



BIG GAME PROGRAMS

Regulatory Proposal and Discussion Item
Presentation to the Wildlife Resources Committee

January 15, 2025
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Wildlife Branch

Presentation Overview

- Big Game Preference Point Reinstatement
- Chronic Wasting Disease: Carcass Handling



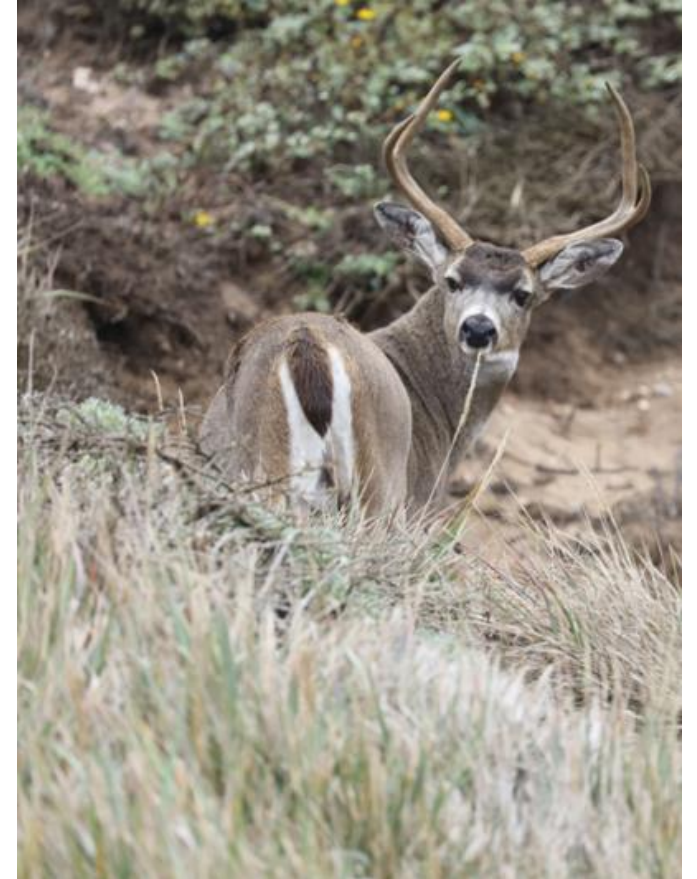


PREFERENCE POINT REINSTATEMENT

Regulatory Proposal

Background on Current Regulations (708.14)

- Authorized point reinstatement for tagholders who were unable to hunt due to inaccessibility of their hunt zone due to public land closures caused by wildfire
- Intended to address loss of long-subscribed opportunity due to total closure of public lands in 2021.



Current Regulatory Language

- Section 708.14(j) (2):

“Commencing with the 2022 hunting license year beginning July 1, 2022, a tag holder whose hunt zone was **inaccessible** for sixty-six percent (66%) or more of a hunt season (pursuant to sections 360 and 361 of these regulations) due to a public land closure caused by wildfire may return their unfilled tag with their written request for preference point reinstatement.”
- Similar language for 708.14(k) (2) for elk, antelope, bighorn sheep reinstatement



