

**Wildlife Restoration MULTI-YEAR GRANT
INTERIM PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife Restoration Grant**

GRANT NUMBER: AKW-B-R2-2020

PROJECT NUMBER: 13.0

PROJECT TITLE: Region 2 Elk S&I program: Elk Populations and Factors Influencing Their Status

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2021

PERFORMANCE YEAR: July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020; year 1 of a 2-year grant

REPORT DUE DATE: Submit to FAC August 28, 2020

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Cynthia Wardlow

COOPERATORS: Jeff Selinger, Nathan Svoboda

Authorities: 2 CFR 200.328
2 CFR 200.301
50 CFR 80.90

I. PROGRESS ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES DURING PERFORMANCE YEAR

OBJECTIVE 1: Population Size, Status, and Trend. Assess the size and status of each elk population to determine the 5-year trend.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Aerial composition surveys indicate an increasing trend in the Unit 8 elk population. The population on Raspberry and Afognak islands was estimated to be approximately 1000–1100 animals in 2019–20.

With support from project collaborators including Afognak, Ouzinkie, Natives of Kodiak, and Koniag Native Corporations as well as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Kodiak Brown Bear Trust, global positioning system (GPS) collars have been deployed in previous years. Previous capture operations were conducted across Afognak and Raspberry Islands, including bull and cow elk from 3 of the 8 herds. Seasonal distribution of radiocollared elk is monitored through telemetry flights and GPS collar verification.

OBJECTIVE 2: Mortality/Harvest Monitoring and Regulations. Assess the number of elk harvested by hunters and other sources of mortality that might have an impact on each population.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Hunt reports provided data on hunting effort and harvest. We issued 700 drawing and registration permits resulting in 315 hunters going afield. Hunters reported harvesting 111 elk (78 males, 33 females), a slight increase from last year's total harvest of 97 elk.

Hunters are required to provide lower jaws from harvested elk in Unit 8. Ages are determined by tooth replacement and wear patterns. Elk found dead are aged in a similar manner when possible.

OBJECTIVE 3: Habitat Enhancement /Assessment. Assess elk habitat and browse availability directly or indirectly and perform habitat enhancement in areas where it is feasible.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Seasonal distribution of radiocollared elk is monitored through telemetry flights and GPS collar verification, and also through observations by state and federal biologists and anecdotal information provided by hunters. Telemetry flights are conducted at different times to monitor elk seasonal distribution through re-location of radio collared elk.

OBJECTIVE 4: Elk Management with Public Participation and Outreach. Manage each elk population with an emphasis on engaging the public in management goals and objectives through public meetings, working groups, educational materials, and incentive programs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: We are in the process of compiling information and data in preparation for writing a five-year elk Management Report and Operational Plan for Unit 8. This report will include historical and current data, management directions, methods, Board of Game actions, harvests and natural mortality, habitat assessments, and local and statewide non-regulatory issues. They are expected to be completed in FY2020 and will be available at the following url:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifepublications&sort=all&species=Roosevelt+Elk&publicationtype=Species+Management+Report+%28and+Plan%29&submit=Search>

Herd-specific population objectives are being developed with additional information from ongoing habitat and distribution research.

We communicated with and attended meetings of local Fish and Game Advisory Committees, the Alaska Board of Game, numerous local village councils, and Native corporations about elk management and to review and analyze regulation proposals for the Alaska Board of Game.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE.

Additional flights were conducted during this reporting period to assess wild elk herd locations and their proximity to an elk farm that reported a large-scale escape of more than 70 Rocky Mountain elk.

Project results are not yet available. Summaries of past data trends are published at the following url:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifepublications&sort=all&species=Roosevelt+Elk&publicationtype=Species+Management+Report+%28and+Plan%29&submit=Search>

Summary results for FY2020 will be published at this location when analyses are completed.

III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND/OR AMENDMENTS.

None. Project number 13.0 was underspent in travel due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, but funds previously planned for travel were used to purchase commodities related to this project.

IV. PUBLICATIONS

All publications for FY2020 are not yet available. Project publications for previous years are available at the following url:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifepublications&sort=all&species=Roosevelt+Elk&publicationtype=Species+Management+Report+%28and+Plan%29&submit=Search>.

The following Elk Management Reports and Plans were published in FY2014 at http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static-f/home/library/pdfs/wildlife/mgt_rpts/elk_2014.pdf

Harper, P., editor. 2014. Elk management report of survey-inventory activities, 1 July 2011–30 June 2013. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Species Management Report ADF&G/DWC/SMR-2014-1, Juneau. *(PDF)*

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

We recommend continued funding for this project to effectively manage Roosevelt elk populations in Southcentral Alaska.

Prepared by: Cynthia Wardlow

Date: September 2020