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## Disease: Chronic wasting hitting too close to home

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resents perhaps the greatest threat to our big game because it has the potential to devastate our ungulate populations."

Ungulates are hooved animals.

The hunters association has been seriously concerned about preventing the disease's spread to wild game herds, Dungannon said.

The group advocates tight regulations on game ranching and has funded disease research and prevention across the state.

People hunting in states with CWD who harvest a deer, elk or moose may only bring back parts without spinal cord or brain tissue, such as antlers on a clean skullcap.

CWD is caused by a protein prion that damages the brain

of infected animals, causing progressive neurological disease and loss of body condition. It's untreatable and always fatal. It spreads through nose-to-nose contact between infected animals and through the animal's bodily fluids.

The disease lasts a long time in the environment, infecting new animals for decades.

It's one of the most devastating wildlife diseases today, said ODFW State Wildlife Veterinarian Colin Gillin.

"Once CWD enters a state and infects free-ranging deer and elk, it has been nearly impossible to eradicate with present day tools," he said. "We want to do all we can to keep Oregon CWD-free."

ODFW has monitored the state's wildlife for CWD for years and is increasing its

surveillance this year by asking hunters to have their deer or elk tested.

ODFW also asks taxidermists and game meat processors throughout the state to alert the agency or OSP if banned deer, elk or moose parts are brought to them from disease-positive states.

Anyone who sees or harvests a sick deer or elk should report it to the state Wildlife Health Lab at 866-968-2600.

Cases of CWD have occurred in Saskatchewan and Alberta, Canada, and in Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

## United Way's Gifts That Make a Difference is Saturday

United Way of Clatsop County sponsors Gifts That Make a Difference from noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9, in the McTavish Room at Liber-

ty Theater, 1203 Commercial St., Astoria.

The event gathers 30 non-profit groups, who will talk about their projects and of-

fer volunteer opportunities to participants.

Many organizations will have items for sale that support their agencies' missions along with end-of-the-year giving opportunities.

There will be music and refreshments provided by Astoria Women Executive Group and Thrivent Action Team.

For more information, call Jennifer Holen at 503-325-1961.

## Finns dish up lunch and more

A Finnish Midwinter Holiday Luncheon and Bake Sale is set for 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 14, at Suomi Hall, 244 W. Marine Drive, Astoria.

The lunch includes laksloida, meatballs, rieska and dessert. There will be Finnish baked goods for sale, a silent auction and music.

Admission is \$15 for adults and \$10 for 12 and younger.

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