2 CWD-positive Wyoming Deer Brought Back To Oregon, Are Being Incinerated

October 28, 2024 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

ODFW biologists confirmed that two mule deer harvested in Wyoming, illegally transported into Oregon, tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) on Oct. 24. To date, CWD has not been found in any wild deer or elk in Oregon.

It is unlawful to import or possess all or parts of a cervid (deer/elk family) carcass into Oregon from another state or country, except for certain allowed parts.

“This incident highlights the importance of following Oregon’s parts ban, as well as possible consequences for not doing so,” said Corey Crossley, ODFW CWD Surveillance Biologist.

Carcasses can still spread the disease when infected animal parts are not disposed of properly. The pathogen that causes CWD can remain in soil for decades and infect an untold number of animals. The transport of CWD positive animals and their parts from another state is one of the most likely ways the disease will come to Oregon.

“Hunters are our first and best line of defense against CWD. If you are hunting out of state, follow the law, and return with memories, meat and a clean head only,” added Crossley.

In violation of the parts ban, three Oregon residents harvested deer in Wyoming and returned to Oregon bringing skulls with brain material and/or meat still attached to the skull into the state. Wyoming CWD testing informed the hunters that two of the three deer harvested tested positive for CWD.

The hunters contacted ODFW to coordinate proper disposal and turn over the animals. Illegal parts brought into Oregon are confiscated and persons may be liable for disposal expenses. Oregon State Police issued citations, and the confiscated parts are being disposed of by incineration.

The following parts are allowed to be transported into Oregon:

• Meat that is cut and wrapped commercially or privately;
• Meat that has been boned out;
• Quarters or other portions of meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached;
• Hides and/or capes with no head attached;
• Skull plates with antlers attached that have been cleaned of all meat and brain tissue;

• Entire skulls that have been processed to remove all meat and brain tissue.
• Antlers (including velvet antlers) with no brain tissue attached;
• Upper canine teeth (i.e. buglers, whistlers, ivories);
• Finished taxidermy heads and finished European style skull mounts.

CWD is always fatal to infected animals, and they won't always appear sick. Its overall effects on populations can be significant if no action is taken to slow its spread. Deer and elk can be infected with the disease and spreading it for years. CWD is not curable, with no vaccine or treatment. No state that has detected CWD has ever been able to eliminate the disease.