IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

November 2026 Commission Meeting ***Agenda Item No.:*** *9*
Agenda Item: *Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update* ***Supervisor Approval:*** *SR*
Presented by: *Stacey Dauwalter*
Position/Title: *Wildlife Health Program Coordinator*

Background:
Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal, neurological disorder of deer, elk, moose and caribou, caused by abnormally folded proteins called prions. The disease has no known cure, is contagious between animals, and can be contracted from a contaminated environment. Infected animals can live for years, shedding the prion into the environment all along, before showing symptoms of the disease and eventual death. The resilient nature of prions allow them to remain in the environment, outside of an animal, for long periods of time.

IDFG has been conducting CWD surveillance on deer and elk since 1997 and has tested over 44,250 samples. IDFG continues to conduct annual statewide surveillance. Surveillance and management of CWD is adaptive to changes in CWD prevalence and geographic spread. The goal is to minimize the amount and spread of CWD in Idaho to keep deer, elk and moose populations healthy.

The Commission has instituted mandatory sampling requirements for harvested deer in Units 14, 18, 23, 63A, 64, 69, and the portion of Unit 1 within Boundary County east of the Selkirk Mountains crest. Mandatory sampling is needed in these areas to get the sample size needed to adequately assess prevalence, or amount, and spread of disease. Units 14, 18, 23, and the portion of Unit 1 are also designated as CWD management zones, with carcass movement restrictions and a ban on the public feeding of deer, elk and moose to try and prevent spread and decrease prevalence.

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) has reported CWD detections in Idaho's captive cervid industry at facilities in Units 1, 63A, 64, and 69. Staff will overview our current understanding of captive detections during the presentation.

In the 2025-2026 sampling year, IDFG—with the help of hunters—collected 6,126 CWD samples for testing. Twenty-two (22) of these samples tested positive for CWD. One (1) from Unit 18, three (3) from the CWD management zone in Unit 1, sixteen (16) from Unit 14, and two (2) from Unit 15 near its border with Unit 14 (the first detections to date in Unit 15). Sampling data collected between 2017 and 2025 was used to evaluate hunter sampling participation and compliance. A summary document was developed, and highlights will be presented during the presentation.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:
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:
IDFG has conducted outreach on CWD sampling efforts, CWD status, CWD surveillance hunts, and through local public meetings. Public will 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.

Staff Recommendation:
N/A – Informational only.