and 24.4 million link views/impressions for the year. The website is linked to other external, non-Cornell entities on over 3,500 sites and is ranked in the top 10 in Google search results for keywords associated with wildlife health

Fact sheets are the most viewed resource on the CWHL website. Currently, there are 59 available Disease Fact sheets, which were viewed over 162,000 times last year with Hemorrhagic Disease of Deer being viewed nearly 27,000 times.

Disease Fact Sheet Views



Technical Documents

Staying Safe in the Field

Helping reduce spillover and transmission risk while protecting yourself and the surrounding habitat.

LEARN MORE



Field Safety documents

The WHP updated and expanded our technical documents library to include updates on [Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Update for Wildlife Rehabilitators](#) and new [Euthanasia of Bats: Inhaled Anesthetic \(Isoflurane\)](#) protocol.

SCIENCE OUTREACH

NYS Wildlife Rehabilitation Council Conference

Jenny Bloodgood and Melissa Fadden discussed the WHP, Avian Influenza, and the importance of snake husbandry and rehabilitation for release.

Skype a Scientist & 4-H Youth

Alyssa Kaganer has continued to participate in classroom outreach with Skype a Scientist. This year she connected with students in South Dakota, New York, Maryland, Georgia, and Florida.

Prince Edward County Field Naturalists

Jennifer Peaslee was invited to present on “Living with Opossums,” as more species move into Canada.

Eastern Bluebird Society

Landon Miller provided real world information on “Wildlife Health.”

Youth in Nature and Outdoor Education

Melissa Fadden presented virtually on “The Science of Nature and Wildlife Forensics- Cold-blooded Pet Trade Edition.”

MEDIA

In June 2025, a bull moose was reported on the summit trail of Goodman Mountain in Tupper Lake, forcing the closure of the popular hiking route to protect both the animal and the public. WHP staff were contacted to evaluate the moose. The young male moose was emaciated, unbothered by humans, and would not move from the trail. The moose’s condition continued to decline in subsequent weeks, and the decision was made to humanely euthanize it in August.

A necropsy performed by the WHP revealed that the 3-year-old bull suffered from a chronic condition, which resulted in emaciation and inability to navigate effectively. There were lesions that suggested chronic injury as well as active inflammation within the brain microscopically, however a specific cause could not be identified despite extensive testing. Multiple pathogens were ruled out, including CWD, brainworm (*Parelaphostrongylus tenuis*), rabies, West Nile virus, epizootic hemorrhagic disease, Eastern equine encephalitis, bovine viral diarrhea, avian influenza, *Francisella tularensis*, and *Yersinia pestis*. There were also lesions related to liver flukes and previous trauma, but the damage was not considered extensive. The Goodman Mountain moose garnered a great deal of media coverage, including being featured in the [NY Times](#).



MARTEN HEALTH

Marten Population Dynamics

In collaboration with SUNY-ESF Adirondack Ecological Center, we are investigating the health of free-ranging American martens. This work will build on ongoing research in the Adirondacks, where martens are live-trapped and fitted with GPS collars to study population responses to mast production and prey availability. As part of this effort, martens are anesthetized with isoflurane for collar placement. Having anesthetized animals in hand provides a valuable opportunity to assess health at both the individual and population levels through comprehensive physical examinations and the collection of biological samples for health and disease screening. We collect blood, feces, oral swabs, and hair for various diagnostic tests, including avian influenza, canine distemper, parvovirus, SARS-CoV-2, anticoagulant rodenticides, and lead.

By integrating health data with food availability, movement, and habitat-use information, this project will help clarify the drivers of marten populations in the Adirondacks and the broader northeastern U.S. In particular, it will improve our understanding of how fluctuations in critical food resources shape population dynamics and how additional stressors, such as disease, may further influence these relationships.

Reproductive Assessment

Beth Buckles and pathology resident, Darian Giannino, are using histology to assess the reproductive health of NY pine martens (*Martes americana*). Ovaries and uteruses collected by DEC personnel over several years are being examined to look for evidence of ovulation, placental implantation, and evidence of previous pregnancy. Histology information will be combined with natural history data from individual martens to assess overall population



health and impacts from anthropogenic changes to the environment.

PATHOGEN SURVEILLANCE TO SUPPORT NORTHERN CRICKET FROG REINTRODUCTION

In a multi-year effort with DEC Region 3, we are working to support amphibian pathogen surveillance at potential reintroduction sites of extirpated northern cricket frogs (*Acris crepitans*). The goal is to introduce northern cricket frogs into ecosystems in which they have the highest likelihood of long-term success, which may mean low disease burden on the landscape. Following last year’s sampling efforts, we identified the sampling methods with the highest probability of detection of both ranavirus and chytrid fungus. We found that ranavirus was best found by collecting bulk water samples and looking for free environmental DNA (eDNA) from the virus, but that skin swabs are most effective at finding the chytrid fungus. This fall, when these pathogens of interest are most active, sampling methods were deployed at a small number of sites to determine suitability for reintroduction.

TIGER SALAMANDERS

In collaboration with DEC Region 1, completing an intensive 16-week sampling effort during the tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*) breeding season at ponds with known high, medium, and low-density populations, as well as control sites where the species is known to be absent. From this effort, we determined that if tiger salamanders were present at a given site, they were detected on the first sampling visit. By sampling throughout the breeding season, we identified pulses when more tiger salamander DNA was released into the environment. Together, we will use these findings to inform the timing and number of samples that must be taken at a site of unknown presence to have high confidence that an eDNA detection or non-detection indicates true occupancy status. This breeding season, DEC Region 1 has begun sampling at sites in which traditional survey methods have been unable to detect tiger salamanders!

