

Specimen Submission Guidelines

What to Submit:

The Wildlife Health Program collects information and tests wildlife to ensure that DEC can detect and respond promptly to wildlife disease issues. We prioritize examining cases most likely to have infectious diseases or toxin exposures. These situations will often show up as unusual mortality events with multiple animals affected in a short time period or limited geographic area. However, single animals of certain species (deer) or with particular clinical problems may also be of interest. The chart on the next page can be used as a quick reference. When in doubt, always call to discuss. We're happy to talk.

Refrigeration vs. Freezing:

Specimens that will be shipped or transported within about 48 hours should be kept refrigerated. If it takes longer than 2-3 days for transport, freezing animals or samples will help preserve them for testing. Carcasses with active maggots should be frozen.

Specimen packaging:

Wildlife carcasses, parts, and samples need to be packaged well to prevent leakage that can expose handlers to diseases. At a minimum, carcasses the size of a raccoon, fox, or smaller should be individually bagged in two separate 3 or 4 mil plastic bags with the open end twisted and tied in a tight knot. Beaks, teeth, and claws will puncture the bags; tucking the beak of a bird under the wing or strategically positioning the feet prior to bagging may help alleviate bag punctures. If available, the absorbent pads used for CWD tissue extraction or layers of newspaper or other absorbent paper will help prevent beak and claw punctures and will also absorb body fluids.

Carcasses larger than fox or raccoon should be bagged in suitable sized 3 to 6 mil plastic bags with enough room to close the bag with twist and knot or twist and secure with duct tape. Large 4 X 8' 6 mil bags have been provided to the Regions for CWD clinical deer and should be used for all deer carcasses. Bag all carcasses. When transporting by truck, use the blue plastic mortar mixing tubs or deer sleds to contain any fluids from leaking bags. All bags will eventually leak, especially if the carcass is frozen, so use as many bags as necessary. When shipping carcasses, include a copy of the submission form in a separate plastic bag inside the box, but outside of the specimen bag.

Notification:

Delivering samples in person? **Notify** staff at the location (Delmar, Cornell, or Duck Lab) that you are inbound with specimens at least 1 hour before you arrive. Email is the easiest. Attach the submission PDFs that you get when you submit online. You will receive a response confirming the delivery request.

Shipping samples via FedEx/UPS? Be sure to email about incoming shipments whenever possible.

Multiple specimens (more than 5 unrelated cases)? Contact staff at the location **before** the day of shipment or delivery. Confirm day/time delivery will occur as facilities need to plan ahead to receive multiple specimens. Do not deliver without a confirmation email from the location. Email is preferred with copies of submission forms prior to specimen delivery.

Contact Information:

Cornell (email notification preferred):

Krysten Schuler	ks833@cornell.edu	607-253-3629
Jenny Bloodgood	jcb469@cornell.edu	607-253-3534
Melissa Fadden*	mf766@cornell.edu	607-253-3134

Delmar (email notification preferred):

Kevin Hynes	kevin.hynes@dec.ny.gov	518-478-3034
Landon Miller	landon.miller@dec.ny.gov	518-478-7827
Therese McNamee	therese.mcnamee@dec.ny.gov	518-478-3046
General email*	wildlifehealth@dec.ny.gov	

*Primary contact for specimen submission

Categories of Interest for Wildlife Specimens

<i>Submission Category</i>	<i>Species</i>
<i>Routinely of interest</i>	Unusual patterns of mortality (out of season, multiple species or animals involved)
	More than single animal found dead in small area or short time
	White-Tailed Deer
	Bald or Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcons
	Raptors
	Loons, Swans, Ravens, Avian Vagrants
	Banded wildlife
	Species of Special Concern, Endangered or Threatened Species
	Bobcat, Otter, Fisher, Weasels, Mink
	All reptiles, salamanders, and frogs
	Exotic or captive species (may need prior approval)
<i>Possibly of interest</i>	Single animals found dead
	Neurologic birds and mammals
<i>Not of interest</i>	Window strikes or cat attacks of common bird species
	Banded racing/homing pigeons
	Common roadkill animals
	Domestic animals
	Common species of newborn/nestling animals

Guidelines for Bagging & Shipping Specimens

- Fill out the online submission form (<https://nwdc.wildlifesubmissions.org/>).
- Be sure to PRINT form and place a printed copy in a Ziploc bag and seal. Tape to the inside lid of the shipping container. You will also get a copy in your email once you hit the SUBMIT button.
- Remember to email/phone the location you are sending/delivering the specimen to.
- Place each tagged carcass in an individual plastic bag. Arrange claws, beaks, and teeth to minimize bag punctures. Close and seal the bag.
 - Cover sealed zipper bag openings with tape (duct or strapping).
 - Twist non-zipper bags closed, tie, and fold over on itself. Secure with tape.
- Place the first bag inside a **second** bag, close and seal. More than 1 bagged animal can be put inside the second bag. Add absorbent materials (absorbent pads supplied for CWD tissue extraction, disposable diapers, paper towels, newspapers) to the inside of the second bag to soak up liquids and pad the carcasses.
- Large carcass bags (4x8 6 mil) have been provided to Regions and can be used for bigger carcasses, such as CWD-suspect deer.
- Line a cooler with a third bag and place frozen ice packs (**NOT ice cubes or dry ice**) in the bottom of the bag. Use enough to keep the carcass cool.
 - Ice packs can be obtained from hardware, sporting goods, or grocery stores.
 - Frozen water can be used if sealed in a plastic container (soda/water bottle)
- Seal the third bag and tape the end shut.
- Tape cooler shut (packing, strapping, or duct tape) with a continuous wrap around the cooler lid and a wrap at each end. Coolers should be encased in a cardboard box to save extra shipping fees. Plastic picnic coolers will be disinfected and returned.

Shipping to WHU or Cornell University

Two labels must be affixed to every cooler:

1. Use the appropriate shipping label for either WHU or Cornell.
2. Coolers must also have a **UN 3373, BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE, CATEGORY B** label attached to show they are biological specimens (see page 4).

Shipping Addresses:

Specimen Delivery
NYSDEC Wildlife Health Unit
108 Game Farm Road
Delmar, NY 12054

Animal Health Diagnostic Center
ATTN: Wildlife Health Lab
Cornell University - CVM
240 Farrier Road
Ithaca NY, 14853

Label for Biological Specimens

Category B: Shipping Label for Biological Substances

The label below should print with the proper dimension of an Infectious Substance label (minimum dimensions: 50 mm on a side, and the proper shipping name, “Biological Substance, Category B” must be in letters at least 6 mm high).

Affix the label to the package by covering it with clear plastic tape, so that moisture will not cause printer ink to run.

