

2021-22 Chronic Wasting Disease Surveillance Program Results

For the 2021-22 hunting season, the Government of Saskatchewan received more than 3,300 submissions to the chronic wasting disease (CWD) hunter surveillance program.

The program detected 644 positive cases: 459 mule deer, 167 white-tailed deer, 16 elk and two moose.

The Ministry of Environment detected the disease in white-tailed deer in two new wildlife management zones (WMZs); WMZ 37, along the eastern Saskatchewan border and WMZ 63, in the southern boreal forest. CWD has now been found in a total of 59/83 wildlife management zones in the province. The disease is considered endemic across southern Saskatchewan, south of the boreal forest.

In addition, the ministry detected the disease in three male white-tailed deer in WMZ 59, in the southern boreal region. The detection of CWD in this area raises concerns for the potential for disease transmission and impact on cervid species in that region.

Evaluating CWD prevalence (the proportion of animals affected) relative to the number of samples submitted is a vital component of understanding this disease. The Ministry of Environment has been monitoring CWD in the province since 1997, where we first detected the disease in a captive elk farm. CWD prevalence rates in mule and white-tailed deer populations have continued to increase since the detection of the disease in the wild, more than 20 years ago.

In the South Saskatchewan River Valley, we estimate the prevalence of CWD in male mule deer is 87 per cent, +/- 9 percent. In the same area, it's estimated that 34 per cent, +/- 14 per cent, of female mule deer have the disease. These are amongst the highest rates reported globally. In areas of North America where CWD prevalence is more than 30 per cent, research is showing decreased survival rates and population declines in mule and white-tailed deer.

Sixteen new cases of CWD were reported in elk last year, in 14 wildlife management zones. There have been sporadic cases of CWD reported in moose as well, primarily in areas of the province where the disease is endemic in deer. In the upcoming hunting season, we will particularly encourage elk and moose hunters to submit their animals for testing. This will help us to better understand the spread of the disease in those species.

For more information about CWD, visit saskatchewan.ca/cwd.

**Thank you to all hunters
who participated in the
CWD surveillance program**

2021-22 CWD Surveillance Program

Positive Test Results