HERPESVIRUS

The CWHL has investigated a years-old potential case of herpesvirus in a saxitoxin-related die-off of diamondback terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin*) off the coast of New York. Our undergraduate

research assistant, Dante Napoletano, who spearheaded this effort, sequenced these samples and found no evidence of alpha-herpesvirus in any individuals.

INVESTIGATING HEMORRHAGIC DISEASES IN WHITE-TAILED DEER

New Jersey Fish and Wildlife veterinarian and Fordham University PhD candidate, Patrick Connelly, has been collecting serum samples from hunter-harvested deer for identification of antibodies to hemorrhagic diseases like epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) and bluetongue (BT). Between November 2021 and March 2024, Pat sampled five regions: Hudson Valley, Long Island, Staten Island, eastern shore of Lake Ontario, and the Finger Lakes. Testing over 700 deer at the AHDC identified that the antibody prevalence varied across years and by region. The Hudson Valley had the most detections of both EHD and BT in all three years. Pat is collaborating with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to identify species of *Culicoides*, biting midges that are the vectors for EHD and BT. Of the 14 species identified by wing pattern, four are thought to be capable of transmitting disease. Interestingly, *C. varipennis*, the primary species responsible for outbreaks in southern states, was absent from the NY samples.



The WHP provides support on any wildlife health topic, not just limited to disease outbreaks. We routinely review research permit requests, management plans, and project proposals to assist staff in working safely with wildlife and reduce potential health impacts.

BAT EUTHANASIA

Bats occasionally need to be humanely euthanized due to severe injury, illness, or when they are suspected of carrying rabies and require diagnostic testing. Safe and humane euthanasia options for bats can be limited. To address this need, Jenny Bloodgood developed a protocol for DEC staff using isoflurane, an anesthetic commonly used in veterinary medicine. This protocol provides wildlife professionals with clear guidance, helping to protect both animal welfare and human health.

TRIBAL RELATIONS

One of the goals in the 2016-2021 WHP Strategic Plan is to improve communication and coordination with tribal nations. Over several years, we have established relationships with members of the Seneca Nation of Indians through our work with hellbenders and chronic wasting disease. In northern NY, there was an unfortunate seizure of two moose carcasses that were illegally imported to NYS by tribal members and hope that we can provide more education on CWD and other diseases to any nations interested in collaboration.

WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR SUPPORT

Jenny Bloodgood and Melissa Fadden staffed a table at the annual New York State Wildlife Rehabilitation Council conference, handing out fact sheets and fielding questions from state licensed wildlife rehabilitators about biosecurity and wildlife health.



Above: Melissa presenting on “ Integrating Welfare and Husbandry Practices into Snake Rehabilitation, from Rescue to Release” at the NYSWRC in November.

Each also presented a talk, Jenny giving the WHP update and Melissa on snake health and husbandry. We also updated the “Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Guidelines for Wildlife Rehabilitators” document, and reinstated a listserv to disseminate time-sensitive information to rehabbers across the state, including a survey that was a collaborative effort between the NYSWRC-Pace Alliance and DEC Special License Unit evaluating relationships and resources between entities. We remain accessible to the rehab community to answer questions, as well as run diagnostics within our scope of service, and strive to continue developing a relationship with this community in the interests of both wildlife and public health.

FACILITY NEWS - WHU CONSTRUCTION

Currently, the WHU in Delmar uses a 30-year-old pathological waste incinerator to dispose of necropsy wastes (carcasses, PPE, sharps) but that machine is undersized, rated at only 70lb/hour, and past its useful service life. Additionally, the incinerator is housed in a separate building located on the opposite side of an increasingly busy public road from the necropsy suite, it is ergonomically inefficient to load, and has become increasingly unreliable. Efforts to replace the incinerator were initiated in 2017; subsequent engineering and design work resulted in the decision to replace it with a 48” tissue digester housed in a new addition connected to our necropsy suite. As part of this same job, we are renovating our older necropsy room with new floor, wall covering, lighting, cabinets and upgraded walk-in cooler and freezer and converting an adjacent stock room into a changing room with bathrooms, showers, and laundry.

Construction is expected to start June 2026 with completion by December 2027. This major construction project will enable the WHU to safely dispose of necropsy waste in a more environmentally friendly manner and provide an updated, more efficient, and safer working environment for staff.

BUREAU OF WILDLIFE HEALTH TEAM MEETINGS

Between 2025-26, representatives of the WHP attended 22 meetings with the Big Game, Herp, Migratory Game Bird, Bird and Mammal Diversity, Upland Gamebird, Land Management and Habitat Conservation, and the Furbearer and Small Game Mammal teams to provide updates on current and emerging wildlife health issues.

The scope of the wildlife health team encompasses all wildlife health related issues involving Bureau of Wildlife programs and responsibilities.

The Wildlife Health Program incorporates the One Health concept, which fosters collaboration among multiple disciplines involving health of humans, domestic animals, and ecosystems. Other specialists from the academic community, Departments of Health and Agriculture & Markets, and federal agencies may participate or provide information as needed.

