

Wildlife Update

October 2019

Ministry of Environment
Fish, Wildlife and Lands Branch



Chronic Wasting Disease Testing

The Ministry of Environment is asking for your help in collecting heads from harvested deer, elk, moose and caribou to test for chronic wasting disease (CWD).

What is CWD?

- CWD is a fatal disease of cervids (deer, elk, moose and caribou) caused by infectious proteins called prions. The disease was first detected in mule deer in Saskatchewan in 2000 and has continued to spread. Many infected animals appear perfectly healthy. Shortly before death, animals may develop neurological and behavioural symptoms.

Why should I have my animal tested?

- Testing provides valuable information to wildlife managers on the location of CWD-infected animals and how widespread it is in certain areas. This information is critical in helping develop actions to control its spread.
- Although there have been no human cases of CWD, the World Health Organization, Public Health Agency of Canada and Ministry of Environment recommend having your animal tested prior to consuming.

How do I get my deer tested?

- 1) Go online: CWDSK.ca.
- 2) Fill out your information and get a CWD tracking number.
- 3) Write the CWD tracking number on your CWDTAG.
- 4) Keep a copy of your CWD tracking number.
- 5) Attach tag to hole in ear/gums of animal using zip-tie.
- 6) Deliver head to drop-off station.
- 7) It may take up to six to eight weeks for results to become available.

A list of drop-off stations can be found at saskatchewan.ca/cwd

What can I do to prevent CWD?

- **Avoid long-distance movements** of deer carcasses. If moving your carcass to a taxidermist or processor, please ensure it is double-bagged (wrapped in tarp) while in transport.
- **Dispose of carcasses at permitted landfill sites** or leave in the field at the location where harvested. For more information, contact your local municipal authority.
- **Avoid the use of mineral licks and baiting and feeding.** Animals can shed CWD in feces, saliva and urine. Attracting higher concentrations of deer can spread CWD by increasing opportunities for contact between deer and contaminating the environment.

Get your results at:

cwhc-rcsf.ca/cwd_hunter_access.php

Please note: it may take several weeks before results are available.

Thank you for helping support the health of Saskatchewan's wildlife

saskatchewan.ca/cwd

Cordie - Research development - should be set up but has not

mandatory responses?

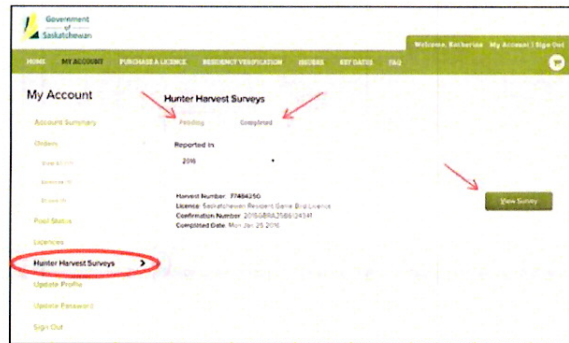
HUNTER HARVEST SURVEY

- Hunter Harvest Surveys have been a key tool in wildlife management in Saskatchewan for more than 50 years – annually collecting information about harvest and hunting efforts in each wildlife management zone. The data is used by wildlife biologists to evaluate recent changes in management strategies and identify areas where different management strategies may be warranted. **Survey results are also an essential source of information for wildlife managers to help guide hunting seasons and set licence quotas.**
- The ministry continues to look for additional ways to engage hunters to improve response rates. The more surveys that are completed, the more thorough the evaluation of management strategies. The ministry encourages hunters to fill out their Hunter Harvest Surveys, even if they did not hunt or harvest an animal. Surveys can be completed online, in person or over the phone. **Options to improve hunter harvest survey submissions are being explored.**
- The survey only takes a couple minutes (or less) to complete.

Survey dates and results can be found at <http://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/parks-recreation-heritage-and-arts/hunting-trapping-and-angling/hunting/hunter-harvest-survey>.

Please Fill Out Your Survey(s)!

