

Meeting Date: November 2020

Agenda Item No. 14.

Agenda Item: Chronic Wasting Disease Update

Bureau Chief Approval: TB

Prepared by: Tricia Hebdon/ Toby Boudreau

Background:

Chronic Wasting Disease is a fatal neurologic disease in cervids (deer, elk, moose, and caribou) that is spreading across North America. CWD is currently in 26 states and two Canadian provinces, with Wyoming, Montana and Utah having confirmed cases of CWD close to the Idaho border.

The Department has been conducting CWD surveillance since 1997. Over the past twenty years, Idaho has tested over 18,000 samples for CWD and to date the disease has not been detected.

The Department's 2020 CWD surveillance is an updated plan, based on the Commission approved January 2018 Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Strategy, includes an assessment of sample coverage from past sampling rotations and is focused on the expansion of CWD along neighboring state borders to provide enhanced sampling to ensure good surveillance coverage. The 2020 CWD sampling includes annual white-tailed deer sampling in the Panhandle and Clearwater and mule deer sampling in the Upper Snake and Southeast Regions. The rotational for sampling is the Salmon Region.

The 2020 enhanced surveillance plan also relies heavily on enhancements to CWD web pages on the Departments website and the development of communication tools for sportsmen, the public and partners. The CWD webpages provide guidance, examples and information for hunters to sample their harvest animals for CWD testing, provides them with drop off locations for samples and heads, and provides them with a look up page to see the results of their sample submission. Additional communications efforts include; press releases around the state, social media blogs, letters to taxidermists and game processors. We are also working with Idaho Department of Transportation to provide information on CWD to travelers along the interstate system.

In addition to surveillance activities, the Department hosted a statewide CWD tabletop exercise that focused on identifying the roles and responsibilities; logistics and communications needed within the Department and with other agencies upon the first detection of CWD in Idaho.

Policy Issues:

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission has concerns over chronic wasting disease and its potential effect on deer and elk populations in Idaho.

Justification:

The agenda item is to provide an update to the Commission on the Department's adaptive enhanced CWD surveillance activities.

Staff Recommendation:

None

Action Requested:

None