



California
Fish and Game Commission
Celebrating 150 Years!



California
Wildlife Conservation Board

Public Records Act Request Support Center

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FAQs

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How does the Public Records Act process work generally using the GovQA system?

How may the public obtain access to a public record?

Request Type: Public Records Act Request
Reference No: R017303-092125
Contact E-Mail: [REDACTED]
Message: *

Attach a File:

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or Drop a file here

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Messages 5

✓ On 10/22/2025 8:45:36 AM, Jeff Burt wrote:

TO: "CALIFORNIADFW Support"[californiadfw@govqa.us]
 Dear William Schmelter, Thank you for providing this response from CDFW in which they state:
 CDFW has not done any research on the transmission of CWD, instead we rely on the significant body of scientific evidence and literature on CWD
 I request the scientific evidence that CDFW is relying on to make the claim, "CWD spreads to cervids through contact with infected animals..." which is a statement on the CDFW website. I am hopeful that there does exist a reference to a scientific study (not a reference to a statement from CDC, not a reference to a CWD surveillance program, neither of which are scientific studies) supporting that assertion that CWD spreads through contact. In the CDFW response you provided, it is stated that they rely on "scientific evidence" (that CWD is contagious or transmissible), which is precisely what I am requesting. I have reviewed the links that were offered and unfortunately cannot find a scientific study within those links. Could you please help me in my search for the scientific evidence that CDFW relies on to assert that CWD is contagious?
 Sincerely, Jeffrey Burt

On Tue, Oct 21, 2025 at 5:17 PM CALIFORNIADFW Support wrote:

✓ On 10/21/2025 5:17:08 PM, CALIFORNIADFW Support wrote:

Subject: [Records Center] Public Records Act Request :: R017303-092125
Body:

RE: PUBLIC RECORDS ACT REQUEST of September 21, 2025, Reference # R017303-092125

Dear Jeff Burt,

This letter is in response to the above-referenced PRA request that you submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

CDFW has conducted a thorough and diligent search of its records and determined that it does not possess records responsive to your request. However, CDFW compiled information from external sources for your review in the note below:

CDFW has not done any research on the transmission of CWD, instead we rely on the significant body of scientific evidence and literature on CWD and other prion disease produced by numerous researchers since at least the 1960s. A review of "State of Knowledge Regarding Transmission, Spread, and Management of Chronic Wasting Disease in U.S. Captive and Free-ranging Cervids Populations" was recently completed by The National Academies of Sciences. From their website "In 2020, Congress passed America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act (P.L. 116-188), directing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to lead a task force for addressing CWD in the United States drawing on a study commissioned from the National Academies. This report will assist the task force in prioritizing research and developing future CWD management strategies. It describes the state of knowledge regarding how CWD is transmitted among cervids, the current distribution of disease outbreaks, and the effectiveness of current diagnostic, prevention, and control methods available to limit the spread of the disease." This report is the most recent and comprehensive review of the transmission, spread and management of CWD in the U.S. and an excellent resource to provide this requestor. It can be found here - <https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/review-of-transmission-and-geographic-spread-of-chronic-wasting-disease-in-us-cervid-populations>. Numerous other published reports and reviews are available online as well. Finally, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - <https://www.cdc.gov/chronic-wasting/animals/index.html> - provides a general overview of CWD.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please feel free to contact us by responding to this message.

Sincerely,

William Schmelter
Attorney

Office of General Counsel

On 9/26/2025 7:35:08 AM, CALIFORNIACDFW Support wrote:

Subject: [Records Center] Public Records Act Request :: R017303-092125

Body:

RE: PUBLIC RECORDS ACT REQUEST of September 21, 2025, Reference # R017303-092125

Dear Jeff Burt,

This letter is in response to the above-referenced request you submitted to the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) pursuant to the Public Records Act (PRA) (Govt. Code, §7920.000 et seq.) on September 21, 2025.

The Department is initiating a search for records responsive to your request and will make available for inspection or provide copies of all responsive records, if any, that it is able to locate through reasonable efforts and that are not privileged or exempt from disclosure pursuant to the PRA or other applicable law. The Department will seek to make such records available as soon as reasonably possible. In the event the Department will be unable to make the records available within 90 days of your initial request, we will contact you to discuss the matter.

The PRA requires disclosure of existing records in the possession, custody, or control of a public agency. If the Department locates existing records responsive to your request, Department staff will assemble the disclosable records. You may elect to receive copies of the records or to inspect them in person:

If you chose to receive copies electronically, documents maintained in electronic format will be transmitted electronically whenever possible through the PRA Records Center.

