

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Serotype 2



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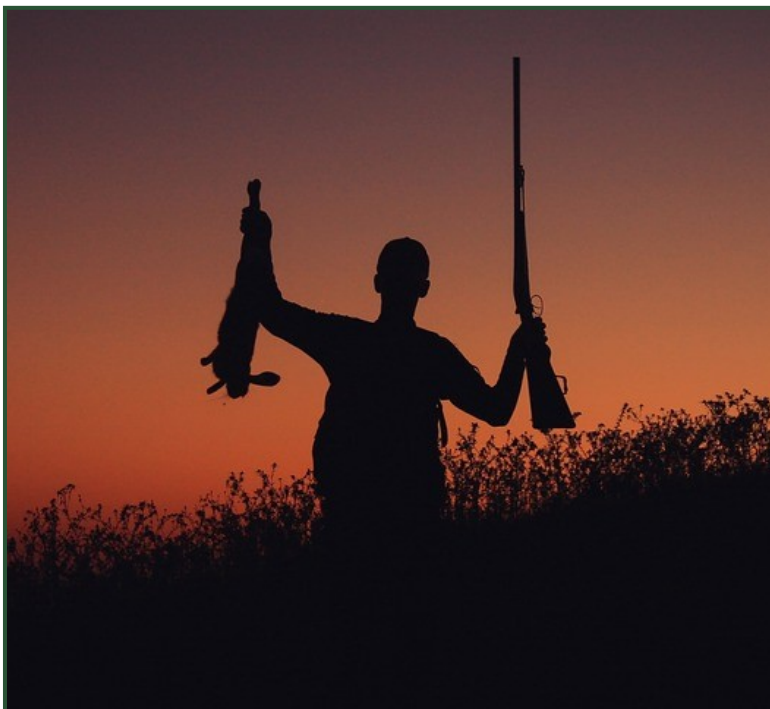
Guidance for Rabbit Hunters and Field Trial Participants

What is Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease?

Rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus serotype 2 (RHDV2) is a highly contagious and lethal virus that affects all rabbit and hare species. It is not a human health concern. RHDV2 is easily spread via direct contact with infected live or dead rabbits or during interactions with scavengers, insects, and dogs that have had previous contact with infected rabbits. The virus can remain active for months in the environment and rabbits may be exposed to the virus directly from the habitat in which they live. The virus also remains active for extended periods on clothing, footwear, and equipment but it is inactivated by a 10% bleach solution. The virus spreads easily and rapidly through rabbit populations and over 80% of infected rabbits may die from RHDV2, potentially causing severe local or landscape-level rabbit population declines.

How to Minimize Spread of RHDV2

- **Do not release domestic rabbits into the wild**
 - * This practice is illegal and can spread disease
- Do not move wild rabbits for any reason, including stocking or dog training purposes, as translocation of rabbits can facilitate spread of disease
- Attempt to eliminate all contact between dogs and dead rabbits
- Apply a dry pet shampoo (and follow the directions on the product label) to dogs after the last hunt of the day or in between hunts if the dogs are traveling the same day to a new hunting area located greater than 5 miles away
- After cleaning rabbits, do not leave remains where they can be spread by scavengers
 - * Bury rabbit remains deep enough to discourage scavenging or double-bag and discard in a trash bin, trash dump, or at a landfill
- Wear rubber gloves when cleaning rabbits and wash hands thoroughly when finished
- Clean all knives, tools, and surfaces used to process a rabbit with detergent and then submerge in a 10% bleach solution for at least 10 minutes
- After handling dead rabbits, wash or change clothes and disinfect the soles of your footwear with a 10% bleach solution before traveling to new hunting areas or handling domestic rabbits
- Cook rabbits thoroughly to at least 165°F
- If you have pet domestic rabbits, do not handle them until you have showered and changed clothes after cleaning or handling dead wild rabbits



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Disinfection Protocol

- Use a 10% bleach (sodium hypochlorite) solution
 - * Mix 1/2 cup 6% or 8.25% household bleach in 1 gallon of water
- Ensure contact time is at least 10 minutes
- Wear gloves and eye protection when mixing the solution and work in a well ventilated area

Signs of RHDV2 Infection

- Multiple dead rabbits (greater than three) found in close proximity over a short period of time
- Rabbits often die suddenly with no outward signs of illness, sometimes out in the open and not under cover
- Dead rabbits may exhibit frothy, bright red blood around the nose and mouth

Current State of RHDV2 in North America

- RHDV2 was first detected in wild rabbits in April 2020
- As of July 2020, all detections in wild rabbits have been confined to the southwestern United States and Mexico
- RHDV2 spread across the continent of Australia in 18 months, therefore rapid spread across the U.S. is possible
- Localized and large scale population-level impacts are possible as a result of an RHDV2 outbreak

What to Do If You Suspect RHDV2

- Report possible RHDV2 to DWR Regional Offices or to the Wildlife Helpline at 855-571-9003
- Do not touch or clean rabbits found dead or that appear diseased

Additional Resources

- **Center for Food Security & Public Health (general facts):** http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/rabbit_hemorrhagic_disease.pdf
- **USDA (general facts):** https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/fs-rhdv2.pdf
- **USDA (cleaning and disinfection procedures):** https://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/rabbits/USDA_CandDofRHDV2.pdf

