

CWD Testing

How can I submit my own CWD sample for testing?

CWD Testing sites: gfp.sd.gov/chronic-wasting-disease Under Related Maps

Deer or elk hunters with licenses to harvest animals in South Dakota can submit samples for testing from anywhere in South Dakota. There are no established research and surveillance priority areas in South Dakota. The CWD testing program is established for hunters wanting to have cervids tested. 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. 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 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.
- 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.

Latest CWD testing results.

In the South Dakota CWD Surveillance period of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, a total of 414 samples have been collected for CWD surveillance.

Breakdown of the sampling is as follows:

- 101 elk sampled-- 84 results returned as Not Positive--(17 POSITIVE ELK FOUND)
- 74 mule deer sampled-- 64 results returned as Not Positive--(10 POSITIVE MD FOUND)
- 238 white-tailed deer-- 214 results returned as Not Positive--(24 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 51 positive deer and elk (10 mule deer, 24 white-tailed deer and 17 elk) in the testing period of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026. To date, South Dakota has found 903 cases of CWD (550 deer and 353 elk) in free-ranging deer and elk since testing began in 1997. Wind Cave National Park (WICA) accounts for 220 of these animals (201 elk, 19 deer). Fifty-five elk and 13 deer have been found in Custer State Park. A total of 35,684 wild deer, elk, and moose have been tested for CWD since 1997.