

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

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Project W-170-R-28

Progress Report



ELK

Study I, Job 1

July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004

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**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Elk Surveys and Inventories</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-28</u>		
SUBPROJECT:	<u>1-7</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>I</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>1</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004</u>		

STATEWIDE

Summary

Rocky mountain elk are Idaho's premier big game animal. Elk are distributed throughout Idaho from the sage-dominated deserts of the south to the dense cedar-hemlock forests of the north. Elk can be classified as habitat generalists, but it must be recognized they have certain basic habitat requirements. These include food, water, and, where hunted, hiding cover and security areas (blocks of elk habitat with limited access). Availability and distribution of these habitat components on each seasonal range ultimately determine the distribution and numbers of elk that may be supported.

Elk hunter numbers have increased in Idaho as populations have increased. However, total pressure on the resource has dramatically increased. Human development has reduced available habitat on winter ranges and increased access into elk habitat, and technological developments and increased availability of leisure time have all contributed to increased hunting pressure on elk.

Access into elk habitat is a primary problem facing wildlife managers today. Roads built into elk habitat for timber management and other activities will increase hunter access and often increase elk vulnerability to harvest. As a general rule, the problem is one of access; that is, of increasing the number of people in elk habitat. The effects of roads, apart from people, are mixed. On the negative side, elk may vacate otherwise suitable habitats to avoid human activity; the period of time before elk return to such areas depends on the severity and duration of the disturbance but may extend several years. Elk habitat is reduced not only by the amount of land taken by the roads themselves, but also because elk tend to avoid areas adjacent to such roads. On the positive side, timber harvest often associated with construction of roads may open "closed" stands of timber, creating additional forage for elk in some important winter ranges.

Although the trade-offs associated with road construction may vary with each individual situation, the increase in numbers of people associated with increased access is almost universally detrimental to elk. Elk move away from human disturbance whenever harassed, and elk that remain in logged and roaded areas are subject to more hunters over a longer period of time than elk that live in more secluded habitats.

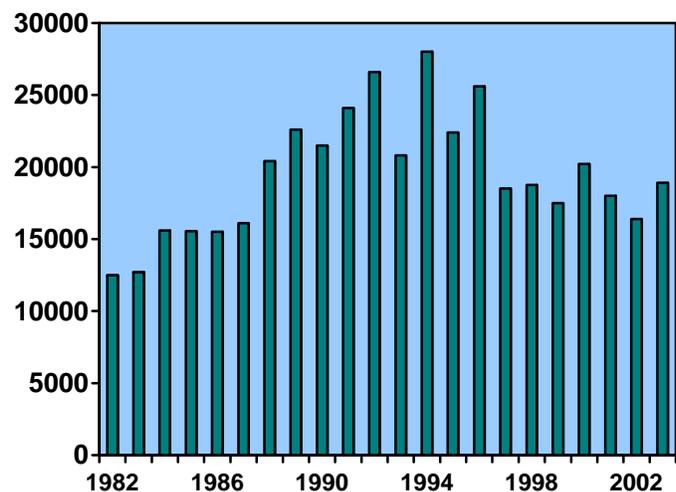
Because human access into elk habitat is the primary problem associated with roads, perhaps the most critical habitat management factor facing wildlife managers is the use of roads. A comprehensive road management program, involving key elements including timing of construction activities, limitation on use of some roads for single-use only (i.e., timber removal), and complete or periodic closures of other roads to create large blocks of habitat with non-motorized access, could do much to benefit elk management.

Maintenance of the quality and quantity of habitat available to elk is crucial to their long-term survival. Many human activities destroy elk habitat, render portions unusable, decrease the ability of areas to support elk, or result in abandonment of certain areas completely. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (Department) has direct control over only a minuscule portion of elk habitat in Idaho. The majority of elk habitat is managed by other public agencies or private landowners. We must rely on others to consider, along with us, the biological needs of the elk resource for Idaho citizens in their management programs.

Unlike deer, elk populations can generally be highly influenced by harvest. Most of the annual mortality of elk (one year and older) is associated with human harvest. Proper harvest management is to establish population goals and establish harvest opportunities that are consistent with achieving or maintaining these population objectives. In this plan, we establish objectives for wintering populations of cows, total bulls, and adult (3.5+ pre-season) bulls. The state has been divided into 29 elk management zones (groupings of units), dependent upon habitat similarity, management similarity, and/or discrete populations. Objectives have been established for each zone. The Idaho Fish and Game Commission (Commission) adopted a statewide minimum objective of ten adult bulls:100 cows pre-season. Total population objectives were chosen based on habitat potential, harvest opportunity, depredation concerns, interspecific issues, population performance issues, and winter feeding issues.

Monitoring population objectives will occur periodically (every 2-5 years) in most cases, and annually in some cases. In addition to these winter surveys, the Department will monitor harvest and antler point class in the harvest. Prior to 1998, the telephone harvest survey provided information regarding harvest. Beginning in 1998, a mandatory harvest report was implemented. Given adequate compliance, more precise information on harvest and antler point data will be available. The 2003 season structure for elk is presented in Appendix A.

Statewide Elk Harvest



Overall, elk populations statewide are near all-time highs. While localized impacts from the 1996-1997 winter in north-central and north Idaho reduced populations, elk numbers throughout southern, eastern, and much of western Idaho have continued to increase over time. Numerically, the state is at or near objectives for total cows, total bulls, and total adult bulls. However, individual zone objectives reflect the need for a distributional change in elk populations.

Calf:cow data collected during aerial surveys suggest declining recruitment ratios in many parts of Idaho. Declining recruitment rates can be explained by two possible hypothesis: 1) populations are at or near carrying capacity and density-dependent factors are regulating productivity, or 2) predation is playing a larger role in population dynamics than previously. Unfortunately, conclusive evidence does not exist as to which hypothesis is primarily affecting current population dynamics. Valid points can be made for either scenario.

Elk habitat in north-central Idaho was greatly improved during the early 1900s when extensive wildfires replaced heavily forested habitats with productive shrub-fields. However, as these shrub-fields have aged and conifer reestablishment has occurred, habitat potential has been reduced. Elk populations in these areas probably represent the longest established population in the state and might be expected to show density-dependent effects first. In fact, populations in north-central Idaho generally have the lowest calf:cow ratios statewide. These observations are consistent with populations that are at or near carrying capacity.

Conversely, the primary potential predators of elk including black bears, mountain lions, and wolves have increased over the last couple of decades. Approximately 400 wolves are currently within the state after being reintroduced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in 1995. Although not well understood, an increase in total predators could reduce recruitment rates. It should be noted that in parts of the state where elk herds are productive and increasing, they have similar densities of predators to those areas where elk herds are not productive and are declining.

The quandary exists as to which management action to apply to improve recruitment rates and thus harvestable surplus. If density-dependent factors are primarily responsible, reducing the total population will “stimulate” the population and the harvestable surplus will increase. However, if density-independent factors (i.e., predation) are primarily responsible, the appropriate action would be to minimize antlerless harvest. A better understanding of the potential factors affecting elk population dynamics is needed before confidence can be gained as to what is the most appropriate management action.

Elk Status & Objectives Statewide

Winter Status & Objectives

Statewide	Current Status				Objective		
	Cows	Calves	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
Total	(80,000)	(25,500)	(19,000)	(11,000)	82,500	19,500	11,500
Bulls per 100 Cows			(24)	(14)		18-24	10 - 14

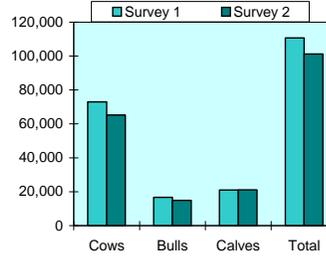
Note : Estimates within parentheses are based on information other than sightability surveys.



Population Surveys

Statewide	Survey 1				Survey 2			
	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
Comparable Surveys Total	72,916	16,698	21,053	110,667	65,214	14,897	21,148	101,259
Per 100 Cows		23	29			23	32	

Comparable Survey Totals

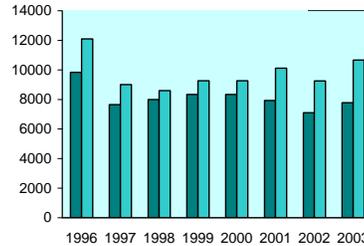


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	9842	7659	7996	8346	8346	7932	7100	7782
'A' Tag			1450	2842	2842	2660	2071	2464
'B' Tag			560	754	754	572	564	584
CH Tag			5986	4750	4750	4700	4465	4734
Antlered Harvest	12100	9013	8607	9272	9272	10110	9261	10660
'A' Tag			2488	2688	2688	2606	2321	2634
'B' Tag			4390	4855	4855	5586	5043	5876
CH Tag			1729	1729	1729	1918	1897	2150
Hunter Numbers	100479	91168	84420	97731	ND	77662	83712	84782
'A' Tag			25140	33341	ND	27844	27567	27905
'B' Tag			37994	43966	ND	31020	37239	37723
CH Tag			21286	20424	ND	18798	18906	19154
% 6+ Points	29	25	33	27	27	28	26	31

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

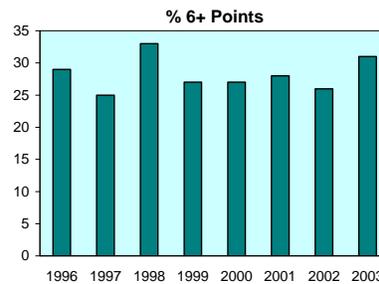
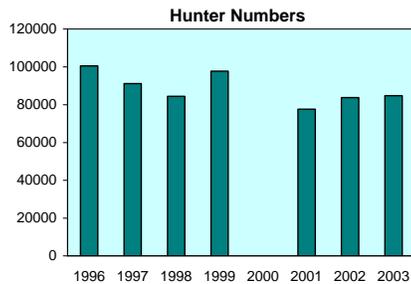


Figure 1. Elk Status and Objectives Statewide.

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PANHANDLE REGION

Panhandle Zone (Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7, 9)

Management Objectives

The objectives for the Panhandle Zone are to establish a population of 2,900-3,900 cows and 600-800 bulls, including 350-475 adult bulls, as measured via aerial surveys of the Panhandle Zone Trend Area. Due to poor snow coverage, the trend area was not flown during the past year. As of two years ago, the zone met objectives for cow numbers, but was low in bull numbers. Based on the classification of 1,859 elk during February 2003, recruitment of calf elk was high (43 calves per 100 cows) and it is likely that the Panhandle Zone elk herd has experienced positive growth since the 2002 flight. Regional staff anticipate the zone will meet goals for bull numbers during the next two years.

Historical Perspective

The Panhandle Zone is a large and diverse zone consisting of Game Management Units (GMUs) 1, 2, 3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7, and 9. Traditionally, the majority of the elk habitat, elk numbers, and elk hunting activity occurred in Units 4, 4A, 6, 7, and 9. These units are primarily composed of forested public lands and private timber companies and consistently record some of the highest hunter densities and elk harvest densities in the state. Expanding elk herds have recently increased hunter activities in Units 1, 2, 3, and 5, particularly in the agricultural areas of Units 3 and 5.

The Panhandle Region has essentially been managed as a “zone” since 1977, when the rest of the state eliminated general season cow harvest. The Panhandle “zone” maintained general either-sex hunting opportunities with fairly consistent hunting seasons across most of the GMUs. A unique feature of the Panhandle Zone is a mandatory check of all elk harvested in the zone. This database, in operation since 1982, provides valuable information relevant to the elk population.

Habitat Issues

Elk numbers were very low in the Panhandle Zone around the early 1900s. Major landscape changes occurred as a result of stand-replacing fires beginning in 1910. Vast areas of timber were transformed into brush fields and early succession timber stands that provided ideal conditions for elk. Additionally, elk were imported from Yellowstone National Park by sportsmen in the 1940s and released in Units 1, 4, and 6. Elk populations increased, with periodic setbacks due to extreme winter conditions. The most recent impact to elk numbers in the Panhandle Zone occurred as a result of the severe winter of 1996-1997. While it is generally accepted that habitat conditions in the core areas have declined from the optimum in the 1950s and 1960s, past timber harvest, prescribed burning, and pioneering of elk into new areas will allow elk numbers to increase to pre-1997 levels and beyond. In the long-term (the time frame is unknown), in the absence of large-scale stand-replacing fire, elk habitat potential may decrease.

Much of the Panhandle Zone's forested habitat experienced extensive timber harvest during the 1980s and 1990s. While this high level of timber harvest created additional elk forage, the more important impact was the construction of logging roads that allowed hunters easy access to elk and increased elk vulnerability. High road densities and threats to large areas of elk security continues to be a concern despite access management plans developed by land management agencies to address wildlife and watershed issues.

Elk depredations on croplands are not a large problem and are normally handled by hazing and kill permits issued to the landowner. An occasional one-time depredation hunt will be conducted to alleviate a specific problem. Elk depredations on nursery orchards often occur, particularly at newly established sites. The high dollar-per-acre value of nursery crops requires quick, effective action that has included construction of fencing, deployment of electronic scare devices, and the use of guard dogs. Depredation hunts or increased general hunt harvest levels are not used to solve nursery depredations, as the number of offending animals is usually low and nurseries are often located adjacent to elk habitat inhabited by non-offending animals.

Biological Issues

The elk populations in the core areas of this zone have shown an overall growth pattern over the past ten to 15 years. Elk numbers in the peripheral GMUs (1, 2, 3, and 5) have shown substantial growth and now support considerable elk hunting opportunities. Growth and expansion in the Panhandle Zone elk herd have continued while offering general either-sex hunting opportunities. Cow:calf ratios indicate the potential for continued growth under the current general hunt. During February 2003 helicopter surveys, 1,859 elk were classified resulting in an estimated 43 calves:100 cows.

The severe winter of 1996-1997 reduced herd numbers in much of the Panhandle Zone. Reductions were considerable in some units. Favorable environmental conditions since the winter of 1996-1997, particularly snow depth on winter range, have allowed substantial recovery of elk populations in this zone. Reductions in cow harvest opportunities were initiated for the 1998 season and remain in place.

Inter-specific Issues

Both white-tailed and mule deer occur in all areas of the zone. White-tailed deer are the predominant deer species and maintain high densities in the lower elevations of Units 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6. Mule deer numbers appear to be stable, at much lower densities than whitetails and are found most frequently in the higher elevations of Units 1, 4, 6, 7, and 9. The moose population in the Panhandle Zone has expanded considerably over the past decade with the highest densities occurring in Units 1 and 2. Competitive interactions may exist among deer, moose, and elk. However, the form and extent of those relationships is presently unclear.

Predation Issues

Harvest levels of black bear and mountain lion indicate that both species are at fairly high population levels relative to recent historic numbers (20-40 years ago). However, both species appear to be at lower levels than five years ago. Harvest peaked for mountain lions in 1997 and recent harvest levels are less than half of the level experienced in 1997. Black bear harvest has also dropped over the past five years but continues to show significant fluctuation. Research conducted in adjacent areas of Idaho and other states indicates that bear and mountain lion predation may have significant impacts, particularly on elk calves. Wolves have recently established residency in the Panhandle Zone. The impacts of predation on elk numbers in the zone are unknown at this time, but current cow:calf ratios obtained during summer and winter surveys do not indicate an immediate problem.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding of elk in this zone is not conducted by the Department. Numerous private individuals feed small bands of elk annually. The Department provided a minimal amount of feed for individuals to feed small groups of elk during the winter of 1996-1997. The impact was of no consequence to the elk herd in the Panhandle Zone.

Information Requirements

There are three levels of aerial survey information needed for management of the Panhandle Zone. The Panhandle Region Trend Area should be surveyed annually to determine population trends. Individual units should be surveyed on a rotational basis to develop population estimates and in the near future, the units impacted hardest by the winter of 1996-1997 should have herd composition counts conducted annually to monitor recruitment.

Elk Panhandle Zone (Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7, 9)

Winter Status & Objectives

Trend Area	Survey Year	Current Status			Objective		
		Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
	2002	3025	438	246	2900 - 3900	600 - 800	350 - 475
Zone Total					2900 - 3900	600 - 800	350 - 475
Bulls per 100 Cows			14	8		18-24	10-14

Note: The Panhandle Elk Trend Area includes parts of GMUs 4, 6, and 7.



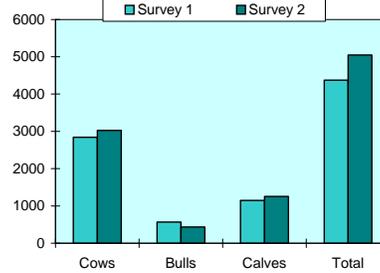
Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
1	ND					ND				
2	ND					ND				
3	1993	367	74	118	559					
4	1991	2288	728	1019	4035	1997	2009	666	409	3084
4A	1994	121	17	36	174	ND				
5	ND					ND				
6	1993	1214	740	394	2348	2002	2646	488	1216	4350
7	1991	977	251	377	1605	1998	1044	541	150	1735
9	1998	598	108	24	730	*2004	241	57	70	368
Trend Area	2000	2844	568	1149	4371	2002	3025	438	1254	5046
Per 100 Cows			13	40				14	41	

Note: ND = no survey data available.

*2004 survey for Unit 9 is composition only - elk observed.

Comparable Survey Totals

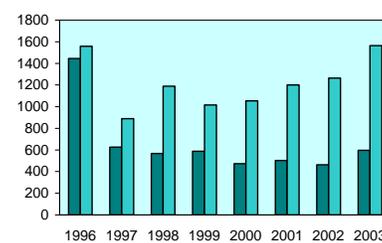


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	1446	626	567	588	473	504	463	597
'A' Tag			53	52	59	110	68	99
'B' Tag			512	534	402	389	393	482
CH Tag			2	2	12	5	2	16
Antlered Harvest	1558	889	1190	1017	1054	1201	1264	1565
'A' Tag			214	225	208	297	319	380
'B' Tag			976	792	846	903	943	1184
CH Tag			0	0	0	1	2	1
Hunter Numbers	19921	14993	15736	14954	ND	12407	13227	14172
'A' Tag			2616	2549	ND	2516	2786	3047
'B' Tag			13100	12385	ND	9872	10421	11082
CH Tag			20	20	ND	19	20	43
% 6+ Points	26	23	32	26	26	24	20	27

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

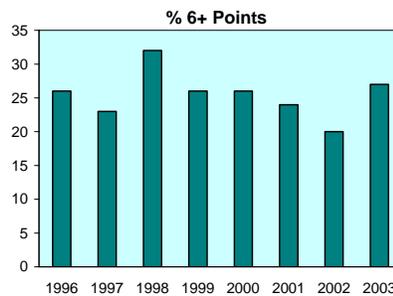
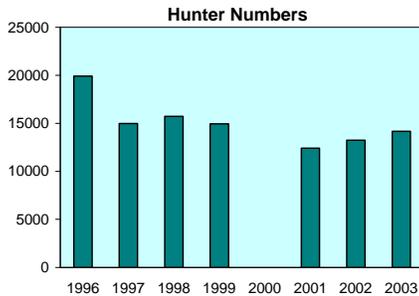


Figure 2. Panhandle Zone Status and Objectives.

**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Elk Surveys and Inventories</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-28</u>		
SUBPROJECT:	<u>2</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>1</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>1</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004</u>		

CLEARWATER REGION

Palouse Zone (Units 8, 8A, 11A)

Management Objectives

The objectives for the Palouse Zone are to establish a population of 1,325 cows and 275 bulls, including 180 adult bulls at ratios of 18-24 bulls:100 cows and 10-14 adult bulls:100 cows. The objectives related to total population level (total elk numbers) were selected to represent a reasonable balance between depredation concerns, and the desire to provide a reasonably large elk population. The objective for the number of adult elk represents the maximum number of elk that could be sustained under the circumstances.

The zone presently exceeds the cow abundance objective. Current antlerless harvest levels should allow continue growth of the cow elk population. Conversely, bull abundance and ratios are well below objectives, suggesting that harvest rates are excessive. A significant reduction in bull harvest will be required to achieve the bull and adult bull number and ratio objectives.

Historical Perspective

Historically, elk herds were scattered and numbers were low in this area. Few big game animals were found along the Clearwater River by Lewis and Clark in the early 1800s, probably due in part to the dense, unbroken canopy of forest that covered the entire area. Wildfires burned over vast expanses near the beginning of the 20th century, creating vast brush-fields that provided abundant forage areas for elk. Elk numbers increased following creation of these brush-fields, and elk numbers apparently peaked around 1950. Elk herds declined, however, through the latter part of that decade and the 1960s and 1970s, partially due to: 1) maturation of the brush-fields and declines in forage availability; 2) logging and road-building activity that increased vulnerability of elk to hunters under the then more liberal hunting seasons; and 3) loss of some major winter ranges. In response to declines in elk numbers, an either-sex hunting regime was replaced in 1976 with an antlered-only general hunting season. Elk herds then began rebuilding.

Habitat Issues

This zone contains portions of the highly productive Palouse and Camas prairies. Dry-land agriculture began in this zone in the 1880s and, until the 1930s, large areas of native grassland existed to supply forage for the large numbers of horses and mules required to farm the area. With the development of the tractor and subsequent improvements, farming efforts intensified as equipment became more capable of handling the steep, rolling hills. Currently, virtually all non-forested land is tilled, and only small, isolated patches of perennial vegetation remain but are regularly burned or treated with herbicides. Elk numbers have only recently increased to levels that have provided significant hunting opportunities. Farmland in Units 8 and 8A provides high quality elk forage, and as populations have grown, so have the number of depredation complaints. Farmers recall few elk problems until the last decade or so. Elk currently cause damage to grain, legumes, rapeseed, canola, and hay crops throughout this zone. Most of the crop damage occurs during summer months. Damage to conifer seedlings caused by elk is a concern where reforestation projects occur on elk winter range. Late-season antlerless elk controlled hunts have had limited success in controlling elk population growth and reducing the overall damage caused by elk.

Additionally, timber harvest in the corporate timber, private timber, state land, and federal land areas of Unit 8A increased dramatically through the 1980s and 1990s, mostly to capture white pine mortality and respond to increased demand for timber products. This activity created vast acreages of early successional habitat, expanding elk habitat potential. Road construction associated with timber harvest is extensive in some areas. Road closures in some areas have significant potential to benefit elk through improved habitat effectiveness and reduced harvest vulnerability.