1. Sign on to your HAL account at www.saskatchewanlicences.active.com



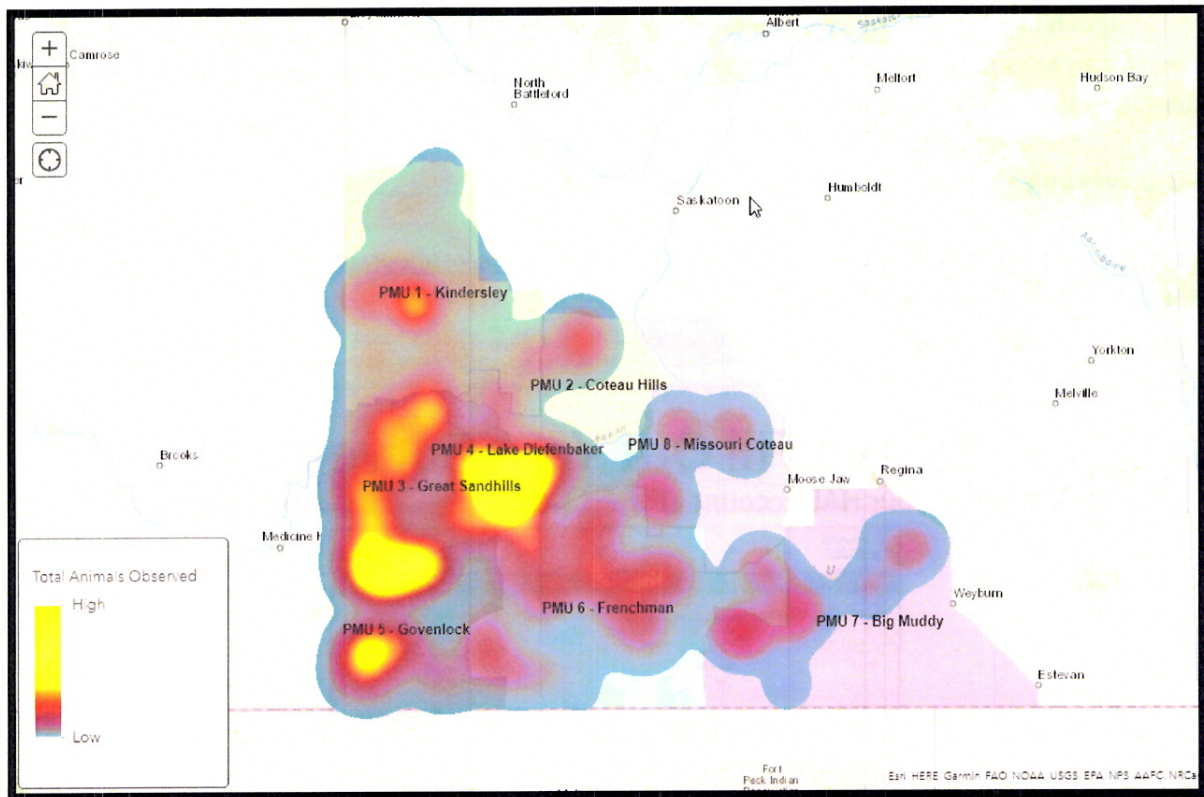
2. Visit a **Ministry of Environment Office.**
3. Call Aspira (formerly Active Network) at **1.888.773.8450.**

*For more information or to provide suggestions for improving response rate, please contact Katherine Conkin at katherine.conkin@gov.sk.ca or 306.933.5304.

PRONGHORN

- Pronghorn numbers are near the long-term provincial average.
- Allocation is considered to be in a base harvest strategy, as defined in the pronghorn management plan.
- Buck:doe and fawn:doe ratios remain near desired objectives.
- Available licences increased to 1,000 either-sex province wide.
- A modest doe allocation was available in select management units.

