

**ELK
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY**

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NO. W-33-6

PROJECT NO. 13.0

PERIOD: 1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008

PROJECT LOCATION: Statewide

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

REPORT DESCRIPTION: This performance report describes elk survey and inventory activities. Regionwide activities are listed before specific activities by game management unit.

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

Regionwide Activities:

Activity 1: Prepare biennial management report.

An elk management report was written for the unit and sub-unit within the region where elk occur. The report provides updated harvest and management information through FY 2007.

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 all six of the elk harvested in Unit 3 during the report period.

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 six animals harvested within the Etolin-Zarembo permit hunt areas.

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 3 elk and deer fecal pellet transects were completed, two on Etolin Island and one on Onslow Island. No pellet group transects were completed on Zarembo Island.

ACTIVITY 3: Capture and radio-collar 3-5 elk to evaluate movements, habitat use, and seasonal range.

Two female elk were captured and fitted with GPS remote down-loadable radio-collars. One was on Etolin, the other on Zarembo.

Submitted by: Neil Barten, Region I Management Coordinator

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

Regionwide Activities:

ACTIVITY 1: Prepare a biennial regional elk management report.

Elk Report was prepared for GMU 8.

Unit 8

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

We completed two aerial composition surveys for a portion of the population. Survey results suggested a stable to decreasing trend in most of the herds observed. The unit population of elk was estimated at 830 animals.

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

We deployed 12 VHF and two GPS radio collars on adult female elk in May 2008. 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 782 drawing permits and registration permits. Hunters reported harvesting 81 elk (57 males, 24 females). The harvest by permit hunt was: Raspberry Island drawing permit hunt, three males, four females; southwest Afognak drawing permit hunt, three males, two females; eastern Afognak drawing permit hunt, 12 males, 10 females; Remainder of Unit 8, 14 male, one female; registration permit hunt, 25 males, seven females; federal subsistence hunt, 0. The reported 2007-08 harvest of 81 elk was about 10% of the estimated population, a slight decrease over the estimated 2006-07 harvest of 11%.

We issued one Emergency Order to close a portion of registration hunt RE755. The closure occurred on Oct.22, 2007, for the southeastern portion of registration hunt RE755 (south of a line from the head of Danger bay to the head of Sapos Bay).

ACTIVITY 4: Assist Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance program.

Elk heads were opportunistically collected from hunters and samples submitted for Chronic Wasting Disease.

Submitted by: Bruce Bartley