



CWD MANAGEMENT



Dear Montana Processor,

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks needs your help in managing and monitoring chronic wasting disease (CWD). As you know, CWD is a fatal disease of deer, elk, and moose that was first found in wild deer in Montana in 2017. We now know the disease is present across much of the state, and for the 2023 hunting season, FWP will be conducting surveillance and monitoring in Priority Surveillance Areas in north-central, southwestern, south-central, and eastern Montana.

You may see deer, elk, or moose arrive at your shop with a yellow ID tag, reading “MTFWP CWD TEST.” This tag indicates the animal has been sampled for CWD and the results should be available online within two weeks, if not sooner. Last year the average result came back within eight days. If an animal tests positive for CWD, the hunter will be contacted by FWP and advised not to consume the meat. If the positive animal was processed at a commercial facility, the Montana Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) will notify the processor of the positive test and work with them to determine whether the animal was processed in a batch with other animals. Any hunter that received meat processed as part of a CWD-positive batch will be contacted and advised not to consume the meat. It is helpful if there are good records available about which animals were processed together.

FWP, DPHHS, and the Montana Food Bank Network have worked to try and ensure all donated deer, elk, and moose carcasses are tested for CWD prior to the meat being released to food banks. While this is not a requirement, we are actively encouraging hunters to have their animals sampled before bringing them to a processor for donation.

How you can help

1. If hunters have questions about CWD testing, please direct them to FWP’s [website](#).
2. On our website, we have instructions on how to collect and submit samples for testing as well as a list of CWD sample collection locations around the state.
3. We are asking processors to consider single-animal processing or batch processing only animals testing negative for CWD, but especially for animals that have been sampled for CWD and are being donated to food banks or other charitable organizations. Furthermore, we are asking processors to consider looking up the CWD test result on our website (fwp.mt.gov/cwd) to confirm a negative CWD test result before releasing processed meat to a food bank for donation. Meat from any CWD positive animal must be properly disposed of in a Class II landfill (see map/list of landfills on FWP website: fwp.mt.gov/cwd).

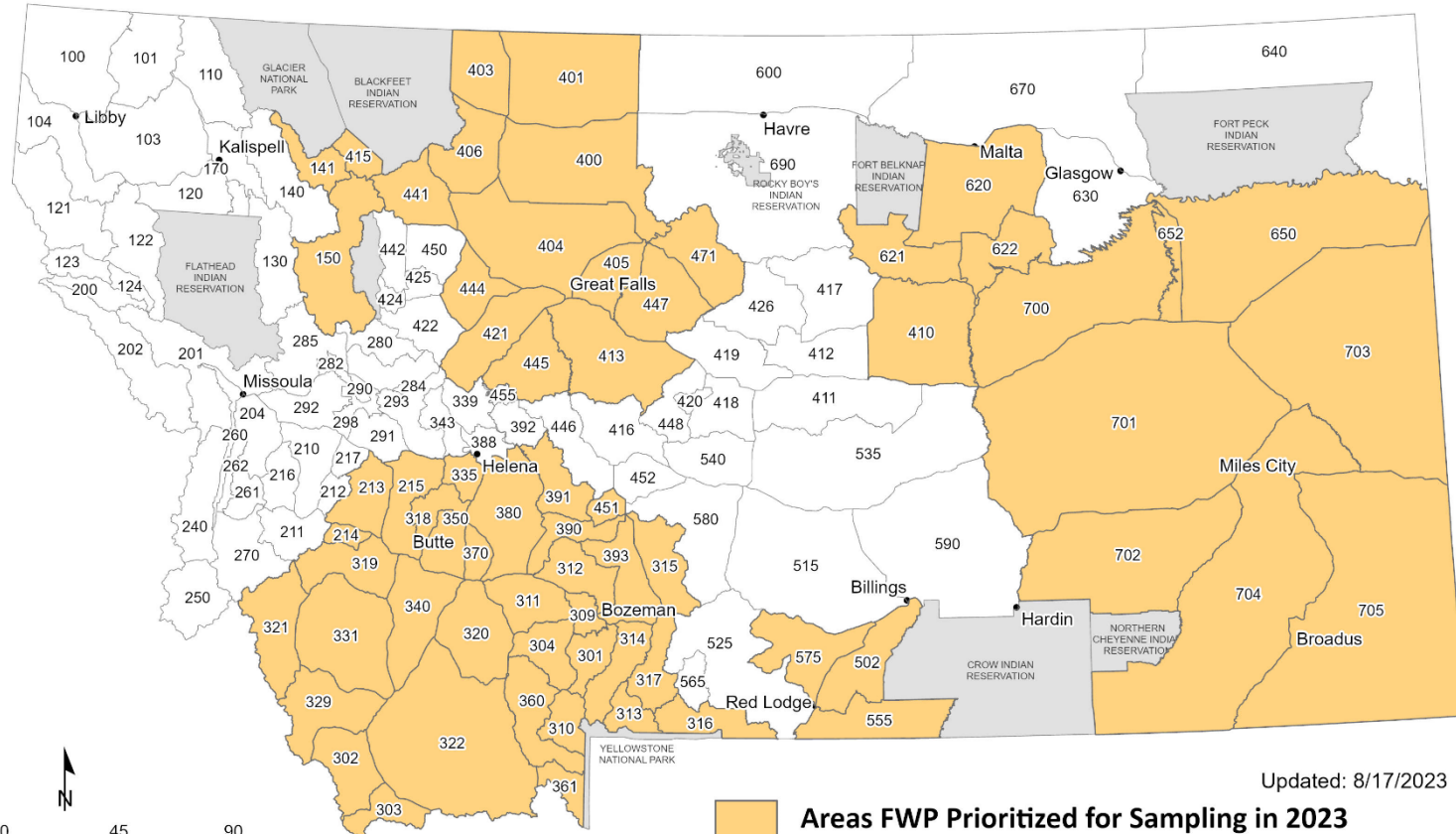
CWD Best Practices – CWD prions are the infectious agent of CWD. These mis-shaped proteins are extremely resistant to conventional disinfecting techniques (e.g., soap, boiling water, etc.). Prions are found throughout the body of an infected animal but are most concentrated in the brain, spinal cord, and lymph nodes. We recommend processors wear rubber gloves and eye protection when processing wild game, and avoid intrusion to the brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils, and lymph nodes of harvested animals. We also recommend disinfecting instruments and work surfaces with a 40% solution of bleach for 5 minutes after processing is complete. All carcass waste (tissue, bone, etc.) must be disposed of in a Class II landfill to prevent the accidental spread of CWD.

If left unmanaged, CWD will spread. As infection rates increase, it could significantly impact Montana’s wildlife and those who hunt and consume them. Thank you for your help as we fight CWD together. For more information, please contact your local FWP office or visit fwp.mt.gov/cwd.



Sincerely,

Jennifer Ramsey, Wildlife Veterinarian
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

CWD Priority Surveillance Areas for 2023



Updated: 8/17/2023

-  Areas FWP Prioritized for Sampling in 2023
-  Deer/Elk Hunting District

MONTANA **FWP**