CURRENT WILDLIFE HEALTH TEAM

DEC Personnel

Region 1	LESLIE LUPO
Region 2	CHRISTINA KNOLL
Region 3	JOHN MILO
Region 4	NICOLE CAMPBELL
Region 5	TIM WATSON
Region 6	CRISTINA MACKLEM
Region 7	ASHLEY MEYERS
Region 8	JESSICA HAGGERTY
Region 9	RYAN ROCKEFELLER

WHP Personnel

WHU	Kevin Hynes (chair)
Cornell	Krysten Schuler/Jenny Bloodgood
BMT Liaison Central Office*	Kevin Hynes
DLE Liaison*	Major Matthew Revenaugh
BMT Liaison (Regional)*	Christina Knoll

**DEC Personnel*

BUREAU OF WILDLIFE - ALL HANDS MEETING

In late March, the WHP presented updates at the statewide Bureau of Wildlife conference in Saratoga Springs. This meeting was an opportunity for Natural Resource leadership and wildlife staff from across all nine regions to gather to discuss broad personnel updates, shared priorities, as well as management actions and research being undertaken.

Staff presentations and workshops highlighted specific species and projects, including two hours dedicated to WHP updates.

Kevin Hynes gave the update for the Wildlife Health Team and also presented on forensic casework. Kevin shared his expertise on forensic testing methods and gave examples of the types of forensic cases the WHP has been involved with in the past.

Colby Plant (right) discussed anticoagulant rodenticides and their effects on wildlife in New York. Certain species will have different signs of anticoagulant rodenticide poisoning upon examination. Colby highlighted some particularly noteworthy cases and provided data showing that wildlife is exposed to anticoagulant rodenticides in every part of the state.



Jenny Bloodgood gave an update on the status of HPAI in wildlife across NY, detailing recent HPAI case numbers, and regularly exposed species. Despite the name “avian influenza,” both birds and mammals species have been affected by HPAI across the country.



And Landon Miller and Therese McNamee provided some educational fun with wildlife health trivia. This exciting session covered a variety of topics. Attendees formed teams and the winning teams were treated to fabulous wildlife-themed prizes! This session was also an opportunity to keep BOW staff up-to-date on any changes that may interrupt standard operating procedures at the WHP.



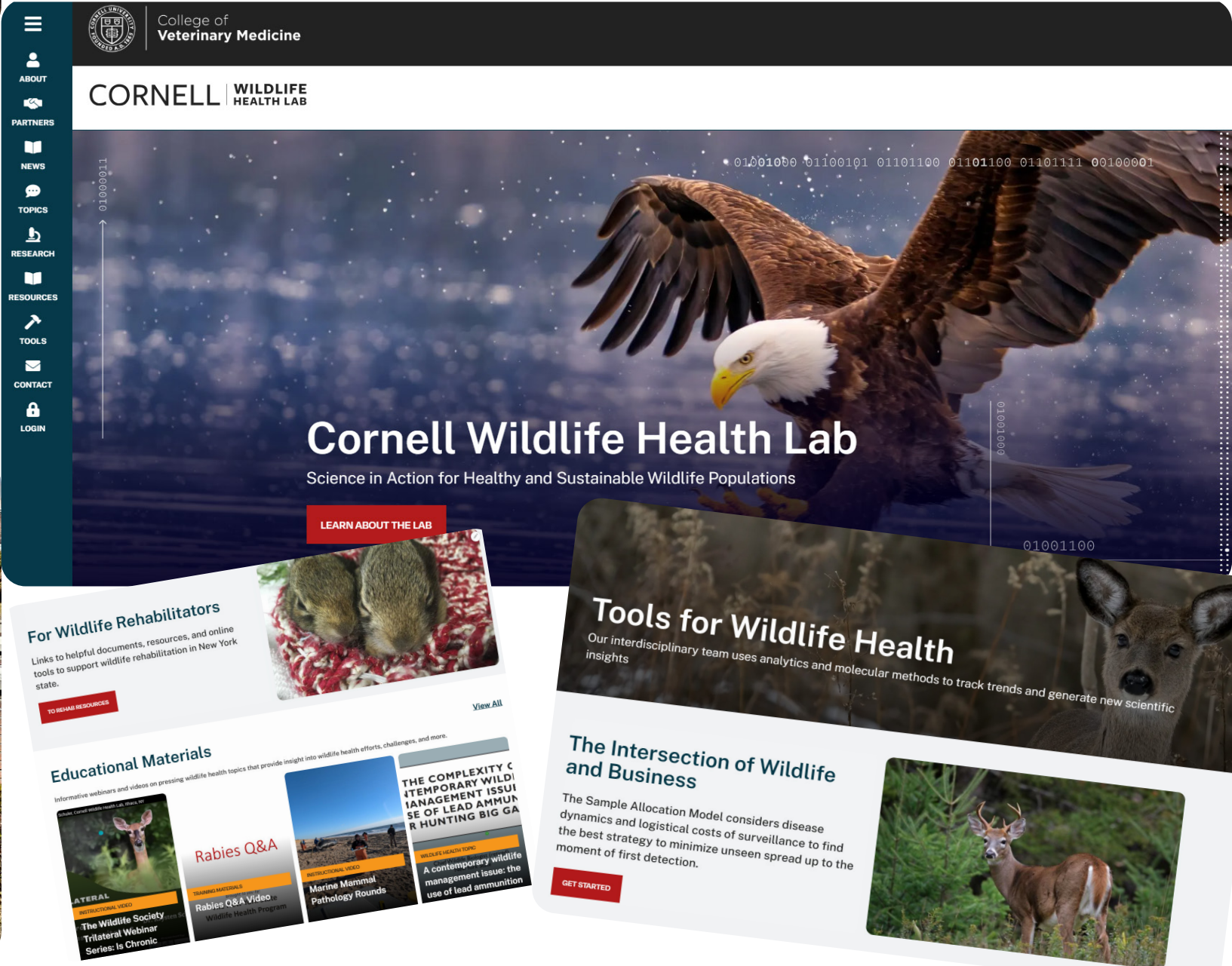
All Bureau of Wildlife staff at Saratoga Springs

RE-DESIGNED WEBSITE LAUNCHED

After nearly a year of hard work and design, the new [CWHL website](#) was released in January 2026. With new functionality, including a [WHP dashboard](#) full of content designed specifically for DEC users to easily access essential documents and functions, the website serves as a resource for DEC and the public to stay informed on New York’s wildlife health.