If the Department needs to deliver hard copies, you will be charged a copying fee of \$.15 per page. The Department will notify you of the total cost prior to mailing the records. Please note the Department cannot waive or reduce these fees and costs for any reason. Once staff are able to return to their offices to make and send the copies, they will be sent to you.

If you chose to inspect the records in person, you will be notified of the availability of the records for inspection.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact us and reference PRA No. R017303-092125. You may also call (916) 654-3821.

Sincerely,

Carla R. Foreman
Senior Legal Analyst

✓ On 9/21/2025 6:35:41 PM, CALIFORNIADFW Support wrote:



Dear Jeff Burt:

Thank you for your interest in public records of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fish and Game Commission, or Wildlife Conservation Board. Your request has been received and is being processed in accordance with the California Public Records Act, Government Code section 7920.000 et seq. Your request was received in this office on 9/21/2025 and given the reference number R017303-092125 for tracking purposes.

Records Requested: "Chronic wasting disease" (CWD) is said to spread to healthy animals by contact with infected animals. I request a scientific study that has demonstrated contagion or transmission of CWD. The study (any study) requested should obviously adhere to the scientific method, using natural exposure methods, and using valid controls. To summarize the request, please provide a study that demonstrates that CWD is contagious.

Your request will be forwarded to the relevant regions and/or programs to locate records and to determine the volume and any costs associated with satisfying your request. You will be contacted about the availability of the records in question. PLEASE NOTE: The Public Records Act does not require a governmental body to create new records, to do legal research, or to answer questions.

You can monitor the progress of your request at the link below and you'll receive an email when your request has been completed. Again, thank you for using CDFW's Records Center.

To monitor the progress or update this request please log into the [Public Records Center](#)



✓ ☒ On 9/21/2025 6:35:39 PM, Jeff Burt wrote:
Request Created on Public Portal

From: Jeffrey Burt [REDACTED]
Date: Tue, Nov 4, 2025 at 5:55 PM
Subject: Re: CWD Research Request
To: Wildlife Chronic Wasting Disease <cwd@wildlife.ca.gov>

Thank you for the additional information. To be 100% clear, I originally requested from CDFW via FOIA any study from any year from anywhere in the world that has demonstrated that chronic wasting disease is contagious. If the science upon which CDFW basis its policy does not exist, then it seems awkward that CDFW would claim that they are basing their policy on science. If there is a study that has demonstrated that CWD is contagious, then I am requesting that study. If there are no studies available to CDFW that demonstrates the contagious nature of CWD, then CDFW is basing its policies, and its assertions that CWD is contagious, upon no science. If this is in fact the case, could you please state clearly that the policies and statements from CDFW are not based on science but rather upon heresy. Thank you so much for your help on this very important issue.

Jeff
Jeffrey Burt
Tel [REDACTED]

On Fri, Oct 31, 2025 at 2:17 PM Wildlife Chronic Wasting Disease <cwd@wildlife.ca.gov> wrote:

Hi Jeffery,

Thank you for contacting us.

Unfortunately, CDFW itself does not hold the following material that you requested: GRIFFITH, J. Nature of the Scrapie Agent: Self-replication and Scrapie. *Nature* **215**, 1043–1044 (1967). <https://doi.org/10.1038/2151043a0>. However, there are other ways to access this material and other materials that are not held by CDFW.

First, you can purchase access to the article through the journal's website.

Second, you can seek access to this journal through a library. University libraries can provide access to these scientific papers, sometimes for free or for a small fee. To find if a university library near you holds physical copies of the back issue that you are hoping to find, consult WorldCat.org or try calling or emailing a university library near you. Universities often can issue day passes or access to their stacks for a small fee, which would allow you to locate a physical copy of the publication. You may also be able to access an electronic copy of the paper through a computer at a university library that holds a subscription to this journal. If you have further questions, you can ask a librarian, who are skilled professionals trained to help people like you with this exact kind of problem.

I wish you success in finding this article, and we are sorry that we do not hold a copy of the article here at CDFW.

Chronic Wasting Disease Team
Wildlife Health Laboratory
California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

wildlife.ca.gov/CWD

8:24

LTE 67

 Voicemail

Transcription

"Hey Jeffrey, this is CFW giving you a call back. I understand that you had a question about the chronic wasting disease was infectious. That's a really good question. I'm just gonna tell you really quickly as public health and wildlife management state agencies like ours rely on broader scientific consensus established through you know your reviewed research rather than conducting every study ourselves. I believe we sent you a link to academies of science. And this could give you a really good idea of the broader research happening with crayon disease diseases, such as chronic disease, but feel free to give us a call back and I can further explain some of this. Thank you so much bye..."

Was this transcription [useful](#) or [not useful](#)?



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