

BC CWD Program Update 2015

SURVEILLANCE UPDATE

In 2015 the B.C. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Program tested 175 cervid heads (141 white-tailed deer, 20 mule deer, 10 elk, 4 moose). All were negative. However, submission numbers were low (down 24% from 2014) and are only capturing a small number of the cervids that are harvested in B.C.. Most of the samples (92%) were submitted by hunters (voluntary), the remainder were road killed or clinical suspect animals submitted by the Conservation Officer Service.

We need more samples to confidently say that B.C. is CWD free. Having adequate samples from the high risk areas of the province will also help us to be prepared if CWD is introduced into B.C.. Community and hunter outreach efforts have been our primary tool for promoting the program and obtaining samples. However, limited capacity and ability to travel to these areas makes it difficult to reach the key audiences and deliver important information. So we also depend on the hunter and outdoor sportsmen community to help us spread the word.

The target (high risk) areas continue to be regions adjacent to the Alberta border (Peace and Kootenay Regions) but we will accept samples from across the province. We count on outdoor recreationalists, regional biologists and conservation officers, particularly in the Peace and Kootenay, to be our messengers, to share feedback from the communities and to let us know of any outreach opportunities.

For more information on the B.C. CWD Program and how to submit a head go to:

www.stopchronicwastingdisease.ca

OUTREACH UPDATE

CWD Program packages will be provided to all drop-off locations, sporting goods stores, meat cutters, taxidermists and regional or district offices upon request. These packages can include head collection kits, posters, and our newly updated CWD pamphlet. Please let us know if you would like to receive a package.

We are always willing to provide training or make presentations at stakeholder meetings, clubs or for government staff. Please let us know if you know of an opportunity to spread the word.

CWD REGULATION

The CWD regulation passed in 2010 prohibits the possession of the head, hoof, hide, spinal column, internal organ including testicles or mammary gland of any deer, elk and moose (cervids) killed outside of B.C.. Possession of an out-of-province cervid hide, antler, or part of a skull is permitted, providing they have been treated in a way that removes all tissues – this means no large chunks of meat or brain are attached.

The purpose of prohibiting possession of these parts is to reduce the risk of CWD being introduced into B.C.. We believe there is a low risk for natural introduction of the disease into B.C. from live infected animals; however human transport of infected animals or their parts is a very real threat. If infected animal parts are disposed of on the ground, the CWD prion material can bind to the soil and even be uptaken by plants. Once prions are in the environment they can stay infective virtually forever. This is

believed to be the most significant way to transmit the disease long distances and could result in CWD becoming established in B.C.

FOR CERVIDS HARVESTED OUTSIDE BC

DO NOT dump carcasses in B.C. - Leave all “risky” and prohibited parts at the kill site.

Meat: It is recommended that meat be de-boned or processed prior to removal from the jurisdiction where it was killed. Only transport those parts of the animal that you intend to consume or are legally required to retain for transport or possession purposes.

Antlers and Hides: Remove antlers, any soft tissue and the connecting bone plate from the remainder of the skull and soak in 2% bleach. All tissue must be removed from hides before being possessed in B.C. Compliance with B.C. CWD regulations and ensuring the necessary parts are provided to the taxidermist for mounts can be easily achieved by contacting the taxidermist before hunting to find out what parts are required.

HIGHWAY SIGNS

Highway signs (below) have been placed in the Peace Region near Dawson Creek and the Kootenay Region near Sparwood (both near the Alberta border – leaving the province). The goal is to inform the public of the CWD regulations and remind hunters of the threat associated with bringing cervid carcasses back into B.C. Do you think more signs would be helpful? If so, the funds required for one sign is approximately \$5000 and ideas for sources and locations would be welcome.