Distribution of pronghorn counted on survey routes in 2019



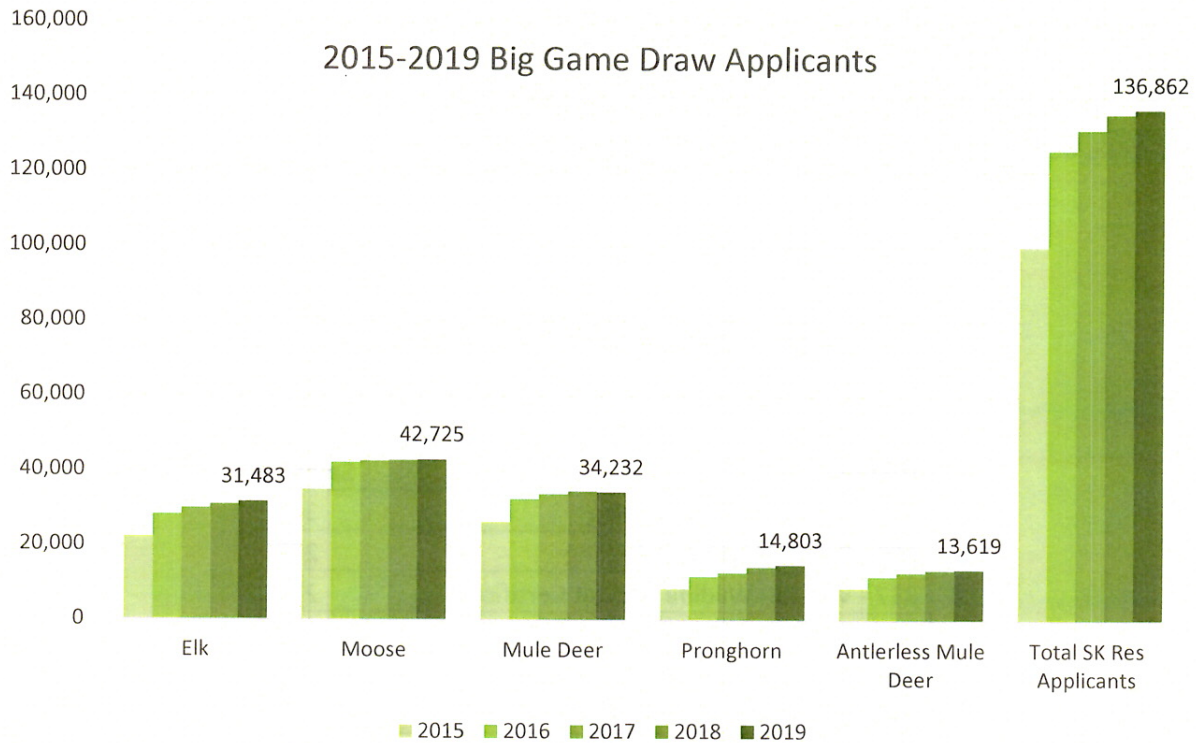
Pronghorn X-ing App

- Initiative launched in the fall of 2017 to collect the locations of pronghorn and other wildlife in relation to roadways.
- Participants can download app or submit observations online. Data can also be viewed on the website to see where individuals are observing pronghorn across parts of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Montana.
- Visit <http://www.pronghornxing.org/> to register or download the app from the iTunes store or GooglePlay.



2019 BIG GAME DRAW

There were a record 102,469 applications submitted by 47,492 hunters for the 2019 Saskatchewan Resident Big Game Draw. This marks a three per cent increase from 2018. A further 2,407 applications were submitted for the Canadian Resident White-tailed Deer Draw.



In 2018, a Legacy pool was created as the highest priority pool. Hunters who apply in the Super A pool for 10 or more consecutive years without being drawn (including zone 99 applications) are eligible for the Legacy pool. This was retroactive to 2006. A breakdown of legacy pool applicants is shown below.

	Eligible	Drawn	Unsuccessful	Declined	Zone 99	No Application
Elk	196	92	11	0	81	12
Moose	130	75	17	0	29	9
Mule deer	31	5	0	0	25	1
Antlerless mule deer	2	0	0	0	2	0

	2019 Legacy Eligible Applicants	Applicants Remaining in Legacy	New Legacy Eligible Applicants	2020 Legacy Eligible Applicants
Elk	196	92	194	286
Moose	130	46	148	194
Mule deer	31	25	11	36

Applicants drawn for three or more species are given the option of declining an awarded licence while still retaining their pool status, but are required to remain drawn for at least two species. A total of 145 of 706 eligible hunters declined at least one licence (159 total declined licences).

	Number of Declined Licences
Elk	52
Moose	33
Mule deer	27
Pronghorn	12
Antlerless mule deer	35

MILITARY VETERAN LICENCES

Product	Sales
301 - SK Res Veteran Angling	341
309 - Res CAN Veteran Angling	245
317 - Veteran Wildlife Habitat Certificate	278
312 - CAN Res Veteran Game Bird	50
324 - CAN Res Veteran Black Bear	21
343 - 2nd SK Res Veteran Ant WTD	7
311 - SK Res Veteran Game Bird	176
323 - SK Res Veteran Black Bear	71
330 - 1st SK Res Veteran WT Deer	145
339 - 1st SK Res Veteran Ant WTD	28
350 - SK Res Veteran Elk	83
357 - SK Res Veteran Arch Mule Deer	39
360 - SK Res Veteran Moose	67
380 - SK Res Veteran Wolf	26

2018/19 CO-OPERATIVE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT SURVEY (CWMS)

- Thank you to those participating in the 2018-19 Co-operative Wildlife Management Survey (CWMS). Whether you participated using our new CWMS App or a traditional paper booklet, we sincerely appreciate your contributions to wildlife management in Saskatchewan. In the accompanying CWMS Annual Report, you will find information on the population structure for big game and observations for white-tailed deer, mule deer, moose, elk, sharp-tailed grouse and wild turkey.
- Woodland caribou were added to the CWMS app in August 2018. Information from woodland caribou observations will be included in the 2019-2020 report.
- In the 2018-19 reporting cycle, there were 690 individuals registered in the CWMS program, 146 of whom reported observations, 30 using the traditional paper booklet and 116 using the CWMS App. CWMS participants collected nearly 3,000 observations of wildlife across Saskatchewan (Table 1).

