



RESOLUTION #2018-02-07

IN SUPPORT OF THE AFWA BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR THE PREVENTION, SURVEILLANCE, AND MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

WHEREAS, the primary authority and capacity to protect and manage species of the family Cervidae resides in the states, provinces, and territories, which consequently have a significant interest in protecting their native wildlife resources from the transmission of wildlife diseases; and

WHEREAS, chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal degenerative disease of deer, elk, moose, and other species of the family Cervidae and is arguably the most important disease threatening North American cervid resources; and

WHEREAS, over the past 50 years CWD has continued to spread across North America and has currently been detected in captive and wild cervids in 25 states and 3 provinces; and

WHEREAS, many North American cervid species, including mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), moose (*Alces alces*), and caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*), currently are exhibiting population declines; and

WHEREAS, introduction of CWD into these herds threatens the sustainability of the populations, impacts harvest levels, and affects food security for indigenous and other human populations; and

WHEREAS, the susceptibility of all native, North American cervid species to CWD, long incubation period before clinical disease appears, and long-term environmental persistence of the CWD agent mean that state, federal, provincial, territorial, and tribal agencies have relatively few options to mitigate the continued spread of this disease across North America; and

WHEREAS, the Fish and Wildlife Health Committee of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has developed the first-ever set of Best Management Practices for Prevention, Surveillance, and Management of Chronic Wasting Disease (BMPs) that have been jointly developed by more than 30 wildlife biologists, wildlife veterinarians, and wildlife disease experts from 22 states and 2 provinces, as well as federal wildlife and natural resource management agencies in the United States and Canada; and

WHEREAS, these BMPs are firmly grounded in the best available peer-reviewed science, as well as the direct management experience of the state, federal, provincial, and territorial wildlife biologists and wildlife veterinarians who have first-hand knowledge regarding the detection and management of CWD; and

WHEREAS, the BMPs provide specific and detailed recommendations regarding the development of CWD response plans and risk assessments, surveillance strategies, options for reducing disease transmission risk from human-associated movements of live animals and cervid carcasses, management strategies, communications to hunters about CWD and CWD management, and priorities for further research on CWD; and

WHEREAS, the BMPs are not meant to be prescriptive or to mandate programs at the local, state, federal, tribal, or territorial level; and

WHEREAS, the BMPs are scientific guidance documents and cannot by themselves affect or alter any state's laws regarding public ownership of wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the BMPs should be regarded as a set of recommendations for agencies to consider as they develop or revise their CWD prevention, surveillance, and management programs;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Association extends its appreciation to the members and leadership of the Fish and Wildlife Health Committee in drafting the first-ever set of Best Management Practices for CWD in North American cervid populations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association affirms and endorses these Best Practices as representing the best-available current scientific information regarding the management of CWD in North America; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association encourages its members to adopt those practices contained in this document that are deemed appropriate for implementation by its individual members in their own jurisdictions in order to promote the scientific management of CWD and reduce the risk of further spread of the disease; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association hereby requests that the Fish and Wildlife Health Committee initiate the development of further science-based recommendations regarding the implementation of certain practices described in the BMP document, to include, but not limited to: a coordinated strategy to address concerns arising from the interstate and intrastate movement of live cervids; a coordinated strategy to help agencies address potential risks from hunter-harvested carcass movements (and other tissues of cervid origin); a strategy for reducing CWD transmission risk from the baiting and feeding of wild cervids, as recommended by the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; and recommendations for minimizing the risk of CWD transmission in natural cervid urine products.

Submitted by the Fish and Wildlife Health Committee

Adopted September 12, 2018, Tampa, FL