Biological Issues

Elk populations in this zone have increased over the last 30 years due to increased availability of agricultural crops, natural forage, and brush-fields (both on summer and winter range). Additionally, mild winters throughout the 1980s likely enhanced calf survival. To address increasing depredation problems during the last ten years, liberal antlerless elk harvest opportunities have been offered.

The 2004 survey in Units 8 and 8A revealed substantial growth of the cow elk population (>50%), while bull abundance declined (-25%).

Elk productivity in this zone is very high, with calf:cow ratios in the mid-40s or higher. This results in a resilient elk population and allows for a liberal season length and harvest.

Inter-specific Issues

The zone supports a substantial population of white-tailed deer, while mule deer are rare. The zone's moose population has expanded substantially over the past decade. Competitive interactions may exist among white-tailed deer, elk, and moose. However, the form and extent of those relationships is presently unclear.

Grazing by cattle occurs on almost all of the available pasture ground and poses some competitive concerns for elk, especially during drought years.

Predation Issues

Increasing mountain lion harvest over the last few years likely reflects increased mountain lion numbers in this zone. Black bear numbers have probably remained static. Wolves are typically not present in the zone, but may become more numerous in the future.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency winter feeding has not been conducted recently.

Information Requirements

Sightability estimates are needed periodically to monitor progress toward achieving population objectives. In addition, the information is valuable to assess population growth with respect to depredations and antlerless harvest levels.

Elk Palouse Zone (Units 8, 8A, 11A)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Survey Year	Current Status			Objective		
		Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
8	2004	404	54	14	325 - 475	50 - 100	25 - 75
8A	2004	1000	47	1	650 - 950	150 - 200	75 - 150
11A	2002	410	47	1	100 - 150	20 - 30	10 - 20
Zone Total		1814	148	16	1075 - 1575	220 - 330	110 - 245
Bulls per 100 Cows		8	1			18 - 24	10 - 14

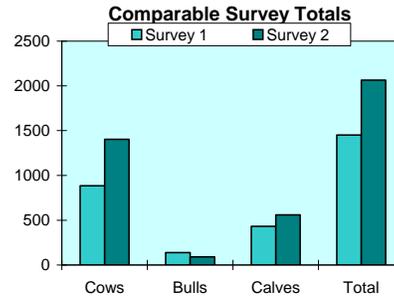
Note: Estimates within parentheses are based on information other than sightability surveys.



Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
8	1997	221	15	143	379	2004	404	54	218	676
8A	1997	663	122	288	1073	2004	1000	47	341	1388
11A	ND					2002	410	47	147	604
Comparable Surveys Total		884	137	431	1452		1404	91	559	2064
Per 100 Cows		16	49				6	40		

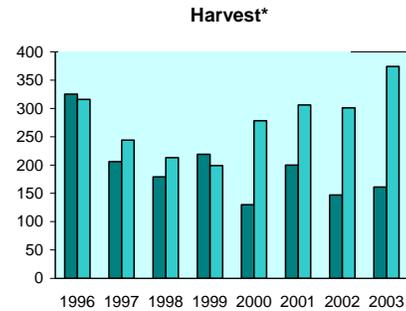
Note: ND = no survey data available.



Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	325	206	179	219	130	200	147	161
'A' Tag			18	45	30	50	24	39
'B' Tag					4	5	1	2
CH Tag	325	187	161	174	96	145	122	120
Antlered Harvest	316	244	213	199	278	306	301	374
'A' Tag			47	39	59	38	44	57
'B' Tag			165	159	197	256	251	313
CH Tag		1	1	1	22	12	6	4
Hunter Numbers	3475	3326	2703	2677	ND	2408	2584	2722
'A' Tag			351	424	ND	378	490	505
'B' Tag			1892	1811	ND	1726	1767	1966
CH Tag	862	576	460	442	ND	304	327	251
% 6+ Points	11	35	13	25	18	17	13	18

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

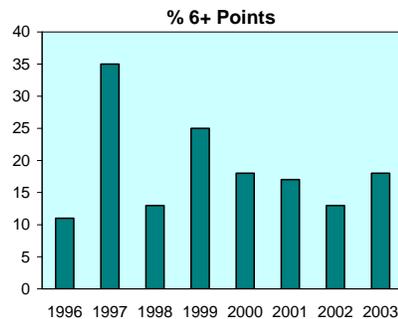
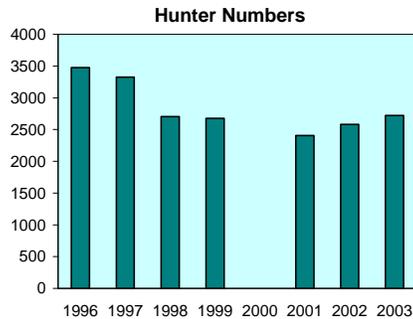


Figure 3. Palouse Zone Status and Objectives.

Lolo Zone (Units 10, 12)

Management Objectives

The objectives for the Lolo Zone are to establish a population of 7,600 cows and 1,600 bulls, including 975 adult bulls at ratios of 18-24 bulls:100 cows and 10-14 adult bulls:100 cows.

Management of the Lolo Zone elk population and setting appropriate population objectives presents a serious quandary. Existing information suggests that both predation and density dependence (habitat limitations) could be causing low calf production/recruitment. If predation is the overwhelming factor, population goals should be set higher (e.g., 15,000 adult elk), and there should be little or no cow harvest. However, if density dependence is significant, goals should be set at a low level, and cow harvest should be at moderate levels (5-10%). Also, both factors may be contributing significantly, leading to some intermediate level of objectives. At present, it is not possible to determine the relative contribution of those effects. In the absence of that knowledge, the objectives were set at intermediate levels.

Historical Perspective

Historically, elk herds were scattered and numbers were low in this area. Few big game animals were found along the Clearwater River by Lewis and Clark in the early 1800s, probably due in part to the dense, unbroken canopy of forest that covered the entire area. Wildfires burned over vast expanses near the beginning of the 20th century, creating vast brush-fields that provided abundant forage areas for elk. Elk numbers increased following creation of these brush-fields, and elk numbers apparently peaked around 1950. Elk herds declined into the 1970s, partially due to: 1) maturation of the brush-fields and declines in forage availability; 2) logging and road-building activity that increased vulnerability of elk to hunters under the then more liberal hunting seasons; and 3) loss of some major winter ranges. In response to declines in elk numbers, an either-sex hunting regime was replaced in 1976 with an antlered-only general hunting season. Elk herds then began rebuilding.

Habitat Issues

Land ownership within this zone is almost entirely publicly-owned forest. The southern portion of the zone is within the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area. Historically, habitat productivity was high in this zone. However, habitat productivity has decreased following decades of intensive fire suppression. Approximately one-third of the zone has good access for motorized vehicles with medium road densities. The remaining portion has low road densities with good trails contributing to medium-to-low big game vulnerability. Aside from damages to reforestation projects, there are no elk depredation concerns in this zone.

Until the 1930s, wildfires were the primary habitat disturbance mechanism in this zone. Between 1900 and 1934, approximately 70% of the Lochsa River drainage was burned by wildfires. Between 1926 and 1990, over 1,900 km of roads were built in this area to access marketable timber. State Highway 12 along the Lochsa River was completed in 1962 and

became the primary travel corridor. In 1964, most of the southern portion of Unit 12 was designated as part of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

Biological Issues

Poor calf recruitment since the late 1980s, winter losses in 1996-1997, and a recent population decline in Unit 10 have contributed to dramatically decreasing elk herds within this zone. The current population is well below objectives.

The winter of 1996-1997 was marked by severe conditions, including extremely deep snow exceeding 200% of average snow-pack in some areas. These conditions apparently caused higher-than-normal winter mortality, leading to a dramatic decline in the Unit 10 population (-48%). In addition, a survey was conducted in Unit 12 during the winter of 1996-1997 and those results suggested a 30% decline at that time. This data, in combination with overwhelming anecdotal information, suggests that catastrophic winter losses occurred in Units 10 and 12.

Calf productivity and/or recruitment have declined substantially since the late 1980s. Prior to then, winter calf:cow ratios often exceeded 30:100 and occasionally exceeded 40:100. From 1989 through 1999, ratios dwindled continuously down to levels below 10:100. This level of recruitment is inadequate to sustain natural mortality in the absence of hunting. More recently, population surveys and composition surveys have revealed recruitment levels between 27 and 30 calves:100 cows in Unit 12, and 19 to 26 calves:100 cows in Unit 10.

Preliminary results from current research efforts suggest that both nutrition and predation may be potential causes of the low calf recruitment levels. Additional work, in an experimental framework, is needed to determine the relative significance of those potential causes.

To address the low recruitment levels, declining bull numbers, and 1996-1997 winter losses, the Department capped B-tag numbers at 1,600 and closed cow elk controlled hunts beginning with the 1998 hunting season. The B-tag cap represents a 60-65% reduction in any-bull rifle hunters. It is anticipated that if recruitment levels recover somewhat, the zone might reach objectives in 5-10 years under this management framework.

Inter-specific Issues

Both units support small white-tailed deer populations, few mule deer, and moderate density moose populations. Moose have increased moderately over the past 20 years. Grazing by cattle occurs to a limited extent in the northwestern corner of Unit 12 on a U.S. Forest Service (USFS) allotment.

Predation Issues

In DAUs 2-1 and 2-2, mountain lion harvest levels have increased over the last decade. Black bear harvest remained somewhat stable through the last two decades, averaging between 100 and 150 bears per year until 1998, when greatly liberalized seasons led to dramatic increases in

harvest. However, black bear population performance remains well above plan objectives. Wolf packs are well established throughout the zone.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency winter feeding has not been conducted recently.

Information Requirements

The level of the Lolo Zone B-tag cap, and any future changes in the cap, are entirely dependent upon recruitment levels. At a minimum, recruitment should be measured with composition surveys, corrected for visibility bias, yearly or every other year to establish the level and trend of calf recruitment. In addition, complete sightability surveys should be conducted frequently to evaluate population performance.

Elk Lolo Zone (Units 10, 12)

Winter Status & Objectives

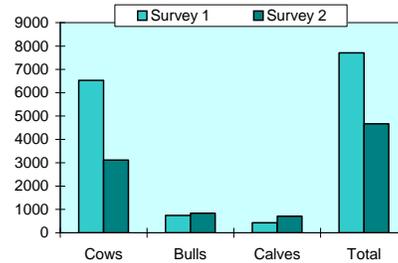
Unit	Survey Year	Current Status			Objective		
		Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
10	2003	1832	419	131	4200 - 6200	900 - 1300	500 - 750
12	2002	1281	422	253	1900 - 2900	400 - 600	225 - 350
Zone Total		3113	841	384	6100 - 9100	1300 - 1900	725 - 1200
Bulls per 100 Cows		27	12			18 - 24	10 - 14



Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
10	1998	4469	318	252	5039	2003	1832	419	371	2622
12	1997	2060	425	181	2666	2002	1281	422	343	2046
Comparable Surveys Total		6529	743	433	7705		3113	841	714	4668
Per 100 Cows			11	7				27	23	

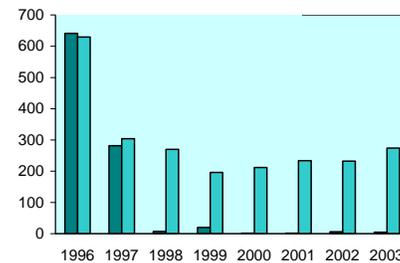
Comparable Survey Totals



Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	641	282	7	20	2	2	6	5
'A' Tag				20	2	2	6	4
'B' Tag			7		0	0	0	1
CH Tag	607	272			0	0	0	0
Antlered Harvest	630	304	270	196	212	234	232	274
'A' Tag			59	6	42	46	46	50
'B' Tag			211	190	170	188	186	224
CH Tag	31	5			0	0	0	0
Hunter Numbers	4365	4281	1533	1485	ND	1126	1435	1493
'A' Tag			293	272	ND	239	322	289
'B' Tag			1240	1213	ND	887	1113	1204
CH Tag	1353	1615			ND	0	0	0
% 6+ Points	19	16	25	14	28	19	22	32

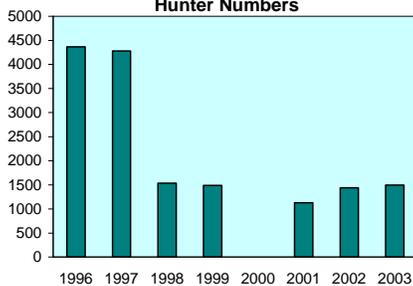
Harvest*



Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

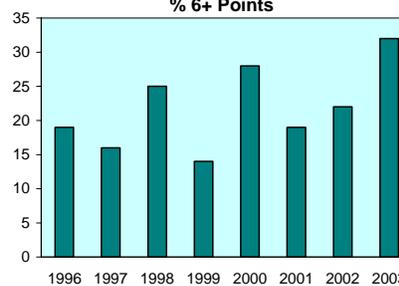


Figure 4. Lolo Zone Status and Objectives.

Dworshak Zone (Unit 10A)

Management Objectives

The objectives for the Dworshak Zone are to establish a population of 3,600 cows and 750 bulls, including 425 adult bulls at ratios of 18-24 bulls:100 cows and 10-14 adult bulls:100 cows. The objective of 3,600 cows represents a level that could be achieved, with little cow harvest, under a worse-case scenario and should be viewed only as a conservative, interim goal until 2006. Subsequently, a more liberal population goal (over 3,600 cows) should be identified to exploit the full productive potential of Unit 10A. The bull objective represents a correspondingly conservative number that would be expected under a worse-case scenario and would correspond to the 18-24 bull:100 cow objective. Likewise, the goal for bull numbers is a conservative, interim number that should be increased to fully exploit the potential of Unit 10A.

The zone cow harvest strategy was modified for the 2000 hunting season to address over-harvest. The current goal is a harvest of 90 to 110 cow elk, which would allow the population to reach objectives. B-tag sales were capped beginning with the 2002 hunting season to allow the zone to reach bull and adult bull objectives.

Historical Perspective

Historically, elk herds were scattered and numbers were low in this area. Few big game animals were found along the Clearwater River by Lewis and Clark in the early 1800s, probably due in part to the dense, unbroken canopy of forest that covered the entire area. Wildfires burned over vast expanses near the beginning of the 20th century, creating vast brush-fields that provided abundant forage areas for elk. Elk numbers increased following creation of these brush-fields, and elk numbers apparently peaked around 1950. Elk herds declined into the 1970s, partially due to: 1) maturation of the brush-fields and declines in forage availability; 2) logging and road-building activity that increased vulnerability of elk to hunters under the then more liberal hunting seasons; and 3) loss of some major winter ranges. In response to declines in elk numbers, an either-sex hunting regime was replaced in 1976 with an antlered-only general hunting season. Elk herds then began rebuilding.

Habitat issues

The Dworshak Zone consists of Unit 10A, which is three-fourths timberland and one-fourth open or agricultural lands and is bisected by canyons leading to the Clearwater River. The first wave of timber harvest in this zone occurred during the early 1900s and consisted mostly of removing the most valuable timber species and largest trees. During the 1970s, timber harvest increased fairly dramatically, and new roads provided access to previously inaccessible areas. In 1971, Dworshak Reservoir flooded approximately 45 miles of the North Fork Clearwater River corridor with slack water and permanently removed thousands of acres of prime, low-elevation winter range for big game. During the early 1970s, only a few hundred elk were observed wintering along the river under the predominantly old-growth cedar hemlock forest. The timberland is owned predominantly by Potlatch Corporation, Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), and the USFS. Access is very good throughout the zone and timber harvest occurs on most

available timber ground. High open and closed road densities contribute to high elk vulnerability and low habitat effectiveness. During the 1980s and 1990s, timber harvest occurred on almost all available state and private land as demand for timber and management of these lands intensified. Despite the reservoir, extensive logging along the river corridor improved winter range in this unit. South aspect forests were cleared to provide timber products and inadvertently provided quality winter range.

Depredations have increased on agricultural land within the past ten years in this zone due to increases in both deer and elk populations and changes in land ownership that reduced hunting opportunities. Elk cause damage to grain, legumes, and hay crops within the south-central portion of this zone during summer months. Occasional damage to stored hay, silage, and winter wheat occurs during winters with heavy snow accumulation. Damage to conifer seedlings by elk is a concern in the remaining portions of this zone where reforestation projects overlap with elk winter range. Controlled antlerless elk seasons have been successful in reducing the overall damage in this zone.

Biological Issues

Historically, Unit 10A has supported a productive elk population. From 1992 through 1996, recruitment averaged 34 calves:100 cows. From 1997 through 1999, recruitment dropped to an average of 19 calves:100 cows. However, the 2001 sightability survey revealed recruitment at 30 calves:100 cows. If this level is sustained, antlerless harvest levels might be liberalized in the future.

Inter-specific Issues

Unit 10A supports a substantial white-tailed deer population, few mule deer, and a small moose population. The white-tailed deer population has increased dramatically over the past 20 years. Significant competitive interactions between white-tailed deer and elk may exist. However, the form and extent of those relationships is presently unclear.

Significant livestock grazing on rangeland in the southeastern portion of the zone impacts elk habitat potential. Most of that grazing occurs on habitats used exclusively during winter months. Additionally, range allotments are present on summer and winter habitat on USFS, IDL, and Potlatch Corporation lands elsewhere in the zone.

Predation Issues

Predator numbers, mountain lions in particular, have increased to high levels in the last decade. In DAU 2-1, mountain lion harvest levels increased steadily from 1991 (43 lions) to a peak in 1997 (149 lions). Harvest subsequently declined. Anecdotal observations suggest this trend in harvest was related to a similar trend in mountain lion populations. Black bear harvest has increased slowly and recently stabilized. However, harvest levels remain below 2000-2010 bear management plan objectives. The long-term increase in bear and mountain lion populations may be adversely affecting elk population performance. However, there is inadequate information to objectively assess those potential impacts.

Wolves are established within the Dworshak Zone. Currently, at least two packs inhabit the zone for part of the year.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency winter feeding has not been conducted recently.

Information Requirements

Sightability surveys will be needed periodically to evaluate population performance relative to plan objectives. Composition surveys may be conducted at more frequent intervals to evaluate potential changes in recruitment.

Elk Dworshak Zone (Unit 10A)

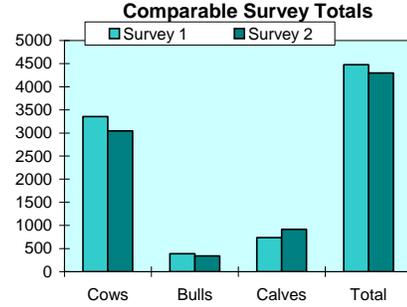
Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Survey Year	Current Status			Objective		
		Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
10A	2001	3045	339	194	2900 - 4300	600 - 900	350 - 500
Zone Total		3045	339	194	2900 - 4300	600 - 900	350 - 500
Bulls per 100 Cows		11	6			18 - 24	10 - 14



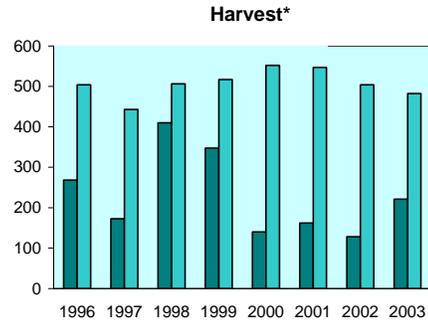
Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
10A	1999	3355	385	734	4474	2001	3045	339	914	4298
Comparable Surveys Total		3355	385	734	4474		3045	339	914	4298
Per 100 Cows			12	22				11	30	



Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	268	173	410	347	140	162	128	221
'A' Tag			339	291	118	135	105	189
'B' Tag			27		4	5	1	2
CH Tag	268	173	44	56	18	22	22	30
Antlered Harvest	504	443	506	517	552	547	504	482
'A' Tag			133	172	110	136	96	116
'B' Tag			373	344	441	409	407	364
CH Tag	5	3		1	1	2	1	2
Hunter Numbers	4079	4800	4790	4819	ND	3639	3520	3271
'A' Tag			1794	1917	ND	1065	1106	1129
'B' Tag			2897	2809	ND	2533	2367	2098
CH Tag	518	479	99	93	ND	41	47	44
% 6+ Points	13	6	7	4	10	11	10	13



Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

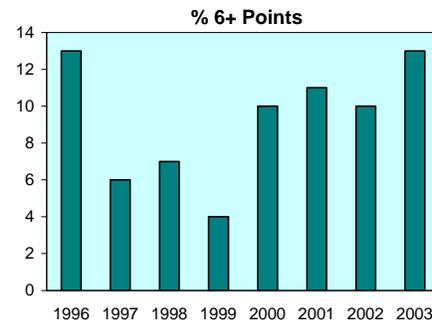
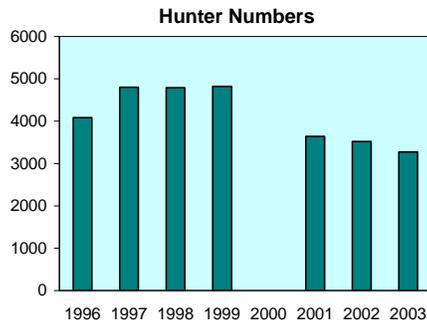


Figure 5. Dworshak Zone Status and Objectives.

Hells Canyon Zone (Units 11, 13, 18)

Management Objectives

The objectives for the Hells Canyon Zone are to establish a population of 1,950 cows and 525 bulls, including 325 adult bulls at ratios of 25-29 bulls:100 cows in Unit 11, 18-24 bulls:100 cows in Unit 13, and 30-34 bulls:100 cows in Unit 18. Current permit levels should allow Units 11, 13, and 18 elk populations to reach objectives.

Historical Perspective

Historically, elk herds were scattered and numbers were low in this area. Few big game animals were found along the Clearwater River by Lewis and Clark in the early 1800s, probably due in part to the dense, unbroken canopy of forest that covered the entire area. Wildfires burned over vast expanses near the beginning of the 20th century, creating vast brush-fields that provided abundant forage areas for elk. Elk production in areas adjacent to this unit increased around the turn of the century, and elk repopulated this zone by the 1960s. Elk herds declined into the 1970s, partially due to: 1) maturation of the brush-fields and declines in forage availability; 2) logging and road-building activity that increased vulnerability of elk to hunters under the then more liberal hunting seasons; and 3) loss of some major winter ranges. In response to declines in elk numbers, an either-sex hunting regime was replaced in 1976 with an antlered-only general hunting season. Elk herds then began rebuilding.

