

Meeting Date: July 28, 2022

Agenda Item No. 10.

Agenda Item: Update on Chronic Wasting Disease
Citizens Advisory Committee and
2022 CWD Sampling Strategy

Bureau Chief Approval: JR

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Background:

IDFG has been monitoring for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in deer and elk since 1997 and have sampled approximately 22,000 animals over the last 25 years.

CWD was first detected in the state in Unit 14 in late 2021. The Commission designated a temporary CWD management zone as Units 14 and 15 and IDFG staff increased CWD surveillance efforts in the area. A CWD Surveillance Area was identified as all of Units 14 and 15, and portions of Units 11A, 13, 18, and 23. Emergency CWD surveillance hunts were employed in those units in December to collect additional CWD samples. In total, four hunter-harvested deer tested positive for CWD in 2021, all harvested in Unit 14. In addition to the harvested deer, two other animals in Unit 14 with potential CWD-like symptoms were sampled and tested positive for CWD, one whitetail buck and one cow elk. To date no additional CWD samples have tested positive and CWD has not been detected outside of Unit 14.

For the CWD sampling period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, Department staff collected and tested the following CWD samples:

Species	Number of Samples Collected
Mule Deer - Statewide	1213
Mule Deer – CWD Surveillance Area	178
White-tailed Deer - Statewide	1035
White-tailed Deer - CWD Surveillance Area	369
Elk - Statewide	331
Elk - CWD Surveillance Area	69

At the January 2022 Commission meeting, staff presented an update on the status of CWD in Idaho, including CWD management actions identified in IDFG's *2021 Strategy for Chronic Wasting Disease*. Management actions identified included consideration of season changes in the CWD management zone, the establishment of a CWD citizen advisory group, continued CWD monitoring statewide, and a new rule granting the Commission authority to require hunter-harvested animal testing in specific areas.

At their March 2022 meeting, the Commission adopted modifications to the 2022 hunting seasons in Unit 14 and also implemented a mandatory check requirement for all deer, elk, and moose harvested in Units 14 and 15 for the 2022 hunting season.

CWD Sampling Plans: July 1 2022 – June 30 2023

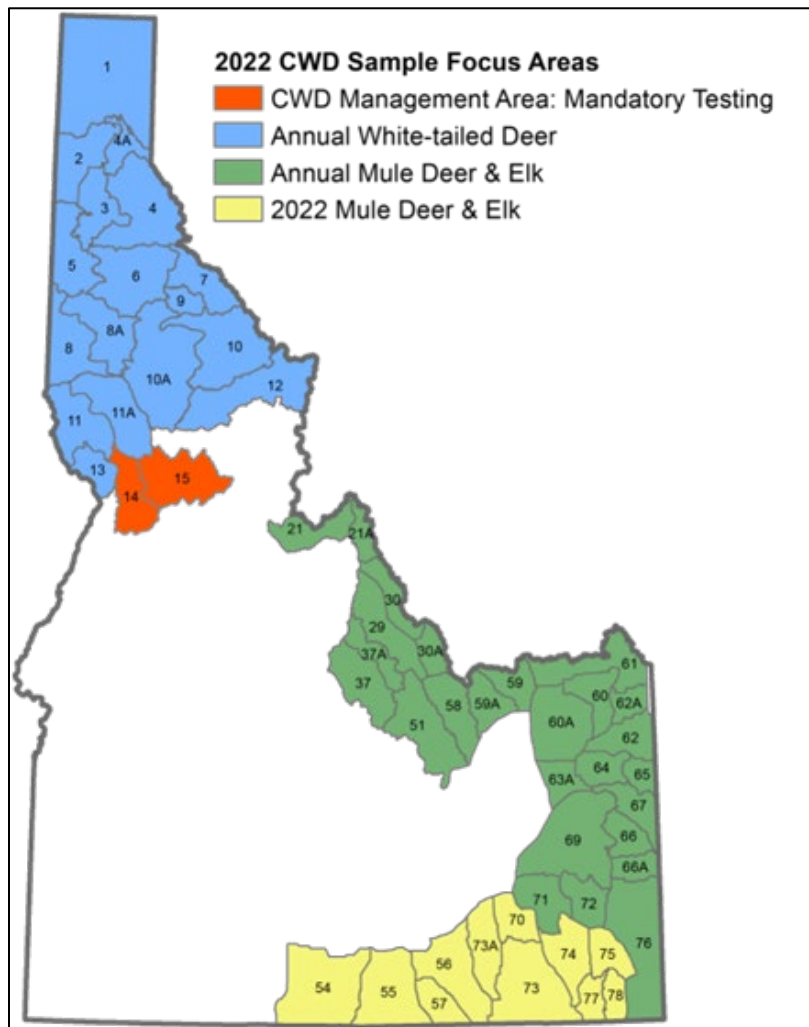
The mandatory check requirement in Units 14 and 15 are expected to result in samples from around 2,000 harvested deer.

In addition to the mandatory sampling of all harvested deer, elk, and moose from Units 14 and 15, the 2021 Strategy for Chronic Wasting Disease prescribes surveillance that

includes sampling animals from portions of the annually and rotating focused sampling among other areas of the state.

Annual CWD-sampling areas for white-tailed deer include Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7, 8, 8A, 9, 10, 10A, 11, 11A, 12, and 13. Annual CWD-sampling areas for mule deer and elk include Units 21, 21A, 29, 30, 30A, 37, 37A, 51, 58, 59A, 59, 60, 60A, 61, 62, 62A, 63A, 64, 65, 66, 66A, 67, 69, 71, 72, and 76 (see below).

Focus sampling areas rotate throughout southern Idaho on a three-year rotation. The 2022 focus sampling area includes Units 54, 55, 56, 57, 70, 73A, 73, 74, 75, 76, and 77, as well as some targeted sampling in 11, 11A, 13, 18, and 23 near the border of GMU 14 (see below).



In addition to the planned sampling schedule outlined above, staff expect a sizable increase in voluntary CWD sample submission this coming year from interested hunters across the state.

At the meeting, staff will present an update on CWD sampling plans for the upcoming 2022 hunting season, both within the CWD management zone and statewide and will include a discussion on hunter outreach, additional staff time dedicated to CWD, facilitation of sample submission in mandatory units, statewide sample rotation, and voluntary sample submission across the state.

Staff will also present an update on the status of the CWD advisory group, including goals and expectations for the group, proposed makeup of the membership, a nomination process, and next steps.

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*.

Proclamation or emergency hunt order may 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. Public input was solicited and received on the proposed season changes and reporting requirements during the season-setting process last spring.

Justification:

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

Staff Recommendation:

None. This agenda item is for Commission information.

Action Requested:

None.