With new sections like Tools – expanding the available models and tools to help answer wildlife managers’ questions using evidence-based methods and Topics - grouping content to make it easier to find related information by wildlife subject matter, our interdisciplinary teams’ use of analytics and molecular methods to track trends and generate new scientific insights is a mouse click away.

The upgraded site features a revamped [Resources library](#) that includes nearly 60 printable fact sheets, 20 technical documents, annual and quarterly reports, a new Wildlife Rehabilitator section offering content for licensed rehabbers, a new library of educational videos, and a Wildlife Health data portal for researchers and agency management to explore available datasets.



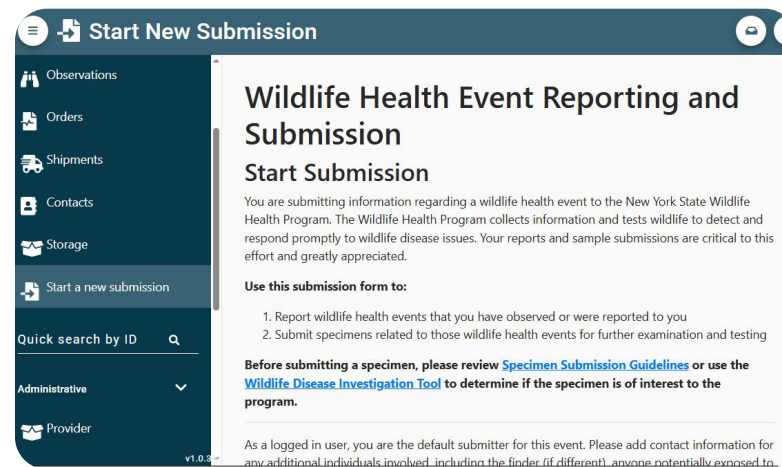
MODERNIZING WILDLIFE HEALTH INTELLIGENCE

The WHP is advancing data-driven wildlife health surveillance. Corvus, a new wildlife health information system developed in partnership with DJ Case & Associates, provides a novel framework supporting DEC's wildlife health data collection, analysis, and communication needs. By integrating workflows, diagnostic laboratory testing, sample archive management, analytics, and reporting into a single platform, Corvus improves efficiency, increases data quality and quantity, and deepens our understanding of emerging wildlife health issues across New York State.

Grounded in Science & Field-Ready

To ensure data is statistically and scientifically defensible, Corvus optimizes DEC resource use by guiding field data collection and testing protocols to maximize the value of every sample.

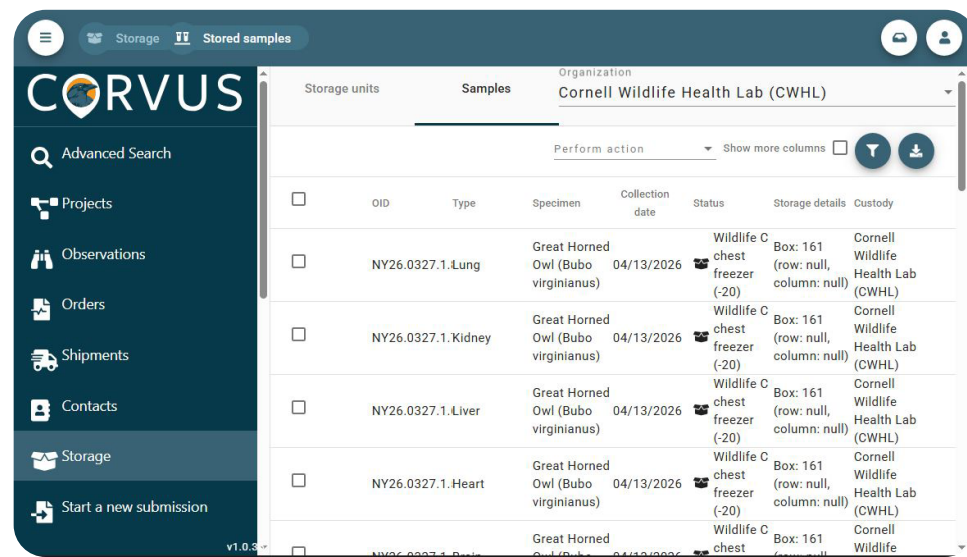
For DEC staff on the ground, Corvus provides a mobile-ready interface for real-time data entry directly in the field. A flexible submission process uses smart conditional logic to ensure critical data are captured immediately and seamlessly incorporated into ongoing state surveillance and research efforts.



Streamlining the Lab and Sample Lifecycle

Corvus meticulously tracks wildlife health specimens from the moment DEC staff collects a sample through its entire lifecycle. The platform automatically handles sample tracking and custody, safeguarding biological resources, and supporting long-term research.

