

You Can Help Prevent RHDV2 in Colorado

Hunters and/or recreationists, please report carcasses or sick wildlife sightings to Fort Carson or PCMS wildlife officials via our iSportsman [Contact Us page](#) and/or the installation's conservation law enforcement officers at 719-503-9256 to help us track and prevent the spread of the RHDV2 virus on our installation and the surrounding areas.

If you notice dead rabbits anywhere while hunting or recreating off post please call CPW's Colorado Springs office at 719-227-5200 to report it.

Symptoms in rabbits you might see: lethargy, high fever, seizures, jaundice, bleeding from nose, mouth, or rectum, difficulty breathing, and death.

Causes of Spread

RHDV2 spreads quickly through direct contact or exposure to the blood or excretions of infected rabbits making it a serious threat to wild rabbit populations. Travis Duncan with CPW warns that this virus can also survive and spread from carcasses, food, water, and any contaminated materials. People hunting or recreating could potentially spread the virus indirectly by carrying it on their clothing and shoes. The RHDV2 virus can also spread internationally and trans-nationally through rabbit parts purchased over the internet, carcasses that are transferred across state lines by hunters, and poorly cleaned gear.

Biologists recommend disinfecting your clothes, shoes, and all rabbit hunting equipment with a 10 percent bleach and water mixture to prevent the spread. The USDA and EPA have also assembled a list of disinfectants that are effective in killing the RHDV2 virus. [List of disinfectants.](#)

Broader Impacts for Wildlife

If wild rabbit populations collapse in regions around the country, there could be wide-felt negative impacts on a variety of other species. Without the rabbits as a food source, predators will likely have to prey on other species to survive and will often opt to prey on deer or pronghorn fawns as well as others.

Guidelines for Wild Cottontails, Hares and Pika

- Please report sick/dead wild rabbits, jackrabbits, snowshoe hares or pika to your local DPW wildlife or CPW office.
- Do not handle rabbits or rodents that have been found dead.
- Do not allow pets or scavengers to feed on found carcasses. Though RHDV-2 is not a risk to pets other than domestic rabbits, a number of other pathogens and parasites from carcasses can affect pets.
- Do not handle or consume rabbits or other game animals that appear to be sick.
- Meat from healthy rabbits harvested by hunters is safe to consume when cooked thoroughly.

Guidelines for Domestic Rabbits

- Rabbit owners should exercise extreme caution and biosecurity to avoid accidental exposure of domestic rabbits through contaminated feed, bedding, equipment or clothing that may have come in contact with infected domestic or wild rabbits or birds that could transfer the virus from infected wild rabbits.
- Domestic rabbits should not be housed outdoors in areas where rabbit hemorrhagic disease has been detected in wild rabbits.
- Contact your veterinarian for more information about this disease in domestic rabbits.