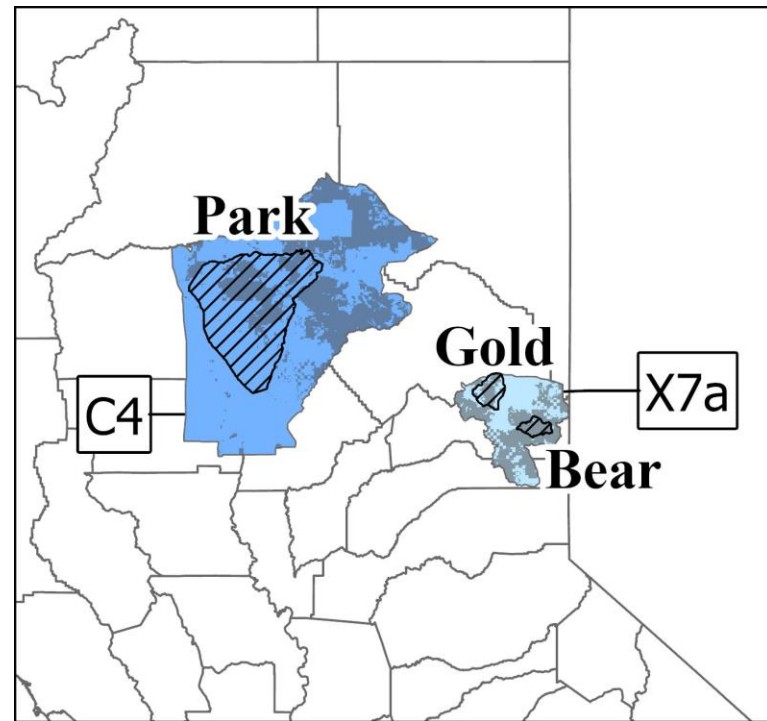
Concerns on Regulatory Interpretation

- “Inaccessible” is undefined
 - Open to interpretation when there are partial land closures
- How to address partial land closure
 - Should all hunts that qualify temporally be treated equally regardless of spatial closure extent?
- Improved clarity would reduce administrative burden
- Fairness of opportunity issue

