



Eleaophorosis

Background

Eleaophorosis is a parasitic disease caused by the nematode *Elaeophora schneideri* which resides in the carotid arteries. Larvae accumulate in the blood capillaries of the head and face and are picked up and transmitted by horseflies. The disease occurs naturally in mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, and domestic sheep and goats. The adult parasite is a long, pearly-white roundworm (females are about the length and diameter of a paperclip) that inhabits the terminal branches of the common carotid arteries. The parasite can also occur in bighorn sheep, bison, and pronghorn antelope.

Management

Signs of the disease in white-tailed deer include facial swelling due to food impactions, tooth loss, and degeneration or fracture of jaw. In elk, the disease causes muzzle and ear necrosis, malformed antlers, blindness, lack of coordination (ataxia), facial or lower limb dermatitis, and death. Mule deer are generally resistant to heavy infections and often show no clinical signs of infection.

The onset of eleaophorosis occurs during the late summer and early fall when the conditions are favorable for increased horsefly activity. The disease can be introduced to naïve native species by domestic sheep and goats and is likely to occur in areas where wild and domestic ruminants overlap. Animals reported to be showing signs of the disease can be targeted and tested on a case by case basis and can be diagnosed by organized scars in the carotid arteries.

Reporting

To report sick, injured, or dead wildlife, please call the Wildlife Disease Hotline at 877-972-8426. Wildlife health personnel will respond Monday through Friday during normal business hours. You can leave a message if it is before or after business hours. Fresh samples are required for testing. If you have a wildlife related emergency, please call our 24 hour dispatch center at (623) 236-7201. If the animal you are calling about has been shot and you are reporting possible illegal activity, call Operation Game Thief 800-352-0700.

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