

Hunters Reminded Of Ban on Import of Certain Deer, Elk, Moose Parts into Oregon Due to CWD

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Hunters are reminded that it is illegal to bring deer, elk or moose parts containing central nervous system tissue into Oregon from any state or province with a documented case of Chronic Wasting Disease. In recent weeks, several hunters have been cited for not following the ban. Though the regulation has been in effect since 2002, the citations show some hunters may be unaware of, or simply not following the rules, which are crucial to keeping Oregon a CWD-free state.

“OSP will aggressively investigate all incidents of illegal importation of parts or wildlife from CWD states,” said Lieutenant Dave Cleary, OSP Fish & Wildlife Division. “All parts that possibly could have neurological tissue attached will be seized and destroyed appropriately. In a recent incident involving hunters from Colorado, the antlers of a large bull elk were seized because they had brain matter and tissue on the skull cap.”

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife officials are very committed to keeping Oregon a CWD-free state and explained the reason for the ban.

“There is evidence that prions, the agents that cause the disease, last a long time in the environment,” said wildlife biologist Don Whittaker. “Some hunters dispose of heads or spinal columns on the landscape where other wildlife could encounter the prions and contract the disease.”

“No state or province that has detected CWD in their free-ranging wildlife has been able to eradicate it and once an animal is infected, the neurological disease is always fatal,” added Colin Gillin, ODFW wildlife veterinarian. “That’s why it is so important to the health of Oregon’s deer, elk and growing moose populations that hunters follow the rules to keep Oregon CWD-free.”

ODFW, OSP and other state wildlife and enforcement agencies are working together to limit the spread of CWD. States with CWD sample thousands of harvested deer and elk and notify ODFW if an Oregon resident hunting in that state has harvested a CWD-positive animal. Recently, an Oregon resident hunting in Wyoming had his animal tested before returning home. Wyoming’s Game and Fish Department just notified ODFW that this hunter’s animal tested positive for the disease.

Wildlife biologists and veterinarians have not found any evidence to suggest that CWD can be transmitted to people but advise hunters to follow routine safety precautions when hunting and dressing game. Hunters should avoid shooting any animal that appears sick or is acting unusual and when dressing or preparing game, use hygiene precautions including wearing disposable gloves and cooking all meat to 165 degrees.

The following states and provinces have documented CWD in deer, elk or moose: Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Montana, Illinois, New Mexico, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, New York, West Virginia and the Canadian Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The following parts may still be imported from those states and provinces: Meat 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 (velvet antlers are allowed); antlers with no tissue attached (velvet antlers are allowed); upper canine teeth (buglers, whistlers and ivories); and finished taxidermy heads.

Monitoring of Oregon deer and elk for CWD is a continual process and requires hunters' cooperation, say ODFW officials. Hunters heading out for the remaining elk seasons are encouraged to visit check stations listed below. The stations are open from dawn until dusk. Hunters can also provide samples by visiting ODFW district and field offices (http://www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/directory/local_offices.asp) or during field checks by ODFW staff.

The dates and locations of field checks for the remaining elk seasons are:

Western Oregon, Nov. 11, 12

Westside " Jct. of Hwy 26 and Timber Road

Westside " Jct. of Hwy 6 and S. Gale Creek Road

Westside " Clatskanie, Safeway Store Parking Lot at the Jct. of Hwy 30 and

Tentative: Flying M Ranch (Yamhill)

Eastern Oregon, Nov. 10, 11, 12

I-84 West at the Dead Man's Pass Rest Station Cabbage Hill (between Pendleton and La Grande)

Eastern Oregon, Nov. 20, 21, 22

Prineville weigh station (just east of Prineville on Hwy 26)

Hunters can also review page 13 of 2006 Oregon Big Game Regulations to find specific information about the CWD import rules. The 2006 Oregon Big Game Regulations are available online at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/big_game/regulations