New York State Cooperative Wildlife Health Program

brought to you by:

Cornell Wildlife Health Lab

a New York State Wildlife Health Program partner
The WHP was established in 2010 as a partnership between NYSDEC and the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine in Ithaca, New York.

We work to detect, manage and prevent serious impacts from diseases and toxins on New York wildlife, domestic animals and people.
Why Wildlife Health?

The Northeast United States is unfortunately a hot spot for emerging diseases.

In the past 20-30 years, NY has dealt with introductions of raccoon rabies, West Nile Virus, White Nose Syndrome and Chronic Wasting Disease.

It is possible for any one of you to encounter a new wildlife disease at any time.

Global Trends in emerging infectious diseases
Kate E. Jones, Nikkita G. Patel, Marc A. Levy, Adam Storeygard, Deborah Balk, John L. Gittleman & Peter Daszak
Nature 451, 990-993 (21 February 2008)
New York State Wildlife Health Program

Why Wildlife Health?

Some wildlife diseases are problematic for both human and domestic animal health.

Because human diseases can come from wildlife, people may have negative perceptions of wild animals.

Having accurate information about the actual risks and disease transmission will help protect both wildlife and people.

61% of human diseases are shared with animals

70% of those originate with wildlife
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Why Wildlife Health?

Some diseases may have serious implications for wildlife species.

**White Nose fungus** has severely reduced little brown bat populations in New York.

In some states with **Chronic Wasting Disease**, deer numbers are declining as infection rates steadily increase.

![White Nose Syndrome](image)

![Chronic Wasting Disease](image)

Photo Credit: Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Our program promotes the health and long term sustainability of wildlife populations through integration of the fields of wildlife ecology and veterinary medicine.
Wildlife biologists and veterinarians have complementary skills that can help us figure out where disease impacts wildlife, and how to manage it.
A major part of what we do is examine submitted animals to determine the cause of death. This type of surveillance helps us rapidly detect new diseases as well as understand how to manage what is already here. Information is regularly shared with our partners in human and domestic animal health.
Surveillance

We accept cases from multiple sources to ensure that we cover a wide variety of species and locations; we examine almost 1200 animals a year.

Biologists can submit cases, see case reports, analyze case data, and access disease fact sheets through our website.
We monitor reports from other state and federal agencies and partners to identify new disease threats that need attention. For these threats, the program designs targeted surveillance and research projects; and works with partners on education, prevention, and response plans. Prevention is the only proven effective method of wildlife disease management.
One of our biggest priorities is preventing the reintroduction of chronic wasting disease (CWD) into the New York State wild deer herd.

Deer hunting and recreational activities contribute $1.5 billion annually to the NY state economy.

NY has an intensive surveillance program and comprehensive prevention and response plans for this disease.
We conduct many collaborative research projects with partners from a variety of universities, non-profits and state and federal agencies. Projects may be initiated when biologists identify a pressing need, or because we discover disease issues that require further investigation.
We hold regular staff training workshops every other year and provide a variety of materials to keep staff up to date on safe handling of wildlife.

Staff may also make requests for specialized training, health information, or support for agency activities.

Staff safety is one of our highest priorities.
Our program regularly engages high school, undergraduate, and graduate students in our research and day-to-day activities.

We may ask NYSDEC staff to allow students to participate in field activities.

Students gain valuable insights from interacting with both wildlife biologists and veterinarians.
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Policy Support

We are always available for NYSDEC managers and biologists to answer questions about care and handling of wildlife, review research permits, and provide input on regulations and management plans.
Core Program

NYSDEC Central Office, Albany
Patrick Martin, Program Leader

NYSDEC Wildlife Health Unit, Delmar
Kevin Hynes, Wildlife Biologist
Joseph Okoniewski, Wildlife Biologist
John Shea, Wildlife Technician
Ashley Ableman, Wildlife Technician

Cornell University, College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, NY
Dr. Elizabeth Bunting, Veterinarian
Dr. Krysten Schuler, Wildlife Disease Ecologist
Dr. Maria Forzan, Pathologist
Nicole Dean, Wildlife Program Aide
Nicholas Hollingshead, Geospatial Analyst
Richalice Melendez, Wildlife Technician

Wildlife Health Team
NYSDEC Bureau of Wildlife

Region | Staff
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1 | Leslie Lupo
2 | Sandy Chan
3 | Tim Watson
4 | Karl Parker
5 | Paul Jensen
6 | Blanche Town
7 | Tom Bell (co-chair)
8 | Jenny landry
9 | Ryan Rockefeller

WHU | Kevin Hynes (chair)
AHDC | Krysten Schuler
    | Elizabeth Bunting
BMT | Patrick Martin (Central Office)
    | Michelle Gibbons (regional)
DLE | Major Matthew Revenaugh
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For More Information

https://cwhl.vet.cornell.edu