

# CWD Testing

## How can I submit my own CWD sample for testing?

### [2023 CWD Collection Sites](#)

Deer or elk hunters with licenses to harvest animals in South Dakota can submit samples for testing from anywhere in South Dakota. Research and surveillance priority areas include Black Hills Elk, and counties or hunting units where CWD has not been detected (mostly East River). Mentored, youth, apprentice, archery, and muzzleloader hunters can also submit samples using one of the options described below. Hunters who harvest deer or elk can have their animal tested for CWD by following the process outlined below. As a voluntary submission, hunters will be responsible for the cost of shipping and any professional sample collection costs, unless the hunter delivers a sample to a GFP Office or established collection station. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) will pay for testing cost of the sample at South Dakota State University Animal Disease and Research Diagnostics Lab. Results will be sent to both the hunter and GFP.

### Submission Steps

#### Option #1

- Tagged samples or entire head can be dropped off at any of the collection stations (see below for details). Available collection stations can be found at the bottom of [gfp.sd.gov/chronic-wasting-disease](http://gfp.sd.gov/chronic-wasting-disease) under “Related Maps” and consist of GFP regional or district offices
  - If a hunter will not be doing a shoulder or European mount, the antlers can remain attached to the skull or removed using a V-cut method and placed in the collection barrel. Antlers left on the skull will not be returned.

#### Option #2

- Completely fill out the [South Dakota Chronic Wasting Disease Hunter Submission Form](#).
- Collect only the retropharyngeal lymph nodes, located in the throat area, as demonstrated in the video found [here](#) . Extraction can easily be performed with a field knife, but some veterinarians will extract samples for a small fee as well.
- Once removed, place lymph nodes in a sealed bag (Ziploc® or similar). Place sealed bag into another sealed bag, then wrap in a paper towel. Place the wrapped sample with a cold ice pack and the submission form (in separate sealed bag) into a small box and send via your choice of parcel carrier. Choose a carrier that will deliver your sample within 24-48 hours. Ship samples during the week (Mon-Thurs) and avoid shipping on weekends and holidays. Use a parcel carrier that offers tracking of your package.
- CWD testing kits are available for hunters at any GFP office found at [gfp.sd.gov/contactus](http://gfp.sd.gov/contactus).
- The package delivery address is listed below and at the bottom of the CWD Hunter Submission Form. Results are usually available within 2-3 weeks but may take longer depending on sample volume at the SDSU Diagnostic Laboratory.

**Send samples to:**  
**South Dakota State University**  
**Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Lab**  
**Box 2175, 1155 North Campus Drive**  
**Brookings, SD 57007**

### **Option #3**

- Contact your local GFP office and schedule to have your sample removed and submitted for testing at no cost.

## **2023 CWD PRIORITY SURVEILLANCE AREAS**

### **Unit-Specific Priority Surveillance Areas**

#### Black Hills Elk Hunting Units

- ALL Black Hills Elk Hunting Units-Elk samples only

#### West River Deer Hunting Units or East River Hunting Units

- any unit that has never found CWD in wild deer or elk

### **Latest CWD testing results.**

In the South Dakota CWD Surveillance period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, a total of 1,042 samples have been collected for CWD surveillance.

Breakdown of the sampling is as follows:

- 439 elk sampled-- 415 results returned as Not Positive--(24 POSITIVE ELK FOUND)
- 89 mule deer sampled-- 77 results returned as Not Positive--(12 POSITIVE MD FOUND)
- 513 white-tailed deer-- 490 results returned as Not Positive--(23 POSITIVE WT FOUND)

Surveillance from hunter-harvest and testing of sick deer and elk implies CWD is relatively rare in free-roaming cervids when the number of animals present is considered. South Dakota is reporting a total of 59 positive deer and elk (12 mule deer, 23 white-tailed deer and 24 elk) in the testing period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. To date, South Dakota has found 722 cases of CWD (439 deer and 283 elk) in free-ranging deer and elk since testing began in 1997. Wind Cave National Park (WICA) accounts for 192 of these animals (177 elk, 15 deer). Thirty-five elk and 12 deer have been found in Custer State Park. A total of 33,918 wild deer and elk have been tested for CWD since 1997.