



Alaska Department of Fish and Game Updates

Testing for respiratory pathogens in Alaska's game animals

Attention Hunters

In response to initial detections of the bacteria *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* in Alaska Dall's sheep, mountain goats, moose, and caribou, ADF&G is expanding its efforts to screen additional animals. Please read the following information so you understand what actions are underway and how you can help collect valuable data for Alaska's wildlife.

What is *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*?

Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae (*M. ovi* is the unofficial shorthand term) is a bacterium that can lead to respiratory disease, including pneumonia, in susceptible ungulates. *M. ovi* does not affect humans.

Are Alaska's wildlife in danger?

The presence of *M. ovi*, or other respiratory pathogens, does not mean that an animal is diseased. *M. ovi* has been detected in healthy Dall's sheep as well as mountain goats, caribou and moose and associated with one caribou mortality. More research and monitoring is needed to determine if the *M. ovi* strains or other pathogens found in Alaska are similar to those in the Lower 48 that have been associated with high mortality events. More information and analyses are needed to characterize these pathogens and determine their potential impact on wildlife.

What is ADF&G doing about it?

The department is collecting samples to test for *M. ovi* and other respiratory pathogens from hooved wildlife in Alaska including: (1) taking samples from hunter harvested animals, (2) investigating dead and/or sick animals, (3) sampling animals captured for radio collar deployment during management or research projects, (4) establishing multi-year monitoring studies of specific sheep and goat populations to assess the impact of *M. ovi*, and (5) conducting research to improve future surveillance efforts for respiratory pathogens.

How you can help:

Successful hunters can help provide the department with harvest samples from:

Dall's sheep — Mountain goats — Muskoxen— Moose — Caribou from Nelchina and Fortymile herds

Please see the back of this flyer for specific information about target species and locations, and how you can help by bringing in the heads of harvested animals.

**Your personal information is not associated with the laboratory sample.*

For more in-depth information about *M. ovi* go to ADF&G's website and look under "Hot Topics and Issues." <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=hottopics.movi>



Hunters: below are the species and areas we are collecting samples from to test for respiratory pathogens, including *M. ovi*, as well as actions we are requesting from you. Please bring fresh (never frozen) samples as soon after harvest as possible (within 14 days).

DALL'S SHEEP

Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa to an ADF&G office within 14 days of harvest for sampling during sealing.

MOUNTAIN GOATS

Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa to an ADF&G office within 14 days of harvest for sampling when bringing in horns to be measured.

CARIBOU

Fortymile Herd (YC831, RC860, RC867)- Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa out of the field for sampling when ADF&G check stations are operating.

Nelchina Herd (RC561, RC562, CC001, DC485)- ADF&G staff will meet hunters along the Denali Highway to collect samples.

MUSKOXEN

Nelson Island- A decision on sampling hunter harvested animals will be made at a later date. Please check with ADF&G before your hunt.

Seward Peninsula (TX095, TX096, TX102, TX103)- Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa to the Nome ADF&G office for sampling.

SITKA BLACK-TAILED DEER

ADF&G staff will be sampling deer during field work. There is no request for hunter harvested heads for sampling unless respiratory disease is noted during field dressing.

DELTA BISON

Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa to the Delta ADF&G office for sampling.

What is intact nasal mucosa?

The mucosa is a type of tissue that lines the inside of the nasal cavity. Biologists insert swabs through the nostril deep into the nasal cavity. If the front of the head and nose of the animal is intact the nasal mucosa should provide a good sample providing the head is not rotten.

MOOSE

Region 1 Southeast

- *Haines (TM059)*- Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa out of the field for sampling when ADF&G check stations are operating.
- *Gustavus (RM049) and Petersburg (RM038)*- Please contact the Douglas ADF&G office to arrange for a staff person to meet you to collect samples.
- *Berners (DM041) and Taku River (RM046)*- Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa to the Douglas office.

Region 2 Southcentral

- *Roadkill salvage requirement*- Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa to an ADF&G office for sampling.
- *Unit 14C* – ADF&G will email a subset of hunters who received drawing permits to request heads for sampling.

Region 3 Interior/Northeast

- *Roadkill salvage request*- Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa to an ADF&G office for sampling.
- *Koyukuk check station*- Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa out of the field for sampling when ADF&G check stations are operating.
- *Unit 20D (DM790, DM791, and DM795)*- Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa to an ADF&G office.

Region 4 Central/Southwest

- *Roadkill salvage requirement for 14A/B and 13A*- Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa to an ADF&G office for sampling.
- *Unit 13 CM300 CSH hunt*- Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa to an ADF&G office for sampling.
- *Dillingham hunters*- Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa to the Dillingham ADF&G office for sampling.

Region 5 Northwest/Western

- *Bethel hunters*- Please bring heads with intact nasal mucosa to the Bethel ADF&G office for sampling.