

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Agenda Item No. 12

Agenda Item: CWD Update

Bureau Chief Approval: SR

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Background:

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was first detected in the Idaho in GMU 14 in late 2021. To date, a total of 75 animals have tested positive for CWD in Idaho (60 white-tailed deer, 13 mule deer, and 2 elk). Most of these animals have been from GMU 14, mostly in and around the Slate Creek drainage, except for 1 mule deer harvested in 2023 near the GMU 23/32A border and 3 mule deer taken during the 2024 control action directly across the Salmon River from Slate Creek in GMU 18.

During fall 2023, CWD was detected in 1 mule deer buck harvested in GMU 23 near the boundary with GMU 32A. This area is summer range for migratory mule deer and elk. By the time IDFG received the positive test result, most mule deer had departed the area enroute to winter ranges in neighboring GMUs (mostly in Units 22, 32A and 32). Increased surveillance efforts through mandatory testing during the 2024 hunting season will be used to determine the distribution and prevalence of CWD in this area.

In addition, 3 CWD positive mule deer were removed from GMU 18 during the 2024 control action, the first confirmations of disease in this GMU. GMU 18 is directly across the Salmon River from the Slate Creek focal area. Although staff have tried to collect as many samples as possible from GMU 18, voluntary CWD sampling of harvested animals has been insufficient to adequately estimate disease presence or prevalence (only 57 total samples from deer in 2023). Increased surveillance efforts through mandatory testing during the 2024 hunting season will be used to determine the distribution and prevalence of CWD in this area.

In March 2024, to be adaptive to changing dynamics of CWD in Idaho while also minimizing burdensome regulations when possible, the Commission made several changes associated with CWD monitoring and management. They modified the CWD Management Zone, removing GMU 15 and adding GMU 18. The Commission also removed GMU 15 from mandatory CWD testing requirements for harvested deer, elk, and moose and removed the mandatory CWD testing requirements for elk and moose harvested from GMU 14. They also implemented mandatory CWD testing of mule deer and white-tailed deer harvested from GMUs 18, 23, 24, and 32A within 10 days of harvest for the 2024–2025 hunting season.

