

**ELK
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY
PERFORMANCE REPORT**

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NR: W-33-4

PROJECT NR: 13.0

PERIOD: 1 July 2005–30 June 2006

PROJECT LOCATION: Regions 1 and 2

PROJECT TITLE: The Status of Elk and Factors Influencing Their Populations

REPORT DESCRIPTION: This performance report describes Region I and 2 elk survey and inventory activities. Regionwide 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 biennial management report.

An elk management report was written and submitted for each unit and subunit within the region where elk occur. These reports provide updated harvest and management information through the 2005 hunt.

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 17 elk harvested inside the drawing permit area during the report period, the Petersburg area biologist collected incisors from 15 and antler photographs from 9.

Activities by Unit

Units 1A, 1B, 2, and 3

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

Petersburg and Ketchikan area staff spoke with pilots and with 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 5 unverified reports of elk harvested other than from Etolin and Zarembo Islands. These reports all involved cow elk reportedly harvested on Bushy Island in Unit 3.

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.

A total of 3 elk and deer fecal pellet transects were completed in one value comparison unit (VCU) on Etolin Island during this report period.

Activity: Use established population modeling techniques to estimate population growth.

This was not done during this report period because insufficient information is currently available on the status of the Unit 3 elk herd (population size, sex and age ratios, mortality rates and predation rates, etc.) to feed into a population modeling program.

Total Regional Segment Period Project Costs (in thousands): \$6.5

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

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

Regionwide

Activity: Prepare a biennial regional elk management report.

Biennial elk management report prepared for unit in which elk occur.

Activities by Unit

Unit 8

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

We completed 2 summer aerial composition surveys for a portion of the population. Survey results suggested an increase in the most of herds observed. The unit population of elk was estimated at 960 animals.

Activity 2: 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.

Activity 3: Monitor the elk harvest through field observations, hunter harvest reports, and contact with hunters.

Of 803 drawing permits and registration permits issued, hunters reported harvesting 115 elk (68 males, 47 females). The harvest by permit hunt was as follows: Raspberry Island drawing permit hunt, 4 males, 5 females; southwest Afognak drawing permit hunt, 3 males, 12 females; eastern Afognak drawing permit hunt, 12 males, 2 females; remainder of Unit 8, 19 male, 8 female; registration permit hunt, 30 males, 20 females; federal subsistence hunt, 0. The reported 2005–06 harvest of 115 elk was about 12% of the estimated population, a slight increase over the estimated 2004–05 harvest of 10%.

Activity: Conduct Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance program.

A unitwide effort to assess the presence and distribution of elk with chronic wasting disease was initiated in the fall of 2003 and continues today. During the 2005–06 hunting season, 400 deer and 21 elk were sampled with negative results.

Total Regional Segment Period Project Cost (in thousands): \$10.2

Submitted by: Gino Del Frate, Regional Management Coordinator