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(Wyo.)-Lichen Kills Elk Near Wamsutter, Hunters Encouraged To Report

By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 10/04/2012 09:20 AM

CASPER, Wyo. (AP) - State wildlife officials say a cow elk found dead near Wamsutter last month died from lichen poisoning.

The news prompted officials to warn hunters this fall not to shoot elk that appear weak or paralyzed.

Lichen poisoning causes elk to be paralyzed, and they typically die of starvation or predation. Officials do not know what in the lichen causes paralysis in elk or whether there are possible health effects from eating elk infected with lichen.

State Game and Fish officials are asking people to report any elk that look sick or are behaving suspiciously.

Lichen poisoning has been a problem in Wyoming elk in the past. More than 500 elk died from lichen in the 2004 and 2008 winters.