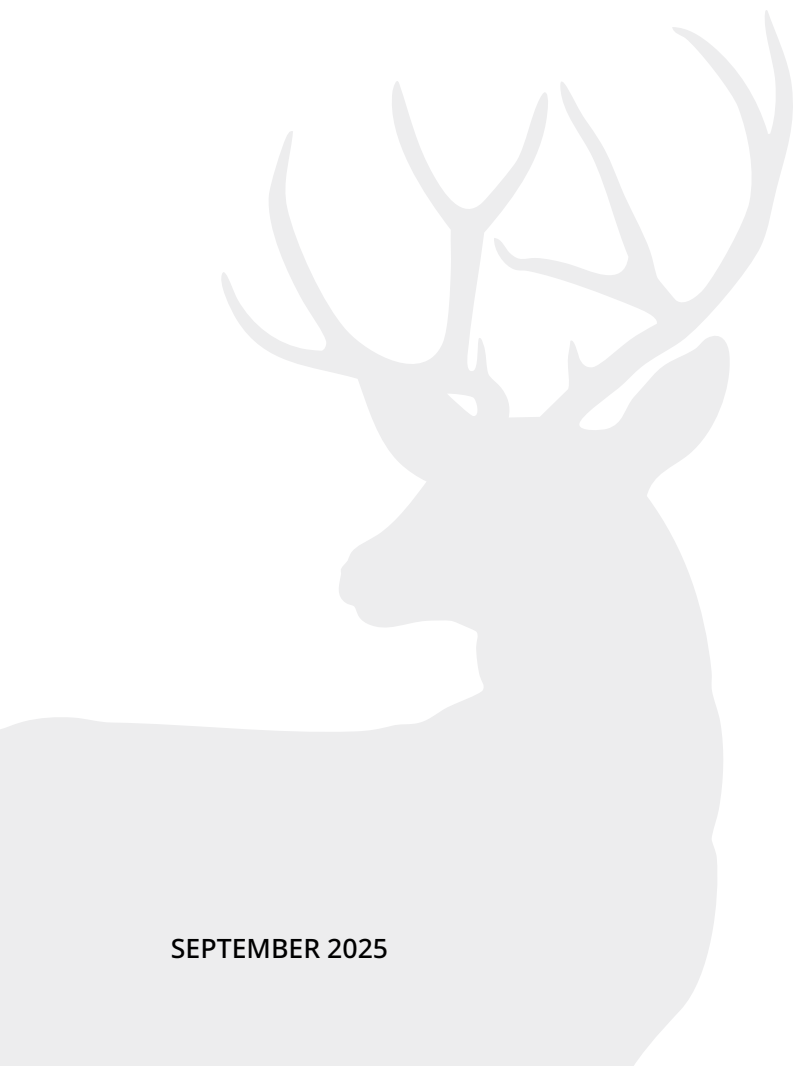


Chronic Wasting Disease Summary Report

Hunting Season 2024-2025



SEPTEMBER 2025



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Executive Summary

Manitoba made significant progress in its fight against Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) over the years. During the 2024–25 hunting season, the Wildlife Health Program tested a total of 3,007 cervids, including deer, elk, moose and caribou, with four samples (one mule deer and three white-tailed deer males) testing positive for CWD (0.13 per cent positive rate). All four cases were identified through hunter participation. Turnaround times for CWD results significantly improved, from 77 days in 2022–23 to only 22 days in 2024–25. This low positive rate and quick turnaround for test results highlight the success of Manitoba's proactive CWD surveillance and management.

Understanding the Threat: What is CWD?

CWD is a fatal and progressive neurological disease that affects cervids, including deer, elk, moose, and caribou. It is caused by prions, which are misfolded proteins that build up in the brain and other nervous tissues, gradually damaging nerve cells. As nerve damage advances, the animal shows symptoms that intensify over time, eventually resulting in death in every case. CWD is exceptionally difficult to control because once prions enter the environment, they can persist for years. Environmental contamination creates a long-lasting reservoir that can transmit CWD to deer (and other cervids) even in the absence of visibly sick animals.

Therefore, early detection and proactive management are essential for minimizing the potential negative impacts of CWD on cervid populations.