Habitat Issues

Habitat productivity varies widely throughout the zone from steep, dry, river-canyon grasslands having low annual precipitation to higher elevation forests with good habitat productivity and greater precipitation. Late successional forest cover types have become fragmented within the zone. Many grassland cover types have been invaded by various weeds and nonnative grasses, including cheatgrass and yellow star thistle. Road density is moderate, and access is restricted in many areas. This results in medium to low vulnerability of big game to hunters.

Historically, sheep and cattle ranchers and miners homesteaded the canyon lands in this zone, while prairie land was settled by farmers. Around the turn of the century, northern Unit 11 was under intensive use for dry-land agriculture and fruit orchards. Many resort cabins were built near and around the town of Waha. Later, many cabins were built along the mail stage route from Lewiston to Cottonwood via Soldiers Meadows and Forest. A mill was built in Winchester, along with numerous smaller mills on Craig Mountain, and the forested portion of Craig Mountain was extensively logged. The forests were frequently high-graded, and the existing forests still show the scars. In addition, past improper grazing practices severely degraded many meadow areas and allowed invasion of noxious weed species on dryer sites.

This zone contains large tracts of both privately and publicly-owned land. Unit 11 is mostly private land except for the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area (CMWMA) along the Snake and Salmon rivers. The CMWMA consists of two major units: the Billy Creek unit (16,123 acres), which was obtained between 1971 and 1983; and the Peter T. Johnson Mitigation

Area (59,991 acres), which was acquired in 1995 as partial mitigation for Dworshak Reservoir. Unit 13 has been mostly under private ownership since settlement and is managed mostly for agriculture and livestock. Historically, sheepherders ran their flocks in the canyons of Unit 18, and some logging occurred in the forested areas of this unit. Unit 18 is two-thirds public land with the remaining in private ownership located at lower elevations along the Salmon River. The majority of the Hells Canyon Wilderness Area, which was designated as such in 1975, is in Unit 18.

Depredations have increased during the past ten years in this zone due to increases in white-tailed deer and elk populations. Elk cause damage to grain, legumes, hay, and rangeland forage. Cultivated crops are the primary concern in the north, while livestock forage is the primary concern in the remaining portion of this zone. Controlled antlerless elk seasons have had limited success in reducing the overall damage.

Biological Issues

Elk hunting in this zone is offered only on a controlled-hunt basis. Across the zone, sightability survey data indicate that cow and bull elk are increasing, with a declining bull:cow ratio and stable calf recruitment.

Inter-specific Issues

Grazing by cattle is gradually decreasing in the zone due to reductions in USFS and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) allotments, along with land ownership shifting from private to public. Mule deer populations have declined dramatically, possibly alleviating any competitive relationships that may have existed with elk, although it is doubtful that any such effects would be significant.

Predation Issues

In DAUs 2-1 and 2-2, mountain lion harvest has increased over the last several years. In DAUs 1E and 1F, black bear harvest has increased steadily. Harvest levels in both DAUs are currently below plan objectives. Wolves have not become established in this zone.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency winter feeding has not been conducted recently.

Information Requirements

Sightability surveys will be required periodically across the zone to evaluate population performance relative to plan objectives.

Elk Hells Canyon Zone (Units 11, 13, 18)

Winter Status & Objectives

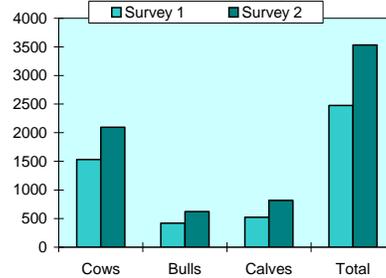
Unit	Current Status				Objective		
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
11	2002	646	184	66	600 - 900	150 - 250	100 - 150
13	2001	890	185	117	500 - 700	100 - 150	50 - 100
18	2000	558	253	161	500 - 700	150 - 225	100 - 150
Zone Total		2094	622	344	1600 - 2300	400 - 625	250 - 400
Bulls per 100 Cows			30	16		25 - 29	14 - 18



Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
11	1999	646	149	209	1004	2002	646	184	327	1157
13	1994	556	105	219	880	2001	890	185	350	1425
18	1992	330	166	95	591	2000	558	253	138	949
Comparable Surveys Total		1532	420	523	2475		2094	622	815	3531
Per 100 Cows			27	34				30	39	

Comparable Survey Totals

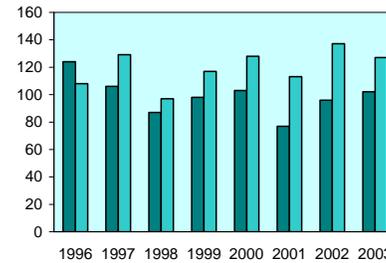


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	124	106	87	98	103	77	96	102
'A' Tag					0	0	0	0
'B' Tag					1	0	0	0
CH Tag	124	106	87	98	102	77	96	102
Antlered Harvest	108	129	97	117	128	113	137	127
'A' Tag					0	4	0	0
'B' Tag					4	3	0	0
CH Tag	108	129	97	117	124	106	137	127
Hunter Numbers	578	595	572	570	ND	539	575	580
'A' Tag					ND	7	11	11
'B' Tag					ND	27	20	40
CH Tag	578	595	572	570	ND	505	544	529
% 6+ Points	36	63	33	36	50	48	50	52

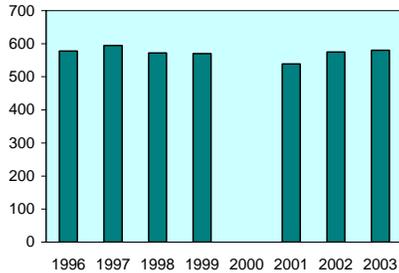
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

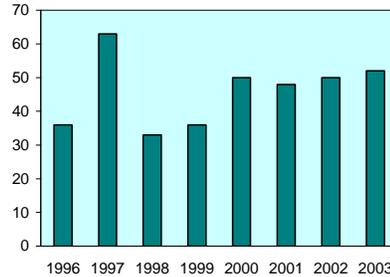


Figure 6. Hells Canyon Zone Status and Objectives.

Elk City Zone (Units 14, 15, 16)

Management Objectives

The objectives for the Elk City Zone are to establish a population of 3,900 cows and 850 bulls, including 475 adult bulls at ratios of 18-24 bulls:100 cows and 10-14 adult bulls:100 cows. The current cow harvest management strategy should allow that segment of the population to achieve its objective by 2006. B-tag sales were capped beginning with the 2002 hunting season to allow the bull segment of the population to reach objectives.

Historical Perspective

Historically, elk herds were scattered and numbers were low in this area. Few big game animals were found along the Clearwater River by Lewis and Clark in the early 1800s, probably due in part to the dense, unbroken canopy of forest that covered the entire area. Wildfires burned over vast expanses near the beginning of the 20th century, creating vast brush-fields that provided abundant forage areas for elk. Elk numbers increased following creation of these brush-fields, and elk numbers apparently peaked around 1950. Elk herds declined into the 1970s, partially due to: 1) maturation of the brush-fields and declines in forage availability; 2) logging and road-building activity that increased vulnerability of elk to hunters under the then more liberal hunting seasons; and 3) loss of some major winter ranges. In response to declines in elk numbers, an either-sex hunting regime was replaced in 1976 with an antlered-only general hunting season. Elk herds began rebuilding.

Habitat Issues

The prairie regions of this zone were converted to agriculture and ranching by the early settlers. In 1862, gold was discovered near the current location of Elk City in Unit 15. After the readily available gold was depleted, miners turned to dredging activities where rivers ran through meadows. Crooked, American, and Red Rivers were channelized and rerouted several times during the extraction processes, which continued commercially until the 1950s. Logging began with mining activities to supply wood for the mines, but in the 1940s, logging activities became commercial and resulted in an extensive network of roads throughout a large portion of this zone. In 1964, with the passage of the Wilderness Act, a small portion of Unit 16 was designated as a part of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. In 1978, portions of Units 14 and 15 were included in the Gospel Hump Wilderness.

Land ownership in this zone is approximately 80% public with the remaining 20% private. The privately-owned portions are at lower elevations along the Clearwater and Salmon rivers. Approximately 8% of this zone is wilderness. Habitat productivity is relatively high in comparison to most other Clearwater Region big game units. Productive conifer forests with intermixed grasslands characterize the majority of this zone. Many forested areas have become overgrown with lodgepole pine and fir due to fire suppression during the past 40 years. Both open and closed road densities are high within the zone, contributing to significant big game vulnerability during hunting seasons along with relatively high illegal harvest throughout the year. Noxious weeds, especially yellow star thistle and spotted knapweed, have increased within

the past 15 years and in some areas, are out-competing grasses and forbs on important elk habitats.

Depredations have increased within the past ten years in this zone due to increases in both deer and elk populations and changes in land ownership that reduce hunting opportunities. Livestock operators are concerned with elk use of pasture and rangeland forage during spring months prior to the release of livestock on these grounds. Some damage to grain crops occurs during the summer. Several past fencing projects have helped to reduce concerns of elk damaging stored hay during winters with heavy snow accumulation.

Biological Issues

Across the zone, cow elk numbers are stable while numbers of bull elk are declining steadily, leading to a declining bull:cow ratio. Bull:cow ratios ranged between 12.9 and 13.6 on the 2000 surveys.

Historically, calf recruitment in Units 14 and 15 has been high, averaging 38 calves:100 cows from 1987 through 1993. However, the 2000 surveys revealed recruitment of 25 calves:100 cows, suggesting that a decline in recruitment, similar to surrounding areas, may be occurring. Chronic low recruitment is a concern in Unit 16, which averaged 19 calves:100 cows from 1990 through 2000.

Inter-specific Issues

Livestock grazes much of this zone on both private and public land. On private land on the west side of Units 14 and 16, competition with domestic livestock may be significant, especially during winter.

Predation Issues

Mountain lion harvest in this zone has increased steadily over the past decade. Anecdotal information suggests a significant increase in mountain lion abundance. Black bear harvest has likewise increased over the past decade. Harvest is currently between 80 and 90 bears annually.

Wolves are well established in the zone. Pack activity has been confirmed in all three management units.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency winter feeding has not been conducted recently.

Information Requirements

All three units should be surveyed periodically to evaluate population performance relative to plan objectives.

Elk Elk City Zone (Units 14, 15, 16)

Winter Status & Objectives

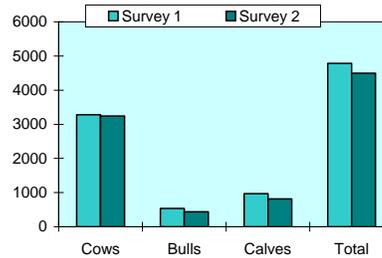
Unit	Current Status				Objective		
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
14	2000	1640	223	96	1400 - 2000	300 - 450	150 - 250
15	2000	676	92	40	950 - 1450	200 - 300	100 - 175
16	2000	927	120	59	800 - 1200	175 - 250	100 - 150
Zone Total		3243	435	195	3150 - 4650	675 - 1000	350 - 575
Bulls per 100 Cows			13	6		18 - 24	10 - 14



Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
14	1993	1483	268	508	2259	2000	1640	223	446	2309
15	1998	923	162	303	1388	2000	676	92	170	938
16	1996	877	105	157	1139	2000	927	120	200	1247
Comparable Surveys Total		3283	535	968	4786		3243	435	816	4494
Per 100 Cows			16	29				13	25	

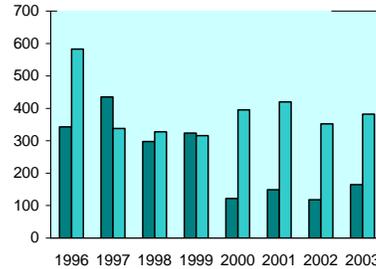
Comparable Survey Totals



Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	343	435	298	324	122	149	118	165
'A' Tag			6	103	91	117	83	112
'B' Tag			7		2	3	2	5
CH Tag	343	435	285	221	29	29	33	48
Antlered Harvest	583	338	328	316	395	420	352	382
'A' Tag			13	65	98	80	64	74
'B' Tag			315	251	291	339	286	308
CH Tag		1	0	0	6	1	2	0
Hunter Numbers	4574	4285	3192	3540	ND	2726	2351	2447
'A' Tag			271	723	ND	773	832	865
'B' Tag			2147	2062	ND	1907	1456	1517
CH Tag	996	1124	774	755	ND	46	63	65
% 6+ Points	11	17	19	18	19	18	23	27

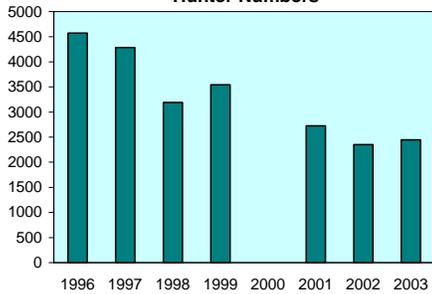
Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

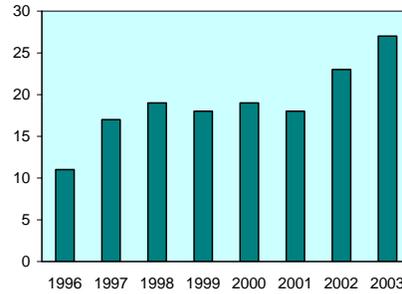


Figure 7. Elk City Zone Status and Objectives.

Selway Zone (Units 16A, 17, 19, 20)

Management Objectives

The objectives in the Selway Zone are to establish a population of 6,100 cows and 1,650 bulls, including 975 adult bulls at ratios of 25-29 bulls:100 cows and 15-18 adult bulls:100 cows.

Like the Lolo Zone, management of the Selway Zone elk population and setting appropriate population objectives presents a serious quandary. Calf recruitment has declined substantially and remains at low levels. Existing information suggests that both predation and density dependence (habitat limitations) could be causing this decline. If predation is the overwhelming factor, population goals should be set higher, and there should be little or no cow harvest. However, if density dependence is significant, goals should be set at a low level, and cow harvest should be at moderate levels (5-10%). Also, both factors may be contributing significantly, leading to some intermediate level of objectives. At present, it is not possible to determine the relative contribution of those effects. In the absence of that knowledge, the objectives were set at intermediate levels.

Antlerless seasons were closed in 1998 to compensate for poor recruitment and 1996-1997 winter mortality. B-tag sales were capped at 1,255 in 2000.

Historical Perspective

Historically, elk herds were scattered and numbers were low in this area. Few big game animals were found along the Clearwater River by Lewis and Clark in the early 1800s, probably due in part to the dense, unbroken canopy of forest that covered the entire area. Wildfires burned over vast expanses near the beginning of the 20th century, creating vast brush-fields that provided abundant forage areas for elk. Elk numbers increased following creation of these brush-fields, and elk numbers apparently peaked around 1950. Elk herds declined into the 1970s, partially due to: 1) maturation of the brush-fields and declines in forage availability; 2) logging and road-building activity that increased vulnerability of elk to hunters under the then more liberal hunting seasons; and 3) loss of some major winter ranges. In response to declines in elk numbers, an either-sex hunting regime was replaced in 1976 with an antlered-only general hunting season. Elk herds then began rebuilding.

Habitat Issues

Habitat productivity varies throughout the zone from high precipitation forested areas along the lower reaches of the Selway River to dry, steep, south-facing ponderosa pine and grassland habitat along the Salmon River. Many areas along the Salmon River have a good mix of successional stages due to frequent fires within the wilderness. Fire suppression within portions of the Selway River drainage has led to decreasing forage production for big game. Road densities are low, contributing to low vulnerability for big game. Noxious weeds, especially spotted knapweed, have encroached upon many low elevation areas of elk winter range.

Due to the rugged and remote nature of this zone, human impacts have been very limited. In 1964, almost all of Unit 17 and a small portion of Unit 16A were included in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Most of Unit 19 became part of the Gospel Hump Wilderness in 1978, and in 1980, part of Unit 20 was included in the Frank Church River-of-No-Return Wilderness.

Biological Issues

Sightability survey data, collected in this zone from 1987 through 2001, revealed declining numbers of adult elk and declining recruitment. Declining calf recruitment was initially detected in Units 16A and 17 in the 1995 surveys, while low recruitment was not observed in Units 19 and 20 until 1996. Composition surveys in Unit 17 during 2002 and 2003, and a sightability survey in 2004 revealed stable, low recruitment at 16 calves:100 cows. The 2004 sightability survey in Unit 16A revealed higher recruitment.

The winter of 1996-1997 was marked by severe conditions, including extremely deep snow exceeding 200% of average snow-pack in some areas. These conditions apparently caused higher-than-normal winter mortality leading to a significant decline in the Unit 16A and 17 herds. The 1999 survey data suggest a 27% decline in adult elk over both units. The 2001 survey data suggest a significant decline in Unit 20 elk and a significant increase in Unit 19 elk. However, the fire activity during summer/fall 2000 may be responsible for significant changes in elk distribution among Units 19, 19A, 20, and 20A.

Inter-specific Issues

The zone supports small, isolated white-tailed deer populations, low density mule deer populations, and moderate density moose populations. Moose have increased moderately over the past 20 years. Grazing by cattle is virtually nonexistent.

Predation Issues

Selway Zone mountain lion harvest has remained static over the past decade. Black bear harvest is likewise stable. In this zone, it is doubtful that harvest levels reflect population trend but rather reflect the remote, rugged nature of the habitat which, in combination with little access, precludes significant mountain lion or bear harvest. Recent trends in mountain lion and bear populations are questionable.

Wolves are well established in this zone. Existing information suggests the presence of several packs.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency winter feeding has not been conducted recently.

Information Requirements

Aerial surveys should be conducted periodically to obtain adequate information to evaluate population performance relative to plan objectives.

Elk Selway Zone (Units 16A, 17, 19, 20)

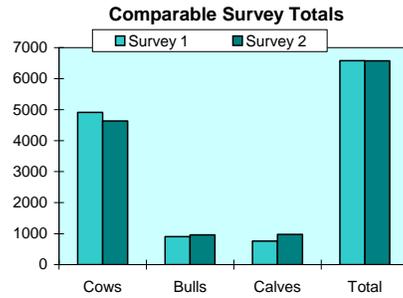
Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Current Status			Objective			
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
16A	2004	457	96	42	650 - 950	175 - 250	100 - 150
17	2004	2076	486	332	2400 - 3600	650 - 975	375 - 575
19	2001	1508	240	153	1050 - 1550	300 - 400	150 - 250
20	2001	596	138	96	800 - 1200	200 - 325	125 - 200
Zone Total		4637	960	623	4900 - 7300	1325 - 1950	750 - 1175
Bulls per 100 Cows			21	13		25-29	14 - 18



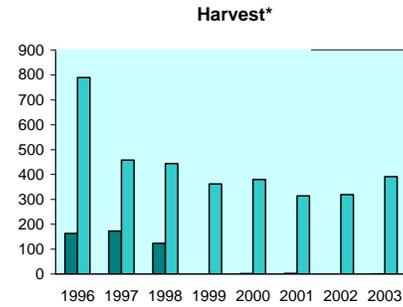
Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
16A	1999	401	51	86	538	2004	457	96	130	683
17	1999	2493	398	298	3189	1999	2076	486	332	2894
19	1996	1149	182	243	1574	2001	1508	240	394	2142
20	1996	871	273	133	1277	2001	596	138	120	854
Comparable Surveys Total		4914	904	760	6578		4637	960	976	6573
Per 100 Cows			18	15			21	21		



Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	163	173	124	0	2	3	0	1
'A' Tag			124		2	0	0	0
'B' Tag					0	3	0	1
CH Tag	163	173			0	0	0	0
Antlered Harvest	790	458	444	362	380	314	319	391
'A' Tag			78	78	73	84	66	91
'B' Tag			366	284	307	230	253	300
CH Tag	140	103			0	0	0	0
Hunter Numbers	3943	3852	3273	2295	ND	1256	1577	1608
'A' Tag			1430	650	ND	423	518	533
'B' Tag			1843	1645	ND	833	1059	1075
CH Tag	1015	1364			ND	0	0	0
% 6+ Points	38	34	30	28	33	37	30	43



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

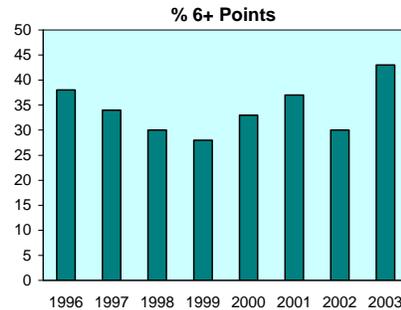
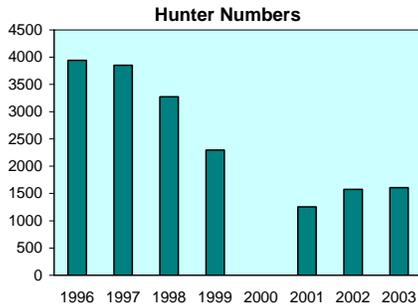


Figure 8. Selway Zone Status and Objectives.

**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Elk Surveys and Inventories</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-28</u>		
SUBPROJECT:	<u>3</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>I</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>1</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004</u>		

SOUTHWEST (NAMPA) REGION

Boise River Zone (Unit 39)

Management Objectives

The objective for this zone is to maintain a population of 4,000+ cows and 800+ bulls, including 475+ adult bulls. The portion of the herd on the west side of the zone will be reduced to address significant landowner concerns about elk depredation. The bull:100 cow ratio will be maintained at the statewide minimum of 18-24, with 10-14 adult bulls:100 cows. This equates to maintaining the herd at its current level and providing for a harvest of 500+ bulls each year. Currently, this zone is meeting objectives for cows, bulls, and adult bulls.

Historical Perspective

Near the turn of the century, elk herds in the Boise River drainage were heavily harvested for hides and meat for the mining camps in the area. Sparse elk herds in Idaho were bolstered with translocated elk from the Yellowstone area in the late 1930s. Relatively liberal either-sex seasons were maintained in this zone until the early 1970s, suppressing the herds well below habitat potential. In 1975, bulls-only hunting was implemented. Since then, the herd has increased to over 7,000 head.

The interest in elk hunting in the Boise River Zone increased along with the growth in the elk population. The zone is one of the most popular elk units in the state with approximately 5,000 hunters.

Habitat Issues

The Boise River Zone includes 2,455 square miles of excellent elk habitat. The conditions range from wilderness situations in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area to the heavily roaded areas near Boise. The Boise National Forest manages the majority of the summer habitat occupied by elk.

