



CWD MANAGEMENT



Dear Montana Taxidermist,

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks needs your help in managing and monitoring Chronic Wasting Disease. As you know, CWD is a deadly disease of deer, elk, and moose that was first found in wild deer in Montana in 2017. We now know the disease is present along the Hi-Line mostly north of Highway 2, in northwest Montana in the city of Libby, in southern Montana south of Billings, and within a half mile of our southeast border near Decker. In 2019, FWP has designated specific CWD Management Zones and areas where FWP will sample for CWD.

Adult mule deer bucks are the highest priority animals for testing, and they are the animals most likely to be received by taxidermists. Lymph nodes collected from the head are the preferred tissue for testing and can usually be collected after the taxidermist's work is completed.

How you can help

1. Please notify hunters that FWP is interested in sampling and testing adult deer, elk, and moose harvested from any of our sampling areas (see map). You can encourage them to take their harvested animal to a local check station or a regional office so FWP can collect samples for our CWD surveillance after the taxidermist's work is complete.
2. If hunters harvest an animal outside of these areas, they may still submit their own samples for testing free of charge, by mailing them to the Wildlife Health Lab (instructions are online at fwp.mt.gov/cwd).
3. If you are interested in learning how to collect retropharyngeal lymph nodes and obex samples as a service you can offer your clients, a video explaining how to collect the samples can be found online at fwp.mt.gov/cwd.
4. Place CWD informational cards at your front desk. FWP can supply the informational cards.

CWD Best Practices – CWD “prions” 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 taxidermists wear rubber gloves and eye protection when handling 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 the taxidermist's work is complete. All large tissue or carcass waste (bone, etc.) should be disposed of in a landfill to prevent the accidental spread of CWD.

If left unmanaged, CWD will spread. As infection rates increase, it can have a significant impact on our wildlife. 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,

Martha Williams
Director
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

CWD Management Zones and areas where FWP will sample in 2019