Current Status of CWD in Manitoba

Since 1997, Manitoba has taken a proactive approach to preventing and detecting CWD in wild cervids. The comprehensive program includes targeted surveillance, import restrictions on potentially infected animals or materials, and regulations to reduce high-risk practices like feeding and baiting.

Manitoba's first confirmed case of CWD was identified in November 2021, a symptomatic male mule deer near Dropmore, a town in western Manitoba, within Game Hunting Area (GHA) 22. A second case was detected in December 2021 near Coulter (GHA 28). Since then, 28 additional cases have been confirmed, bringing the total to 30 across six GHAs (18C, 22, 23, 27, 28, and 31). Figure 1 shows the distribution of CWD-positive cases by species and sex since 2021.

CWD Positive Cases

30 TOTAL CASES

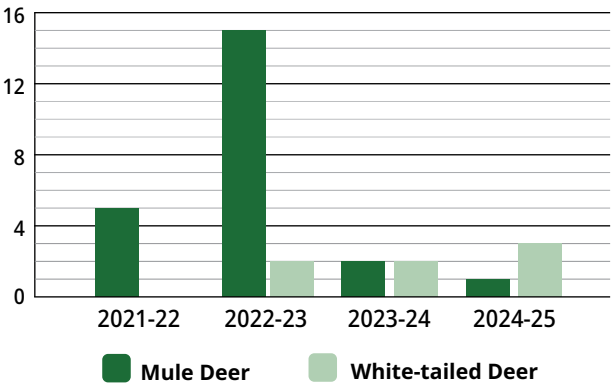


28 Males

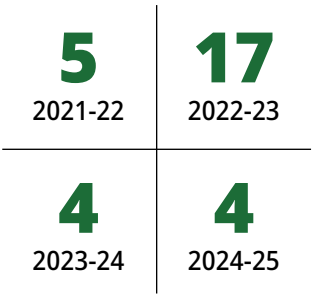


2 Females

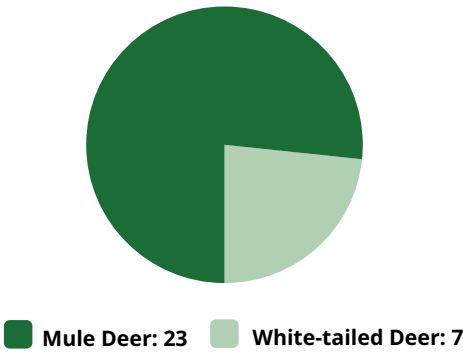
CWD Positive Cases by Season



Season Breakdown



Species Distribution



Sample Collection Methods



Key Statistics of CWD Positive Cervids

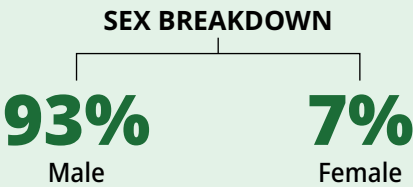
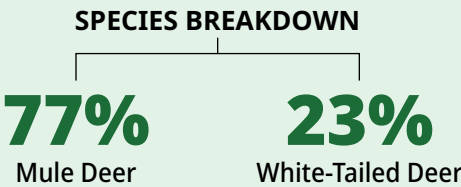


Figure 1. CWD Positive Cases Summary Dashboard (2021-25)

Hunters are Manitoba's Wildlife Heroes

Every hunter who submits a sample truly acts as a wildlife hero. In Manitoba, 83 per cent of all positive cases of CWD (25 out of 30) were identified through hunter participation (see Figure 1; sample collection method). Without hunter harvests, these infected animals might have gone undetected, potentially spreading disease throughout wild cervid herds. Hunters are not just harvesting game; they are harvesting hope for healthy wildlife cervid populations and saving the future of hunting. Licensed hunters who harvest mule deer, white-tailed deer, or elk within the CWD surveillance zone (GHAs 5, 6, 6A, 11, 12, 13, 13A, 18, 18A, 18B, 18C, 22, 23, 23A, 27, 28, 29, 29A, 30, 31, 31A, 32, 33, 35, and 35A; see Figure 2) are legally required to submit samples for testing within seven days. Sample Drop-off Depots are located throughout the province – see [Drop-Off Depot Locations](#).