There are large areas of private land on the west side of the unit in the Horseshoe Bend area. Landowners in this area have suffered significant damage to hay crops and private rangeland,

especially in the spring. On the south side of the unit, winter and spring concentrations of elk have been in conflict with livestock operations. The urban sprawl of subdivisions and five-acre home-sites in the foothills around Boise have led to significant conflicts with wintering elk. The loss of winter range and conflicts with homeowners may be the most serious factor limiting elk populations in the Boise River Zone.

Several large wildfires have converted shrub lands to grasslands and may have improved some wintering conditions for elk. The effects of wildfire in the summer and transition ranges have generally improved conditions for elk.

Biological Issues

The implementation of bulls-only hunting and a series of mild winters in the late 1980s has increased elk survival in this zone. Calf recruitment is fair to good with a ratio of 28-50 calves:100 cows. Bull harvest exceeded the potential for bull calf recruitment through much of the 1990s. For example, in 1997, 664 bulls were harvested and an estimated 550 bull calves were recruited. Seasons were adjusted in 2002 to move the general bull hunt out of the period of overlap with the general deer season with the hope of reducing bull harvest to below the replacement potential.

During winter 2003 – 2004, 90 elk fell through the ice while attempting to cross the Mores Creek arm of Lucky Peak Reservoir. Extensive effort was made to haze elk away from the crossing area until the ice was sufficiently thick.

Inter-specific Issues

The Boise River Zone is also one of the top five mule deer hunting units in Idaho. The recent changes to the habitat have favored elk. The winter survey flights show the separation of wintering deer and elk. The mule deer are not using some of the wintering areas that were used when there was a lower elk population in the 1960s.

Predation Issues

Black bear and mountain lion populations are well established and apparently stable in the Boise River Zone. The mountain lion population is well above the levels of the 1950s. Wolves were reintroduced in Idaho in 1995. On occasion, wolves ventured into the unit during 1995-2002. In 2003, 2-3 packs established and had litters in the eastern quarter of the unit. Wolves may become a significant issue for elk management in the near future.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding sites were maintained along the Middle Fork Boise River for both deer and elk through the 1950s. The only elk winter feeding that has taken place in the last ten years has been around subdivisions to bait elk away from problem areas. The native range has the capability to support the current elk herd in nearly all situations.

Information Requirements

This large unit contains both winter and summer range for this elk herd. The current sightability surveys provide excellent information on the status of the entire herd. The most pressing need is an evaluation of the impact of elk on the availability of rangeland forage to livestock.

Elk Boise River Zone (Unit 39)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Current Status			Objective			
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
39	2002	4222	908	529	3200 - 4800	650 - 950	375 - 575
Zone Total		4222	908	529	3200 - 4800	650 - 950	375 - 575
Bulls per 100 Cows		22	13			18 - 24	10 - 14

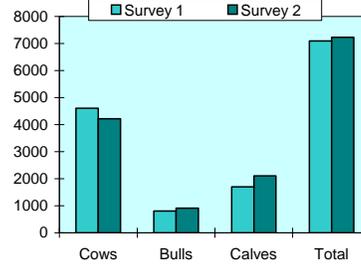


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
39	2000	4600	799	1696	7095	2002	4222	908	2106	7236
Comparable Surveys Total		4600	799	1696	7095		4222	908	2106	7236
Per 100 Cows			17	37				22	50	

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey Totals

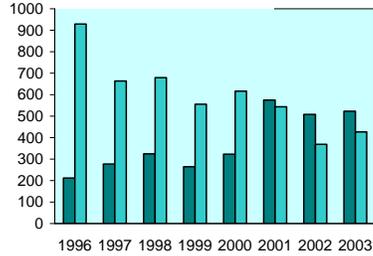


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	212	278	325	265	323	575	509	523
'A' Tag				0	9	53	47	54
'B' Tag				13	2	6	1	5
CH Tag				252	312	516	461	464
Antlered Harvest	929	664	679	556	616	544	369	427
'A' Tag				46	15	11	3	14
'B' Tag				510	590	513	345	402
CH Tag				0	11	20	21	11
Hunter Numbers	6016	5446	5069	5806	ND	5076	4842	4831
'A' Tag				799	ND	507	550	578
'B' Tag				4441	ND	3450	2769	2682
CH Tag				566	ND	1119	1523	1571
% 6+ Points	19	16	22	19	22	27	18	19

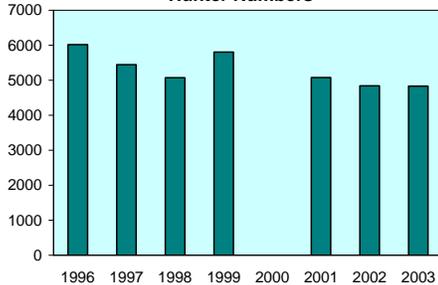
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

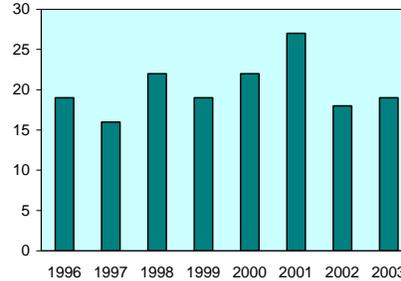


Figure 9. Boise River Zone Status and Objectives.

**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Elk Surveys and Inventories</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-28</u>		
SUBPROJECT:	<u>3, McCall</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>I</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>1</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004</u>		

SOUTHWEST (MCCALL) REGION

McCall Zone (Units 19A, 23, 24, 25)

Management Objectives

The objective for this zone is to maintain a population of 3,075+ cow and 665+ bull elk, including 375+ adult bulls. This zone will be managed to produce the statewide minimums for bull:cow ratio (18-24 bulls:100 cows) and adult bull:cow ratio (10-14 adult bulls:100 cows). The total population objective draws a balance among the concerns about depredation damage, the desire for a reasonably large elk population, and concern about habitat-carrying capacity. Overall bull numbers and bull:cow ratios can be expected to decrease, but remain above the statewide minimums. The decrease in bulls will be due to increased hunter numbers and harvest as the zone absorbs some of the hunters displaced from other zones. Increases in road density will also affect elk vulnerability in the near future. Harvest mortality is not expected to increase in this zone initially; however, as management changes in other zones displace hunters, harvest rates may need to be adjusted.

Historical Perspective

Elk were abundant in the McCall Zone prior to European settlement in the late 1800s. The proliferation of mining due to the gold rush in the late 1800s and early 1900s led to widespread slaughter of these animals to supply meat and hides for mining camps. As a result, elk became increasingly rare to see, and at one time were thought to be eliminated from the area. Remnant populations relegated to the more remote rugged portions of the zone survived. Translocation of elk from Yellowstone to places in the McCall Zone such as New Meadows occurred in the late 1930s. Liberal either-sex hunting seasons kept population numbers of elk suppressed well into the 1970s. The implementation of bulls-only hunting in 1976 spurred an increase in elk populations in the McCall Zone. This increase has continued to the present day peaks in elk populations.

Habitat Issues

Over 70% of the McCall Zone is in public ownership and management. The Little Salmon River and North Fork Payette River valley bottoms comprise most of the private ownership. Private land in this zone is predominantly agricultural or rural subdivision in nature.

Timber harvest and livestock grazing affect habitat change on the public lands on the west side of the McCall Zone. Wildfire or prescribed burning influence habitat alteration on lands on the east side of the zone. Several large fires have burned in this zone in the last decade. A balance exists among early, mid, and late successional habitat stages that are used by elk in summer. Winter ranges occur primarily on public ground. The federal land management agencies (USFS and BLM) have active prescribed burning programs that should maintain good winter range habitat for elk in the McCall Zone. Noxious weed invasion, specifically from spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*) and yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), is a threat to winter ranges in the Little Salmon River and Salmon River drainages of Unit 23. Elk/human conflicts occur during the summer and fall months when elk enter agricultural fields in the valley bottoms to forage.

Road building and its subsequent negative effect on elk vulnerability is a habitat concern facing this elk population. Road densities are estimated at less than 0.25 miles per square mile in Units 19A and 25. Road densities in Units 23 and 24 are estimated at greater than 2.5 miles per square mile. Active timber harvest programs are anticipated to dramatically increase these road densities in the near future.

Biological Issues

The McCall Zone elk population performed well from the mid-1980s to early 1990s. Since then, calf production has declined from 30+ calves:100 cows to poor (24 calves:100 cows) in Unit 19A, and Unit 23 calf production has remained stable in the 30+ calves:100 cows range. Bull:cow ratios have remained high in this zone due to the relatively low hunting pressure and low road densities.

Inter-specific Issues

Elk must compete zone-wide primarily with mule deer and to a lesser extent with white-tailed deer. Extensive domestic sheep and cattle grazing occurs on elk range in the western part of the zone. A small number of bighorn sheep occupy a portion of rugged country less favored by elk in the northeast portion of the zone. The competitive effect of these species on one another is largely unknown.

Predation Issues

Black bear and mountain lions are prevalent in the McCall Zone. Bears are at a moderate but stable level, and mountain lions are thought to be at the highest number in recent history. There is no evidence as to the extent these species prey on elk in this zone. Wolves, introduced in Idaho's backcountry in 1995, make periodic appearances in the eastern half of the zone.

Predation by wolves is considered insignificant at this time; however, as packs continue to establish, frequency of wolf predation in the eastern half of the zone will likely increase.

Winter Feeding Issues

The remote location of most of the winter range in this zone precludes large-scale winter feeding. In severe winters, some feeding has occurred in Unit 24. The Goldfork bait site was established in 1985 to bait elk out of winter livestock feeding operations. Approximately 75 tons of hay is supplied by the Department annually to feed 80-120 elk.

Information Requirements

Carrying capacity of winter ranges is unknown. This information is needed to identify appropriate elk densities that will maintain optimum productivity and harvest. Impacts of three potential predators on elk production is largely unknown. Information is lacking on the migration routes and patterns of elk in this zone.

Elk McCall Zone (Units 19A, 23, 24, 25)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Survey Year	Current Status			Objective		
		Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
19A	2001	469	158	131	750 - 1150	150 - 250	100 - 150
23	2001	1381	220	119	1050 - 1550	225 - 325	125 - 175
24	ND				0	0	0
25	2001	678	174	154	700 - 1000	150 - 225	75 - 125
Zone Total		2528	552	404	2450 - 3700	525 - 800	300 - 450
Bulls per 100 Cows			22	16		18 - 24	10 - 14

Note: Estimates within parentheses are based on information other than sightability surveys.

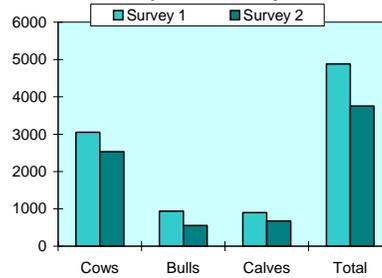


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
19A	1998	939	242	214	1395	2001	469	158	146	773
23	1997	1280	352	489	2121	2001	1381	220	402	2003
24	ND					ND				
25	1998	832	340	196	1368	2001	678	174	124	976
Comparable Surveys Total		3051	934	899	4884		2528	552	672	3752
Per 100 Cows			31	29				22	27	

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey Totals

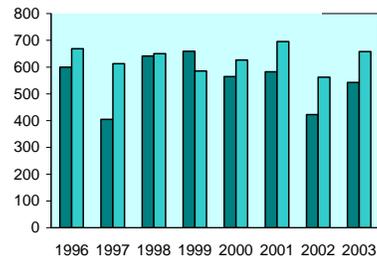


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	600	405	641	659	565	582	423	543
'A' Tag			138	172	71	101	67	115
'B' Tag			7	0	2	4	1	0
CH Tag			496	487	492	477	355	428
Antlered Harvest	669	613	650	586	627	695	562	658
'A' Tag			197	120	167	230	190	221
'B' Tag			445	464	436	423	363	436
CH Tag			8	2	24	42	9	1
Hunter Numbers	5788	5872	7208	7284	ND	6188	6120	6100
'A' Tag			2039	1965	ND	1652	1680	1616
'B' Tag			3735	3894	ND	3165	3094	3105
CH Tag			1434	1425	ND	1371	1346	1379
% 6+ Points	44	25	37	24	31	31	27	30

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

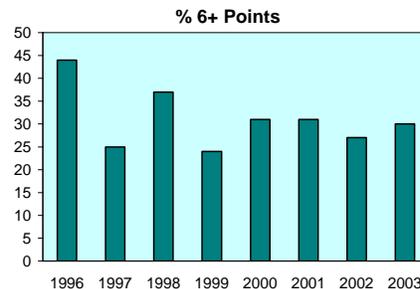
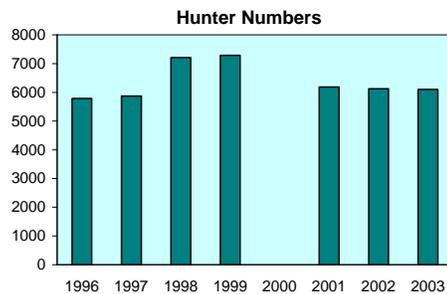


Figure 10. McCall Zone Status and Objectives.

Weiser River Zone (Units 22, 32, 32A)

Management Objectives

The goal for this zone is to reduce cow elk population levels to 2,700+ elk. Most antlerless elk reduction will occur in Units 22 and 32. The total population objective draws a balance between the concern about depredation damage and the need to sustain a reasonably large elk population. In the short term, the reduction of antlerless elk will result in an increase in controlled antlerless elk permits. As herds are reduced and population levels are stabilized, permit levels will decrease. This zone will be managed to produce the statewide minimums for bull:cow ratio (18-24 bulls:100 cows) and adult bull:cow ratio (10-14 adult bulls:100 cows). A large decrease in harvest mortality will be necessary to increase the bull numbers in this zone. A postseason population of 550+ bulls, including 315+ adult bulls, is the objective for this zone. A harvest of 400+ bulls can be sustained each year.

Historical Perspective

Elk were present in the Weiser River Zone prior to European settlement in the mid-1800s. Native American tribes hunted elk for food in the Weiser River drainage. As in other areas in Idaho, the proliferation of mining due to the gold rush in the late 1800s and early 1900s probably led to year-round slaughter of these animals to supply meat and hides for mining camps. Subsequent intensive livestock grazing denigrated habitat in the zone. Translocation of elk from Yellowstone to places in the McCall Zone on the periphery of the Weiser River Zone occurred in the late 1930s to bolster sagging elk populations. Regulated livestock grazing began during the same era. Transient elk from these populations probably repopulated the Weiser River Zone. Liberal either-sex hunting seasons kept population numbers of elk suppressed well into the 1970s. Unit 22 became a controlled either-sex hunt in 1971. This unit reopened to general bulls-only hunting in 1977. The implementation of bulls-only hunting spurred an increase in elk populations in the Weiser River Zone.

The elk population in the agricultural area of the west half of Unit 32 consisted of transient elk prior to 1980. Following several hard winters, elk herds started moving into this area. Most elk were there in the winter and a few groups of elk became year-round residents. The population of elk in the Weiser River Zone reached its sociological tolerance level in the early 1990s.

Habitat Issues

About 60% of Units 22 and 32A and 20% of Unit 32 is in public ownership and management. Private land predominates the western portion of Unit 32 and the Weiser River valley of Units 22 and 32A. Agricultural products are primarily dry-land grazing, grain production, and hay fields.

Timber harvest, livestock grazing, and prescribed fires are the preponderant methods affecting habitat change in this zone. Most forested habitat is in the early to mid-successional stage. Winter ranges occur primarily on public ground in Unit 22, but mostly on private ground in Units 32 and 32A. Noxious weed invasion, such as yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) and whitetop (*Cardaria draba*), is a threat to winter range habitat. The Andrus WMA in the

southwest portion of Unit 22 is managed for elk and mule deer winter range and encompasses about 8,000 acres.

Extensive road building from past timber harvest and mining activities contribute to the high vulnerability of elk during hunting seasons in this zone. The inherent lack of security cover and openings created from timber harvest compound elk vulnerability. Active timber harvest programs are anticipated to increase these road densities in the near future.

Elk/human conflicts occur during the summer and fall months in Units 22 and 32A when elk enter agricultural fields in the valley bottoms to forage. Resident elk in Unit 32 have caused landowners concern about damage to fences, fall plowed fields, row crops, and alfalfa hay fields. The Department has paid an average of \$13,000 per year for damage in this area.

Biological Issues

The Weiser River Zone contains a highly productive elk population. Calf production averages well over 40 calves:100 cows. Bull:cow ratios are low (15 bulls:100 cows) due to the high vulnerability of the open-canopied, heavily-roaded habitat. Even with the good calf production, harvest of bulls is at or exceeds production.

Inter-specific Issues

Elk compete zone-wide with mule deer for habitat. Intensive domestic sheep and cattle grazing occurs over most of the zone. The competitive effect of these species on one another is largely unknown.

Predation Issues

Black bear and mountain lions occur in moderate to high numbers in the Weiser River Zone. There is no indication that predation is having an impact on elk calf recruitment or survival of elk in this zone. Coyotes are common, but are not known to have much effect on elk populations.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding takes place on an irregular basis in the Weiser River Zone. Most elk feeding operations have been to bait elk away from livestock feeding operations.

Information Requirements

Carrying capacity of winter ranges is unknown. This information is needed to identify appropriate elk densities, which will maintain optimum productivity and harvest. Information is lacking on the migration routes and patterns of elk in this zone and interaction with elk in the adjacent Brownlee Zone. A full survey of these interacting herds is needed for these zones. Knowledge of inter-specific competition is needed.

Elk Weiser River Zone (Units 22, 32, 32A)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Current Status				Objective		
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
22	2004	2194	327	137	1100 - 1700	250 - 350	125 - 200
32	2004	1075	142	57	325 - 475	50 - 100	40 - 60
32A	2004	235	34	10	700 - 1100	150 - 200	75 - 125
Zone Total		3504	503	204	2125 - 3275	450 - 650	240 - 385
Bulls per 100 Cows			14	6		18 - 24	10 - 14

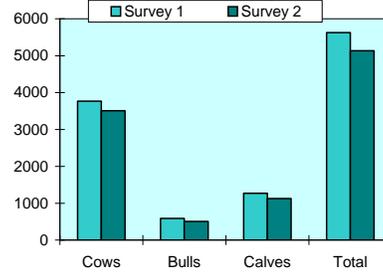
Note: Estimates within parentheses are based on information other than sightability surveys.



Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
22	2000	1480	224	515	2219	2004	2194	327	709	3230
32	2000	1141	263	495	1899	2004	1075	142	336	1553
32A	2000	1147	102	259	1508	2004	235	34	83	352
Comparable Surveys Total		3768	589	1269	5626		3504	503	1128	5135
Per 100 Cows			16	34				14	32	

Comparable Survey Totals

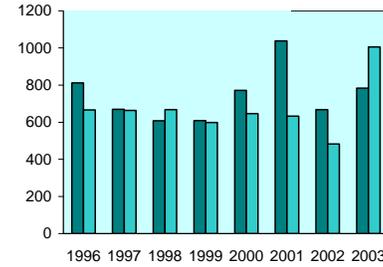


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	812	670	608	609	772	1038	668	784
'A' Tag			58	48	80	472	136	235
'B' Tag			0	6	1	5	6	23
CH Tag			550	555	691	561	526	526
Antlered Harvest	666	664	668	598	647	633	482	1005
'A' Tag			159	153	91	97	90	244
'B' Tag			509	445	522	496	362	738
CH Tag			0	0	34	40	30	23
Hunter Numbers	6858	6725	6746	6649	ND	7503	6079	6773
'A' Tag			1244	1123	ND	2235	1398	1759
'B' Tag			3599	3571	ND	2586	2757	3244
CH Tag			1903	1955	ND	2682	1924	1770
% 6+ Points	15	15	24	18	19	16	16	18

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

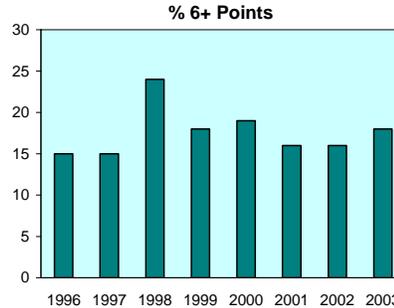
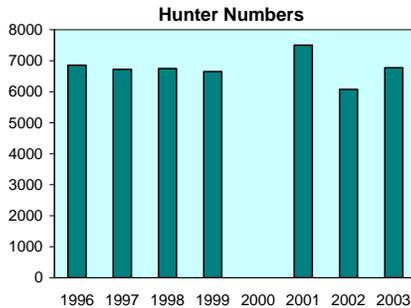


Figure 11. Weiser River Zone Status and Objectives.

Brownlee Zone (Unit 31)

Management Objectives

The objective for this zone is to maintain a population of 700+ cow and 140+ bull elk, including 75+ adult bulls. This zone will be managed to produce the statewide minimums for bull:cow ratio (18-24 bulls:100 cows) and adult bull:cow ratio (10-14 adult bulls:100 cows). The total population objective draws a balance between concerns about depredation damage and the need to sustain a reasonably large elk population. The current harvest of 30-50 bulls per year by permit is expected to be maintained. Intense controlled antlerless hunting and animal displacement have this population below current objectives. Controlled hunt harvest opportunity will remain similar to current levels until this population increases again. General hunting opportunity was increased with the implementation of a spike-only A-tag season in 1998. General antlerless or any-bull hunting opportunity is unlikely, due to the inherent vulnerability of elk in this habitat.

Historical Perspective

Elk were present in the Brownlee Zone prior to European settlement in the mid-1800s. Native American tribes hunted elk for food in the Weiser River drainage. As in other areas in Idaho, the proliferation of mining due to the gold rush in the late 1800s and early 1900s probably led to year-round slaughter of these animals to supply meat and hides for mining camps. Subsequent heavy livestock grazing denigrated habitat in the zone. Translocation of elk from Yellowstone to places in the Weiser River and McCall zones occurred in the late 1930s to bolster dwindling elk populations. Regulated livestock grazing occurred during the same era. Transient elk from these populations probably repopulated the Brownlee Zone. Liberal either-sex hunting seasons kept population numbers of elk suppressed well into the late 1960s. Unit 31 was closed to elk hunting in 1968. The unit reopened to controlled hunting in 1976. Protected by conservative bull-only permits, this elk population expanded rapidly in the late 1980s. This population reached its sociological tolerance level in the early 1990s.

