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# Chronic Wasting Disease in Wisconsin: Hunter Behavior, Perceived Risk, and Agency Trust

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## Abstract

License sales for the 2002 Wisconsin gun deer hunting season declined approximately 11% following the discovery of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in the state. This article examines the extent to which CWD influenced 2001 Wisconsin deer hunters who did not participate in the 2002 season. The article also compares 2002 hunters against those who dropped out in 2002 relative to their perceptions of risks associated with CWD and their trust in the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). Data were obtained from a survey of 2001 resident Wisconsin deer hunters (n=1,373, response rate=67%). A cluster analysis of 14 possible reasons for not hunting indicated that about half (estimate=52%±5%) of the 2001 Wisconsin hunters that did not participate in the 2002 season did not hunt because of CWD. The remaining non-

hunters dropped out of gun deer hunting for a variety of reasons unrelated to CWD (e.g., not enough time, conflicting responsibilities). Individuals who dropped out for non-CWD reasons gave responses on perceived CWD risk and trust in WDNR that were statistically equivalent to those of 2002 gun hunters. Non-hunters who did not participate due to CWD were less likely to believe the information provided by the WDNR and were less trusting of this agency compared to those who hunted. These findings reinforce the role of social trust in fostering a positive relationship with an agency's stakeholders.

Keywords:

chronic wasting disease   hunting   constraints   perceived risk   agency trust

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## Notes

1 For other population percents that range from 30% to 70%, the standard error is somewhat larger. For example, for  $.3 \equiv 30\%$  (or its complement  $.7 = 1 - .3 \equiv 70\%$ ), the standard error is  $100\% * (.3 * .7 / 1000)^{.5} \cong 1.4\%$ . For population percents between 30% and 70%, using a standard error of about 1.5% is reasonable.

2 The cluster analysis was conducted using the SPSS (version 12.0) K-means procedure. Separate cluster analyses were performed for 2, 3, and 4 group solutions. The 3-group solution provided the best fit to the data. To validate this solution, the data were randomly sorted. A K-means analysis was conducted after each of three random sorts. All of these additional cluster analyses supported the initial 3-group solution.

3 There were 222 respondents that did not hunt in 2002. Of these, there were 143 non-hunters for whom there were no missing data. The standard error in 48% or 52% is approximately the standard error in an estimate of about 50% $\approx$ .5. Standard error for .5 is  $\approx 100% * (.5 * .5 / 143)^{.5} \approx 4%$ . Given that the clustering split was not exact, there is a minimum standard error of 5%. With this level of error, results such as a 48%/52% represent “about half” of the non-2002 hunters.

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