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Deer Samples Negative for CWD, TB

Samples taken from North Dakota deer, elk and moose during the 2008 hunting season have tested negative for chronic wasting disease and bovine tuberculosis, according to Dr. Dan Grove, wildlife veterinarian for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

Last fall, samples for CWD testing were taken from nearly 2,300 deer (with 1,600 taken from the targeted area of the central third of the state), 53 elk and 24 moose.

“In addition to our CWD surveillance, we started routine bovine TB surveillance in the northeast, and random sampling throughout the state,” Grove said. “Altogether, 850 deer, moose and elk tested negative for bovine TB.”

Since January approximately 160 moose and deer that died or were showing clinical signs of disease were sampled for CWD and TB as part of the Game and Fish Department’s year-around targeted surveillance. To date, all animals have tested negative for CWD, and bovine TB test results are still pending.

“As always, the success of our surveillance program could not be accomplished without the cooperative efforts of hunters, meat processors, taxidermists and local establishments,” Grove said.

The Game and Fish Department’s three-year cycle of sampling the entire state for CWD will conclude this fall by testing deer from the western third of the state. Grove said a new cycle will begin in 2010 in the eastern third of the state. “We will also continue to test animals in northeastern North Dakota for TB until it has been eradicated from the adjacent Minnesota herd,” Grove added, “and will continue to sample suspect or high risk cases of CWD and TB throughout the year.”

Since 2002, more than 12,300 North Dakota deer, nearly 360 elk and 60 moose have tested negative for CWD. To date, CWD and TB have not been diagnosed in wild or farmed cervids in North Dakota, although these diseases have been found in surrounding states and provinces.

WMA Public Use Regulations Amended

North Dakota Game and Fish Department regulations governing public use of the state’s wildlife management areas have been amended effective immediately. The change involves tree stands, paintballing and geocaching.

Scott Peterson, wildlife resource section supervisor, said the Game and Fish Department periodically reviews public use regulations and modifies as needed. “We present the proposed changes to the public

to gather input, and the state legislature's administrative rules committee grants final approval," Peterson said.

The deadline to remove tree stands from WMAs has been extended three weeks to Jan. 31. Peterson said extending the archery season has allowed archers to hunt WMAs later into January than in previous years. "This left very little time for archers to remove tree stands," Peterson said. "We thought it was prudent to give hunters more time to remove tree stands."

In addition, tree stands left unattended on WMAs require an identification tag displaying the owner's name, address and telephone number. "The reason for this is two-fold," Peterson said. "First, it allows us to contact the owner of a tree stand if a conflict should arise, and second, we believe this will deter theft of tree stands on public land."

Paintball and geocaching activities on WMAs are now prohibited. "While these types of activities may not always create a significant impact to an individual WMA, they do create a considerable amount of unnecessary disturbance to both wildlife and wildlife habitat," Peterson said. "They also have the potential to create competition with hunters and anglers who help pay for managing WMAs."

A complete list of the WMA regulations is available by contacting the Game and Fish Department at (701) 328-6300, or email ndgf@nd.gov. WMA use regulations are also available on the Game and Fish website at gf.nd.gov.