Through direct integration with diagnostic laboratories, WHP staff can order diagnostic tests right through the platform. Corvus automatically retrieves and processes test results, linking them directly to field events. This eliminates manual data entry, cuts administrative errors, and ensures critical data are immediately available for monitoring.



Above left: Corvus Submission portal.

Bottom left: Sample tracking and archive information is incorporated into Corvus.

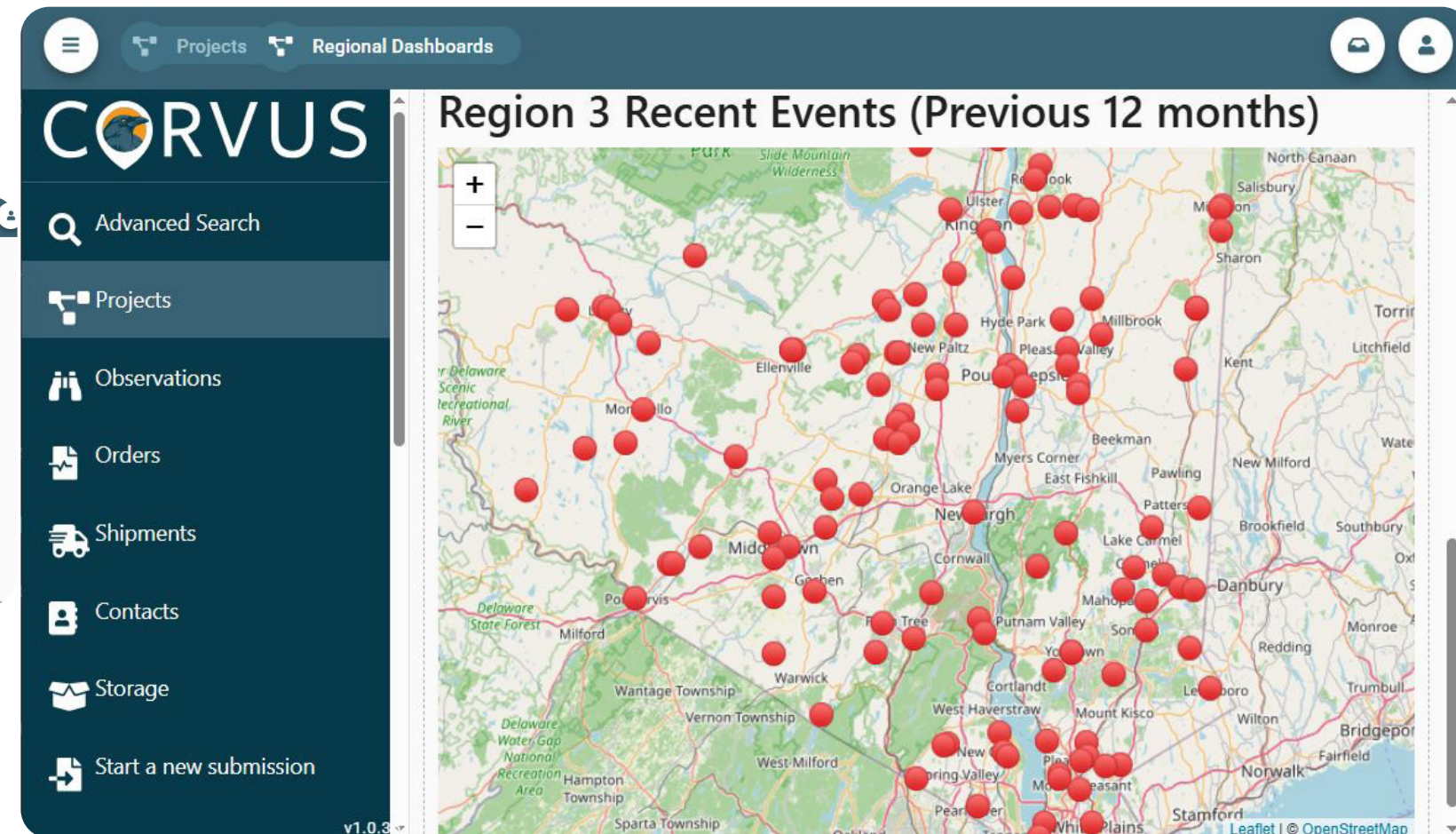
Above right: Targeted results by region is a click away.

Bottom right: Case tracking by species, date and region.

Standardizing Data & Supporting Collaborators

Historically, data fragmentation has been a persistent challenge across the wildlife health field. Corvus addresses this by introducing controlled vocabularies and automated data mapping that standardizes information flowing from external testing laboratories and DEC databases.

Because effective surveillance relies on teamwork, Corvus utilizes a sophisticated user management system. This allows DEC to grant controlled, secure access to external academic, non-profit, and local government partners, vastly improving communication and data sharing on shared wildlife health issues.



Connected and Built for Growth

Backed by a robust Application Programming Interface (API), Corvus serves as a powerful data hub for a wildlife health information system. It eliminates data silos by creating secure pipelines that connect and exchange data with other systems and critical national networks like the USGS National Wildlife Disease Database.

Engineered for long-term growth by a team of wildlife professionals and data scientists at the WHP, future updates to Corvus will introduce advanced modules for statistical analysis and predictive data modeling, keeping New York at the forefront of wildlife health management.