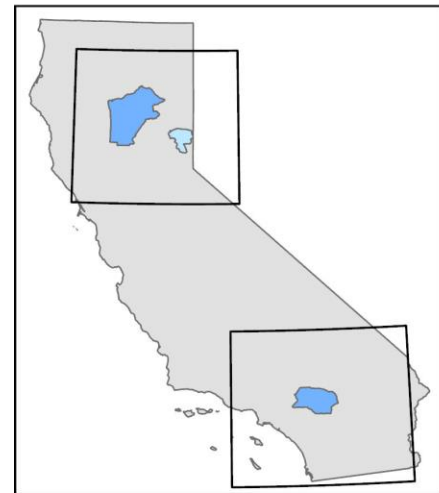


2024 Closures – Premium General Zones

- Percent area closed
 - X7a – 20%
 - D14 – 21%



100 Miles



 Fire Related Closures in Hunting Zones

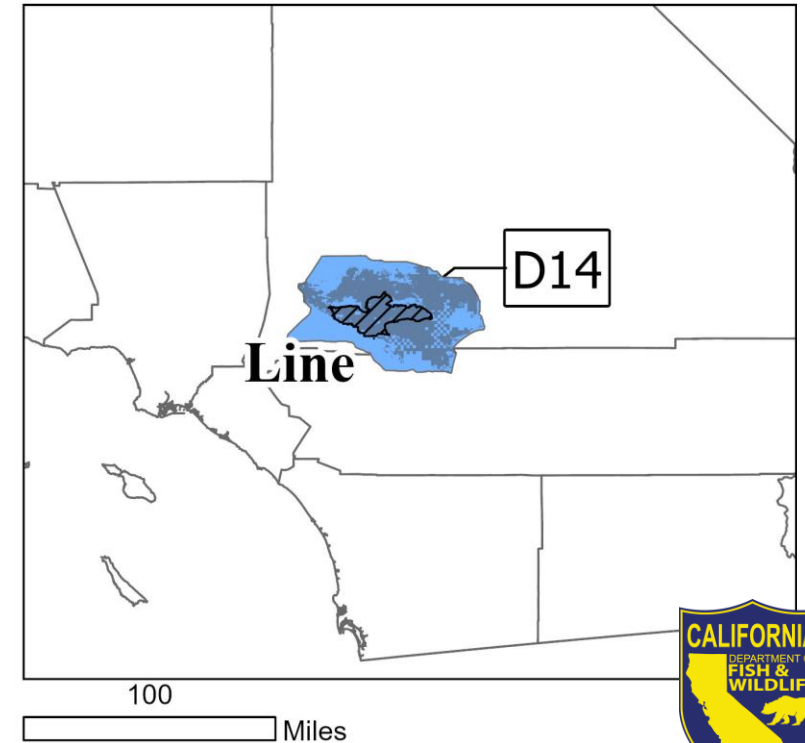
 Huntable Public Lands In Zone

Percentage of Huntable Public Lands closed in zone*

 5% to 20%

 20% to 40%

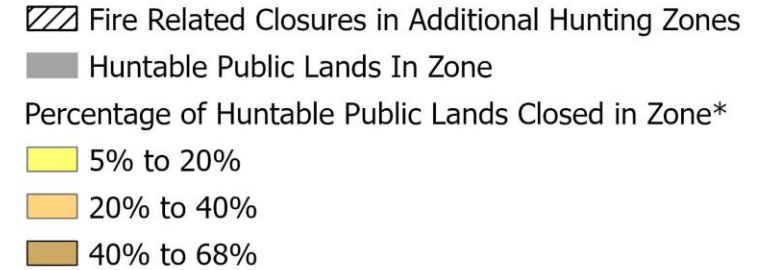
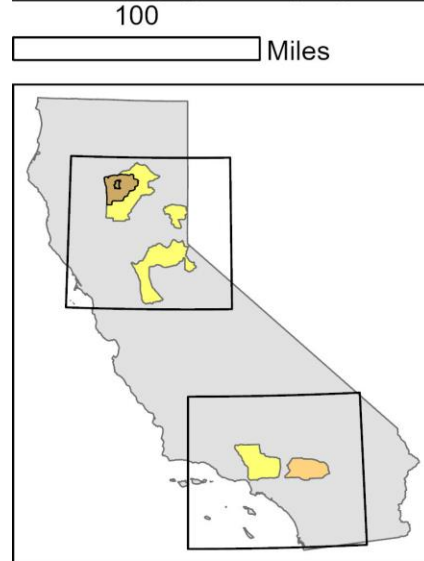
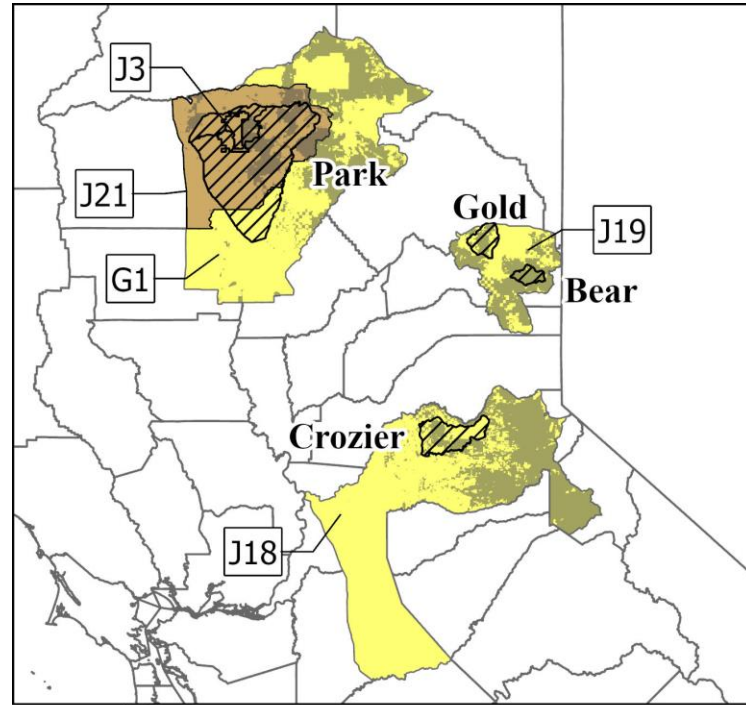
*Premium hunt zones in which closure closed land greater than 66% of the hunt season for that zone.



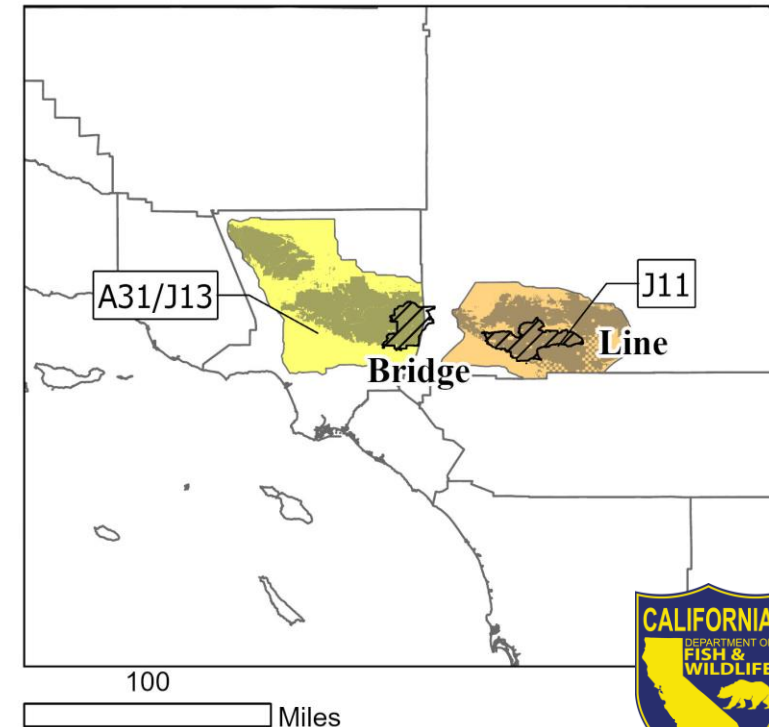
2024 Closures – Premium Hunts

- Percent area closed

- J18 – 7%
- A31/J13 – 14%
- G1 – 17%
- J19 – 20%
- J11 – 23%
- J3 – 41%
- J21 – 68%



*Premium hunt zones in which closure closed land greater than 66% of the hunt season for that zone.



