

Frequently asked questions:

2018-2019

Elk Herd Management Program

at CFB Suffield

- A daily participation limit has been established at a maximum of 125 hunters per day during the designated hunt dates (listed below).
- Indigenous hunters will be required to pre-register for access to CFB Suffield during hunt seasons. To register, please email: SUFHRP@forces.gc.ca.
- All participants must attend a daily safety briefing at the CFB Suffield Recreation Centre in Ralston, Alta. which takes place at 6:45 a.m. each day of the hunt. Doors open at 6:00 a.m.
- All hunters must be inside the CFB Suffield Recreation Centre no later than 6:30 a.m. daily.
- All participants must be off the Range and Training Area by no later than 6:00 p.m. Not complying with this timing could result in a ban for the remainder of the EHMP 2018 to 2019 season.
- All hunters and helpers must be at least 18 years of age or older. Hunters are limited to two helpers. *No one under the age of 18* will be granted access to the Range and Training Area (government-issued photo identification required).

What is the Elk Herd Management Program at CFB Suffield?

In 2012, an Elk Herd Reduction Program was implemented by the Government of Alberta. Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Suffield has supported the province's efforts to reduce the elk population by granting access to the base for an annual hunt. As of 2017, this provincially run hunt continues as the Elk Herd Management Program (EHMP) at CFB Suffield.

Why is there an elk hunt at CFB Suffield?

An elk herd was re-introduced at CFB Suffield in 1997. From a population of about 200 elk in 1997, the population grew to more than 7,000 by 2014. Because there are few predators in the area of CFB Suffield, without hunting, this

population was projected to increase by more than 20 per cent annually. The EHMP aims to reduce the number of elk in CFB Suffield's Range and Training Area.

When is the EHMP at CFB Suffield?

This year's EHMP will take place from November 12, 2018 to January 24, 2019.

The schedule for the hunt is as follows:

- Week 1 – November 12 to 15, 2018
- Week 2 – November 19 to 22, 2018
- Week 3 – November 26 to 29, 2018
- Week 4 – January 7 to 10, 2019
- Week 5 – January 14 to 17, 2019
- Week 6 – January 21 to 24, 2019

How do I contact Alberta Environment and Parks or CFB Suffield?

To contact Alberta Environment and Parks:

- **Email:** AEP.Info-Centre@gov.ab.ca
- **Toll Free:** 1-877-944-0313

To contact CFB Suffield regarding the EHMP:

- **Email:** SUFEHRP@forces.gc.ca
- **Phone:** 403-544-5555

Who can participate in the EHMP at CFB Suffield?

- Hunters aged 18 and older who have applied for and successfully been drawn for the EHMP tags. All hunting tags must be acquired through the Government of Alberta. CFB Suffield does not issue hunting tags. For more information, see My Wild Alberta at: <https://mywildalberta.ca/>
- First Nations hunters aged 18 and older, who have pre-registered with CFB Suffield, will be granted access on an availability basis to the EHMP through a registration process. First Nations hunters must submit their request to hunt and register with CFB Suffield in advance by contacting the following email address: SUFEHRP@forces.gc.ca
- Each hunter will be booked into specific dates and times in order to distribute participation across the entire hunt period for safety reasons.

What First Nation Communities are eligible to hunt during the EHMP?

- First Nations members, aged 18 and older, who are recognized by the Province of Alberta's regulations and laws to be eligible for hunting in southeastern Alberta will be eligible to register to hunt during the EHMP.
- Members of indigenous communities that are not recognized by the provincial regulations to hunt in southeastern Alberta will not be granted access to the range by CFB Suffield unless they are in possession of EHMP tags or provincial regulations are amended to grant further

eligibility.

- CFB Suffield does not determine First Nations eligibility and shall adhere to provincial law with respect to wildlife management.

Where does the hunt take place?

Hunters will be granted access to parts of CFB Suffield's Range and Training Area on a daily basis after attending the mandatory morning safety briefing.

CFB Suffield is located five kilometres north of the Trans-Canada Highway along Highway 884. It is approximately 50 kilometres away from the City of Medicine Hat. [View map](#)

Some sections of the Range and Training Area will be restricted for safety reasons. The number of participants who are authorized access to the base can vary daily based on the weather conditions and other safety considerations.