Habitat Issues

About 50% of the Brownlee Zone is in public ownership and management. Private land predominates the southern and eastern portions of the unit. Agricultural products are primarily dry-land grazing and hay fields. Higher elevations are timbered; lower elevations are primarily shrub-steppe or desert.

Timber harvest, livestock grazing, and prescribed fires are the preponderant methods affecting habitat change in this zone. Most forested habitat is in the early to mid-successional stage. Winter ranges occur primarily on public ground. Noxious weed invasion, such as yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) and whitetop (*Cardaria draba*), is a threat to winter range habitat. The Andrus WMA is managed for elk and mule deer winter range and comprises about 8,000 acres in the northwest part of the zone. Elk/human conflicts occur during the summer and fall months when elk enter agricultural fields in the valley bottoms to forage.

Extensive road building from past timber harvest and mining activities contribute to the high vulnerability of elk during hunting seasons in this zone. The inherent lack of security cover and openings created from timber harvest compound elk vulnerability. Active timber harvest programs are anticipated to increase these road densities in the near future.

Biological Issues

Since the mid-1980s, elk populations in this zone have performed well. Calf production is good, at greater than 35:100 cows on average. Elk have not reached their habitat potential in this zone but have reached a threshold of tolerance among user groups concerned.

Inter-specific Issues

Elk compete zone-wide with mule deer for habitat. Intensive domestic sheep and cattle grazing occurs over most of the zone. The competitive effect of these species on one another is largely unknown.

Predation Issues

Black bear and mountain lions occur in low to moderate numbers in the Brownlee Zone. There is no evidence these species have an effect on the elk population in this zone. Coyotes are common but are not known to have much effect on elk populations.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding in the Brownlee Zone is an extremely rare event. Winter feeding occurred on a limited basis in close proximity to domestic livestock feeding operations during the severe winter of 1992-1993.

Information Requirements

Carrying capacity of winter ranges is unknown. This information is needed to identify appropriate elk densities, which will maintain optimum productivity and harvest. Information is lacking on the migration routes and patterns of elk in this zone and interaction with elk in the adjacent Weiser River Zone. A population survey concurrent with the adjacent Weiser River Zone is needed. Knowledge of inter-specific competition is needed.

Elk Brownlee Zone (Unit 31)

Winter Status & Objectives

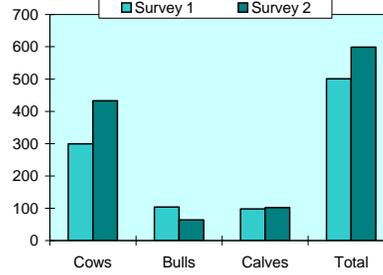
Unit	Current Status			Objective			
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
31	2004	433	64	20	550 - 850	125 - 175	50 - 100
Zone Total		433	64	20	550 - 850	125 - 175	50 - 100
Bulls per 100 Cows		15	5			18 - 24	10 - 14



Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
31	2000	299	104	98	501	2004	433	64	102	599
Comparable Surveys Total		299	104	98	501		433	64	102	599
Per 100 Cows			35	33				15	24	

Comparable Survey Totals

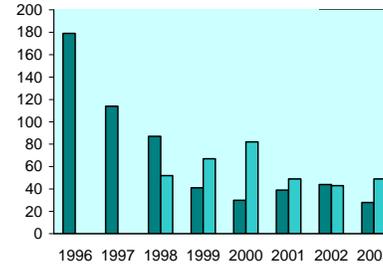


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	179	114	87	41	30	39	44	28
'A' Tag			7	0	0	4	0	1
'B' Tag			0	0	0	0	0	0
CH Tag			80	41	30	35	44	27
Antlered Harvest	0	0	52	67	82	49	43	49
'A' Tag			20	31	39	14	10	13
'B' Tag			0	0	0	0	0	0
CH Tag			32	36	43	35	33	36
Hunter Numbers	644	471	776	617	ND	287	304	273
'A' Tag			316	251	ND	120	106	113
'B' Tag			0	0	ND	0	0	0
CH Tag			460	366	ND	167	198	160
% 6+ Points	61	35	45	32	35	43	32	54

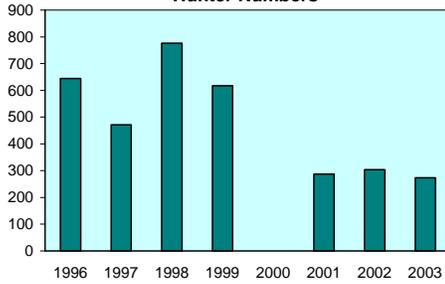
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

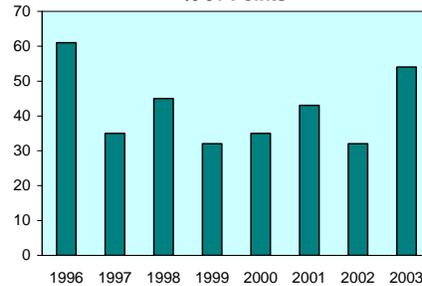


Figure 12. Brownlee Zone Status and Objectives.

**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Elk Surveys and Inventories</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-28</u>		
SUBPROJECT:	<u>4</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>I</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>1</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004</u>		

MAGIC VALLEY REGION

Pioneer Zone (Units 36A, 49, 50)

Management Objectives

The objective for this zone is to stabilize elk herds at slightly reduced levels (about 4,200 cows and 1,350 bulls) to maintain herd productivity and to minimize potential impacts on mule deer. This zone will continue to be managed to produce very high bull:cow ratios (30-35 bulls:100 cows postseason) and many mature bulls (18-22 bulls \geq 3 years old:100 cows).

Historical Perspective

Elk abundance was low in the Pioneer Zone through much of the 20th century. These units have been managed for decades under conservative controlled hunt strategies. As has occurred over much of the west, elk herds expanded dramatically since the mid-1970s. Today, the Pioneer Zone winters approximately 9,000 elk, an increase of about 40% (3,700 elk) since the early 1990s.

Around 4,000 people hunt in the Pioneer Zone each year since adoption of the dual-tag zone system in 1998. Conservative bull harvest management has produced exceptional bull:cow ratios and a reputation for large mature bulls. The controlled bull hunts in this zone have become very desirable; rifle permits are in high demand and difficult to draw. The area's reputation for many mature bulls has also made this zone a very attractive archery hunt.

Habitat Issues

Cattle ranching, livestock grazing, and recreation are dominant human uses of the landscape in the Pioneer Zone. The zone is in a generally arid region where forage production can be strongly influenced by growing season precipitation. During drought years, high elevation mesic habitats are more heavily utilized by elk while low elevation riparian areas and wet meadows are more heavily utilized by cattle. Elk depredations on agricultural crops are common and are especially pronounced in dry years.

In some areas, elk winter in mature stands of mountain mahogany which appear relatively stagnant and unproductive. Forests are slowly encroaching into shrub and grassland communities. Spread of noxious weeds, such as knapweed and leafy spurge, could ultimately have significant impacts on winter range productivity.

Recent housing developments in the Big Wood River drainage in Unit 49 have severely reduced winter elk habitat. Continued development on the remaining winter ranges will reduce elk carrying capacity in the unit. Changes in land ownership in Unit 50 are making it difficult to manage depredation problems.

Biological Issues

Elk populations have been increasing steadily since the mid-1970s. Liberal antlerless permits have been offered to stabilize population growth rates, but some depredation problems continue to exist.

Recruitment measured through sightability surveys indicate most populations are reproducing at moderate to high levels (30-40 calves:100 cows). Bull:cow ratios remain at very high levels (≥ 35 bulls:100 cows).

Inter-specific Issues

Current high elk densities may be having some impact on deer populations.

When elk numbers are high, as they are currently, livestock operators often perceive elk as competing with livestock for range forage and impacting riparian areas. However, elk generally remove a minor portion of forage compared to livestock, and elk tend to use different habitats and different forage species than livestock.

Predation Issues

Black bear densities appear to be low and stable in the Pioneer Zone. Mountain lion densities are low to moderate and appear to have increased in recent years, probably partly due to increased elk densities. Coyotes are common, but not known to have much impact on elk populations. Wolves reintroduced by the USFWS in central Idaho in 1995 are established in the Pioneer Zone. They may become a significant factor in elk distribution and population demographics and may displace other predators through competitive interactions.

Winter Feeding Issues

No Department-sponsored feeding facilities exist in this zone; however, artificial feeding of elk by private citizens in Unit 49 is an annual occurrence. Education measures undertaken to reduce this activity have met with some success. Efforts need to continue to give non-sanctioned feeders a better understanding of problems associated with artificially-fed elk.

Information Requirements

Impacts of elk on mule deer winter range are occurring and may be a limiting factor for mule deer populations. The most productive elk herds are those maintained at a level below carrying capacity. Better information is needed to identify appropriate elk densities that will maintain optimum productivity and harvest. Additionally, if wolves become a significant factor in elk ecology, better information regarding impacts to hunting opportunity would be beneficial.

Elk Pioneer Zone (Units 36A, 49, 50)

Winter Status & Objectives

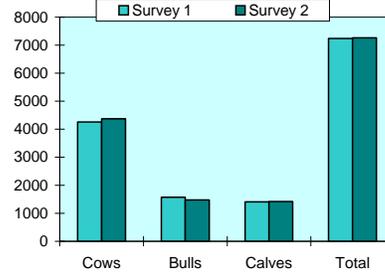
Unit	Survey Year	Current Status			Objective		
		Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
36A	2004	1901	652	409	1050 - 1550	300 - 500	200 - 300
49	2004	1188	422	233	1350 - 2050	500 - 700	300 - 400
50	2004	1279	402	265	950 - 1450	300 - 500	200 - 300
Zone Total		4368	1476	907	3350 - 5050	1100 - 1700	700 - 1000
Bulls per 100 Cows			34	21		30 - 35	18 - 22



Population Surveys

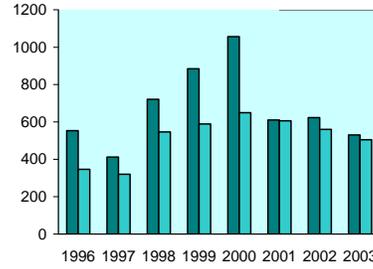
Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
36A	2000	2126	595	602	3323	2004	1901	652	571	3124
49	2001	1108	544	341	1993	2004	1188	422	430	2040
50	2000	1026	431	464	1921	2004	1279	402	419	2100
Comparable Surveys Total		4260	1570	1407	7237		4368	1476	1420	7264
Per 100 Cows			37	33				34	33	

Comparable Survey Totals



Zone Harvest Statistics

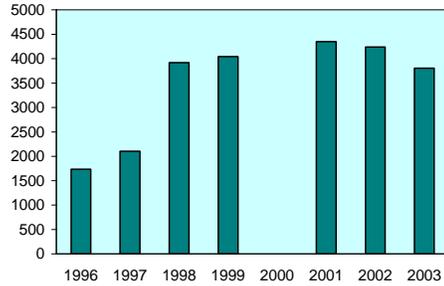
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	553	412	721	884	1056	610	623	530
'A' Tag			44	511	109	67	72	59
'B' Tag			0	0	0	1	0	1
CH Tag			677	373	947	542	551	470
Antlered Harvest	346	320	546	589	649	605	560	504
'A' Tag			230	262	268	247	196	188
'B' Tag			0	0	1	2	0	0
CH Tag			316	327	380	356	364	316
Hunter Numbers	1732	2101	3922	4043	ND	4351	4239	3805
'A' Tag			1660	2346	ND	1607	1483	1434
'B' Tag			0	0	ND	29	14	27
CH Tag			2262	1697	ND	2715	2742	2344
% 6+ Points	63	39	37	32	49	41	43	47



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

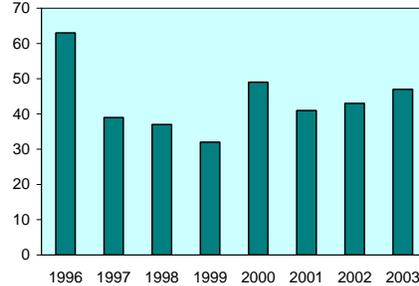


Figure 13. Pioneer Zone Status and Objectives.

Owyhee-South Hills Zone (Units 38, 40, 41, 42, 46, 47, 54, 55, 57)

Management Objectives

The objective in this zone is to provide additional hunting opportunity commensurate with the increased elk population. Harvest management will emphasize the opportunity to harvest a mature bull.

The nine management units within this zone vary substantially in their potential to sustain elk populations under current biological and socio-political constraints. Management will retain enough flexibility to allow adjustments of elk numbers, up or down, to address issues that may arise. In Unit 54, surveys will be initiated to provide data on which to assess population status.

Historical Perspective

During the late 1800s, elk in the Owyhee-South Hills Zone were nearly eliminated because of unrestricted hunting and conflicts with the area's growing livestock industry. Elk densities remained low throughout the 20th century but began to increase in the 1990s. Recently, ingress from the rapidly growing northern Nevada elk population and natural reproduction have both contributed to herd growth. Presently (2002), there are an estimated 850 elk in the zone.

Efforts by the Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW) to reestablish elk in the northern portion of that state have been very successful. Elk are expanding their range into suitable habitats in Nevada and Idaho that have not had resident elk for nearly a century. Transplants have been used to hasten the growth in elk numbers. Since the mid-1980s, 523 elk have been released into five areas in northern Nevada (Elko County). The overall current population (2002) is estimated to be 2,260 head with a management cap of 4,480 elk.

Units 38, 40, 41, and 42 - During the 1970s, a few hundred elk inhabited Units 40 and 42. By the mid-1990s, this elk herd had increased to about 600 head and is presently (2002) estimated at approximately 450 head. Elk in Units 40, 41, and 42 use seasonal habitats in Nevada and Oregon. In Units 40 and 42, most elk move to winter ranges in Oregon and long distance interstate movements have been documented. One elk calf tagged in Baker, Oregon was harvested as an adult near Murphy, Idaho, over 175 miles away. In Unit 41, elk that winter east of Highway 51 move south to summer ranges in Nevada, although an increasing number are staying in Unit 41 year-long. Most of these elk originated from a reintroduction program conducted by NDOW and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) in the Bruneau River drainage in Nevada. One of the released elk was harvested in Unit 46 southwest of Castleford, Idaho, over 50 miles from the Nevada release site.

Units 46, 47, 54, 55, and 57 - Elk numbers in these units were very low throughout the 1900s. Elk sightings were considered uncommon and management emphasized providing quality mule deer hunting opportunities. In 1916, the Department reintroduced 19 elk (17 cows and two bulls) into Unit 54. Following the release, elk numbers increased only slightly. In 1950, there were approximately 60 elk wintering in Unit 54. Hunting seasons were authorized from 1963-1966 (5-15 permits) but were discontinued because of low success. In 1990, the Magic

Valley RMEF chapter proposed releasing elk into Unit 54 to establish a larger, huntable, resident elk population. Since ingress of elk from Utah and Nevada was beginning to occur at that time, it was decided to allow elk numbers to increase naturally without transplants. Although reliable estimates of elk numbers are currently unavailable, the population in Units 46, 47, 54, 55, and 57 in 2002 was estimated between 250 and 350 head, exceeding the 1998 objective. Elk hunting was authorized in Units 46, 47, and 54 in 2002 with 15 either-sex archery permits, 15 any-weapon antlered permits, and 15 any-weapon antlerless permits. Similar hunting seasons were authorized for 2003 and 2004 with the antlerless hunt permit level increased from 15 to 40 permits.

Because these management units have not traditionally been managed to maintain a resident elk population, the Department scoped three possible management scenarios with the public between December 2001 and February 2002. These scenarios were 1) do not allow an elk population to become established; 2) allow slow, carefully monitored growth of the elk herd to allow timely and effective responses to issues or conflicts that might arise; and 3) maximize elk population growth. Of the 230 people surveyed on the issue, 7% favored scenario 1, 52% favored scenario 2, and 41% favored scenario 3. Hunters overwhelmingly favored the establishment of a resident elk population. Ranchers were split between scenarios 1 and 2 and expressed concerns about the potential for elk to compete with livestock for forage on public and private grazing lands. Specifically, ranchers were concerned about elk use on private meadows in August and September and possible future reductions in AUMs on federal lands because of elk.

Habitat Issues

The Owyhee-South Hills Zone is comprised of nine management units, which have varying degrees of potential for supporting elk populations. Habitat quality varies considerably between units, as does the potential for depredation problems.

The BLM manages the majority of elk habitat in Owyhee County. However, small parcels of private property include habitats that receive substantial elk use. The number of Landowner Appreciation Permits has been increased in Units 40 and 42 to provide landowners the opportunity to harvest some of the elk that utilize their property.

In Units 46, 47, 54, 55, and 57, the USFS and BLM manage the majority of elk habitat. Habitat conditions are currently suitable for supporting substantially higher numbers of elk. A large amount of the sagebrush, bitterbrush, and mountain shrub dominated habitats preferred by mule deer have been altered by fire, improving elk habitat suitability. However, high road densities, the open character of the habitat, and depredations are important issues that will ultimately help determine elk management objectives.

Biological Issues

Because elk densities have traditionally been low in this zone, surveys have not been conducted to provide data on population dynamics. Anecdotal information suggests these populations are increasing, but accurate estimates of population size are unavailable. Increases in elk numbers over the next 5-10 years are inevitable from natural reproduction and continued ingress of elk

from Nevada. Although elk numbers in some units currently exceed the population objectives established in 1998, no major biological issues have been identified.

Inter-specific Issues

The Owyhee-South Hills Zone has traditionally had a large population of mule deer, although deer numbers have declined during the past decade from changes in habitat and the effects of drought and severe winters. The current, small elk population has had no impact on mule deer numbers.

Conflicts between elk and livestock have had a major influence on elk management in portions of Owyhee County. The concentration of elk on the private land holdings in western Owyhee County has created significant depredation problems. The landowners' major concerns are damage to fences and loss of private rangeland forage. Currently, there are no elk depredation problems in this zone east of the Bruneau River, but the potential exists. Depredations that occur will be dealt with aggressively by the Department in a timely manner as specified in Idaho Code (36-1108) and Department policy. The Department will work closely with private landowners to avoid the development of chronic problems. On federal lands, any resource damage attributed to elk will be jointly evaluated by the Department and managing agency.

Predation Issues

Mountain lions are the primary predator on elk. Lion numbers have declined during the past ten years concurrent with deer population declines. Predation is presently not a major factor limiting growth of these elk populations, nor is it anticipated to become a concern.

Winter Feeding Issues

There has been no winter feeding of elk in this zone recently. Elk numbers will not be maintained at a higher level than can be supported by available winter habitat. Unsanctioned feeding by private individuals will be strongly discouraged. In the event that emergency feeding is necessary, elk will be reduced to resolve the problem.

Information Requirements

To effectively manage elk in this zone, population surveys will be conducted to identify seasonal habitat use areas and provide data on elk status and trend - especially in those units where population increases are expected (Units 46, 47, and 54). Current estimates are based on reports from ranchers, biologists, and hunters, but better data will be necessary for management of anticipated higher numbers.

Elk Owyhee - South Hills Zone (Units 38, 40, 41, 42, 46, 47, 54, 55, 57)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Current Status			Objective			
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
38		(0)	(0)	(0)	0	0	0
40		(150)	(40)	(25)	125 - 175	20 - 40	15 - 25
41		(155)	(45)	(20)	25 - 75	5 - 15	5 - 10
42		(175)	(70)	(40)	150 - 200	25 - 50	15 - 25
46		(10)	(5)	(3)	5 - 15	1 - 10	1 - 5
47		(20)	(10)	(5)	15 - 25	1 - 10	1 - 5
54		(150)	(50)	(30)	20 - 30	1 - 10	1 - 5
55		(20)	(10)	(5)	15 - 25	1 - 10	1 - 5
57		(20)	(10)	(5)	15 - 25	1 - 10	1 - 5
Zone Total		(700)	(240)	(133)	370 - 570	55 - 145	40 - 85
Bulls per 100 Cows			(34)	(19)		18 - 24	10 - 14

Note: Estimates within parentheses are based on information other than sightability surveys.

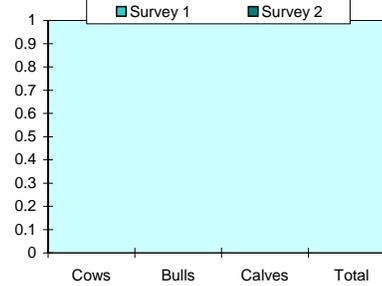


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
38	ND					ND				
40	ND					ND				
41	ND					ND				
42	ND					ND				
46	ND					ND				
47	ND					ND				
54	ND					ND				
55	ND					ND				
57	ND					ND				
Comparable Surveys Total		0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
Per 100 Cows										

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey Totals

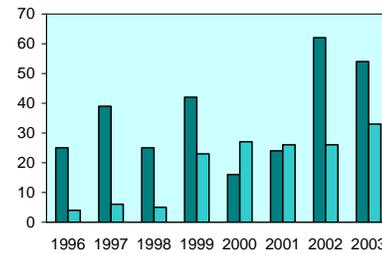


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	25	39	25	42	16	24	62	54
'A' Tag				13	1	2	44	2
'B' Tag					2	0	0	0
CH Tag			25	29	13	22	18	52
Antlered Harvest	4	6	5	23	27	26	26	33
'A' Tag				20	7	2	0	2
'B' Tag					2	3	0	0
CH Tag			5	3	18	21	26	31
Hunter Numbers	127	246	233	696	ND	286	345	378
'A' Tag				457	ND	25	19	24
'B' Tag					ND	21	21	9
CH Tag			233	239	ND	240	305	345
% 6+ Points	67	60	50	0	56	58	72	67

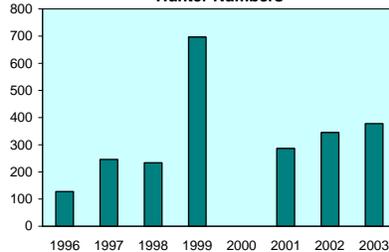
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

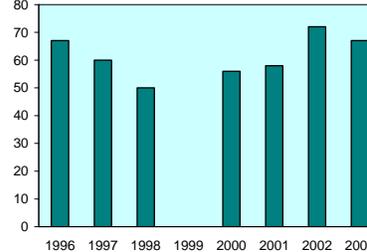


Figure 14. Owyhee-South Hills Zone Status and Objectives.

