



Published Date: 2022-03-29 18:48:24 CEST

Subject: PRO/AH/EDR> COVID-19 update (83): animal, USA, mule deer

Archive Number: 20220329.8702286

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 UPDATE (83): ANIMAL, USA, MULE DEER

A ProMED-mail post

<http://www.promedmail.org>

ProMED-mail is a program of the
International Society for Infectious Diseases
<http://www.isid.org>

Date: Tue 29 Mar 2022 12:09 AM MDT

Source: FOX13 [edited]

<https://www.fox13now.com/news/local-news/covid-19-detected-in-utah-mule-deer-for-the-first-time-but-no-cause-for-concern>

Two years after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the virus has been confirmed in Utah's mule deer population.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources [DWR] said it collected blood and nasal swab samples from mule deer during their recent winter health assessments.

While only one nasal swab came back positive for the virus -- specifically, the delta variant in a female mule deer in Morgan County -- the DWR says several others had COVID-19 antibodies in their blood samples, indicating that the virus had already made its way into the mule deer population.

This is the 1st mule deer in the United States to test positive for the virus, although it was previously detected in white-tailed deer in some parts of the country.

The US Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has been studying the virus in wildlife, and the DWR's sample collection was part of that effort.

The presence of the virus in mule deer doesn't have wildlife biologists overly concerned, however.

"While it is confirmed that mule deer are susceptible to this virus, the deer that we took samples from did not show any clinical signs of the illness, and there isn't any evidence that it is killing mule deer," DWR State Veterinarian Ginger Stout said in a press release issued Monday [28 Mar 2022]. "There is also no evidence that animals, including mule deer, are playing a significant role in spreading SARS-CoV-2 to people, and the available research suggests that the likelihood of getting COVID-19 from an animal is quite low."

It is not yet known how this mule deer or others were exposed to the delta variant of COVID-19, the DWR says it could have been through other deer, another animal species, or even humans.

The DWR also assures hunters that there is no evidence that people can get COVID-19 by eating meat from an infected animal, but they gave these tips for general food hygiene when processing game meat:

- Don't allow contact between wildlife and domestic animals, including pets and hunting dogs.
- Do not harvest animals that appear sick or are found already dead.
- Keep game meat clean, and cool the meat down as soon as possible after harvesting the animal.
- Avoid cutting through the animal's backbone and spinal tissues, and do not eat the brains of wildlife.
- When handling and cleaning game meat, wear rubber or disposable gloves. Don't eat, drink, or smoke while handling the meat.
- When you are finished handling and cleaning the meat, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

--

Communicated by:

Mary Marshall

<mjm2020@googlemail.com>

[Soon after transmission of SARS-CoV-2 variants was found to be occurring among white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), making this species a suitable compartment where the virus may be maintained and evolve, in my comment I said that surveillance efforts needed to be taken in other deer of the Capreolinae subfamily (New World deer).

The mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) is phylogenetically close to white-tailed deer (both belong to the same genus). While white-tailed deer is found throughout most of North America east of the Rocky Mountains and in the valleys of the Rocky Mountains from Idaho and Wyoming northward, mule deer are found on the western Great Plains, in the Rocky Mountains, in the southwest United States, and on the west coast of North America.

The significance of mule deer on the dynamics of SARS-CoV-2 is yet to be determined and largely depends on its transmissibility and pathogenicity in this species. If it spreads in mule deer as it does in white-tailed deer, this is of concern, as there would be another potential compartment for the virus to be maintained and evolve inhabiting a different region. The same might apply to some of the remaining 20 species of the Capreolinae subfamilies that occur throughout the Americas. -
Mod.PMB

ProMED map:

Morgan County, Utah, United States: <https://promedmail.org/promed-post?place=8702286,4391>