Are there other conditions that must be adhered to when participating in the EHMP at CFB Suffield?

All participants must submit a waiver at the morning safety briefing. This will be provided upon entry prior to the briefing. There is no requirement to submit paperwork in advance.

All hunters are required to have the following items in their possession:

- A charged cellphone with them at all times.
- Blaze hunter orange or equivalent visible clothing must be worn at all times when outside of vehicle while on the range.
- Hunters must ensure they have sufficient fuel for their day's activities.
 - The CANEX gas station at the base now has regular, premium and diesel fuels available.
- Registered rifles: All commonly used rifle calibres including, *but not limited to*, the following are accepted on the range:
 - .338 Winchester;
 - .300 Winchester Magnum;
 - .340 Weatherby; and
 - .30-06 Springfield

Large calibre weapons, such as the .338 Lapua or higher, will not be authorized to be brought on the range due to safety requirements.

- Documentation required:
 - Government-issued photo identification.
 - For provincially registered hunters: elk hunting license and hunting tags.
 - For First Nations hunters: Government-issued Secure Certificate of Indian Status Card.
 - Vehicle registration and proof of insurance.
 - All hunters must have their Possession and Acquisition Licence

(PAL) for firearms.

What is required to hunt in the CFB Suffield National Wildlife Area (NWA)?

Access to the CFB Suffield NWA will be granted through a draw each morning prior to the safety briefing.

Some additional equipment is mandatory to have for hunting in the CFB Suffield NWA. Hunters must be accompanied by at least one helper to hunt in the NWA.

The following equipment is required:

- Handheld GPS or compass,
- Flashlight,
- A method of animal retrieval, such as a game hunting cart, is recommended.

The NWA is a walk-in and walk-out area where no vehicles are permitted off road.

What is not permitted on the base?

- There is a zero-tolerance policy for drug or alcohol use or possession in the Range and Training Area. All drugs, cannabis and alcohol will be confiscated and disposed of by the Military Police. If a participant is found to be in possession of these items, they and their hunting party will be banned immediately.
- No photography or videography is allowed.
- Speeding will not be tolerated.
- CFB Suffield is a controlled airspace, and therefore, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs or drones) are not permitted.
- Base personnel are not able to assist with the recovery of a disabled vehicle during the EHMP. In the event that a vehicle gets stuck or breaks down, towing and recovery will be an owner's responsibility. Most towing companies can be called out to the Range and Training Area, but they will need to be escorted by Range Control personnel.
- Base personnel will not assist with animal retrieval.

What types of vehicles are permitted?

- A pass must be issued to each vehicle that enters the base. Four-wheel drive, pick-up trucks and SUVs are strongly recommended.
- All-terrain vehicles (quads, four-wheelers, snowmobiles, etc.) are *not* permitted in the Range and Training Area.
- Light cargo trailers are permitted for the transport and storage of harvested animals.

What hunters involved in the EHMP at CFB Suffield should know about Bovine Tuberculosis

What is Bovine Tuberculosis?

Bovine tuberculosis (bovine TB) is a bacteria that can occur in some wildlife species, including free-ranging elk.

The bacteria generally are associated with thick yellow pus, either in lungs or lymph nodes. Internally, small round tubercles ("pearls") may be found in the lungs, liver, kidneys, or lymph nodes, or in the lining of the ribcage.

Is there a risk from Bovine Tuberculosis at CFB Suffield?

Although various species are susceptible, bovine TB is a rare disease in wild populations. The original elk on CFB Suffield were translocated from Elk Island National Park in the late 1990s, and all animals relocated from the park were tested for bovine TB and found to be disease free.

Bovine TB can infect humans, but the disease does not readily transfer to people.

How should hunters deal with the threat of Bovine Tuberculosis?

The morning safety briefing covers information about how to deal with an animal when you suspect that it may have been infected with bovine TB.

