



IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

November 2025 Commission Meeting

Agenda Item: Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update

Presented by: Stacey Dauwalter

Position/Title: Wildlife Health Program Coordinator

Agenda Item No.: 11

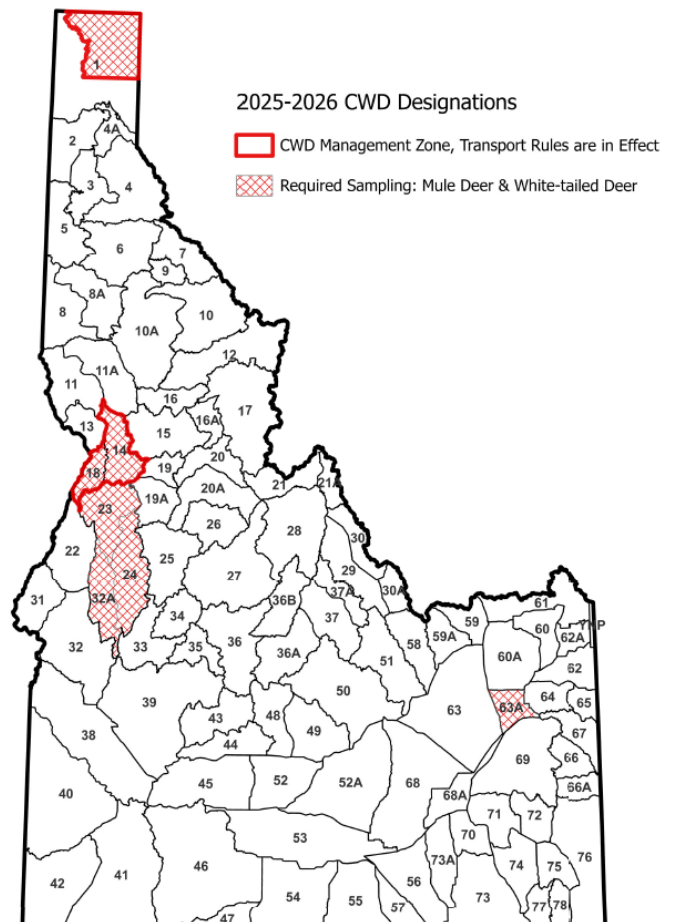
Supervisor Approval: SR

Background:

CWD is a fatal, neurological disorder of deer, elk, moose and caribou, caused by abnormally folded proteins called prions. Due to the abnormal shape of the protein, animals are unable to break down the prion in the way a normal protein would break down. As a result, build-up of the prions causes irreparable neurological damage. The disease is contagious between animals by either direct contact with infected animals or the environment. There is no known cure for the disease. Animals infected with the prion can live for years shedding the prion in the environment before showing symptoms of the disease and eventual death. The resilient nature of prions allow them to remain on the landscape and in carcasses for long periods of time. The Department has been conducting CWD surveillance on deer and elk since 1997 and has tested over 38,800 samples. The Department continues to conduct annual statewide surveillance.

The Department initially detected Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Game Management Unit (Unit) 14 in November of 2021. Since 2021, there have been 89 positive CWD detections in Unit 14, 5 positive detections in Unit 18, 1 positive detection 50 miles south of Slate Creek in Unit 23, and 6 positive detections in Unit 1 north of Bonner's Ferry. In 2024, two domestic elk tested positive for CWD in unit 63A.

For the current sampling year, a mandatory sampling requirement for harvested deer is in effect for Units 14, 18, 23, 24, 32A, 63A, and the portion of Unit 1 within Boundary County and east of the Selkirk Mountains crest (red hatched areas on the map). Mandatory sampling is needed to obtain enough samples from harvested deer to accurately assess





IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

the prevalence, or amount, and spread of disease in these areas.

Idaho also has three areas designated as CWD management zones (the areas on the map outlined in red) with carcass movement restrictions to try to limit CWD spreading to other areas of Idaho, as well as bans on the public feeding of deer, elk and moose in these areas.

The Department's CWD surveillance and management recommendations to the Commission are adaptive to changes in CWD prevalence and geographic spread, with the ultimate goal of minimizing the amount and spread of CWD in Idaho to keep deer, elk, and moose populations healthy. During the presentation, staff will provide up-to-date numbers of sampling efforts for the 2025 hunting seasons to date.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

IDFG, under the direction of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission, is the designated authority for wildlife management in the state and is charged with the mission to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage all wildlife for the public interest. Idaho code §§ 36-104(b) and 36-201 (2023), authorize the Commission to adopt rules governing the classification, protection, importation, transportation, possession and sale of wildlife and wildlife parts of captive and free-ranging wildlife, including disease threats like Chronic Wasting Disease (IDAPA 13.01.06, "Rules Governing the Classification and Protection of Wildlife" and 13.01.10, "Rules Governing Importation, Possession, Release, Sale, or Salvage of Wildlife").

Public Involvement Process:

The Department has conducted outreach on CWD sampling efforts, CWD status, CWD surveillance hunts, and through local public meetings. Public will also have the opportunity to comment on this topic at the Commission meeting public hearing.

Justification:

This agenda item is for Commission information on Chronic Wasting Disease monitoring and status.

Staff Recommendation:

NA. This agenda item is for Commission information.