

ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NR.: W-33-11

PROJECT NR.: 13.0 Elk

PERIOD: 1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013

PROJECT LOCATION: Statewide: Activity in Regions I and II.

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

REPORT DESCRIPTION: This performance report describes statewide elk survey and inventory activities. Activities are listed by region and herd or game management unit.

Region I—Southeast Alaska

Regionwide Activities

ACTIVITY 1: Provide information to state and federal regulatory processes on elk management.

Data from elk harvest and population monitoring efforts was used in the spring 2013 Board of Game meeting to assist in elk management strategy.

ACTIVITY 2: Monitor harvest through analysis of drawing and registration permit data.

As part of the permit requirements, all harvested elk must be reported, and photos of antlers are taken.

ACTIVITY 3: Monitor dispersal of elk through anecdotal information from hunters.

During discussions with hunters, fishermen and other outdoors people, we acquire information about elk presence and or absence throughout the unit.

ACTIVITY 4: Collect biological data on harvested elk including incisors for aging and photos of antlers.

The Petersburg Area Biologist collected 6 incisors and 6 antler photographs from 8 elk harvested in Unit 3 during the report period.

ACTIVITY 5: Conduct spring fecal pellet surveys as budgets permit.

This activity was not conducted during this 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, moose 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.

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

Staff received no reports of elk harvested outside of the Etolin-Zarembo permit hunt area under the “general hunt”.

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: Use established population modeling techniques to estimate population growth.

This activity was not conducted during the report period.

ACTIVITY 3: Conduct spring elk fecal pellet surveys on Etolin, Zarembo and Onslow Islands in conjunction with spring deer pellet-group surveys.

Elk and deer fecal pellet surveys were not completed on Etolin and Onslow Islands.

Submitted by: Neil L. Barten, Region I Management Coordinator

Region II—Southcentral Alaska

Region wide Activities

ACTIVITY : Prepare a biennial regional elk management report.

Staff collected information for preparation of the biennial report in 2014.

ACTIVITY : Provide information to state and federal regulatory processes on elk management.

Staff routinely interact with federal staff and discuss management of brown bear relative to the respective regulatory systems. Staff attended the state Board of Game meeting during this reporting period.

Activities by Unit and herd

Unit 8

ACTIVITY : We completed 7 aerial composition surveys for a portion of the population. Survey results suggested a stable trend in most of the herds observed. The unit wide population of elk was estimated at 685 animals.

ACTIVITY : In June 2011 we deployed 14 VHF transmitters on elk residing on Afognak and Raspberry Islands. Twelve collars were relocated throughout this reporting period, 2 of which died during the fall/winter of 2012-13.

ACTIVITY : No elk were collared in this reporting period due to unavailability of collars.

ACTIVITY : Hunt reports provided data on hunting effort and harvest. We issued 443 drawing and registration permits. Hunters reported harvesting 41 elk (19 males, 22 females). The harvest by permit hunt was as follows: Raspberry Island drawing hunt – 4 elk (3 males, 1 female); southwest Afognak drawing hunt – 5 elk (1 males, 4 females); eastern Afognak drawing hunt – 11 elk (7 males, 4 female); remainder of Unit 8 drawing hunt – 14 elk (8 males, 6 females); registration hunt – 7 elk (7 females). The reported 2012-13 harvest of 41 elk was about 6% of the estimated population.

On October 22, 2012 an Emergency Order was issued to close portions of registration hunt RE755 south of a line running from the head of the northwest arm of Kazakof Bay to the peak of Shepard's Ridge to the northern tip of Gretchen Lake to the western side of the mouth of Sapos Bay on Afognak Island. The Emergency Order also restricted the bag limit in the remaining open areas to antlerless elk only.

On November 3, 2012 another Emergency Order closed the elk season in all portions registration permit hunt RE755 except south and west of a line running from the head of Back Bay to Hatchery Peak to the head of Malina Bay on Afognak Island.

ACTIVITY : Herd specific objectives have been developed for each of the recognized herds on Afognak and Raspberry Islands and we are currently managing each herd based on these objectives.