Hunter participation helps the wildlife health team in early detection and gives them the chance to act promptly.

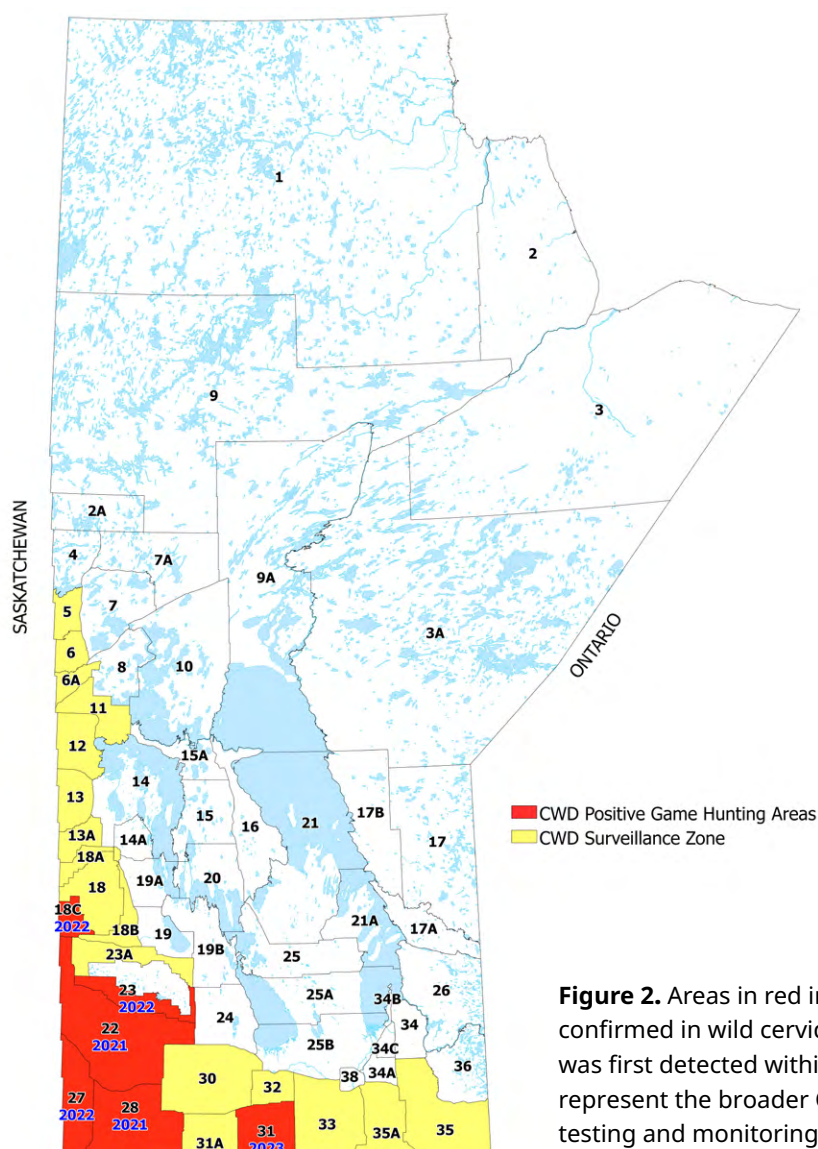


Figure 2. Areas in red indicate GHAs where CWD has been confirmed in wild cervids. Blue text indicates the year CWD was first detected within a positive GHA. Yellow zones represent the broader CWD Surveillance Zone, where ongoing testing and monitoring are in place.

2024-25 Hunting Season

In the 2024-25 hunting season, the Wildlife Health Program tested 3007 samples, bringing the number of wild cervids tested for CWD to 14,472 since 2021. The breakdown of the 3,007 samples was as follows:

- **White-tailed deer:** 2,756 (91.5%)
- **Elk:** 133 (4.4%)
- **Mule deer:** 69 (2.3%)
- **Moose:** 48 (1.6%)
- **Caribou:** 1 (0.03%)

Out of 3,007 samples tested, three white-tailed deer and one mule deer were positive for CWD, resulting in a positive rate of 0.13 per cent (see **Figure 3**).