See Also

COVID-19 update (80): animal, USA, deer, transmission 20220325.8702212

COVID-19 update (63): animal, Canada, wild deer 20220303.8701773

COVID-19 update (43): animal, USA, wild deer, omicron 20220209.8701357

COVID-19 update (451): animal, USA, wild deer 20211230.8700589

COVID-19 update (413): animal, Canada, wild deer 20211202.8700020

COVID-19 update (373): animal, USA, wild deer, transmission 20211102.8699412

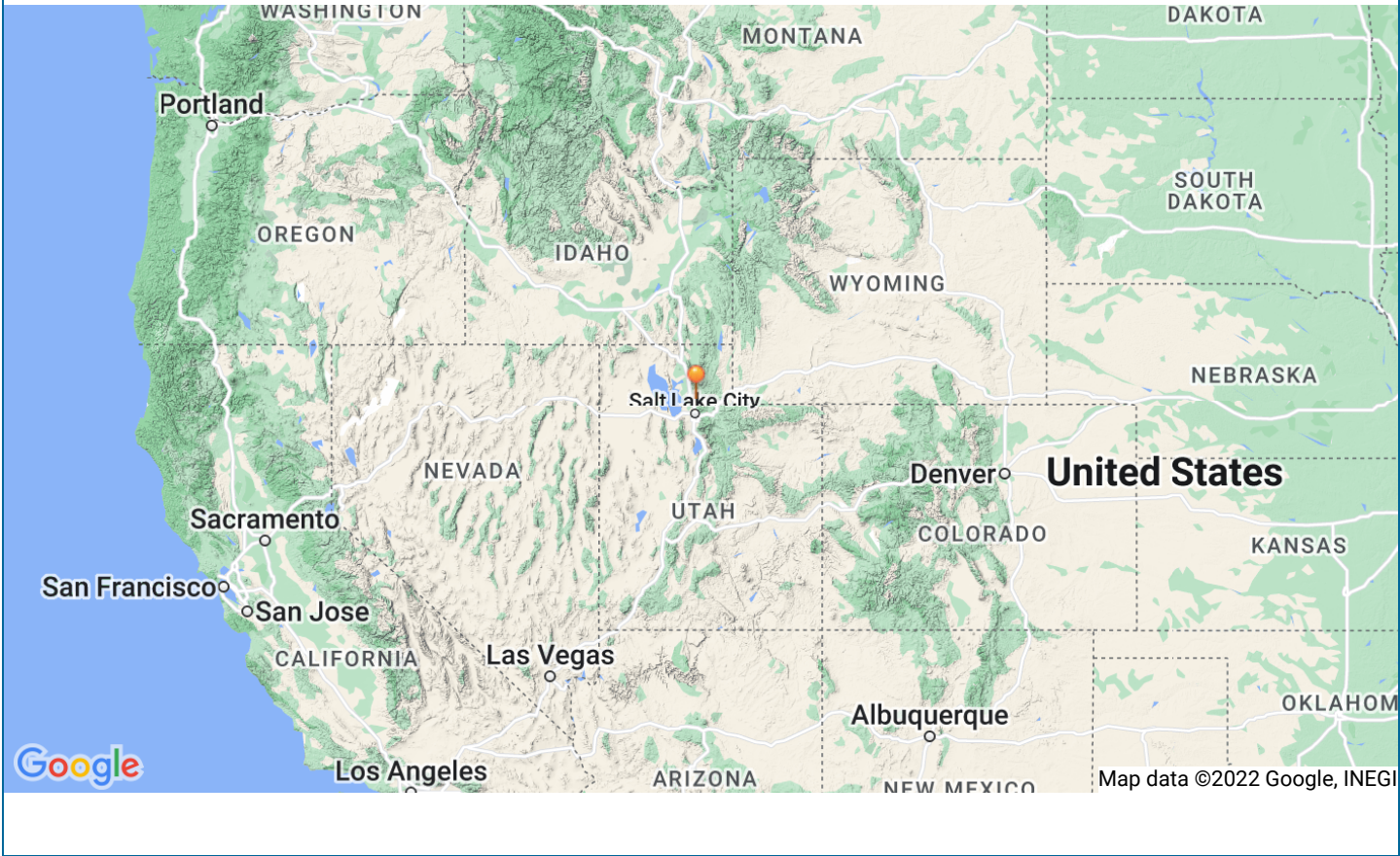
COVID-19 update (260): animal, USA, wild deer, exposure, RFI 20210729.8554149

16 Jan 2021 COVID-19 update (20): animal, deer, experimental infection
2020

COVID-19 update (536): animal, USA (UT) wild mink, 1st case 20201213.8015608

.....pmb/mj/jh

ProMED-mail alerts



[Support](#) [Privacy Policy](#)
[Terms & Conditions](#)