

**FEDERAL AID  
FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

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

**ELK  
SURVEY AND INVENTORY**

**STATE:** Alaska

**GRANT AND SEGMENT NR.:** W-33-5

**PROJECT NR.:** 13.0

**PERIOD:** 1 July 2006 – 30 June 2007

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Statewide

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

**REPORT DESCRIPTION:** This performance report describes deer survey and inventory activities. Region-wide activities are listed before specific activities by game management unit.

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

**Region-wide Activities**

ACTIVITY 1: Monitor harvest through analysis of drawing and registration permit data.

This was successfully done.

ACTIVITY 2: Collect biological data including incisors for aging and photos of antlers.

The Petersburg Area Biologist collected an incisor and antler photographs for the only elk harvested in Unit 3 during the report period.

**Activities by Unit**

**Units 1A, 1B, 2, and 3**

ACTIVITY 1: 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, commercial fisherman, 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. In addition to numerous anecdotal reports of elk observations in the Kake Area on northwest Kupreanof Island, the Petersburg Area Biologist confirmed the presence of elk on Mitkof Island in October of 2006.

ACTIVITY 2: Monitor the general elk hunt in Units 1, 2, and “the remainder of Unit 3.”

Staff received no reports of elk harvested other than the one animal harvested within the Etolin-Zarembo permit hunt area during the archery-only season.

### **Unit 3**

ACTIVITY 1: 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 mandatory drawing and registration permit hunt reports, incisors, and photos of antlers submitted by hunters.

ACTIVITY 2: Conduct spring elk fecal pellet surveys on Etolin Island in conjunction with spring deer pellet-group surveys.

A total of 7 elk and deer fecal pellet transects were completed in 3 VCU's on Zarembo Island. No pellet group transects were completed on Etolin Island. In April 2007, however, staff traveled to Etolin Island on two separate occasions to evaluate elk and deer winter mortality, collect elk and deer fecal pellet samples and conduct browse surveys along transects that were originally established by the Forest Service in 1991 and surveyed in 1991, 1998, and 1999. Fecal pellet samples from both species will be analyzed for plant composition and used to evaluate the extent of dietary completion between introduced elk and native deer during a winter with record snowfall. Additionally, fecal pellet samples will be sent to a laboratory for genetic analysis to evaluate whether or not DNA can be successfully extracted from fresh elk pellets for eventual use in developing a mark-recapture population estimate.

**Submitted by:** Dale L. Rabe, Region I Management Coordinator

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

### **Region-wide Activities**

ACTIVITY 1: Prepare a biennial regional elk management report.

Elk management reports will not be due until next year.

### **Activities by Unit**

#### **Unit 8**

ACTIVITY 1: Conduct aerial sex and age population composition surveys to determine status, trends, productivity, and mortality of elk.

We completed 3 summer aerial composition surveys for a portion of the elk population. Survey results suggested a stable to decreasing trend in most of the herds observed. The estimated unit wide population of elk was 920.

ACTIVITY 2: Monitor elk seasonal distribution through relocation of radio-collared 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.

Harvest report cards returned by hunters provided data on hunting effort and harvest. We issued 879 drawing permits and registration permits. Hunters reported harvesting 104 elk (70 males, 34 females). The harvest by permit hunt was as follows: Raspberry Island drawing permit hunt, 6 males, 1 females; Southwest Afognak drawing permit hunt, 1 male, 5 females; Eastern Afognak drawing permit hunt, 12 males, 5 females; Remainder of Unit 8, 17 males, 2 females; registration permit hunt, 34 males, 22 females; and Federal Subsistence hunt, 0. The reported 2006-07 harvest of 104 elk was about 11% of the estimated population, a slight decrease over the estimated 2005-06 harvest of 12%.

We issued 1 Emergency Order to close a portion of registration hunt RE755. The closure occurred on 22 October 2006 for the southeastern portion of registration hunt RE755 (south of a line from the head of Danger bay to the head of Sapos Bay).

**Submitted by:** Lawrence J. Van Daele, Ph.D. and John R. Crye