Smoky Mountains Zone (Units 43, 44, 48)

Management Objectives

The objective in this zone is to establish a population of 2,300+ cows and 700+ bulls, including 475+ adult bulls, at ratios of 30-35 bulls:100 cows and 18-22 adult bulls:100 cows. The management objective balances depredation concerns in Unit 44, feed-site capacity in Units 43 and 48 and the desire to provide the maximum elk population the habitat can sustain. The adult bull objective was selected to maximize bull quality in controlled hunts and provide adequate adult bulls to sustain quality elk populations. Currently, objectives for bull:cow ratios and adult bull:cow ratios are within established goals while population levels are below goals.

Historical Perspective

Accounts from trappers and miners in the 1870s and 1880s indicate that elk occurred in the zone but were not as numerous as deer. Excessive use by livestock during the late 1800s and early 1900s severely damaged the Boise River and Big Wood River watersheds and reduced the area's ability to support high numbers of elk. Additionally, heavy, unregulated hunting by miners, market hunters, and local settlers drastically reduced big game populations during the late 1800s. By 1905, it was difficult to find camp meat. Elk had been all but eliminated and deer observations were rare in the Boise River Basin and Big Wood River drainage.

In 1915, the Department began a reintroduction effort with a release of elk from Yellowstone National Park into the Boise River drainage just above Arrowrock Dam. In 1930, the elk population in the Soldier Mountain area was estimated at 135 head. Reintroduction efforts continued in 1935 and 1936 with elk releases near Ketchum in the Big Wood River drainage. Elk populations increased steadily during the 1950s and 1960s, and controlled hunts were used to manage the harvest. Supplemental winter feeding of elk by the Department and private interests has occurred in this zone since the initial releases.

Habitat Issues

Primary spring, summer, and fall habitats throughout the zone are managed by the USFS, and winter ranges are a mixture of USFS, BLM, and private lands. Suitable winter ranges in Units 43 and 44 are very limited. Because of this, nearly annual supplemental feeding must take place to sustain these populations. In Unit 43, the South Fork Boise River corridor is critical for elk that winter away from established feed sites. In Unit 48, most of the best winter habitat exists on private land in drainage bottoms near residential areas. A substantial loss of winter range to residential development has occurred in Unit 48.

Habitat productivity has probably improved on federal lands in recent years because of reductions in domestic sheep grazing and regrowth of shrubs in areas with timber harvest. However, suppression of fire throughout much of this century has probably resulted in declining elk habitat quality. Many aspen communities are decadent and/or are being replaced by conifer species and would benefit from fire. Additionally, in some areas, ponderosa pine-dominated communities would benefit from fire to reduce high densities of Douglas fir in the stands.

Spotted knapweed has become established in the zone and threatens habitat productivity and diversity in several localized areas.

Depredations have been very limited in most of this zone, with the only real problems arising near urban areas where wintering elk find exposed horse hay or ornamental shrubs.

In Unit 43, high road densities from past timber harvest activities have increased elk vulnerability during the hunting seasons. Seasonal road closures have been instituted by the USFS to increase elk escapement and mitigate for the high road densities. However, over-snow recreational pursuits (snowmobiling, backcountry skiing, summer home access) potentially pose a serious threat to wintering elk and could hamper the Department's ability to achieve population goals.

Biological Issues

Elk populations have been increasing steadily since their reintroduction in the 1930s. Mild winters in the 1980s and early 1990s enhanced calf survival and increased population growth rates. Liberal antlerless harvest throughout this period has begun to stabilize population growth.

Production, measured through sightability surveys and herd composition surveys at feed sites, indicate most populations are reproducing at sustainable levels (30 calves :100 cows). However, at some feed sites in the South Fork Boise River (Unit 43), observed reproductive performance has been somewhat lower. No determination has been made as to the cause of this lower production.

Inter-specific Issues

The zone supports a substantial population of mule deer, numerous moose, and, at higher elevations, mountain goats. The relationship between deer and elk is presently unclear but is not believed to be a significant issue in this zone. Elk remain within the zone during winter whereas most deer migrate to winter ranges in Units 45 and 52, minimizing potential competition during the critical winter months.

Cattle and domestic sheep have imposed the major forage demand in this zone since the 1870s. Excessive use by cattle and domestic sheep severely damaged watersheds in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Today, livestock use has been reduced to roughly 15% of the historic use and competitive concerns remain but tend to be more localized.

Predation Issues

Black bear populations have remained relatively static over time whereas mountain lion numbers probably increased in the late 1980s and early 1990s following increases in mule deer and elk populations. Recently, wolf-pack activity and reproduction has been documented in the Big Wood River (Unit 48) and South Fork of the Boise River drainages. Once established, they will become a potential predator on elk and may displace other predators through competitive

interactions. Predation is currently not considered to be an important factor in the sustainability of elk populations in this zone.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding is the most contentious issue related to elk in this zone. The Department has five Commission-approved feed sites located in Units 43 and 48. These are the only elk feed sites in Idaho formally sanctioned by the Commission. Unsanctioned private feeding also occurs at as many as nine locations in Unit 48 and two locations in Unit 44 during many winters.

Elk feeding has become a “tradition” in Unit 43 with near annual feeding operations being conducted. Without supplemental winter feeding, elk numbers in Unit 43 would probably be less than half of current numbers. Currently, the elk population in Unit 43 is managed at a level that is compatible with the capacity of the four feed facilities (approximately 1,100 head). Recent discoveries of Brucellosis at “emergency” feed sites in the Upper Snake Region may influence future management of this elk population.

Unit 48 has one Department-sanctioned feed site in the Warm Springs Creek drainage. It is not necessary to sustain the population, but was set up to shortstop elk before they enter developed winter ranges in the town of Ketchum. The private feeding operations in the valley are a symptom of growth and the changing demographics of the populace of the Ketchum-Sun Valley area. Most private feeding operations take place whether it is warranted or not.

Information Requirements

More detailed information is needed on 1) the effects of concentrating elk for feeding purposes (i.e., are diseases present in fed elk and what is the relationship between feeding and low observed calf ratios); 2) the movement patterns of fed elk to improve harvest management; and 3) more frequent sightability surveys to monitor population trends and age and sex ratios. In addition to improving harvest management, population surveys and movement studies are important to our discussions with local political factions regarding development in and around critical elk wintering areas.

Elk Smoky Mountains Zone (Units 43, 44, 48)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Current Status				Objective		
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
43	2002	867	420	253	1350 - 2000	425 - 650	275 - 400
44	2002	250	138	103	150 - 250	50 - 75	30 - 50
48	2002	350	179	140	375 - 550	125 - 175	75 - 125
Zone Total		1467	737	496	1875 - 2800	600 - 900	380 - 575
Bulls per 100 Cows		50	34			30 - 35	18 - 22

2004 - Unit 48 ground survey: 40 calves:100 cows (n=626 elk observed)

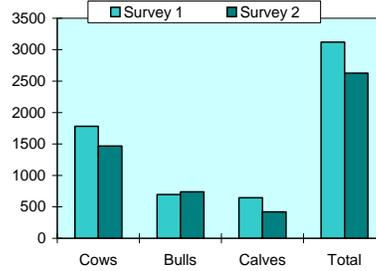


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
43	2000	1040	292	340	1672	2002	867	420	241	1528
44	2000	250	157	80	487	2002	250	138	94	482
48	1999	493	245	224	962	2002	350	179	86	615
Comparable Surveys Total		1783	694	644	3121		1467	737	421	2625
Per 100 Cows			39	36				50	29	

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey Totals

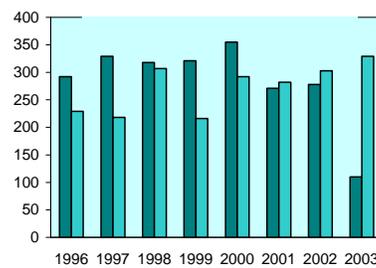


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	292	329	318	321	355	271	278	110
'A' Tag			6	26	9	10	5	9
'B' Tag					0	1	0	0
CH Tag	292	329	312	295	346	260	273	101
Antlered Harvest	229	218	307	216	292	282	303	329
'A' Tag			102	46	82	81	72	68
'B' Tag					1	3	0	3
CH Tag	229	218	205	170	209	198	231	258
Hunter Numbers	2045	2400	3065	2866	ND	2622	2791	2590
'A' Tag			861	739	ND	740	773	743
'B' Tag					ND	27	20	12
CH Tag	2045	2400	2204	2127	ND	1855	1998	1835
% 6+ Points	46	38	47	37	35	47	44	42

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

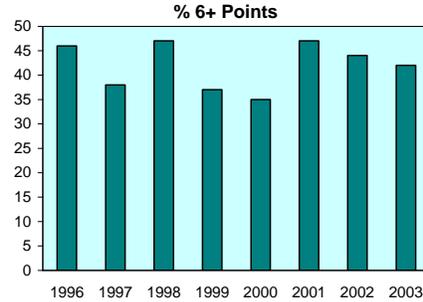
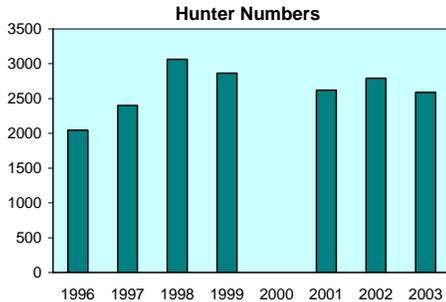


Figure 15. Smoky Mountains Zone Status and Objectives.

Bennett Hills Zone (Units 45, 52)

Management Objectives

The objective is to maintain a population of 350+ cows and 155+ bulls, including 55+ adult bulls, at ratios of 18-24 bulls:100 cows and 10-14 adult bulls:100 cows. One sightability survey (1999) has been conducted in the zone since population objectives were established with results indicating modifications in zone objectives may be necessary. Current population levels are 375 cows, 200 bulls, and 165 adult bulls at ratios of 58 bulls:100 cows and 50 adult bulls:100 cows.

Historical Perspective

Elk were extirpated from the Bennett Hills Zone by the early 1900s as a result of unregulated hunting and habitat depletion from excessive livestock use. The recolonization of the Bennett Hills Zone by elk was slow, following the reintroduction of elk into south-central Idaho (Arrowrock Reservoir in 1915, Warm Springs Creek west of Ketchum in 1935 and 1936). During the late 1940s, elk numbered less than 50 head in Unit 45 and less than 15 head in Unit 52. Although population surveys have not been conducted, the zone is currently believed to have about 450 elk.

In Unit 45, general five-day either-sex elk hunts were held in the western portion of the unit from 1943 through 1953. There were no elk seasons in Unit 45 from 1954 to 1963 and 1971 to 1978. Unit 52 was closed to all elk hunting from 1943 to 1978 and 1971 to 1978.

In 1965, 36 elk (nine bulls, 19 cows, and nine calves), trapped in Unit 48, were released in Unit 52 about one mile south of Magic Reservoir. By the late 1970s, the population had increased to an estimated 235 head and depredation problems occurred on wheat and alfalfa fields from the approximately 120 elk that summered in the Johnson Hill area. Early controlled firearms hunts and archery seasons were implemented in 1979 to reduce the depredation concerns. In 1980, the management objective was to reduce depredations and increase the elk population to 300 head. The 1986-1990 Elk Management Plan established a goal of about 400 elk for Units 45 and 52 combined. Because depredation problems were minimal and the elk population relatively small, aerial surveys were not conducted in the Bennett Hills Zone until 1999 to monitor the elk population.

Habitat Issues

The Bennett Hills Zone encompasses roughly 3,700 square miles; 8% is managed by the USFS, 67% is managed by the BLM, 5% is administered by the IDL, and 27% is private land. Most of Unit 52 and the southern portion of Unit 45 are primarily arid semi-desert dominated by sagebrush-grass. The Mount Bennett Hills in the northern portion of Unit 45 is a low range of mountains or high plateau consisting of sagebrush-grass and mixed mountain shrub communities with small pockets of aspen and Douglas fir on northern exposures and more mesic sites. The Camas Prairie on the north side of the zone is primarily private land used for pasturing livestock and growing grass and alfalfa hay.

Livestock grazing is the primary land use in the zone. There are competitive concerns during drought years when forage utilization by cattle is higher.

Private interests own or control access to important summer and fall habitats. This has been a subject of much concern by hunters unable to gain access to areas they wish to hunt. Several elk ranching operations have recently been established in Unit 45 bringing concerns of potential loss of the genetic integrity of wild elk and possible transmission of diseases to wild populations.

Biological Issues

Elk populations in this zone have increased over the last 30 years as a result of reintroduction, conservative harvest management, and improved livestock grazing practices. The 1999 sightability survey indicated populations are reproducing at sustainable levels (47 calves:100 cows). Population size is within sustainable margins, however bull ratios are considerably higher than required to maintain the population (58 bulls:100 cows).

Inter-specific Issues

This zone winters nearly all of the mule deer from management units 43, 44, 45, 48, and 52, and for this reason, mule deer will be given management priority over elk whenever conflicts are identified. Currently, competitive concerns are minimal; the elk population is relatively small and static and there is little or no known overlap in winter use areas between deer and elk. A small population of pronghorn also occurs in the zone, but there is little overlap of habitat.

Livestock grazing, primarily cattle, occurs throughout the federal and state-administered lands and on most of the private land that is not farmed. Specific conflicts between livestock grazing and elk have not been identified.

Predation Issues

Two or three mountain lions and <10 black bears are taken by hunters in this zone annually, all in Unit 45. There has been no noticeable change in bear or mountain lion numbers in recent years.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding has not been conducted in this zone recently and is not an issue.

Information Requirements

With only one aerial survey being conducted since the development of the current plan, additional aerial surveys for elk are needed to validate the current objectives and population status. Also additional information is needed to document winter use areas.

Elk Bennett Hills Zone (Units 45, 52)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Current Status			Objective			
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
45	1999	300	175	150	225 - 325	50 - 75	35 - 50
52		(75)	(25)	(15)	50 - 100	10 - 20	5 - 10
Zone Total		(375)	(200)	(165)	275 - 425	60 - 95	40 - 60
Bulls per 100 Cows		(58)	(44)		18 - 24	10 - 14	

Note: Estimates within parentheses are based on information other than sightability surveys.

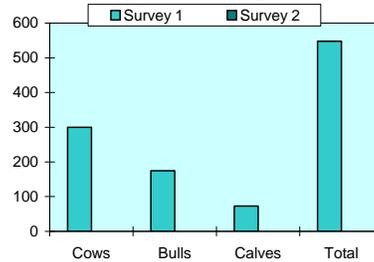


Population Surveys

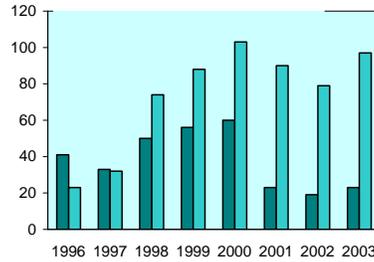
Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
45	1999	300	175	73	548	ND				
52	ND					ND				
Comparable Surveys Total		300	175	73	548		0	0	0	0
Per 100 Cows			58	24						

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey Totals



Harvest*



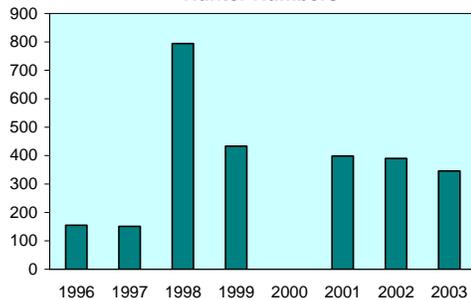
* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	41	33	50	56	60	23	19	23
'A' Tag					3	1	1	1
'B' Tag					0	0	0	0
CH Tag	41	33	50	56	57	22	18	22
Antlered Harvest	23	32	74	88	103	90	79	97
'A' Tag			26	38	42	27	26	30
'B' Tag					1	0	0	0
CH Tag	23	32	48	50	60	63	53	67
Hunter Numbers	155	151	794	433	ND	398	390	346
'A' Tag			573	213	ND	234	225	223
'B' Tag					ND	3	5	0
CH Tag	155	151	221	220	ND	161	160	123
% 6+ Points	43	44	54	50	43	54	43	55

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

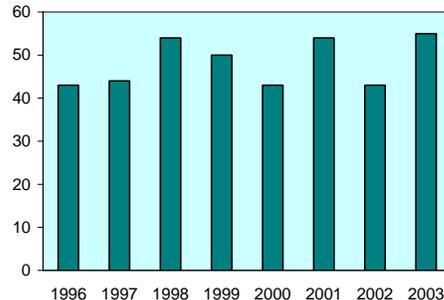


Figure 16. Bennett Hills Zone Status and Objectives.

Big Desert Zone (Units 52A, 68)

Management Objectives

The objective for the Big Desert Zone is to maintain a wintering elk population of 120-200 cows and 25-45 bulls, including 15-25 adult bulls. Although no population survey estimate exists for this zone, field reports indicate that current total numbers may exceed objectives.

Historical Perspective

The elk population in the Big Desert Zone has increased substantially from early historical records. Accounts of trappers through this area in the mid-1800s suggest that, although elk were common, buffalo, bighorn sheep, and pronghorn were far more numerous. Unregulated harvest of the late 1800s and early 1900s likely reduced populations to relatively low levels.

Elk hunting in the Big Desert Zone began in 1983 with 30 either-sex permits for Unit 63. Since that time, elk numbers and permit numbers have increased substantially. In 2001, the Big Desert Zone was reduced from six GMUs (52A, 53, 63, 63A, 68, 68A) to two units (52A, 68). Unlimited sales of tags also ceased in 2001 and subsequently, all elk tags have been issued on a controlled hunt basis.

Habitat Issues

The Big Desert Zone represents some of the least productive habitat found in eastern Idaho. Comprised of mostly dry desert shrub habitat types, the Big Desert Zone provides limited summer range for elk.

The BLM administers the majority of the public ground (67% of total area) in the Big Desert Zone. Private ground makes up 24%, state endowment lands 4%, and other federal agencies (National Park Service, USFWS, Atomic Energy Commission) make up about 5%.

A number of water guzzlers have been developed primarily for nongame, upland game, and pronghorn within the Big Desert Zone. Although the impacts to other wildlife are unknown, elk have permanently destroyed some guzzlers and can prematurely dry up storage tanks.

Wildfires continue to play a big role with habitat throughout the Big Desert Zone. In many cases, fire has replaced sagebrush stands with perennial grasses, theoretically improving habitat conditions for elk.

Biological Issues

With the exception of a few Idaho National Environmental and Engineering Laboratory (INEEL) aerial surveys, generally covering the northeast corner of the zone, population surveys have not been conducted in the Big Desert Zone. Therefore, estimates for recruitment and total numbers are based on other data.

Inter-specific Issues

Livestock, mule deer, and pronghorn are the primary ungulates sharing the range with elk in the Big Desert Zone. We are unaware of significant concerns regarding elk competition for forage with livestock. It is unknown what, if any, impacts an increasing elk population may have on pronghorn or mule deer.

Predation Issues

Coyotes are the predominant large predators within this zone. However, they are not believed to be a significant factor in elk population dynamics.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency supplemental feeding of elk has not been conducted recently. The relatively inaccessible nature of this zone in winter and generally limited snowfall preclude many concerns for winter feeding.

Information Requirements

The greatest data need for the Big Desert Zone is reliable population data that provide estimates of abundance, composition, and recruitment, and distribution data that would assist in developing effective harvest and depredation control strategies.

Elk Big Desert Zone (Units 52A, 68)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Current Status			Objective			
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
52A		(60)	(20)	(15)	45 - 75	10 - 20	5 - 10
68		(100)	(20)	(20)	75 - 125	15 - 25	10 - 15
Zone Total		(160)	(40)	(35)	120 - 200	25 - 45	15 - 25
Bulls per 100 Cows		(43)	(24)		18 - 24	10 - 14	

Note: Estimates within parentheses are based on information other than sightability surveys.

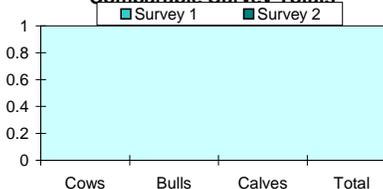


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
52A	ND					ND				
68	ND					ND				
Comparable Surveys Total		0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
Per 100 Cows										

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey Totals

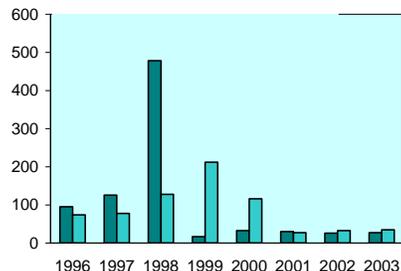


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	95	126	478	17	33	30	26	27
'A' Tag			342	0	4	0	0	0
'B' Tag			0	0	0	0	0	0
CH Tag	34	42	136	17	29	30	26	27
Antlered Harvest	74	78	128	212	116	27	33	35
'A' Tag			59	205	69	1	0	2
'B' Tag			0	0	1	0	0	0
CH Tag			69	7	46	26	33	33
Hunter Numbers	411	714	1619	4211	ND	221	217	218
'A' Tag			1073	3961	ND	19	8	9
'B' Tag			0	0	ND	3	2	3
CH Tag			546	250	ND	199	207	206
% 6+ Points	61	48	59	25	47	61	45	46

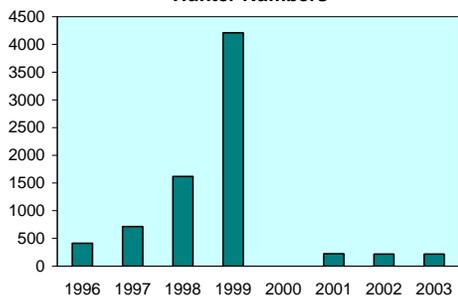
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

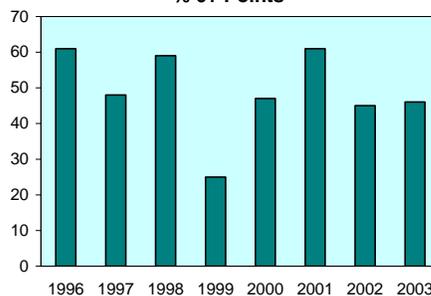


Figure 17. Big Desert Zone Status and Objectives.

Snake River Zone (Units 53, 63, 63A, 68A)

Management Objectives

The objective for the Snake River Zone is to maintain a wintering elk population of 30± cows and 8± bulls, including 3± adult bulls. Although no population survey estimate exists for this zone, field reports combined with INEEL surveys indicate that current numbers exceed objectives. The low population objective is necessary to alleviate significant depredation concerns in Units 53 and 63. Aggressive harvest rates will be necessary to achieve population objectives.

