

Maine Captive Cervid Escapes Protocol

Step 1: Contacts

Please notify Taryn Pearson or Stefanie Bolas at the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (ME DACF) that there has been a captive cervid escape.

- a. Taryn Pearson: 207-446-6375 OR taryn.pearson@maine.gov
- b. Stefanie Bolas: 207-287-7615 OR stefanie.bolas@maine.gov

Our goal is for the animal(s) to be returned quickly and unharmed to their farm of origin.

Because neither captive nor wild cervids in Maine can be verified to be CWD-free, it is very important to prevent contact between the two populations. When that fails, it is a priority for owners and state regulatory agencies to minimize the amount of time an escaped cervid co-mingles with wild cervids.

Please read the current rules below and contact ME DACF staff if you have any questions.

State Requirements if an animal escapes from your facility:

For licensed captive cervid farms:

RECOVERY OR DISPOSITION OF ESCAPED CERVIDS [From Ch. 204, p. 4]:

A. **The license holder shall report any escaped cervids to the Department within 24-hours of the known escape.** The license holder shall be responsible for monitoring the movement of the escaped cervids and for recovering the cervids as authorized by the Department. **If a cervid has been at large for longer than 72 hours, but has been returned to the owner's premises alive, the escaped cervid must be identified and tested for CWD when it ultimately dies.**

B. The Department may euthanize any captured cervid that is relinquished to the Department by its owner, if known, for the purpose of diagnostic testing for the presence of CWD. The Department may, in accordance with 7 M.R.S.A. §1802, condemn any captured cervid that is suspected of being infected with, or exposed to, CWD, and order that cervid euthanized for the purpose of diagnostic testing.

In the event that capture of the escaped cervid is not practical, the Department will consult with the owner, if known, to determine whether the owner will relinquish the cervid to the Department. If the owner agrees to relinquish the cervid, or if the owner does not agree but the commissioner of the Department condemns the cervid in accordance with 7 M.R.S.A. §1802, the representatives of the Department, with cooperation from the representatives of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, may destroy the escaped cervid, and samples may be taken for the purpose of diagnostic testing. **The license holder shall be responsible for reasonable and appropriate costs associated with the capture, euthanasia, or destruction of escaped cervids.**

For licensed Commercial Large Game Shooting Areas:

RECOVERY OR DISPOSITION OF ESCAPED DOMESTICATED LARGE GAME [From Ch. 223, p. 9]:

A. **LGSA license holders must report any escaped domesticated large game to the Department within 24 hours of discovery.** The license holder shall be responsible for monitoring the movement of the escaped large game and for recovery of the escaped large game, as authorized by the Department.

B. If escaped individuals are cervids that have been at large for longer than 72 hours, but have been returned to the owner's premises alive, these individuals must be identified and tested for CWD when they ultimately die.

C. The Department may euthanize any captured domesticated large game that is relinquished to the Department by its owner, if known, for the purpose of diagnostic testing for disease. The Department may, in accordance with 7 M.R.S. §1802, condemn any domesticated large game individual that is suspected of being infected with or exposed to CWD, brucellosis, tuberculosis, or other disease of domesticated animals or wild game, for purpose of diagnostic testing.

D. In the event that capture of the escaped large game individual is not practical, the Department will consult with the owner, if known, to determine whether the owner will relinquish the escaped individual to the Department. If the owner agrees to relinquish the escaped individual, or if the owner does not agree to relinquish it, and the Department condemns the escaped domesticated large game animal in accordance with 7 M.R.S. §1802, the Department with cooperation with representatives of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, may destroy the escaped individual, and samples may be taken for the purpose of diagnostic testing.

E. **LGSA license holders shall pay for reasonable and appropriate costs associated with the capture, euthanasia, or destruction of domesticated large game that escape from their commercial large game shooting areas.**