CWD Surveillance and Testing Strategy: July 2023 – June 2024

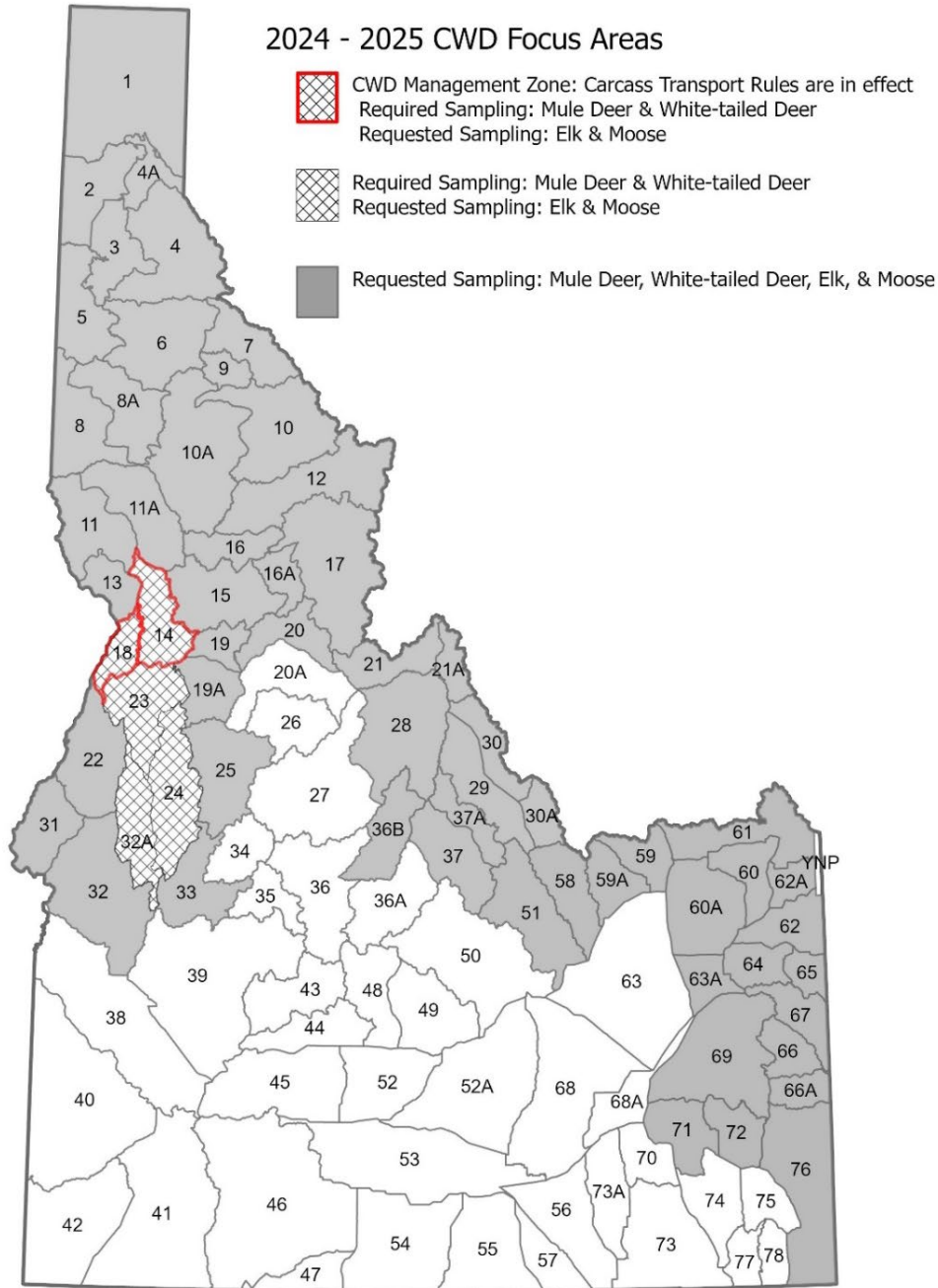
For the CWD sampling period July 1, 2023 to June 20, 2024, Department staff collected and tested the following CWD samples:

	Total	Not Detected	Suspect/Detected	Pending (shipped)
Statewide	4233	4204	26	3 (1)
GMU 14	887	865	22	
GMU 18	93	90	3	
GMU 23	83	82	1	

In total, 20 white-tailed deer, 5 mule deer, and 1 elk tested positive for CWD during this sampling period.

CWD Detections	White-tailed Deer	Mule Deer	Elk	Total
Roadkill/Suspect	5	1	1	7
Management Action	11	3		14
Hunter Harvest	4	1		5

CWD Surveillance and Testing Strategy: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025



In addition to areas with Commission-directed mandatory sampling of all harvested deer (Units 14, 18, 23, 24, and 32A), the *2021 Strategy for Chronic Wasting Disease* prescribes CWD surveillance that includes sampling animals from portions of the state that are 1) sampled every year because they border CWD positive states and 2) a rotating

focused sampling area from the remainder of the state. The focus sampling area rotates throughout the portion of southern Idaho not included in annual sampling, on a three-year rotation. The 2024 hunting season focus sampling area includes Units 13, 15, 19, 19A, 22, 25, 31, 32, and 33.

At this meeting, staff will present an update on CWD sampling plans for the 2024 hunting season and will discuss newly initiated efforts to update Idaho's CWD management strategy.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Monitoring and management of chronic wasting disease is described in the *Idaho Department of Fish and Game 2021 Strategy for Chronic Wasting Disease*. The Commission may use proclamation or emergency hunt orders to designate seasons and areas in which portions of a carcass must be presented to the Department within a specified timeframe (IDAPA 13.01.08.350.03).

Public Involvement Process:

The Department has conducted outreach on CWD sampling efforts, CWD status, CWD surveillance hunts, and through local public meetings.

Justification:

This agenda item is for Commission information on the status of chronic wasting disease testing and management in Idaho.

Staff Recommendation:

NA. This agenda item is for Commission information.