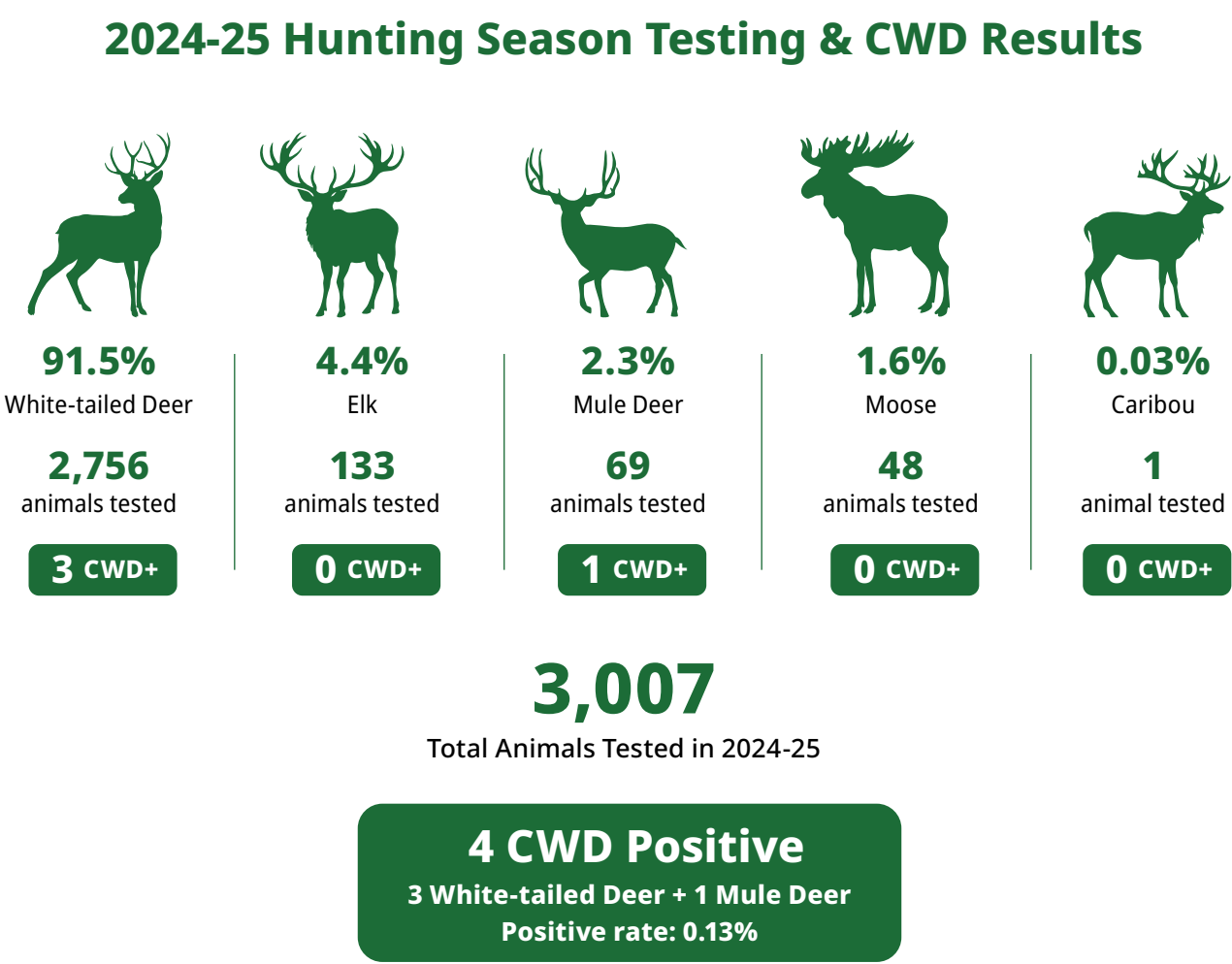


Figure 3. 2024-25 Hunting Season Testing and CWD Results

All four positive cases were found within 70 km of Coulter, MB, through hunter-harvest, highlighting the ongoing significance of hunter-based surveillance (see **Figure 4**).