Historical Perspective

The elk population in the Snake River Zone has increased substantially from early historical records. Accounts of trappers through this area in the mid-1800s suggest that, although elk were common, buffalo, bighorn sheep, and pronghorn were far more numerous. Undoubtedly, the unregulated harvest of the late 1800s and early 1900s maintained at or reduced populations to relatively low levels.

The Snake River Zone (Units 53, 63, 63A, 68A) was contained within the Big Desert Zone (Units 52A, 68) from the beginning of the zone system in 1998 through 2000.

Elk hunting in the Snake River Zone began in 1983 with 30 either-sex permits for Unit 63. Since that time, elk numbers and harvest opportunity have increased substantially.

Habitat Issues

The Snake River Zone represents some of the least suitable habitat found in eastern and southern Idaho. Comprised of mostly agriculture and dry desert shrub habitat types, the Snake River Zone provides limited summer range for elk.

The BLM administers the majority of the public ground in the Snake River Zone. Other primary ownership includes private and INEEL ground. The INEEL, which is primarily unhunted, provides daytime refuge for several hundred elk that forage on private cropland at night. Efforts will continue to improve management options available to the Department for elk on the INEEL.

A number of water guzzlers have been developed primarily for nongame, upland game, and pronghorn within the Snake River Zone. Although the impacts to other wildlife are unknown, elk have permanently destroyed some guzzlers and can prematurely dry up storage tanks.

Wildfires continue to play a big role with habitat throughout the Snake River Zone. In many cases, fire has replaced sagebrush stands with perennial grasses, theoretically improving habitat conditions for elk.

Biological Issues

With the exception of a few INEEL aerial surveys, population surveys have not been conducted in the Snake River Zone. Therefore, estimates for recruitment and total numbers are based on other data. Given the relatively rapid increase in elk observed over the last 15 years, it is believed that production is high. To achieve population objectives for the Snake River Zone, with what are probably high recruitment rates, will require high harvest rates.

Inter-specific Issues

Livestock, mule deer, and pronghorn are the primary ungulates sharing the range with elk in the Snake River Zone. We are unaware of significant concerns regarding elk competition for forage with livestock. It is unknown what, if any, impacts an increasing elk population may have on pronghorn or mule deer.

Predation Issues

Coyotes are the predominate large predator within this zone. However, they are not believed to be a significant factor in elk population dynamics.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency supplemental feeding of elk has not been conducted recently. The relative inaccessible nature of this zone in winter and generally limited snowfall preclude many concerns for winter feeding.

Information Requirements

The greatest data need for the Snake River Zone is reliable population data that provides estimates of abundance, composition, and recruitment, and distribution data that would assist in developing effective harvest and depredation control strategies.

Elk Snake River Zone (Units 53, 63, 63A, 68A)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Current Status			Objective			
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
53		(60)	(20)	(15)	0	0	0
63		(200)	(100)	(50)	25 - 35	5 - 10	1 - 5
63A		(0)	(0)	(0)	0	0	0
68A		(0)	(0)	(0)	0	0	0
Zone Total		(260)	(120)	(65)	25 - 35	5 - 10	1 - 5
Bulls per 100 Cows		(46)	(25)			18 - 24	10 - 14

Note: Estimates within parentheses are based on information other than sightability surveys.

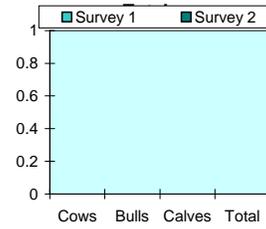


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
52A	ND					ND				
53	ND					ND				
63	ND					ND				
63A	ND					ND				
68	ND					ND				
68A	ND					ND				
Comparable Surveys Total		0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
Per 100 Cows										

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey

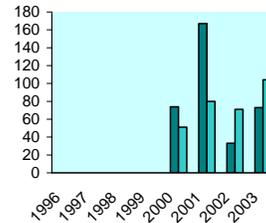


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	0	0	0	0	74	167	33	73
'A' Tag			0	0	74	167	33	46
'B' Tag			0	0	0	0	0	0
CH Tag	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27
Antlered Harvest	0	0	0	0	51	80	71	104
'A' Tag			0	0	49	79	71	71
'B' Tag			0	0	0	1	0	0
CH Tag	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	33
Hunter Numbers	0	0	546	250	ND	468	865	976
'A' Tag					ND	458	859	770
'B' Tag					ND	10	6	2
CH Tag			546	250	ND	0	0	204
% 6+ Points	0	0	0	0	47	61	20	45

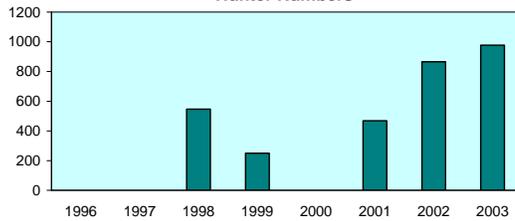
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

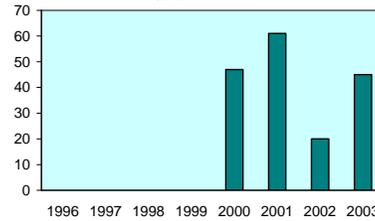


Figure 18. Snake River Zone Status and Objectives.

**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Elk Surveys and Inventories</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-28</u>		
SUBPROJECT:	<u>5</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>I</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>1</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004</u>		

SOUTHEAST REGION

Bannock Zone (Units 56, 70, 71, 72, 73, 73A, 74)

Management Objectives

The objective for the Bannock Zone is to maintain a wintering elk population of 625+ cows and 145+ bulls, including 85+ adult bulls. Although no population estimate exists for this zone, field reports, combined with incidental observations from deer surveys, indicate that current numbers exceed objectives. A reduction in cows is necessary to alleviate significant depredation concerns and reduce the occupancy of elk in important mule deer winter ranges. A reduction in bulls and adult bulls will provide for hunter demand of antlered elk and balance bull numbers with cow numbers. Aggressive harvest rates will be necessary to achieve population objectives.

Historical Perspective

According to the Pocatello Deer-Elk Herd Management Plan (1945), in the early 1900s, elk were not found in the area and “deer were a rarity.” In 1916-1917, 35 elk were transported by train from Gardiner, Montana, and released west of Pocatello. Counts in the 1930s and 1940s found 500-600 elk. By 1950, elk were reported to be spreading into the Elkhorn Mountain and John Evans Canyon areas (Unit 73), Blackrock (Unit 71), and Crystal and Midnight Creeks (Unit 70).

In a 1940 report, Ted Trueblood said, “Elk (in this area) are a liability and a problem; deer would be an asset.”

Elk hunts were first offered in the zone in 1933. Elk numbers declined in the 1950s due to “over-hunting by whites and Indians,” and seasons were closed. Permit hunts were offered in some units between 1962 and 1968. Populations remained at very low levels into the late 1980s. Since that time, elk have expanded dramatically in all but Unit 73A. By the mid-1990s, all units except 73A offered some elk hunting opportunity.

Habitat Issues

The topography of the Bannock Zone (3,125,000 acres) is characterized by low, north-south mountain ranges separated by broad valleys. Elevations range from 4,000-9,000 feet. Mountains support mixed conifer/aspen stands on north slopes and mountain brush/grass communities on southern exposures. Juniper and mountain mahogany are common on lower slopes. Valleys are agricultural with large expanses of small grains, pasture, and hay. Grazing, logging, and urbanization are additional factors affecting habitats in the zone.

Land ownership is 55% private, 30% federal, 5% state, and 10% Indian reservation. Access is widespread with few areas more than one mile from some type of road.

Winter range consists of windswept ridges, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage, and other agricultural fields. Depredation damage complaints from private landowners have increased dramatically in several areas in recent years.

Biological Issues

Calf recruitment rates have not been measured in this zone. However, the rapidly increasing numbers observed and changes in distribution suggest a highly-productive herd. Additionally, newly-colonizing populations without any known competition tend to have high recruitment rates. Given that recruitment is probably high, high harvest rates will be necessary to achieve population objectives.

Inter-specific Issues

The concurrent increase in numbers of elk and decrease in mule deer on some winter ranges has raised concerns about possible competition for forage and/or social intolerance. Livestock operators in several areas have complained about increasing elk use of forage on public land grazing allotments and private lands.

Predation Issues

Mountain lions are the major natural predators of elk in the zone and are judged to be at relatively high levels in most areas; however, expanding populations of elk do not indicate that predation is significantly impacting numbers. Coyotes are quite common but not believed to be a major predator of elk. Black bears exist at extremely low levels within the zone and, therefore, are not an important source of mortality for elk.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency supplemental feeding of elk has not been conducted in the zone. A rancher on the west side of Unit 72 has fed a small number of elk several winters for the purpose of keeping them out of his cattle feedlot. Elk have been fed on the west side of Unit 74 for the same reason.

Information Requirements

Elk permits have increased significantly from conservative to relatively higher levels over the past decade. A greater level of precision in estimating elk numbers and population change (recruitment) would help in determining appropriate levels and types of hunting to help achieve population objectives.

Better understanding of mule deer/elk interactions, particularly on winter ranges, would help to determine future management direction for both species. A future question for wildlife managers and the public may be “Do we want to favor deer or elk?”

Elk Bannock Zone (Units 56, 70, 71, 72, 73, 73A, 74)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Current Status			Objective			
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
56		(125)	(75)	(50)	100 - 150	30 - 50	20 - 30
70		(100)	(40)	(25)	50 - 75	5 - 15	5 - 10
71		(50)	(20)	(20)	50 - 75	5 - 15	5 - 10
72		(300)	(100)	(60)	50 - 75	5 - 15	5 - 10
73		(150)	(50)	(30)	100 - 150	20 - 30	10 - 20
73A		(10)	(5)	(5)	10 - 20	1 - 5	1 - 5
74		(300)	(100)	(60)	150 - 200	25 - 35	15 - 25
Zone Total		(1035)	(390)	(250)	510 - 745	125 - 165	61 - 110
Bulls per 100 Cows			(38)	(24)		18 - 24	10 - 14

Note: Estimates within parentheses are based on information other than sightability surveys.

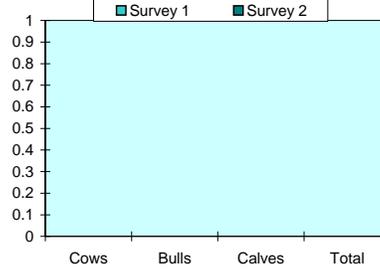


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
56	ND					ND				
70	ND					ND				
71	ND					ND				
72	ND					ND				
73	ND					ND				
73A	ND					ND				
74	ND					ND				
Comparable Surveys Total		0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
Per 100 Cows										

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey Totals

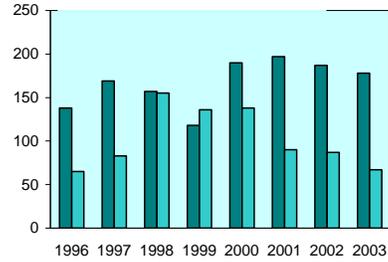


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	138	169	157	118	190	197	187	178
'A' Tag			0	85	182	168	187	177
'B' Tag			0	18	2	1	0	0
CH Tag			157	15	6	28	0	1
Antlered Harvest	65	83	155	136	138	90	87	67
'A' Tag			55	55	101	36	23	22
'B' Tag			13	24	4	8	0	0
CH Tag			87	57	33	46	64	45
Hunter Numbers	619	1079	1847	2149	ND	1682	1675	1500
'A' Tag			622	1528	ND	1413	1432	1291
'B' Tag			197	301	ND	20	5	8
CH Tag			1028	320	ND	249	238	201
% 6+ Points	39	37	55	47	33	47	39	57

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

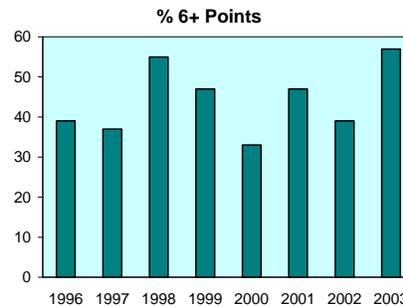
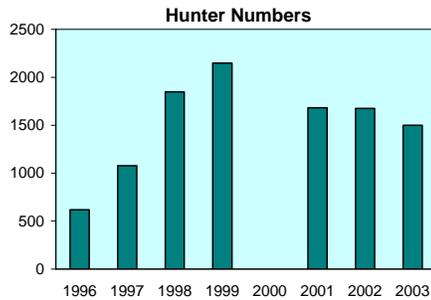


Figure 19. Bannock Zone Status and Objectives.

Diamond Creek Zone (Units 66A, 76)

Management Objectives

The objective for the Diamond Creek Zone is to maintain a wintering elk population of 1,600+ cows and 500+ bulls, including 310+ adult bulls. Limited amounts of suitable winter range in Unit 66A preclude significant increases in the wintering population for that unit. Although Unit 76 could support a higher wintering population, it would be at the expense of significant depredation concerns and increases in elk occupying mule deer winter ranges. The most recent aerial survey (1995) indicates that the population is within objectives for cows, bulls, and adult bulls.

Historical Perspective

The elk population in the Diamond Creek Zone has increased dramatically from early historical records. Accounts of trappers through this area in the mid-1800s suggest that although elk were common, buffalo and bighorn sheep were far more numerous. Undoubtedly, the unregulated harvest of the late 1800s and early 1900s maintained at or reduced populations to relatively low levels. By 1952, elk were believed to be numerous enough to warrant the first hunting season with 250 permits for either-sex elk in Units 66, 66A, and 69. An aerial survey of Unit 76 during February 1952 resulted in 193 elk observed with a total population estimate of 230. Elk in Unit 66A are primarily migrational and winter with elk in Units 66 and 69. The first hunt in Unit 76 began in 1964 with 75 either-sex permits.

As the elk population grew, so did hunting opportunity. Although this zone has primarily been managed via controlled permits, several general hunting seasons have occurred since regulated harvest began. Between 1955 and 1959, general hunts were held in Units 66, 66A, and 69 varying between a three-day antlered-only to a ten-day either-sex season. Again in 1968 and 1969, nine-day antlered-only general seasons were offered. The last general hunting opportunity in Unit 66A occurred in 1975 with a three-day antlered-only season.

The most recent population survey (2002) estimated a total of 3,116 elk in Unit 76. This total represents a 1,355 percent increase over the first estimate in 1952. Historically, elk in Unit 76 summered and wintered within the unit; however, as populations have increased, there has been use of wintering areas outside the unit.

Habitat Issues

The Diamond Creek Zone represents some of the most productive habitat found in southeastern Idaho. Three main vegetation types predominate: sagebrush-grassland, aspen, and conifer. Past habitat-use research indicates that aspen habitat types are highly preferred, especially during non-snow periods. Fire suppression efforts and intensive livestock grazing in the past have resulted in increased shrub and conifer cover with a reduction in the aspen component since historical times.

Approximately 65% of the land in the Diamond Creek Zone is publicly owned, primarily USFS. The 35% private land is used for rangeland pasture and small grain and hay production. Depredation complaints have generally increased in the last decade. Predominate land uses of the publicly-owned ground include livestock grazing, timber management, recreation, and phosphate mining. Approximately 35% of the known U.S. reserves of phosphate ore are located in the Diamond Creek Zone.

Open habitat types combined with moderate road densities (0.7-2.3 miles/square mile) and, in some cases, unrestricted ATV travel result in a relatively high vulnerability standard for elk in the Diamond Creek Zone.

Biological Issues

Calf:cow ratios, as measured during aerial surveys, indicate a healthy, productive herd in the Diamond Creek Zone. High calf:cow ratios are consistent with growing populations that are not heavily influenced by density-dependent factors. Given these high levels of recruitment, relatively high harvest rates of antlerless elk are necessary to stabilize populations. Additionally, liberal bull harvest rates can be sustained by high recruitment rates.

Inter-specific Issues

Although both livestock and elk numbers within the Diamond Creek Zone are high, there appears to be little concern by livestock operators for competition for grass. However, localized concerns do exist for livestock (primarily sheep) over-utilization of ridge-tops used by wintering elk.

During the mid-1900s, Unit 76 supported a high population of mule deer with relatively few elk. Important mule deer wintering areas included Brown's Canyon to Yellowjacket Creek, east of Henry, Stump Creek, Crow Creek, and the Soda Front from Wood Canyon to Dingle. Today, these winter ranges are predominately occupied by elk. It is unknown whether habitat changes and/or competition (resource or social intolerance) have led to this change. However, there appear to be areas with suitable deer winter range vegetation but are only occupied by elk. Extensive populations of wintering mule deer are not expected to occur with current distribution and numbers of elk in this zone.

Predation Issues

Potentially major predators of elk in the Diamond Creek Zone include black bears and mountain lions. The black bear population is extremely low and probably has remained unchanged for many years. Mountain lions are believed to have increased during the last 30 years. However, current recruitment rates and other elk population parameters suggest this increased mountain lion population is not having a significant effect. Coyotes are common but not believed to be a significant predator on elk.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency supplemental feeding of elk has been provided during four winters since 1981 in the Diamond Creek Zone. Numbers of animals fed have ranged from 200-880. Recurrent emergency feeding areas include near Freedom, Thomas Fork Valley, Crow Creek, Stump Creek, and Bischoff Canyon. Additionally, it is believed that some elk summering in this zone migrate to annual winter feed grounds in adjacent Wyoming. During 1985, 122 elk were trapped near Stump Creek and translocated elsewhere. On-site testing for Brucellosis resulted in no positive responses. However, during 1992-1993, a group of 300 wintering elk in Idaho and Wyoming along the Thomas Fork Valley were trapped and marked in Wyoming. One out of the 40 elk tested showed a positive Brucellosis response.

Information Requirements

Recently, observed changes in winter distribution of elk in the Diamond Creek Zone are poorly understood. Possible explanations include a population that has reached habitat fill, habitat change resulting in less suitable winter range, and/or random behavioral response to differing environmental conditions. A better understanding of the processes involved in winter range selection would aid in a better ecological understanding of elk in this zone and lead to more responsive management actions.

The Diamond Creek Zone has been a highly popular area for archery hunting. It is believed that a significant amount of archery harvest occurs in this zone; however, past data collection efforts have been inadequate to precisely monitor archery harvest. Better archery harvest information would enhance management efforts.

Elk Diamond Creek Zone (Units 66A, 76)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Survey Year	Current Status			Objective		
		Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
66A		(50)	(25)	(20)	40 - 60	15 - 25	5 - 15
76	2002	1741	612	329	1260 - 1900	385 - 575	250 - 350
Zone Total		(1791)	(637)	(349)	1300 - 1960	400 - 600	255 - 365
Bulls per 100 Cows		(36)	(19)			30 - 35	18 - 24

Note : Estimates within parentheses are based on information other than sightability surveys.

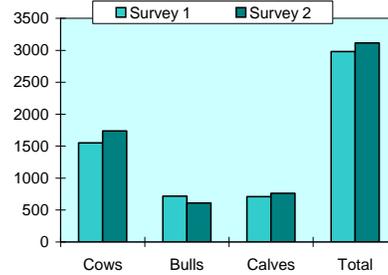


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
66A	ND					ND				
76	1999	1551	719	711	2981	2002	1741	612	763	3116
Comparable Surveys Total		1551	719	711	2981		1741	612	763	3116
Per 100 Cows			46	46			35	44		

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey Totals

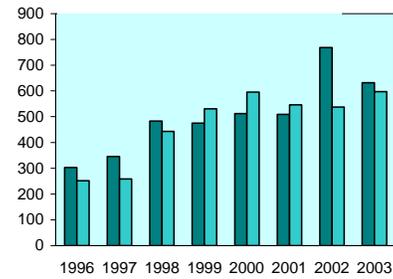


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	303	346	483	475	512	509	768	632
'A' Tag			59	60	56	78	88	90
'B' Tag			0	0	0	0	0	0
CH Tag			424	415	456	431	680	542
Antlered Harvest	252	258	443	531	596	546	537	597
'A' Tag			251	285	314	242	224	249
'B' Tag			0	0	3	4	0	4
CH Tag			192	246	279	300	313	344
Hunter Numbers	1058	1562	3016	3611	ND	3278	3911	3855
'A' Tag			1478	1811	ND	1587	1869	2000
'B' Tag			0	0	ND	35	42	25
CH Tag			1538	1800	ND	1656	2000	1830
% 6+ Points	28	25	41	32	32	37	34	44

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

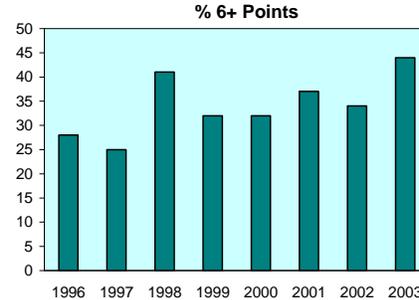
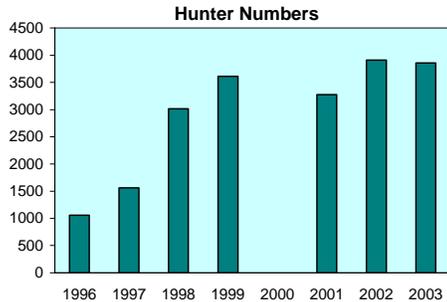


Figure 20. Diamond Creek Zone Status and Objectives.

Bear River Zone (Units 75, 77, 78)

Management Objectives

The objective for the Bear River Zone is to maintain a wintering elk population of 500+ cows and 100+ bulls, including 60+ adult bulls. Although this zone could support a higher wintering population, it would be at the expense of significant depredation concerns and increases in elk occupying mule deer winter ranges. The most recent aerial survey (1996) indicates that the population is within objectives for cows, bulls, and adult bulls. No significant changes in harvest rates are necessary.

Historical Perspective

The elk population in the Bear River Zone has increased substantially from early historical records. Accounts of trappers through this area in the mid-1800s suggest that although elk were common, buffalo and bighorn sheep were far more numerous. Undoubtedly, the unregulated harvest of the late 1800s and early 1900s maintained at or reduced populations to relatively low levels.

Elk hunting in this zone began in the 1940s with controlled either-sex hunts, was closed for several years, and started up again in 1956 with general hunts for either-sex. Unit 75 was closed on and off through the 1960s. From 1968 through 1975, all units were open to general either-sex hunting. Starting in 1976 through the present, all units have been open for general antlered-only opportunity. In 1984 and 1985, a few either-sex permits were offered along with the antlered-only hunt. Since 1986, antlerless-only permits have generally increased.