For information on how to safely deal with bovine TB, see the My Wild Alberta website:

- Bovine Tuberculosis and Hunters
<https://mywildalberta.ca/hunting/safety-procedures/bovine-tuberculosis-and-hunters.aspx>

As a precaution, wear waterproof gloves whenever you handle the internal tissues of your harvested animal. Wash your hands, knives and clothes in warm, soapy water. Cook meat well, until the juices run clear.

If there is bovine TB present, smoking, freezing or drying meat will not destroy the bacteria. Cook meat well. For more information about bovine TB, visit the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) website at:

- Bovine Tuberculosis
<http://inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/tuberculosis/eng/1330205978967/1330206128556>

Chronic Wasting Disease at the EHMP at CFB Suffield

What is Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)?

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a transmissible, degenerative brain disease that affects mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, moose and reindeer.

As of 2018, CWD has only been found in members of the deer family (Cervids). It is fatal in all cases; there is no treatment or vaccine.

For more information on CWD, visit the Alberta Environment and Parks website at:

- Chronic Wasting Disease – Information for Hunters
<http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/fishing-hunting-trapping/hunting-alberta/chronic-wasting-disease.aspx>

How is CWD transmitted?

It is not known exactly how CWD is transmitted. CWD is a prion disease, which means it is caused by an abnormal protein, which may be passed laterally from animal to animal through saliva, urine or feces. In Alberta, it appears to affect male mule deer more often than other animals.

Because CWD infectious agents are extremely resistant in the environment, transmission may be both direct and indirect.

Is there CWD in the elk herd near CFB Suffield?

More than 2,100 elk heads over the course of the past five years have been sampled from the herd. In 2016 and 2017, CWD was confirmed in one male and one female elk, respectively from the CFB Suffield herd. Since there is no deer hunting at the base, it has not been possible to test the deer that are on the CFB Suffield Range Training Area, but the disease is well-established in nearby herds.

How can hunters help the CWD monitoring program?

Hunters play an important role in Alberta's CWD monitoring by submitting heads of harvested elk for CWD testing. Depending on where in Alberta you are hunting, elk head submission for CWD testing is either mandatory or voluntary. Be familiar with the CWD testing requirements for the area in which you are hunting.

Submission of elk heads from CFB Suffield in to 2018 to 2019 season is encouraged but is NOT required.

How do I submit heads for testing at CFB Suffield?

There will be a station set up at the Range Control Office (Building #604), where hunters exit the Range and Training Area, for the voluntary submission of heads for scientific testing to track Chronic Wasting Disease. It is not a requirement to submit an animal head for testing. For provincial biologists to acquire an accurate sample size, voluntary submissions are strongly encouraged whenever possible.

How do I make sure an animal can be tested?

- If possible, please do not shoot elk in the head, as this can damage the lymph nodes and brain samples needed for testing. A usable sample consists of the entire head but you can remove the antlers and skull plate and not damage the required tissues.
- Please remove the neck just behind the head – so the head takes up much less space in the freezer.
- Do not remove and submit only the brain.

How do I find out the results for a head I submitted?

All hunters are encouraged to visit AlbertaRELM.com to view their CWD test results. When your results are available, a message will be sent to the email address in your AlbertaRELM account.

As in previous years, if there is a positive result, the hunter who submitted the head will be contacted directly by phone.

Why does Alberta test for CWD?

The ongoing surveillance program shows a steady increase and expanding geographic spread of CWD in local deer populations. This information has important implications for long-term deer management. It also provides information useful to hunters as well as to Alberta Agriculture and Forestry in regards to their programs involving farmed elk and deer.

Is there a public health risk?

This disease poses significant economic concerns for farmers of elk and deer, but there has never been a recorded case of the disease infecting a human.

Some experiments have shown that the CWD pathogen might be able to infect human tissue. If an animal is confirmed to have CWD, it is recommended that you do not eat the animal. For additional information please contact AEP or Alberta Health.

How rare is CWD in Alberta?

During the 2017-2018 hunting seasons, the province conducted tests on more than 6,300 heads of wild deer, elk and moose. The disease continues to increase in deer herds in eastern Alberta, and is spreading further westward into central regions.

The proportion of infected deer remains low (5.2 per cent), but is considerably higher in mule deer (8.2 per cent).

The total number of CWD cases detected in wild deer in Alberta since September 2005 is 919.