

**FEDERAL AID
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 25526
Juneau, AK 99802-5526

**ELK
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY
PERFORMANCE REPORT**

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NR: W-33-2

PROJECT NR: 13.0

WORK LOCATION: Statewide

PROJECT LOCATIONS: Game Management Regions 1 and 2

PERIOD: 1 July 2003–30 June 2004

PROJECT TITLE: The Status of Alaska Elk and Factors Influencing Their Population

REPORT DESCRIPTION: This statewide performance report includes the two regions involved in elk survey and inventory activities. Statewide and regional activities are listed before specific activities by herd and game management unit.

**The Status of Elk
and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region I**

Regionwide Activities

Activity : Provide information to the Board of Game on elk management.

The Board of Game meets on a two-year cycle for the SE Alaska region and did not meet during this reporting period. However, in preparation for the November 2004 meeting, regional staffs have met and discussed ideas that may need to be addressed at the next meeting.

Activity : Monitor harvest through analysis of drawing permit data.

This was successfully done.

Activity : Collect biological data including incisors for aging and photos of antlers.

Of the eight elk harvested during the report period, the Petersburg Area Biologist collected incisors from eight, and antler photographs from 5.

Units 1A, 1B, 2, and 3

Activity : Monitor for presence of elk in southern southeast Alaska through contact with deer, elk, and bear hunters.

Petersburg and Ketchikan area staff spoke with pilots and deer, moose and black bear hunters opportunistically to gain an understanding of elk sightings and gather information on elk dispersal in southern Southeast Alaska.

Activity : Monitor the general elk hunt in Units 1, 2, and “the remainder of Unit 3.”
Staff received no verifiable reports of elk harvested other than from Etolin and Zarembo islands.

Unit 3

Activity : Monitor the Unit 3 Etolin and Zarembo Islands elk hunt and analyze the permit report data.

The Petersburg Area Biologist and other staff members spoke with hunters before, during and/or after their hunts. Hunt-based parameters were evaluated by use of drawing permits, incisors, and photos of antlers submitted by hunters.

Activity : Conduct spring elk fecal pellet surveys on Etolin Island in conjunction with spring deer pellet-group surveys.

No pellet-group surveys were conducted on Etolin Island during this report period, however, a total of nine elk and deer fecal pellet transects were completed on Zarembo Island.

Activity : Monitor the browse condition at established exclosures.

A June 2003 inspection of the elk exclosures revealed that one exclosure had been destroyed by animals, and the other had been destroyed as a result of vandalism. At this point in time it is uncertain if the exclosures will be resurrected.

Activity : Use established population modeling techniques to estimate population growth.
This was not done during this report period.

Other activities funded by Federal Aid on this project: None

Stewardship Investment items purchased: None

Total Regional Segment Period Project Costs (in thousands): \$6.26

Submitted by: Dale L. Rabe – Region I Management Coordinator

The Status of Alaska Elk and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region II

Regionwide Activities

Activity 1: Prepare an elk management report.

Elk management reports were not due during this report period. However, staff collected data for use in the report in subsequent years.

Activity 2: Provide information to the Board of Game on elk management.

The Board of Game meets on a two-year cycle for the SC Alaska region and did not meet during this reporting period. However, regional staff members have met and discussed ideas that may need to be addressed at the next meeting.

Unit 8

Activity: Conduct aerial sex and age population composition surveys to determine status, trends, productivity, and mortality of elk.

We completed four summer composition surveys and two winter surveys for a portion of the population. Survey results suggested an increase in the most of herds observed and the movement of several eastern herds to the west side of Afognak Island. The unit population of elk was estimated at 865 animals.

Activity: Monitor elk seasonal distribution through relocation of radiocollared elk.

Before 1998 the annual home ranges of most of the elk herds were relatively stable with little interchange between herds. Recent data indicate considerable mixing of herds and changes in traditional use areas during the winter and early spring. We suspect many of these changes are because of significant alteration to winter ranges by commercial logging operations. In the summer and fall of 2003, five collared elk moved from the east side of Afognak to the west side of the island.

Activity: Monitor the elk harvest through field observations, hunter harvest reports, and contact with hunters.

Harvest report cards returned by hunters provided data on hunting effort and harvest. Hunters reported harvesting 81 elk (50 males, 31 females). The harvest by permit hunt was as follows: Raspberry Island drawing permit hunt, 4 males, 2 females; southwest Afognak drawing permit hunt, 2 males, 11 females; eastern Afognak drawing permit hunt, 7 males, 8 females; Remainder of Unit 8, 25 male, 4 female; registration permit hunt, 22 males, 5 females; federal subsistence hunt, 1 female. The reported 2003–04 harvest of 81 elk was about 9% of the estimated population, a slight increase over the estimated 2002-03 harvest of 8%.

Stewardship Investment items purchased: None

Total Regional Segment Period Project Costs (in thousands): \$13.2

Submitted by: Bruce Bartley, Acting Assistant Management Coordinator

Statewide Project Costs (in thousands):

State Share = \$4.87 Federal Share = \$14.6 Total Costs = \$19.46