

Guidance to Prevent Human Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to Wildlife
Trappers, WCOs, Hunters
12 August 2021 – Final

Rationale: While handling or in close proximity to wildlife, humans infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID19, may expose susceptible animals to this virus. Should the virus transmit to a wild animal, it could become established in the wild, with unpredictable impacts on affected populations. Further, sustained spread of SARS-CoV-2 in the wild could lead to further mutations of the virus and increase the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission back to humans.

To date, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has tested 24 mustelids (weasel family) on intake to permitted wildlife rehabilitation facilities for SARS-CoV-2. All have been negative.

WDFW encourages all individuals, including hunters, trappers, wildlife control operators, and wildlife biologists who handle or work in close proximity to wildlife follow CDC's recommendations for [Reducing the Risk of SARS-CoV-2 Spreading between People and Wildlife](#)

In addition, WDFW specifically recommends the following when handling mammals with known susceptibility to SARS-CoV-2, based on current knowledge, such as felids (cat family), mustelids (weasel family), some rodents, and white-tailed deer:

- Whenever possible, minimize direct contact and close proximity to these wildlife taxa.
- Use proper Personal Protective Equipment, [as defined by the CDC](#).
- Dispose or sanitize (wash) PPE such as masks, goggles, face shields between uses properly.

When in doubt, avoid working directly with or in proximity to wildlife with known susceptibility to SARS-CoV-2.