The screenshot displays the 'Observations' section of the Corvus application. It shows a table with columns for Created, Event date, OID, Species observed, Total observed, and Location. The table lists several observations, including Red-tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis), White-tailed Deer (Odocoileus virginianus), Mourning Dove (Zenaidura macroura), Great Horned Owl (Bubo virginianus), American Mink (Neogale vison), Snowy Owl (Bubo scandiacus), Red Fox (Vulpes vulpes), and Red Fox (Vulpes vulpes).

Created	Event date	OID	Species observed	Total observed	Location
03/24/2026	03/24/2026	NY26.0273	Red-tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis)	2	Saugerties (NY)
03/24/2026	03/24/2026	NY26.0272	White-tailed Deer (Odocoileus virginianus)	1	Wallkill (NY)
03/24/2026	12/15/2025	NY26.0271	Mourning Dove (Zenaidura macroura)	3	Yonkers (NY)
03/23/2026	03/23/2026	NY26.0270	Great Horned Owl (Bubo virginianus)	1	Orient (NY)
03/23/2026	08/24/2025	NY26.0269	American Mink (Neogale vison)	1	Lewiston (NY)
03/23/2026	03/09/2026	NY26.0268	Snowy Owl (Bubo scandiacus)	1	Cheektowaga (NY)
03/23/2026	03/21/2026	NY26.0267	Red Fox (Vulpes vulpes)	1	Horseheads (NY)
03/20/2026	03/20/2026	NY26.0266	Red Fox (Vulpes vulpes)	1	Port Ewen (NY)

ANNUAL WORK PLAN

Program Management

Administration: budgeting, fiscal, personnel, T&A, LATS, FMIS	Ongoing
Biannual wildlife health program review (Central Office or Cornell)	Complete
Wildlife Resources Center (WRC) infrastructure, equipment management and maintenance	Ongoing
WRC incinerator operation, lab maintenance, facility maintenance and grounds	Ongoing
Increase the integration of wildlife health principles into DEC field and administrative activities for Bureau of Wildlife and Division of Law Enforcement.	
WHP core staff will attend BOW Team meetings as full members on an annual basis to improve communication and integration of wildlife health into DEC activities.	Ongoing
In addition to the WHP Leader, core staff will attend Bureau Management Team and bureau-wide meetings as needed to report on activities or receive guidance on projects.	Ongoing
The Wildlife Health Team will meet in person annually to perform work planning and provide guidance on BOW and DLE needs and ensure program consistency statewide.	Ongoing
Demonstrate leadership in the field of wildlife health	
Support the development of state and/or regional wildlife health programs through partnerships (e.g. Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies), case data sharing, specimen archiving, staff training, outreach, and collaborative research.	Ongoing
Publish articles in peer-reviewed journals, news outlets, and social media outlets regularly.	Ongoing
Represent the WHP at state, national, and international scientific conferences, specialized meetings, workshops, and public engagements.	Ongoing
Develop relationships with Indigenous Nations in NY to assist with wildlife health issues and initiate CWD education and sampling programs.	
Continue to develop relationships with Tribal leaders and wildlife staff and offer wildlife disease training with an emphasis on CWD. Add them to distribution lists for wildlife health news.	Ongoing
Develop a relationship with The State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF) Center for Native Peoples and the Environment.	Not started
Discuss risks associated with captive cervids with Tribal leaders.	Ongoing

Policy Development

Increase the integration of wildlife health principles in agency activities through policy analysis, review, and development.	
Support protocol for live animal seizures by DLE according to current BMPs.	Complete
Continue to develop or provide input to BOW Teams for “best practices” guidance for common field activities performed by staff.	Ongoing
Evaluate potential issues related to wildlife rehabilitation and explore solutions to remediate problems.	Ongoing
Work with the rehabilitation community to train and assess distribution of RVS rehabilitators in collaboration with SLU.	Ongoing

Preparedness and Response

Respond to wildlife health incidents in a timely and effective manner	
Regularly update Field Response for Wildlife Diseases and disease response plans to include easy-to-follow flow charts and synopses of generic wildlife disease response plans, so managers and DEC administrative staff can find information in multiple forms.	Ongoing
Continue to develop disease response plans for specific pathogens identified by the WHP and the Wildlife Health Team, offer training on the response plans during biennial regional workshops, and include links to technical and relevant documents in the weekly case update emails.	Ongoing
Continue to work with DEC Office of Communications Services to provide outreach and education on important disease issues	Ongoing
Incorporate euthanasia guidance into DEC staff training.	Complete
Maintain situational awareness of climate change impacts and guidance as needed on how the health of native New York wildlife species may be affected.	Ongoing
Establish MOUs and maintain an updated list of options for disposal of deer carcasses and parts to minimize the risk of CWD transmission from the activities of hunters, meat processors, or taxidermists.	Complete
Ensure BOW has appropriate supplies, equipment, and facilities to conduct wildlife health activities safely and effectively	
Continue to ensure that staff have the necessary facilities, equipment, and supplies.	Ongoing
Support efforts to design and construct a DEC One Health Laboratory to replace the WHU and other DEC laboratory facilities.	Ongoing
Work cooperatively, as needed, with other agencies and collaborators	
WHP core personnel will participate in national and regional fish and wildlife health committees by attending meetings and assisting with guidance documents.	Ongoing
As requested, WHP core personnel will provide products and expertise to other state wildlife agencies and wildlife health entities.	Ongoing
DEC will work with other NYS agencies (State Parks, Dept. of Health, Dept. of Agriculture and Markets) in responding to disease events or concerns, such as detection of CWD within NY.	Ongoing
Establish a formal One Health relationship for infectious disease notification (chain-of-command) for partners in New York City that is adaptable for other cities.	Ongoing
Develop guidance for DEC on expectations for working with county departments of health in potential rabies exposure cases.	In progress