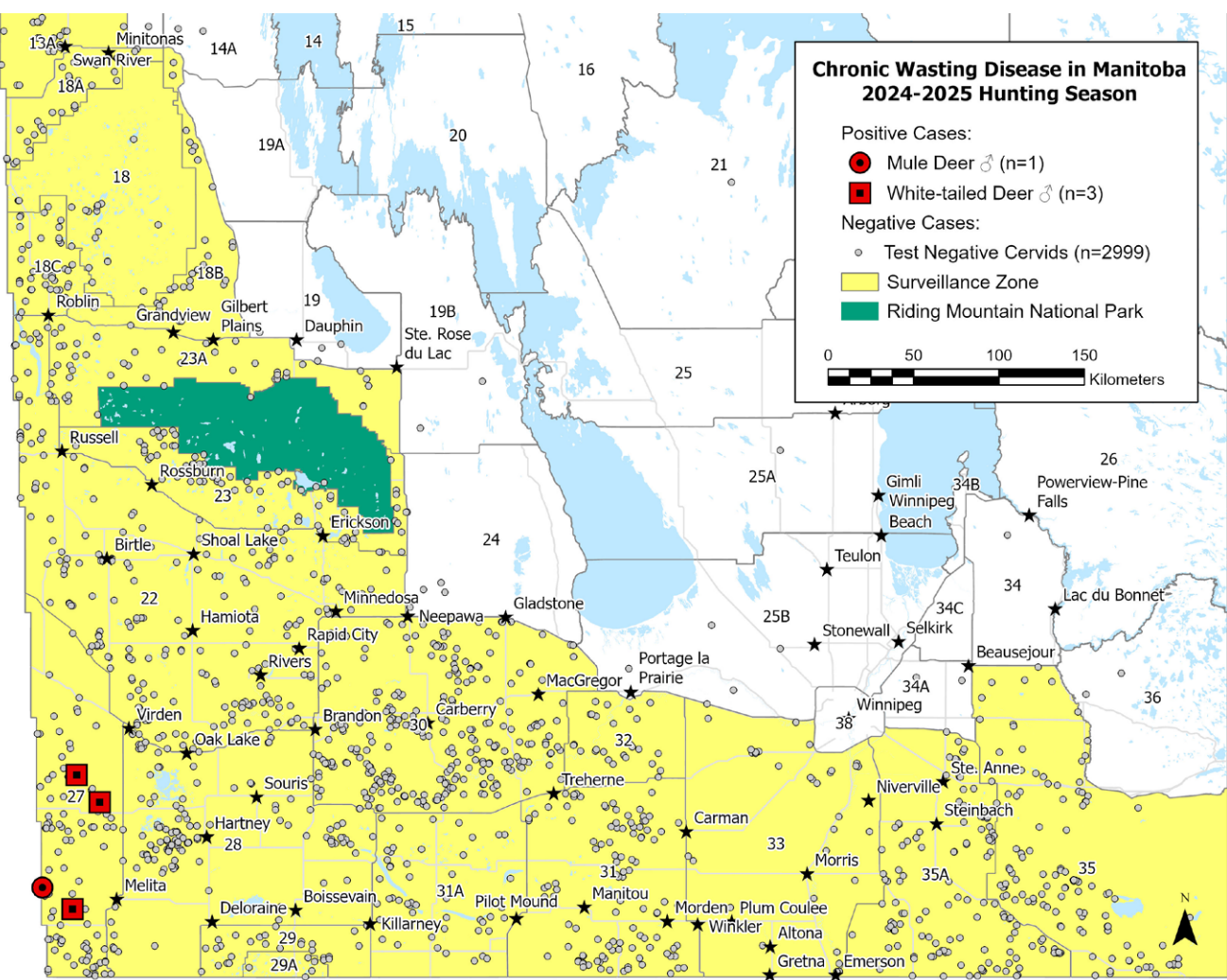


Figure 4. Map showing the distribution of CWD samples collected during the 2024–25 hunting season. Grey circles represent cervid samples that tested negative for CWD. CWD-positive samples are differentiated by species with a red circle for mule deer or a red square for white-tailed deer.