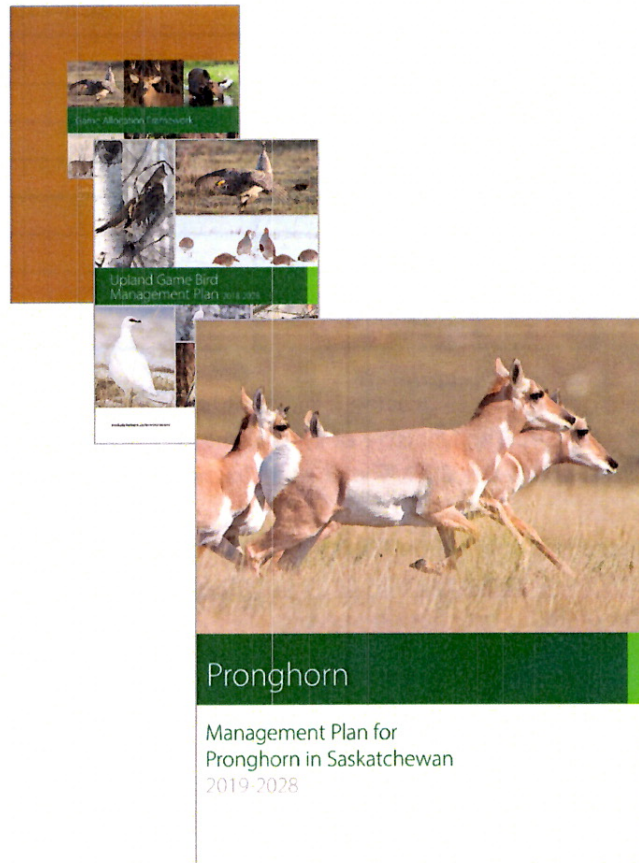
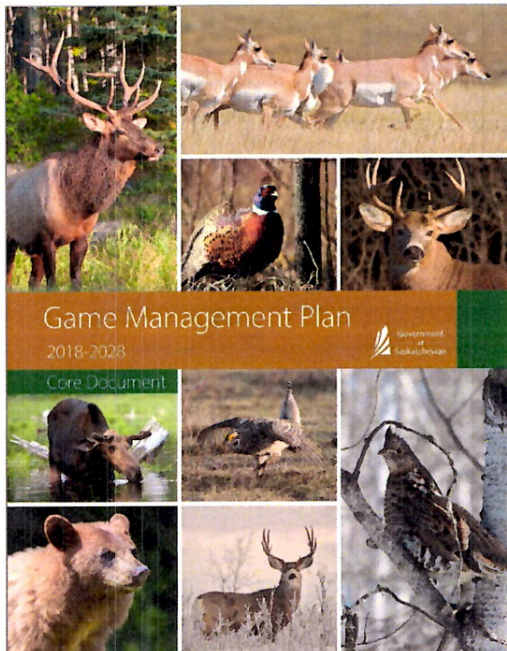
Number of observations by species in 2018-19 (September 1, 2018 to July 15, 2019).

Species	Observations		Total
	Booklet	CWMS App	
White-tailed deer	551	840	1,391
Mule deer	229	541	770
Moose	60	331	391
Elk	6	70	76
Sharp-tailed grouse	0	144	144
Wild turkey	0	1	1
Grand Total	846	1,927	2,773

- Results of the CWMS provide important information that guides the management of game species in Saskatchewan. The Ministry of Environment is seeking to enhance participation and you can help by spreading the word about the CWMS with your friends and family. We appreciate it!
- For more information on Ministry of Environment wildlife surveys, please visit: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/parks-culture-heritage-and-sport/hunting-trapping-and-angling/wildlife-population-surveys>

SPECIES MANAGEMENT PLANS

- The Management Plan for Pronghorn in Saskatchewan 2019-2028 has been completed.
- The plan was developed as part of the Saskatchewan Game Management Plan and is the next document in the series, following the Game Allocation Framework and the Saskatchewan Upland Game Bird Management Plan.
- The plan outlines a framework for how pronghorn will be managed in the province over the next 10 years, with particular emphasis on the thresholds developed to trigger a change in management strategy.
- Game species management plans for moose, elk and black bear are expected to follow by early 2020, with mule deer later that year.