Research

Conduct and support basic and applied research on wildlife health issues and ensure that research is rigorous, goal oriented, and scientifically sound	
Advance ability to understand and manage disease threats to wildlife with multidisciplinary research.	Ongoing
Prepare high-priority wildlife health project proposals that are eligible for Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act and other funding sources.	Ongoing
Continue to collaborate with internal and external partners and follow the One Health tenets to produce high-quality data relevant to wildlife, human, and domestic animal health.	Ongoing
Provide guidance for wildlife health best practices in agency research projects.	Ongoing
Participate in multi-state/interagency projects to increase understanding of disease ecology at the landscape scale.	Ongoing
Curate an online wildlife tissue biobank	Ongoing

Training and Development

Ensure BOW staff and partners are provided information and training so that they can conduct wildlife health activities safely and efficiently and in compliance with all state and federal regulations, animal welfare, and biosafety standards.		
Ensure that all incumbent staff and new hires attend workshops or complete training modules (available on the CWHL website) in the following subject areas within 1-2 months of being hired. Consider incorporation into onboarding processes and Fish/Wildlife Seasonal Handbook, etc.	Ongoing	
Offer NY-specific Chemical Immobilization (CI) training annually in a central location to ensure staff, including DLE, receives training on a five-year basis to maintain fluency with current standards and proficiency with techniques outlined in the Chemical Immobilization SOP. Ensure consistency with yearly regional refresher CI courses.	Complete	
Develop guidance documents for DEC staff as needed (e.g. medical treatment of free-ranging wildlife).	Ongoing	
Continue to provide a “wildlife health refresher” during statewide BOW staff meetings.	Ongoing	
Update the DEC user list twice annually to capture new seasonal employees. Obtain DEC master employee list including work locations for distribution of materials/services through the CWHL website.	Complete	
Continue to integrate with DLE to ensure they have similar training and access to wildlife health information, including proper submission protocols, shipping regulations, and access to personal protective equipment. DLE will be included in wildlife staff, chemical immobilization training, and the Region BLOC meetings.	Complete	
Identify appropriate training opportunities for WHP core staff, such as PPE selection and use, wildlife necropsy procedures, disease diagnosis, epidemiology, and Foreign Animal Disease familiarity, and facilitate DEC and CWHL staff participation.	Ongoing	
Sharing information and training with wildlife professionals, students, and Indigenous Nations so that they can conduct wildlife health activities safely, efficiently, and in compliance with all state and federal regulations, animal welfare, and biosafety standards		
Via the CWHL website, provide disease fact sheets, glossary, and analytic tools to improve staff knowledge of wildlife disease and facilitate responses to public inquiries.	Complete	
Participate in or plan advanced workshops or lectures on specific diseases, taxonomic groups, laboratory procedures, or other topics of interest.	Ongoing	
Through the DEC Office of Indian Nation Affairs liaison, maintain contacts with Indigenous Nations in NY to provide wildlife health information and training and better understand what is occurring on Tribal lands.	Ongoing	
Utilize veterinary and wildlife biology students where research and experiential opportunities exist to support the WHP mission.	Complete	



CWHL Wildlife Health technician Mariel Vandegrift demonstrating the eDNA filtering process at the Fall Herp Team meeting in Region 9, August 6-8, 2025.

Surveillance and Monitoring

Ensure staff are aware of typical disease patterns and recognize emerging wildlife health issues		
Launch a new WHP case database to collate data and provide on-demand disease analytics (e.g. maps, charts).	Complete	
Ensure that diagnoses are provided promptly and are clearly communicated to staff.	Ongoing	
Provide relevant maps on request for specific species, locations, or hazards (e.g. eagle electrocution sites, historic organochlorine pesticide poisoning locations, HPAI detections).	Ongoing	
Provide weekly case updates through a subscription email service with case status updates, disease outbreak information, and other emerging threats.	Ongoing	
Regularly ensure the listserv is up-to-date and includes new staff.	Complete	
Ensure information for the prevention, management, and mitigation of disease or contaminant impacts are based on sound surveillance and monitoring data		
Employ molecular methodologies for pathogen detection and profiling.	Ongoing	
Develop new assays for wildlife species identification with an emphasis on diseases (e.g. chronic wasting disease, Bsal) and some rare and cryptic species (e.g. endangered reptiles and amphibians).	Ongoing	
Continue to maintain DEC staff and management access to online case data to facilitate data-driven decision-making.	Ongoing	
Identify emerging zoonotic threats or diseases that may have the potential to spill over to humans or domestic animals.	Ongoing	
Support coordinated surveillance and monitoring activities within New York State and with national and international agencies.		
Engage in national efforts to document and share information on emerging disease threats.	Ongoing	
Participate in the NEAFWA Fish and Wildlife Health Committee and Northeast Wildlife Health quarterly meetings.	Ongoing	
Work with state and federal agencies to develop regional approaches for disease surveillance and understanding population impacts.	Ongoing	
Provide space for the NEAFWA Regional Fish and Wildlife Health Coordinator at the AHDC.	Complete	
Develop new surveillance methodologies and testing capacity for emerging infectious disease of wildlife for New York and our state and federal partners.		
Continue to develop minimally invasive testing for DEC and neighboring states	Ongoing	
Provide online and video training for new surveillance methods.	In progress	
Share technological improvements with other wildlife agencies.	Ongoing	
Develop guidance on appropriate sample sizes to determine freedom-from-disease or prevalence rates through advanced quantitative analysis to improve agency effectiveness and efficiency.	Complete	
Share tools and software with other states, provinces, and Indigenous Nations to ensure a more coordinated and comprehensive approach to disease surveillance.	Ongoing	
Participate in national efforts to collect, standardize, and share data.	In progress	
Establish an online wildlife health diagnostic portal within the AHDC	Complete	
Forensic services for DLE	Ongoing	
Annual CWD surveillance (sample collection, Taxidermy Partnership Program, reporting)	Complete	

