



Ohio Department of Natural Resources

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Dear Taxidermist:

As you may already know, in 2006 the ODNR, Division of Wildlife implemented rules restricting the transport of hunter-killed cervids harvested in states where Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) has been detected in wild or captive animals. Hunters returning from out- of-state with an elk, mule deer, caribou, white-tailed deer or moose harvested from a Chronic Wasting Disease positive area can only bring into Ohio:

- cleaned hides with no heads attached;
- skull plates that have been cleaned of all meat and brain tissue;
- antlers with no meat or tissue attached;
- hides and capes without any part of the head or lymph nodes attached; or finished taxidermy mounts;
- cleaned upper canine teeth;
- meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached;
- meat that is boned out, securely and completely wrapped either commercially or privately.

In October 2014, a positive test for chronic wasting disease (CWD) occurred in a captive deer from World Class Whitetails of Ohio in Holmes County. Recently, six captive deer have been harvested outside of deer facilities in Holmes County, two of which have been traced back to the affected facility. Neither of those deer have tested positive for CWD. As of November 28, 2014, no additional deer at the facility have tested positive for CWD since the initial case was discovered.

The division intends to introduce language to Ohio Administrative Code this winter addressing the transport of carcasses from affected areas in Ohio. Until the rule process is completed, we are simply informing and encouraging hunters that this is a best practice, and while it may be an extra step it is in the best interest of *all* deer hunters throughout Ohio to adhere to the guidelines above.

In the event that a hunter brings a whole head with cape and antlers or a whole carcass for taxidermy from a CWD-positive area, please contact your State Wildlife Officer with the following information: the species of cervid, the location harvested and the name and contact information for the hunter. After notifying the Wildlife Officer, you may cape out the head and remove the antlers being careful to remove all visible brain and spinal cord material from the skull cap and cape. Because carcass of infected cervids can shed prions into the environment causing exposure to CWD, proper disposal of these materials is essential. The Ohio Department of Agriculture recommends that carcasses and/or associated materials be buried on the premises (not less than four feet beneath the surface of the ground) or transported directly to an approved landfill.

Further information about CWD, CWD-positive areas, proper disposal methods of carcasses, and recommendations for minimizing the potential risk of CWD is available on our website at <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/> and in the attached document. Your assistance with this is vitally important to the health and future of deer hunting in Ohio.

Sincerely,



Scot Zody
Chief

SAZ/KF/jnc

Attachment

Taxidermists Can Help to Prevent the Spread of Chronic Wasting Disease

Scientists believe that **Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)** is transmitted through **animal-to- animal contact** and through **food and soil contaminated with bodily excretions** including saliva. **CWD contaminated carcasses &/or carcass parts** (brain, spinal cord, lymph nodes) may also **spread disease** indirectly through **environmental contamination**.

What is Chronic Wasting Disease?

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a progressive, fatal, degenerative disease of the brain affecting elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and moose. Animals with CWD may not have any visible signs or symptoms of the disease for a number of years. CWD belongs to a group of related diseases called Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs), which include diseases such as Scrapie in sheep and goats, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle and Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) in humans. CWD is not the same as CJD or BSE. TSEs are thought to be caused by abnormal proteins, called prions, in the brain. There is no evidence that CWD affects humans. There is currently no treatment or vaccine available.

How can Taxidermists Help Prevent the Spread of CWD?

The movement of high-risk carcass parts (brain, spinal cord, lymph tissues) is a potential avenue through which CWD could be spread from infected areas. Ohio, as well as many other states, has developed regulations to prohibit the importation of high-risk carcass parts from CWD endemic areas. Specific carcass parts where the CWD prion (causative substance) concentrates are: head (including brain, tonsils, eyes and retropharyngeal lymph nodes); spinal cord and smaller nerves; spleen; upper canine teeth, if root structure is present; any object or article containing visible brain or spinal cord material; unfinished taxidermy mounts or brain- tanned hides.

Taxidermists who accept deer or elk harvested should:

1. Determine if the specimen brought to you is from a CWD-positive area by checking the Division's website at <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/species-and-habitats/diseases-in-wildlife>
2. If from a CWD-positive area and high-risk parts are present, such as a whole head with cape and antlers or a whole carcass, contact your State Wildlife Officer to report it. After notifying the Wildlife Officer, taxidermists may cape out the head and remove the antlers being careful to remove all visible brain and spinal cord material from the skull cap and cape. Proper disposal of these materials is essential.
3. Properly dispose of all carcass parts and taxidermy by-products. Carcasses and materials presumed or known to be contaminated with CWD should be disposed of according to methods approved by the Ohio Department of Agriculture. To reduce the risk of CWD, the ODA recommends that carcasses and/or associated materials be buried on the premises (not less than four feet beneath the surface of the ground) or transported directly to an approved landfill. For further information, visit the ODA website at <http://agri.ohio.gov/>

4. Do not allow domestic or wild animals to have access to your taxidermy area or taxidermy by-products or waste.
5. Wear latex or rubber gloves when working on specimens and dispose of gloves properly.
6. Thoroughly clean hands and taxidermy tools with soap and water and then sanitize tools in a solution of 50 percent household chlorine bleach and 50 percent water for one hour.

In 2006, the Ohio Division of Wildlife established Administrative Rule 1501: 31-19-02 concerning proper transportation of hunter-killed wild cervids:

The risk of introducing Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) from the transport of carcasses of hunter-killed, wild cervids (deer, elk and moose) appears small, when compared to the risk of introduction from the movement of living, infected animals. However, proper disposal of carcasses, trims, and parts would virtually eliminate the risk of CWD introduction from hunter-killed deer, elk, or moose, regardless of the origin, destination, or health of the animal.

Carcass parts acceptable from out-of state: Hunters returning from out-of-state with an elk, mule deer, caribou, white-tailed deer or moose harvested from a Chronic Wasting Disease positive area can only bring into Ohio:

- cleaned hides with no heads attached;
- skull plates that have been cleaned of all meat and brain tissue;
- antlers with no meat or tissue attached;
- hides and capes without any part of the head or lymph nodes attached; or finished taxidermy mounts.
- cleaned upper canine teeth;
- meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached;
- meat that is boned out, securely and completely wrapped either commercially or privately;

Websites to visit for more information:

Ohio Division of Wildlife at <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/>
Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance at www.cwd-info.org
USDA Animal and Plant Inspection Service at
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/aphis/home/>
Ohio Department of Agriculture at <http://agri.ohio.gov/>