

Sticking Their Noses in It - Ungulates Investigating Carrion in a CWD World (Poster)

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The recent arrival and spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in Montana permeates the thoughts of the hunting public and wildlife managers. Both communities share a concern for how hunters might play a role in either facilitating or limiting disease spread; live ungulates may contact infected carrion, either in the field post harvest or after transport and disposal by a hunter. We operate two camera-trap projects involving dead ungulates to study scavenger ecology. From winter of 2015 to present we have placed cameras on over 400 roadkill deer on private lands in the Bitterroot Valley to document marked eagles and other scavengers. We've also worked with hunters for two years placing cameras on gut piles in the field in many parts of Montana as well as Colorado and Wyoming. In addition to scavengers, we incidentally noticed a surprising number of ungulates investigating the carrion involved in both projects. This poster will share camera footage and documentation of how often this behavior occurs. We'll discuss our results in the context of potential CWD transmission and spread and managing hunter behavior in disposal of gut piles, carcasses, and butchering scraps.