Regulation Change Concept

- Clarify regulation language to achieve the original intent – restoration of preference points when catastrophic events result in total land closure
- Further specify “inaccessible”
 - Add “100% of public lands”





CWD RESPONSE

2024 CWD Surveillance Summary

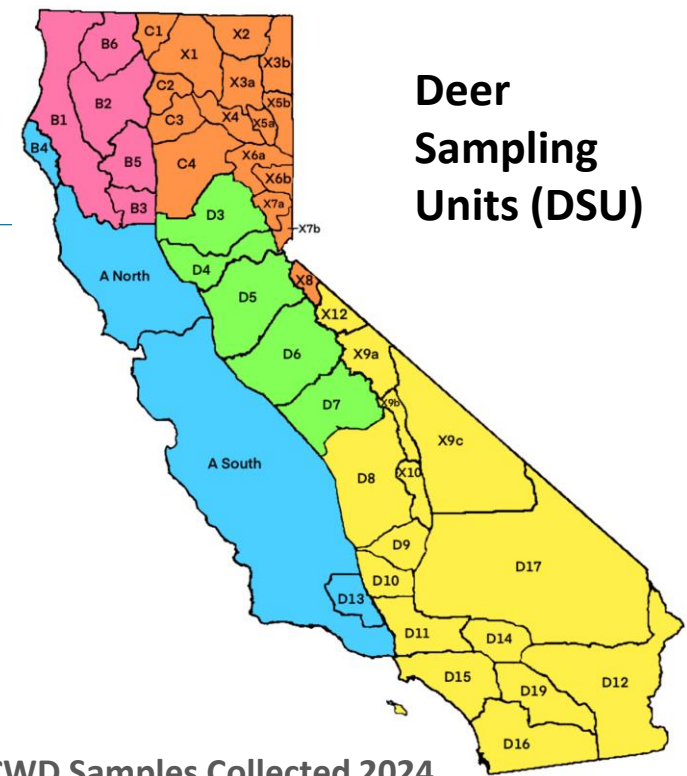
➤ Enhance surveillance around detections and statewide.

➤ 1,756 deer and elk tested in 2024

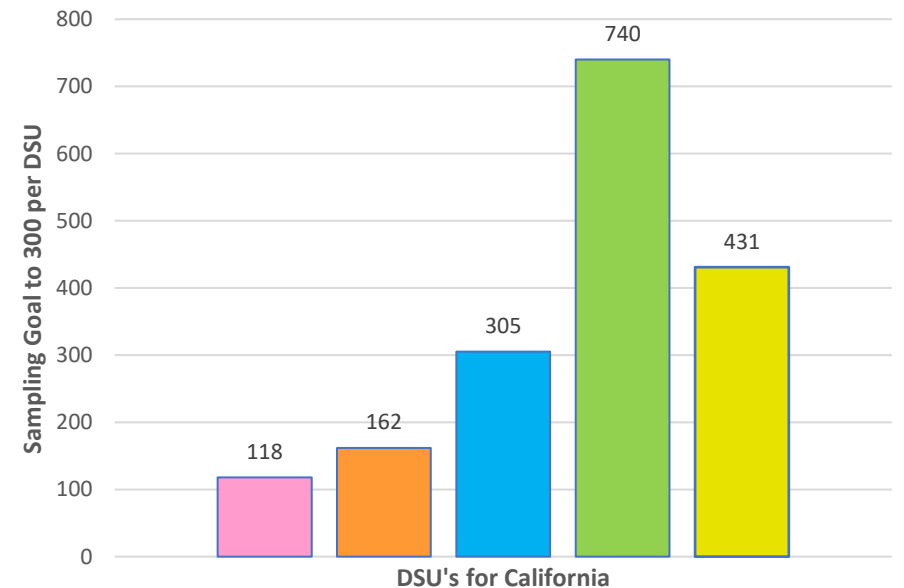
- NO NEW DETECTIONS
- ~half were from CMZs
- 33 pending results
- We expect <100 more for 2024