CWD Result Turnaround Time

The average turnaround time for CWD results has improved significantly over the years, approximately 22 days in the 2024-25 hunting season compared to 77 days in 2022-23 (see **Figure 5**). These faster turnaround times were possible due to improved laboratory systems and better logistics. Key contributors included:

- Hunters and taxidermists submission of extracted samples instead of entire cervid heads
- Manitoba Wildlife Federation associated Game and Fish Clubs assisting with the transportation of samples
- Barcoded sample tags for efficient tracking

Reporting Time Improvements 2022-23 to 2024-25

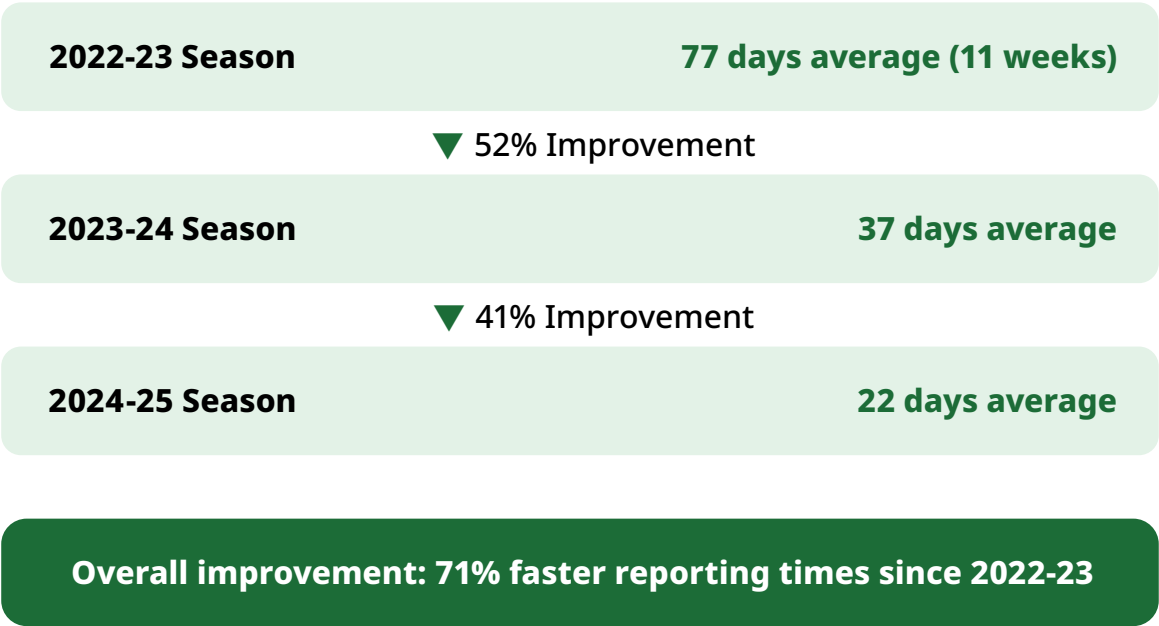


Figure 5. This figure displays the improvement in CWD test result turnaround times across three hunting seasons (2022-23 to 2024-25)

When hunters self-sample for CWD testing, it saves time and helps in faster CWD surveillance; your efforts truly make a difference. See the video on [Self-Sampling for CWD Testing](#).

Potential Improvements Under Consideration

The following initiatives are being considered to strengthen CWD surveillance, enhance response capacity, and improve communication with hunters:

- **Streamlined sample submission** through increased self-sampling (tissue and incisor collection), reducing the need to handle intact heads
- **Mail-in option** for biological samples to increase accessibility for hunters
- **Online platform** for sample submission and an interactive mapping tool to pinpoint locations
- **Enhanced digital communication** through faster data flow, more timely hunter updates, and improved access to CWD information via the CWD Dashboard

These changes are under review and will be implemented only after careful consultation and operational assessment. The goal is to further reduce processing delays, improve result turnaround times, and support hunters as key partners in CWD detection.

The Bottom Line

Manitoba's CWD surveillance program proves that early detection works when hunters and wildlife teams unite. With very low positive rates, rapid testing turnaround, and unwavering hunter participation, Manitoba is successfully monitoring and managing this disease threat.

Every sample submitted by hunters brings us closer to protecting the wildlife heritage we all value. Together, we are not just hunting; we are safeguarding Manitoba's wildlife future.