

Is Your Meat Safe?

by Carolee Anita Boyles, © Progressive Farmer, September 2003, reprinted with permission

Hunter concerns about the safety of game infected with CWD and West Nile virus are overblown.

Unless you've been living under a rock for the past year, you've already seen several headlines about chronic wasting disease and West Nile virus.

Reports have appeared in publications ranging from *The New York Times* to all the big hunting magazines, and everyone has an opinion about the effects of these diseases.

Here's the latest about CWD and WNV and how they affect the game meat we eat:

Chronic Wasting Disease. Dr. Gary Wolfe, project director for the CWD Alliance, believes the risk from eating meat from CWD-infected animals is minimal.

"Chronic wasting disease has been known to exist in the wild in northern Colorado and southern Wyoming for at least 25 years, and probably longer than that," he says. "We don't know for sure if CWD can be transmitted to humans, so it's appropriate to take some common-sense precautions. But there's been an overreaction about the potential health risk associated with it."

Wolfe says he and his wife have been hunting elk in the heart of this "hot zone" for the past 15 years.

"It's an area we enjoy hunting, and I'm not going to let the fear of CWD keep me from doing that," he says. "When it comes to hunting and eating wild game, the potential risk of contracting a neurological disease as a result of CWD isn't even on my top 10 list of concerns. I'm more concerned about driving from Montana to Colorado, getting injured when I'm packing into the area, or being involved in a hunting accident."

Wolfe says if you handle meat from a CWD-infected animal appropriately, the risk of even coming into contact with infected material is minimal. He offers the following recommendations for hunters:

- Avoid obviously sick animals; shoot only those that appear healthy.
- Wear rubber gloves when you field dress any big game.
- Bone out all meat to minimize the possibility of spreading any infected material into the meat from brain, spinal cord, lymph glands, or spleen.
- Cook meat as usual.
- Learn as much as you can about CWD, find out if it's been detected where you hunt, and make an informed decision. For more information about CWD, visit the CWD Alliance Web site at www.cwd-info.org.

West Nile Virus. If you're concerned about this disease affecting game birds, National Turkey Federation biologist Tom Hughes says, "According to the Centers for Disease Control, wild birds that appear healthy have a very low likelihood of carrying the virus."

"The prevailing wisdom is that there's no way you can catch it from eating a bird that's been exposed to the virus, but everybody is trying to err on the side of caution," he continues. "So don't handle sick or dead birds if you don't have to, and that would include eating them."

Hughes says West Nile virus appears to be transmitted strictly by mosquitoes, and turkeys seem to be resistant to the disease. "They don't act as a reservoir and are nearly immune to it," he says. "In a study where researchers tried to infect turkey poults, they all acquired the virus to a minor degree. None of

Fill Out Survey on Deer Hunting Season

by George F. Siniscal, Natural Resources Committee Chairman

As many of you well know (especially those of you who hunt), the deer populations in Western Oregon are diminishing. This is primarily because of what wildlife biologists refer to as "hair loss syndrome" and "chronic wasting disease."

I'm asking all tribal members (whether you hunt or not) to assist me with a survey on whether or not you feel the deer hunting season should be closed in the Stott Mountain units for at least one year, beginning in 2004. This closure would affect non-tribal hunters as well as tribal people.

I'm compiling this information in order to forward it to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) in an attempt to help save our blacktail deer from extinction. By answering this survey, we hopefully can help ODFW determine whether or not it should close deer hunting in those two units.