Communication

Ensure BOW staff are provided information and training so that they can conduct wildlife health activities safely, efficiently, and in compliance with all state and federal regulations, animal welfare, and biosafety standards		
Improve access to wildlife health information using digital tools, scientific publications, and other media outlets (e.g. podcasts and social media).	Ongoing	
Increase use of digital tools for intra-agency communications and document sharing, including DLE.	Ongoing	
Attend DLE BLOC meetings and ensure that DLE staff view on-line Wildlife Health training materials.	Ongoing	
Contribute to the Wildlife Health Team SharePoint folder by providing technical and guidance documents, data, and presentations of interest.	Ongoing	
Maintain cooperative relationships with external agencies and collaborators for coordinated response to wildlife health issues		
Incorporate or improve the use of new methods for collecting and sharing data (e.g. digital permit reporting, case database, CWD data collection in the field)	Ongoing	
Participate in the NEAFWA Fish and Wildlife Technical Committee.	Ongoing	
Include NYSDAM, NYSDOH, and USDA APHIS in listserves and training opportuinites.	Ongoing	
Increase public awareness of emerging wildlife health issues and the wildlife health program		
Maintain a data portal for the public to access basic case and disease information.	Ongoing	
Increase engagement with the general public through online resources, popular press, lectures, and social media.	Ongoing	
Expand and promote a library of wildlife disease fact sheets, available online and in printable format.	Ongoing	
Facilitate BOW staff responses to public inquiries by providing staff with improved information resources.	Ongoing	
Engage with communications specialists to design and implement outreach programs.	Ongoing	
Be engaged in Cornell CVM/AHDC strategic planning processes to improve development, communications, and programming for wildlife-related activities at the College.	Ongoing	
Continue to work with Hunter Education Program instructors to keep them current on information (i.e. CWD mitigation, lead ammunition, common wildlife diseases hunters may encounter) through the Hunter Education syllabus or other media sources.	Ongoing	
Maintain CWD outreach materials to use if/when CWD is detected in NY.	Complete	
P.tenuis white paper for livestock owners	Drafted	
Targeted newsletter communication with WHT, DEC , DAMS and rehabbers	Ongoing	
Wildlife health and wildlife rehabilitators listserv maintenance	Ongoing	
NYS CWD Communication Strategy	In progress	



Information Management

Provide BOW staff and collaborators with accurate and reliable wildlife health data that is readily available to support all program goals		
Provide variable levels of access for staff and the public for real-time case data and analytic tools through the CWHL website, CWD Data Warehouse, and case database.	Ongoing	
Provide online access to other databases (ex. rehabilitator, taxidermist, meat processor, captive cervid license data).	Complete	
Work with SLU and other groups to facilitate collection of relevant permit reports and analysis for WHP and agency use.	Complete	
Provide data summaries and analysis for information requests and policy decisions.	Ongoing	
Integrate DEC and NYSDAM databases for captive cervid facilities, disease testing, and inspections.	In progress	
Support development of mobile app and web-based field and public data collection	Ongoing	
Provide data/specimen portal for researchers	Complete	
Development of new Laboratory Information Management System (CORVUS)	Complete	
Development of a new CWHL website to integrate with CORVUS	Complete	
Participate in National Wildlife Disease Database development process	In progress	
SOP4CWD NAHLN - Data Warehouse integration	Complete	

NYSDEC Avian Influenza Reporting Form

Instructions

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is monitoring highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in wild birds and we need your help to report suspect cases.

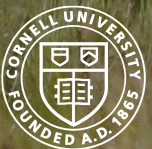
Veterinary Support Services

Guide the handling of live wildlife by BOW staff and the regulated community using veterinary medical “best practices”		
As needed, develop recommendations for potential adoption by the BOW and the regulated community to respond to injured, ill, orphaned, endangered and threatened species.	Ongoing	
Offer hands-on veterinary support on field projects.	Ongoing	
Support legal chemical immobilization and euthanasia drug acquisition and use.	Ongoing	
Provide support and consultation to cooperating veterinary practitioners who can assist BOW staff and licensees with issues realted to veterinary medical services for wildlife.	Ongoing	
Assess current BOW practices and procedures involving the handling of live wildlife and provide standards to ensure they are guided by best veterinary medical principles.	Ongoing	
Review licenses issued by the DFW and provide recommendations to ensure that activities conducted under the authority of such licenses are guided by best veterinary medical principles and do not pose a threat to wildlife.	Ongoing	
Establish an MOU with Tri-State Bird Rescue to be prepared in the event of an oil spill.	In progress	
Support Teams in the creation and maintenance of “best practices” documents related to head-starting threatened and endangered species including propagation, introduction, augmentation, and translocation.	Ongoing	



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