

BEFORE THE FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF DESIGNATION-)
OF CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE)
MANAGEMENT ZONE AND)
MANDATORY CHECK)
IN A PORTION OF UNIT 1)
_____)

Order No. 24-45

BACKGROUND & FINDINGS

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal, degenerative disease that may spread among deer, elk, and other members of the cervid family and has negatively impacted cervids in various states and Canadian provinces. In 2021, CWD was detected in the Clearwater Region. On August 1, 2024, the state of Washington reported its first case of CWD (in a white-tailed deer north of Spokane, about 20 miles west of the Idaho border). CWD has also been reported in southern British Columbia in 2024 and western Montana in 2024 and several preceding years.

In August 2024 samples collected by the Department from an adult white-tailed doe in Game Management Unit 1 tested positive for CWD, becoming the first CWD detection in the Panhandle Region. Before it died, the sampled animal was reported as appearing sickly on private property approximately three miles north of Bonners Ferry in Unit 1.

After the positive test, the Department identified an area of interest and a sampling program to determine prevalence of CWD in this area. The Idaho Fish and Game Commission established a 300-tag, nine-day controlled surveillance hunt for white-tailed deer (either sex) in the area of interest. To obtain desired sampling effort, the Department also issued kill authorizations for deer on private lands within this area. Successful hunters were required to transport the entire head of the deer within 24 hours of harvest to drop-off locations established by the Department or to the Panhandle Regional office.

This program yielded 169 samples from white-tailed deer, with two samples testing positive for CWD and 167 testing negative. Both CWD-positive samples were taken from deer harvested within one mile of the initial CWD-positive deer.

Unit 1 is a popular hunting destination for white-tailed deer. An estimated 7,100 Idaho resident hunters harvested an estimated 2,918 white-tailed deer in Unit 1 in 2023. Many of those hunters travelled from other parts of Idaho to hunt in Unit 1. Exact numbers are unknown, but undoubtedly successful hunters travelled to homes in other parts of Idaho with whole white-tailed deer carcasses or heads and/or spinal material. Additionally, an estimated 730 nonresident hunters harvested an estimated 400 white-tailed deer in Unit 1 in 2023, some also transporting whole carcasses or heads and/or spinal material.

Based on Department staff conversations with trappers, roadkill deer are salvaged and are used in trapping throughout northern Idaho. From January 1, 2020 to September 24, 2024, 915 roadkill white-tailed deer were reported salvaged in Unit 1. The number of roadkill white-tailed deer salvaged in Unit 1 is higher than in other Units (nearly three-fold more than the next highest salvage rate).

Staff have reviewed CWD sampling rates for Unit 1 for the last several years. Sampling in Unit 1 began in 2019 and has averaged a total of 147 white-tailed samples per year since. In 2023, 143 white-tailed deer samples were collected, or 4.3% of the total white-tailed deer harvest. In many

parts of Idaho, the majority of CWD samples taken from hunter-harvested deer and elk are collected at big game check stations. In the Panhandle Region relatively fewer hunters pass through check stations, resulting in more limited CWD sample collections at check stations.

The Wildlife Bureau and Panhandle Region have recommended:

- Designation of a CWD Management Zone comprised of that portion of Unit 1 within Boundary County and east of the Selkirk Mountains crest.
- Mandatory check requirements for all deer harvested in the Unit 1 CWD management zone, as now apply in the Units 14/18 CWD Management Zone:
 - Submittal of sample from any deer harvested in the Unit 1 CWD Management Zone is required within 10 days of the date of the respective harvest. This requirement may be met by providing lymph nodes or the entire head of the deer to any Department check station, designated drop-off location, or regional office.
- These requirements do *not* waive evidence of sex and evidence of species and do *not* require leaving the carcass at the kill site.

Based on the foregoing findings, the Director concludes it is appropriate to use authority of 13.01.10.150 to designate a CWD Management Zone in a portion of Unit 1, as recommended by staff. The Director also concludes that it is appropriate to adopt mandatory check for all deer harvested in this zone, with portions of any general or controlled deer hunt occurring within the zone considered as emergency hunts for the limited purpose of mandatory check under IDAPA 13.01.08.350.

The Director's authority under 13.01.10.150 is limited to no more than 90 days and is subject to Commission review. The Commission has a regular meeting scheduled for November 7, 2024.

ORDER

Pursuant to authority of the Director under Idaho Code 36-106, 36-1201, IDAPA 13.01.08.350, and IDAPA 13.01.10.150, and findings of biological and public need, the undersigned hereby ORDERS the designation of a CWD Management Zone comprised of that portion of Unit 1 within Boundary County and east of the Selkirk Mountains crest.

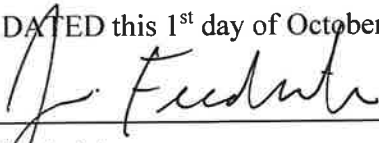
The undersigned further orders the designation of those portions of general and controlled hunts occurring in this CWD Management Zone as emergency hunts for the limited purpose of mandatory check under IDAPA 13.01.08.350.

The undersigned further orders mandatory check by any person harvesting a deer in this CWD Management Zone. To meet this requirement for mandatory check, such person must, within 10 days of the date of the respective harvest, provide lymph nodes or the entire head of the deer to any Department check station, designated drop-off location, or regional office.

The mandatory check requirement does not waive other requirements for harvest, such as evidence of sex and evidence of species.

In accordance with IDAPA 13.01.10.150, this order will be subject to review of the Commission by no later than the regular meeting of the Commission set for November 7, 2024.

DATED this 1st day of October, 2024.



Jim Fredericks
Secretary to the Commission and
Director of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game