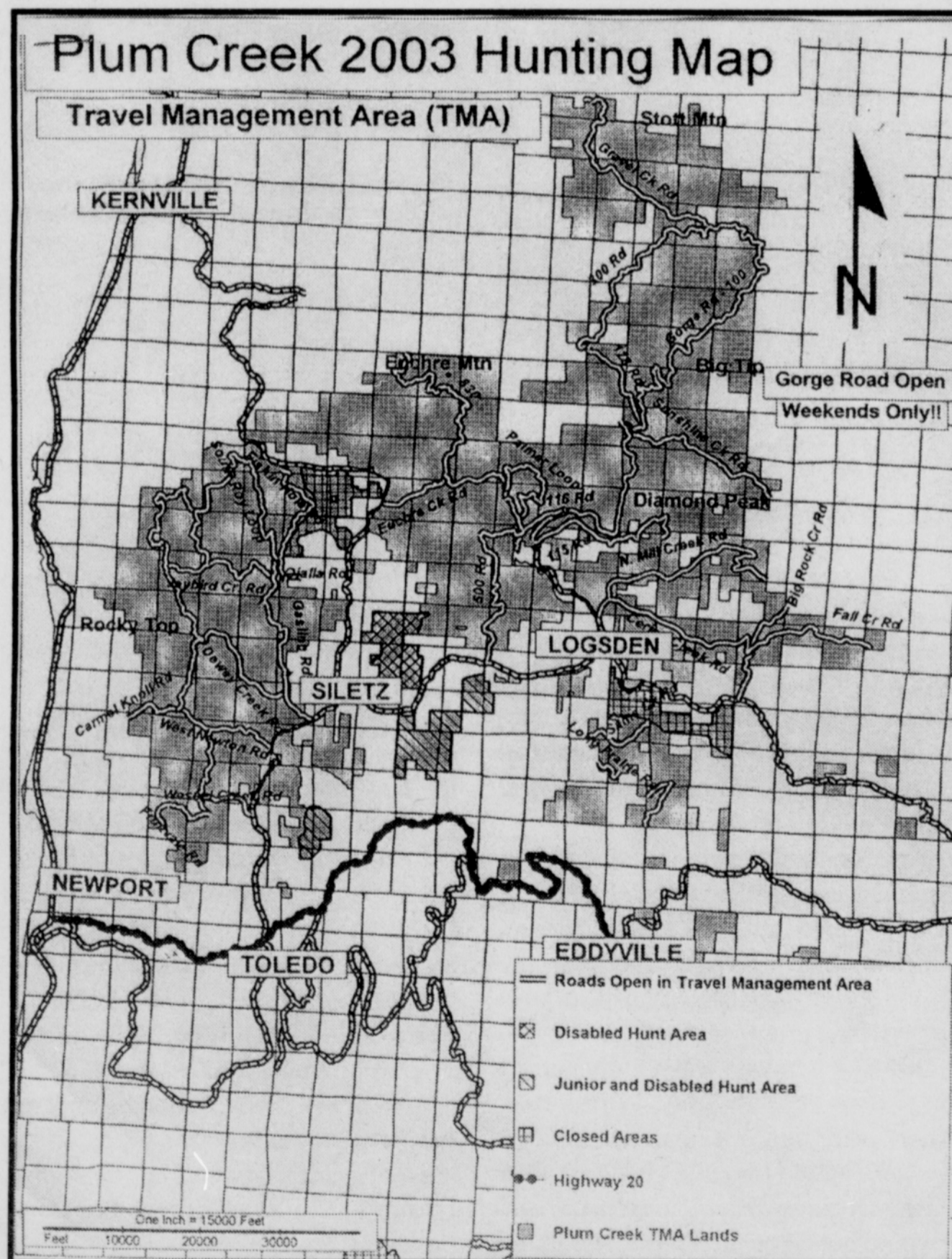
Please choose one of the following:

1. ___ Close all deer hunting in the Stott Mountain and Alsea units for at least one year, but not to exceed two years.
2. ___ Close antlerless deer hunting in the Stott Mountain and Alsea units for at least one year, but not to exceed three years.
3. ___ Shorten the deer hunting season in the Stott Mountain and Alsea units by at least two weeks.
4. ___ Leave deer hunting in the Stott Mountain and Alsea units the way it is.

The choices above will include archery hunting as well as rifle hunting. Please check **one** of the choices and

returning the survey either to me or to Frank Simmons by **Oct. 10, 2003**.

Thank you for your time and interest. Please return the survey to George F. Siniscal, 2043 Siletz River Highway, Lincoln City, OR 97367 or Frank Simmons, Natural Resources Dept., CTSI, P.O. Box 549, Siletz, OR 97380-0549.



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