CMZ	# Samples
D7	615
X9a	177
X9b	44
X9c	37
Total	873

➤ No detections in hunter-harvests



CWD Samples Collected 2024



CWD Initial Response

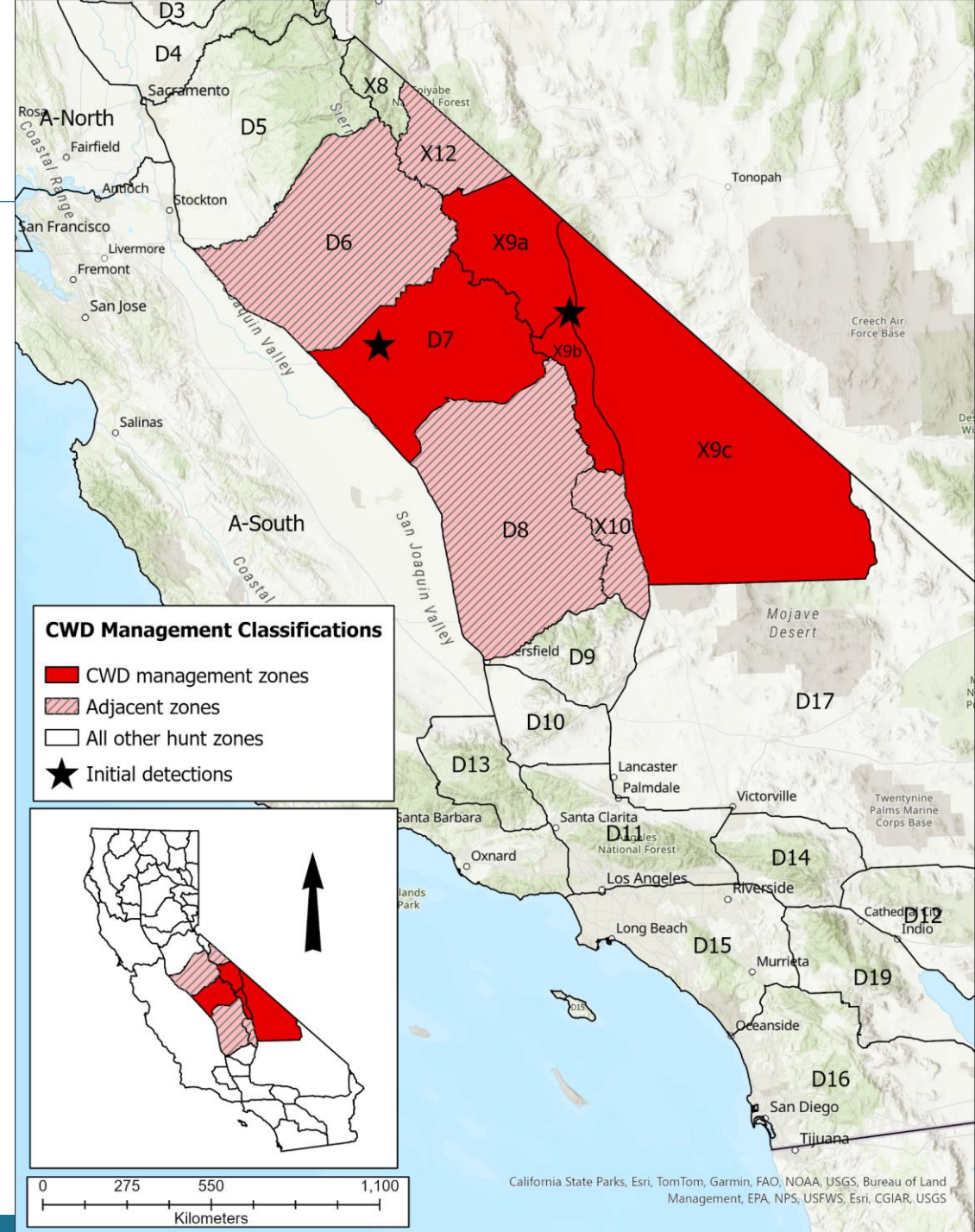
➤ Outreach and education

➤ Enhanced surveillance:

1. How prevalent?
2. What's the geographic distribution?

➤ Regulations/Responses to consider:

1. **Mandatory testing in CWD Zones.**
2. Carcass handling, e.g. apply T14, 712.
3. Targeted removal.
4. Adjust hunting seasons to align peak harvest and peak breeding season.
5. Restrict or prohibit fawn rehabilitation.