UPDATE ON MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES ON FISH AND WILDLIFE DEVELOPMENT FUND LANDS

A Conservation Land Trust Agreement between the Ministry of Environment, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ducks Unlimited Canada (collectively referred to as the Board of Trustees) was signed in 2015 to improve the management of Fish and Wildlife Development Fund (FWDF) lands that were solely owned by the ministry.



Ongoing activities include assessments of all FWDF parcels, placement of new signage on the majority of properties, targeted removal of hazardous sites, invasive weed control and an improved system for managing and administering leases.

At the request of the ministry, the Board provided recommendations on an expanded grazing program that aligned with the goal of enhancing wildlife habitat. As the program progresses, the Board, in consultation with the ministry, continues to revise the operational guidelines to ensure the grazing program still enables the protection of wildlife habitat.

Current policy states that areas being grazed are open to the public for foot access throughout the grazing period, which runs from June 15 to September 1. The Board and ministry continue to refine the criteria for management of these lands in areas such as range assessments, fencing and other guidelines. We anticipate the revised criteria and guidelines will be finalized and available to distribute later this year.

To date there are 45 dispositions (13,228 acres), including three properties under development (561 acres). There are three additional properties under consideration for 2020 (approximately 480 acres).

Wildfires burned approximately 2,000 acres involving four FWDF properties in 2019 (Wapella, Insinger, Biggar and Vonda). Rejuvenation of fireguards and repairs to fencing have been completed on these properties.

Not in place yet

TRESPASS ACT

Legislation introduced in fall 2018 will change trespassing laws in rural Saskatchewan. Under the new legislation, hunters and trappers wishing to access private land and leased Crown land will be responsible for seeking permission from the landowner or occupant of the land. These changes will help ensure landowners and occupiers are aware of the presence of others on their property to help improve safety, reduce property damage and decrease the risk of agricultural diseases. The new law will also provide landowners with legal protection by limiting liability. **This legislation is not expected to come into effect before the end of 2019.**

CALIBRE RESTRICTIONS

The ministry has received significant feedback from stakeholders on this issue, including additional data and analysis from individuals and organizations. We are reviewing the information, but no decision has been made on whether to amend existing legislation.

FIRST NATIONS HUNTING

The ministry has received concerns from numerous stakeholders pertaining to the constitutional rights of treaty and Aboriginal rights holders. It is clear that misunderstandings remain with regards to this issue. The most concise information that speaks to these rights under law is contained in the Saskatchewan Guide for Treaty and Aboriginal Rights for Hunting and Fishing. This document is available at:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/parks-culture-heritage-and-sport/hunting-trapping-and-angling/treaty-and-aboriginal-rights-for-hunting-and-fishing>

AERIAL SURVEY PROGRAM 2019/2020

- Multi-species aerial surveys are being proposed for southeastern Saskatchewan.
- These surveys will align with targeted zones for CWD surveillance in order to maximize the utility of the information collected.

BIG GAME MEAT REFUND POLICY

- The Ministry of Environment will no longer provide any form of compensation for big game meat for any reason. This includes offering replacement licences or financial refunds.
- The ministry provides hunters with a regulated opportunity to harvest a big game animal. There is no guarantee as to the success of harvest nor the condition of any animal harvested.
- The ministry does not provide compensation for game birds, fish or any other harvested animals that are considered unfit for human consumption. Aligning big game in this manner provides a consistent policy approach.
- This policy aligns with the practice in most other jurisdictions.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT STAFF CONTACTS

- If you'd like to discuss game populations or wildlife management with the Ministry of Environment Wildlife Management team, please contact the following species managers:

Species	Manager		
	Name	Phone	Email
Upland game birds	Katherine Conkin	(306) 933-5304	katherine.conkin@gov.sk.ca
White-tailed deer	Allison Henderson	(306) 786-1425	allison.henderson@gov.sk.ca
Mule deer	Todd Whiklo	(306) 778-8262	todd.whiklo@gov.sk.ca
Elk	Tom Perry	(306) 953-2695	tom.perry@gov.sk.ca
Moose	Katie Rasmussen	(306) 933-5304	katie.rasmussen@gov.sk.ca
Caribou	Tim Trottier	(306) 786-1425	tim.trottier@gov.sk.ca
Black Bear and Wolf	Mike Gollop	(306) 778-8262	mike.gollop@gov.sk.ca

