



Attention

Deer and Elk Heads Needed for CWD Surveillance

FREE CWD TESTING

This year the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) will again be testing, **free of charge**, the first 600 deer and 50 elk heads submitted for sampling. Once the sampling goal has been met, hunters can still have their animal tested for a \$25 fee. Since 1999, more than 2,500 samples have been collected and tested. All test results have been negative for CWD. California is considered a “**low risk**” state for CWD because of its long-term ban on the importation of live elk, prohibition of elk farming, and its strict monitoring of live deer importations. Deer importations are closely regulated by DFG, resulting in few deer being imported into the state during the past 20 years.

NO SKULL, NO BACK BONE!!!

Due to concerns of CWD-affected deer and elk carcasses theoretically transporting the CWD disease agent into California, regulations were adopted by DFG banning the importation of whole deer/elk carcasses harvested out-of-state by California hunters. No skull and no backbone are allowed into the State from deer and elk harvested out of state. Please see section [§712 Restriction of Importation of Hunter-Harvested Deer and Elk Carcasses](#) for specific details on what is allowed in the state.

HOW CAN HUNTERS HELP?

Participate in the surveillance! Get your head checked!

The collection of heads or tissue samples will take place during opening weekend for different hunt zones. Hunter participation is voluntary but strongly encouraged. Priority will be given to samples collected from the following hunts within Northern California; however, samples from all zones will be accepted. **Deer zones:** A (northern portion), C1, C2, C3, C4, X1, X2, X3a, X3b, X4, X5a, X5b, X6a, X6b, X7a, X7b, X8, X9a, X9b, X10 and X12 and **Elk zones:** Big Lagoon, Del Norte, Klamath, Marble Mountains, Northeastern California, and Siskiyou.

Hunters are also asked to report any sick looking deer or elk to the Wildlife Investigations Lab through the contact information provided below. To locate a sampling station, check the DFG website after July 15, 2006 at: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/wasting.html>, or call (916) 358-1461.

WHAT IS CWD?

CWD belongs to a family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. The CWD disease damages portions of the brain of infected deer and elk, causing the animals to become emaciated, display abnormal behavior, and eventually die.

The most obvious and consistent symptom of CWD is chronic weight loss. Other signs include increased drinking and urination, excessive salivation, and behavioral changes, including listlessness, lowering of the head, blank facial expression, and repetitive walking. Duration of the illness varies from several days to a year; however, most affected animals die after a 3-4 month illness.

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

This fatal neurological disease is found in wild deer and elk herds in limited areas of Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, Alberta, Western Saskatchewan (Canada), Wisconsin, and Wyoming. It has been found in farmed elk in nine states. CWD was first observed in 1967 in captive deer at a research facility in Colorado. To date, no confirmed cases of CWD have been identified in California.

IS CWD TRANSMITTABLE TO HUMANS?

Epidemiologists with the federal Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta have found no link between CWD and any neurological disease that affect humans. However, based on recommendations from state agencies, it is suggested that hunters follow simple precautions when hunting:

- Wear rubber gloves when field dressing carcasses
- Bone out meat from the animal, minimize the handling of brain and spinal cord, eyes, spleen, and lymph nodes and avoid consuming these tissues
- Wash hands and instruments thoroughly after field dressing is completed
- Health officials advise that no human or animal eat any part of a deer known to have CWD or displaying clinical signs of CWD

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hunters can learn more about CWD by visiting our website at: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/wasting.html>.

For a current map on where CWD has been detected in North America, visit the National Wildlife Health Center website at:

http://www.nwch.usgs.gov/disease_information/chronic_wasting_disease/north_america_CWD_map.jsp.

Please send any comments regarding the CWD Surveillance Program to: Wildlife Investigations Lab, 1701 Nimbus Road, Suite D, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670 or contact us by phone at 916-358-2790.