CWD Initial Response – Carcass Handling

Consider sources:

- **Vehicles, others:**
 - SCP/salvage permits
 - County Works
- **Hunter-harvest:**
 - Only within CMZs?
 - May affect sampling efforts
 - Leave high risk parts at site.
 - Relinquish head.
 - Meat processors, Taxidermist

No detections in hunter-harvests.

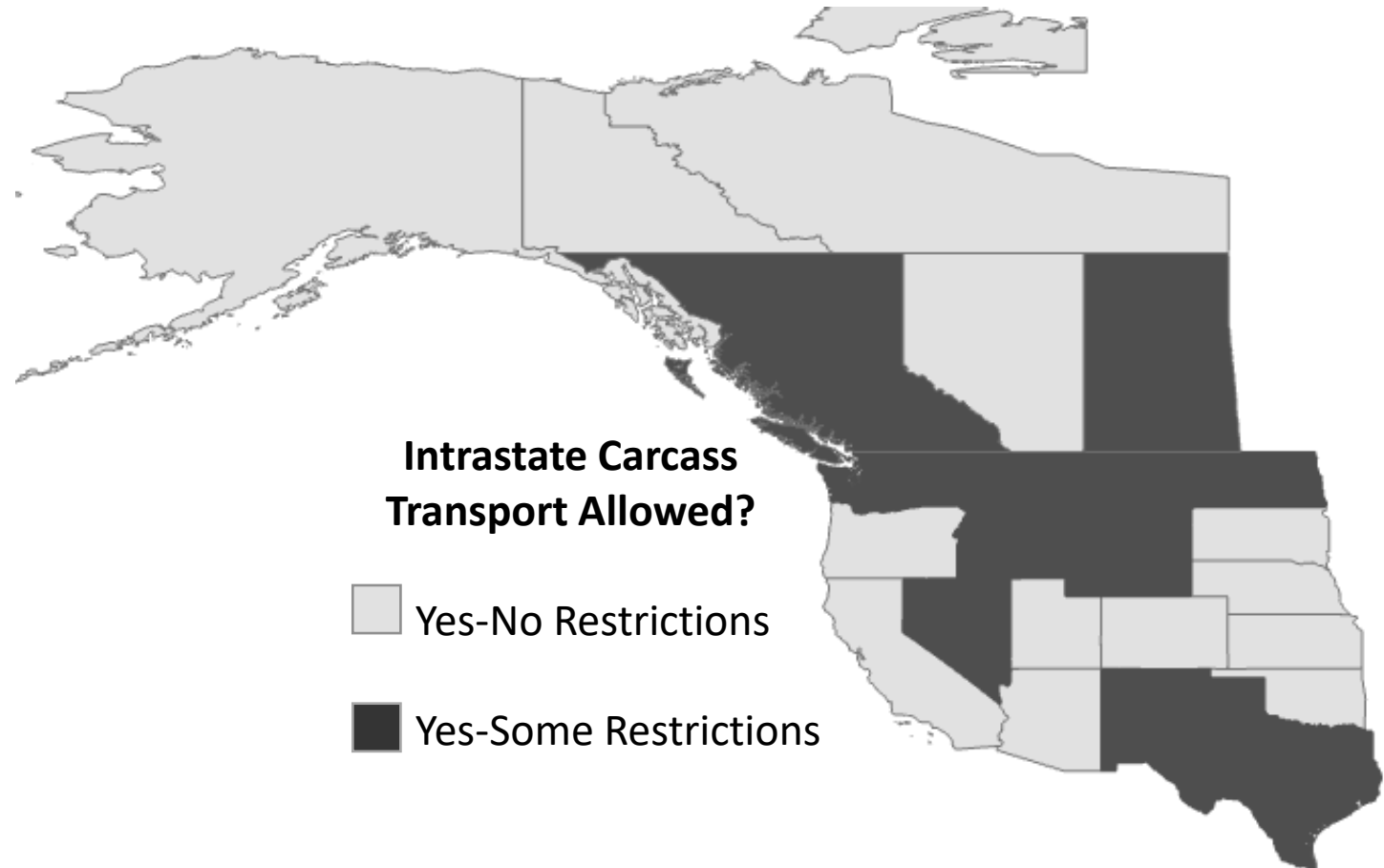


FIGURE: WAFWA Wildlife Health Committee member survey intrastate harvest transport (DRAFT)