Prior to the late 1970s, the vast majority of elk that summered in this zone wintered in Utah. Since that time, elk wintering in this zone have dramatically increased.

Habitat Issues

The Bear River Zone represents some of the highest productive habitat found in southeastern Idaho. Three main vegetation types predominate: sagebrush-grassland, aspen, and conifer. Past habitat-use research indicates that aspen habitat types are highly preferred, especially during non-snow periods. Fire suppression efforts and/or intensive livestock grazing in the past has resulted in increased shrub and conifer cover with a reduction in the aspen component since historical times.

The USFS administers the majority of public ground (49% of total area) in this zone. Predominant land uses of the public ground include livestock grazing, timber management, and recreation. Private ground makes up the remaining 51% and is used primarily for rangeland pasture and small grain and hay production. Since most of the potential elk winter range is privately held, depredation concerns have been significant. Several stackyards have been developed in order to alleviate some of the depredation concerns. The urban sprawl of subdivisions and small-acreage home-sites in this zone have also led to significant conflicts with

wintering elk. The loss of winter range and conflicts with producers are the primary considerations limiting elk populations in the Bear River Zone.

Because of relatively high amounts of conifer cover, the Bear River Zone represents some of the best security cover found in southeastern Idaho. Increased use of ATVs and increases in roading will increase vulnerability standards in this zone.

Biological Issues

Calf:cow ratios, as measured during aerial surveys, indicate a healthy, productive herd in the Bear River Zone. High calf:cow ratios are consistent with growing populations that are not heavily influenced by density-dependent factors. Given these high levels of recruitment, relatively high harvest rates of antlerless elk are necessary to stabilize populations.

Inter-specific Issues

The elk population in this zone has caused conflict with several livestock operations in the foothills. The main sources of concern are damage to fences and loss of hay, grain, and private rangeland forage.

The Bear River Zone is also a highly productive mule deer area. Recent habitat changes appear to be favoring elk. Although these units do show some niche separation during winter between elk and deer, recent observations indicate that elk are beginning to occupy suitable deer winter range.

Predation Issues

Potentially major predators of elk in the Bear River Zone include black bears and mountain lions. The black bear population is extremely low and probably has remained unchanged for many years. Mountain lions are believed to have increased during the last 30 years. However, current recruitment rates and other elk population parameters suggest this increased mountain lion population is not having a significant effect. Coyotes are common but not believed to be a significant predator on elk.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency winter feeding of elk only occurs periodically in this zone. The last effort occurred during the winter of 1983-1984 with two sites in each of Units 75 and 77. An unknown but substantial number of elk are believed to migrate and winter in Utah, with some known to use the feeding operation at the Hardware Ranch.

Information Requirements

An unknown but substantial number of elk are believed to migrate and winter in Utah. A better understanding of these numbers would benefit management recommendations.

Historically, harvest estimates from this zone have suffered from small sample size. The need exists for better precision of these parameters.

A more thorough understanding of mule deer/elk interactions, particularly on winter ranges, would help to determine future management direction for both species. A future question for wildlife managers, land managers, and the public may be “Do we want to favor deer or elk?”

Literature Cited

McDermott, P. J. and H. M. Koppes. 1945. Pocatello Deer-Elk Herd Management Plan, Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Elk Bear River Zone (Units 75, 77, 78)

Winter Status & Objectives

Current Status					Objective		
Unit	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
75	1996	216	21	22	200 - 300	40 - 60	25 - 35
77	1996	104	34	14	100 - 150	20 - 30	10 - 20
78	1996	163	56	21	100 - 150	20 - 30	10 - 20
Zone Total		483	111	57	400 - 600	80 - 120	45 - 75
Bulls per 100 Cows			23	12		18 - 24	10 - 14

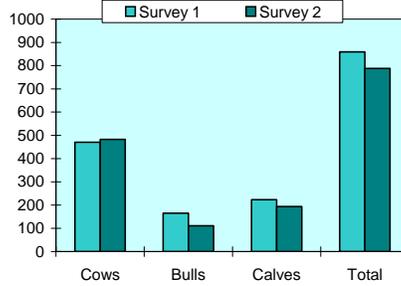


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
75	1991	235	105	132	472	1996	216	21	75	312
77	1992	55	12	16	83	1996	104	34	39	177
78	1992	180	48	76	304	1996	163	56	80	299
Comparable Surveys Total		470	165	224	859		483	111	194	788
Per 100 Cows			35	48				23	38	

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey Totals

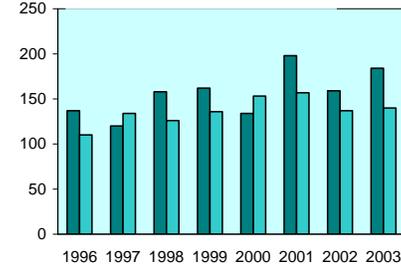


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	137	120	158	162	134	198	159	184
'A' Tag			45	40	132	195	159	184
'B' Tag			0	0	0	3	0	0
CH Tag			113	122	2	0	0	0
Antlered Harvest	110	134	126	136	153	157	137	140
'A' Tag			32	26	61	45	26	39
'B' Tag			84	90	70	103	97	85
CH Tag			10	20	22	9	14	16
Hunter Numbers	1892	1568	1906	1798	ND	1646	1750	1800
'A' Tag			550	519	ND	947	1104	1083
'B' Tag			920	804	ND	676	622	693
CH Tag			436	475	ND	23	24	24
% 6+ Points	29	10	25	19	19	28	32	35

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

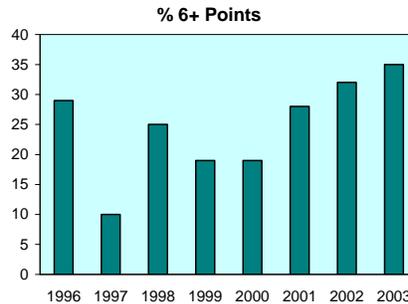
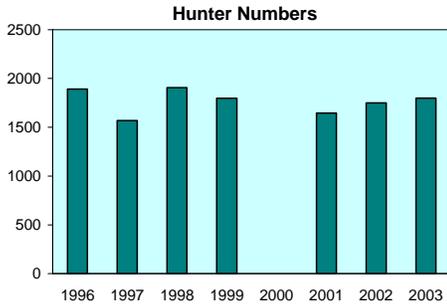


Figure 21. Bear River Zone Status and Objectives.

**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Elk Surveys and Inventories</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-28</u>		
SUBPROJECT:	<u>6</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>I</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>1</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004</u>		

UPPER SNAKE REGION

Island Park Zone (Units 60, 60A, 61, 62A)

Management Objectives

The management objective for the Island Park Zone is to maintain a wintering elk population of approximately 1,500 cows and 475 bulls, including 300 adult bulls. Currently, elk wintering on the Sand Creek winter range in Unit 60A are above objective. Obtaining adequate harvest on this population is difficult due to its migratory nature and the fact that significant portions of the herd spend the fall in Yellowstone National Park and Harriman State Park where they are immune to harvest. Bringing this population down to below 3,000 animals postseason is a primary objective. Bull:cow ratios are difficult to measure for the hunted portion of the population, again because they are inflated by those animals which avoid hunting. The Island Park Zone currently provides the widest array of hunting opportunity available, including archery, centerfire, and muzzleloader seasons; early and late hunting; and controlled any-bull and either-sex hunts.

Historical Perspective

Elk have been present in varying numbers in at least portions of the Island Park Zone throughout recorded history. There has been a general elk season in all or part of Fremont County since 1882. This undoubtedly is the longest running general hunting opportunity in the state. During much of the early 20th century, these hunts were based upon elk populations summering in Yellowstone National Park.

In the late 1940s, elk were first observed wintering on the high desert habitats of Unit 60A, with 582 wintering elk recorded in 1952. These wintering populations varied from about 700 to 1,200 elk until the mid-1970s, at which time the elimination of general either-sex elk hunting resulted in a rapidly increasing winter population. In the winter of 1999-2000, a total of 4,134 elk was estimated on the Sand Creek winter range.

General bull hunting was restricted to spikes-only in 1991 in response to an accelerated timber harvest program on the Targhee National Forest that resulted in poor bull escapement and low

bull:cow ratios. Antlerless elk hunting opportunity has been managed through controlled hunts and, beginning in 1993, permits have been offered for any-bull hunting opportunity throughout the Island Park Zone.

Habitat Issues

Most of the elk summer range in the Island Park Zone occurs on USFS lands and is dominated by gentle topography lodgepole pine communities. Douglas fir stands are common on sloping sites. Timber management practices from 1970-1990 severely altered habitat in the Island Park Zone. In the mid-1970s, approximately two-thirds to three-fourths of the merchantable lodgepole pine stands on the Targhee National Forest were classified as dead or dying due to a mountain pine beetle infestation. Consequently, the USFS dramatically accelerated timber harvest. The result is an extensive network of roads and clearcuts, which reduced elk habitat effectiveness and greatly increased elk vulnerability. Recent implementation of road and area closures in some areas and increasing security cover from forest regeneration should help offset some of these effects in the future.

The Sand Creek winter range supports a vegetative complex typical of high desert shrub steppe dominated by sagebrush. Bitterbrush and chokecherry are prominent on areas of stabilized sand. Land ownership consists of a checkerboard of State, BLM, and private property. Cooperative-use trade agreements have benefited the elk population. Agricultural encroachment continues to threaten winter range in the Island Park Zone.

Biological Issues

Winter elk populations have been increasing steadily in the Island Park Zone since they were first noticed on the Sand Creek Desert in the late 1940s. A total of 582 were recorded in 1952. This total has climbed steadily to the 4,134 elk counted in 2000.

Recruitment measured through sightability surveys indicates the moderately productive nature of the herd, with calf:cow ratios typically in the 30-35 calves:100 cows range. Bull:cow ratios have rebounded markedly since the implementation of spike-only general hunting in 1991. Bulls:100 cows ratios have ranged from 40-68. It should be noted, however, that these totals are buttressed by an unknown segment of the population that spends the summer and fall in Harriman State Park and Yellowstone National Park. These animals are largely unharvested, being subjected to hunting pressure only while migrating to winter range, followed with a conservative winter range controlled hunt.

Inter-specific Issues

Unfortunately, little evidence exists to evaluate the potential relationships between elk, mule deer, and moose in the Island Park Zone. White-tailed deer are scattered throughout the Island Park Zone but are relatively uncommon. Heavy grazing/browsing by deer, elk, and moose may alter Columbian sharp-tailed grouse habitats.

Domestic sheep and cattle grazing occurs throughout the Island Park Zone which could pose some competitive concerns for elk, especially on winter range during drought years.

Predation Issues

Black bear densities appear to be low and stable in the Island Park Zone. Mountain lions are extremely rare. Coyotes are common, especially in the winter range portion of the Island Park Zone, but are not known to have much impact on elk populations. Wolves recently introduced by the USFWS in Yellowstone National Park may become established in this zone, which could affect other predators and elk.

Winter Feeding Issues

No Department-sponsored feeding activities occur in the Island Park Zone except under emergency situations. Agricultural encroachment on the Sand Creek winter range increases the risk of elk depredations on stored crops, especially under adverse winter conditions. Some feeding by private citizens, resulting in the short-stopping of elk, has occurred on Ashton Hill in recent years. Educational efforts need to continue to give non-sanctioned feeders a better understanding of the problems associated with artificially-fed elk.

Periodically, agricultural producers dump excess potatoes in the Sand Creek Desert, and elk have been observed wintering on these sites.

Information Requirements

Sightability estimates are needed periodically to monitor progress toward achieving population objectives. In addition, the information is valuable to assess the results of the recently implemented travel management policy on the Targhee National Forest.

Additionally, better knowledge of the summer/fall spatial distribution of this elk herd could improve achieving harvest objectives.

Some local concern over displacement of elk onto winter range and/or private agricultural ground exists for the September archery season in Unit 60. This unit historically did not have an archery hunt prior to implementation of the dual-tag framework in 1998. Better information regarding this concern is needed. However, there is little evidence that this issue has significant biological ramifications; rather, it may be more of a social concern.

Elk Island Park Zone (Units 60, 60A, 61, 62A)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Current Status			Objective			
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
60	ND				0	0	0
60A	2002	1878	699	442	1200 - 1800	400 - 575	250 - 375
61	ND				0	0	0
62A	ND				0	0	0
Zone Total		1878	699	442	1200 - 1800	400 - 575	250 - 375
Bulls per 100 Cows		37	24		30 - 35	18 - 22	

Note : Estimates within parentheses are based on information other than sightability surveys.

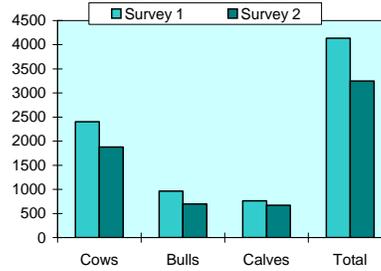


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
60	ND					ND				
60A	2000	2404	967	763	4134	2002	1878	699	669	3246
61	ND					ND				
62A	ND					ND				
Comparable Surveys Total		2404	967	763	4134		1878	699	669	3246
Per 100 Cows		40	32				37	36		

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey Totals

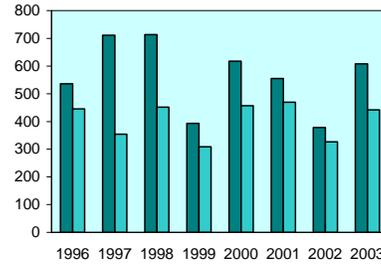


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	536	711	713	393	618	555	378	608
'A' Tag				232	113	82	134	93
'B' Tag				0	0	0	0	0
CH Tag				481	280	536	421	285
Antlered Harvest	445	354	452	309	457	470	326	442
'A' Tag				238	185	230	232	158
'B' Tag				0	0	2	1	0
CH Tag				214	124	225	237	168
Hunter Numbers	3783	2441	4385	4044	ND	3994	4068	4182
'A' Tag				2752	2441	ND	2170	2244
'B' Tag				0	0	ND	10	4
CH Tag				1633	1603	ND	1814	1820
% 6+ Points	55	57	36	22	32	26	26	39

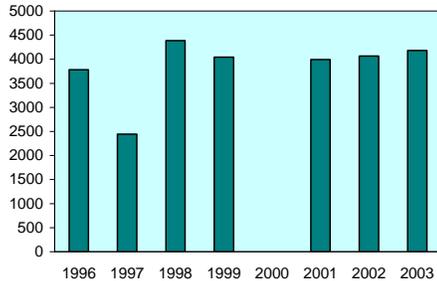
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

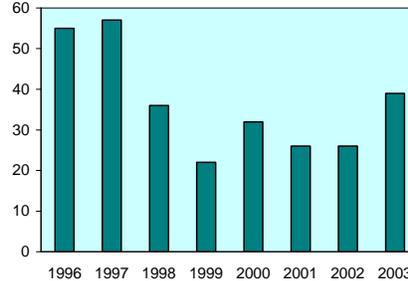


Figure 22. Island Park Zone Status and Objectives.

Teton Zone (Units 62, 65)

Management Objectives

The population management objective for the Teton Zone is to maintain approximately 200 cows and 45 bulls, of which 25 should be adult bulls. This represents approximately a 17% reduction from 1996 levels and is designed to eliminate artificial feeding operations existing at Victor, Conant Creek, and Felt, as directed by the Wildlife Brucellosis Task Force Report and Recommendations to the Governor (September 1998). Following the elimination of feeding, the population will be allowed to recover to the extent it can be supported on natural forage. Population manipulation will be accomplished primarily through public hunting; however, trapping and transplanting may be used if hunting is unsuccessful in achieving objectives.

Limited radio-collar information suggests that well over half of the elk in this zone spend the spring, summer, and fall in Wyoming or Yellowstone National Park. They often do not enter Idaho until after the standard hunting seasons are over. This presents a difficult challenge for management. These migratory elk provide little opportunity for Idaho hunters, particularly in the eastern portion of Unit 65 where they cause depredation problems during the winter.

Historical Perspective

Reports of elk in the 1800s and early 1900s are sketchy and inconclusive for this area; however, it is likely elk were present. General either-sex hunting was allowed until the mid-1970s. At that time, over-harvest became a concern and the format was changed to allow five days of general hunting for bulls only. Hunting for antlerless elk was restricted to permits. Winter range in the zone has always been limited by elevation and associated deep snows, and by agricultural development. The elk population was relatively stable through the 1980s with 50-60 animals wintering in the Game Creek/Moose Creek area, 30-40 animals wintering along the Teton River in the basin, 40-50 animals being fed at a ranch on Conant Creek, and approximately 100 elk wintering in and adjacent to the Teton River and its tributaries north of State Highway 33. Elk populations increased dramatically in the 1990s. The most recent survey conducted during the 2000-2001 winter estimated 340 total elk. However, mild winter conditions may have affected elk distribution.

Habitat Issues

Although extensive logging and roading on national public lands over the last three decades has reduced elk habitat effectiveness and elk security, ample summer range remains. True winter range has always been limited in the zone due to high elevations and associated deep snows and severe temperatures. A large area of winter range in the western portion of Unit 62 has been converted to farming. Some of this land is now enrolled in the CRP program. Elk winter range was lost to the construction and subsequent failure of Teton Dam, although the greatest losses associated to that event were to deer habitat. Recently, urban sprawl, particularly in the east portion of Unit 65, has crept up the hillsides and reduced much of what limited winter range existed in that portion of the zone. Additionally, recent increases in winter recreation (snowmobiles and skiing) likely reduce suitable winter range. Efforts are underway to inventory

occupied and potential winter range in the zone as part of a strategy to end annual winter feeding of elk.

Biological Issues

The most pressing biological issues in this zone relate to the overall size of the wintering population in Units 62 and 65. The Teton Basin population (Unit 65) has increased over the past ten years and consists of two groups. One herd winters east and south of Victor and numbers about 200. It is estimated the winter range in the area could support 50-60 animals. Addressing this overpopulation through harvest is difficult because many of the animals are in Wyoming until late winter. The other group winters along the Teton River in Teton Basin. They have increased to over 100 animals and they pose a major depredation threat in normal winters. There is an opportunity to control them with hunting.

Two groups of elk being fed in Unit 62 need to be moved or redistributed by hunting or other strategies. These animals are fed in the winter on private ranches at Teepee Creek and Conant Creek. Both as a Brucellosis control method and to comply with Commission policy, these annual feeding operations should be eliminated. It is believed that the feeding has short-stopped elk which previously migrated further to the west in winter. These elk summer in Wyoming and in the Bechler Meadows area of Yellowstone National Park.

Inter-specific Issues

This zone contains a moderate mule deer population, a significant and relatively new white-tailed deer population in Teton Basin, and a strong moose population. The area is grazed extensively by domestic livestock. Inter-specific relationships among these species and elk are not monitored and are poorly understood. There is concern over elk herds establishing winter use in traditional mule deer winter range in Teton Canyon. Examination of livestock impacts on elk winter range will be conducted as part of the effort to end annual winter feeding of elk in this zone.

Predation Issues

There are no known unique or unusual predator issues affecting the elk population in this zone. Wolves reintroduced by the USFWS in Yellowstone National Park in 1995 may become established, which could affect other predators, as well as elk demographics.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding is occurring at three locations in this zone on a regular basis. Continued annual feeding at these sites is in direct conflict with Commission policy and presents a Brucellosis risk. Observations during the 2000-2001 aerial survey indicate that most elk in this zone are associated with private feeding operations. A description of the history of each site follows.

Victor - A herd of approximately 50 elk traditionally wintered in the foothills east and south of Victor. Around 1990, a landowner began feeding this elk herd, which has grown each

year and now numbers approximately 200 animals. The Department had rejected all requests to feed elk or establish a permanent feed ground at this site. Permanent stack yards, panels, and hazing have been employed to combat depredations at this site. A large damage payment was made to a nursery in the vicinity, which was then fenced at significant expense. The Department provided hay to this operation on two winters, which were deemed to be emergency cases.

Conant Creek - In the late 1950s, a private landowner began feeding approximately 20 elk on upper Conant Creek. Over the years, the Department has provided this landowner hay to bait the elk away from stored hay and cattle. The number of elk increased and in the interim, the Department tried to work with the landowner to solve the problem with options other than feeding. All such efforts were rejected and the landowner has successfully enlisted the support of politicians and sportsmen in continuing the feeding. Things changed in 2002 when the cattle herd tested positive for Brucellosis. Since then, the cattle herd has been destroyed, a fence has been built to keep elk out of the feeding grounds, and no elk have been fed there.

Teepee Creek (Felt) - A landowner on Teepee Creek began feeding elk in the early 1990s. There currently are approximately 150 habituated to this operation. The Department has provided panels to the landowner to protect haystacks but has not provided any feed. It is believed this operation and the one at Conant Creek have short-stopped elk from migrating to winter ranges further west.

During the winter of 2003-2004, the Department and the Winter Feeding Advisory Committee sponsored emergency feeding of 60 elk in the Packsaddle area and 80 elk east of Victor due to harsh winter conditions.

Information Requirements

A comprehensive inventory of winter range in this zone is needed to accomplish the objective of ending annual winter feeding. The condition of some winter ranges may provide an opportunity for enhancement for elk, perhaps through burning or changes in livestock management. As part of this, an assessment of the location, quality, and remaining terms of enrollment of the area's CRP lands is key if the fed populations in this zone are to become self-sufficient. Additionally, information on snowmobile use of these lands is needed. If they are to be made available to elk, snowmobiles should be discouraged.

Elk Teton Zone (Units 62, 65)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Current Status			Objective			
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
62	2001	108	49	41	100 - 150	20 - 30	10 - 20
65	2001	97	17	14	50 - 100	15 - 25	5 - 15
Zone Total		205	66	55	150 - 250	35 - 55	15 - 35
Bulls per 100 Cows			32	27		18 - 24	10 - 14

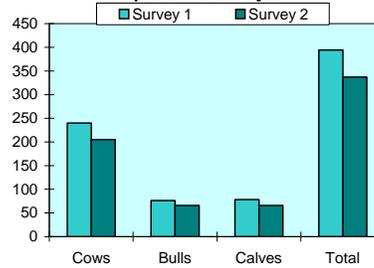


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
62	1992	65	25	26	116	2001	108	49	40	197
65	1996	175	51	52	278	2001	97	17	26	140
Comparable Surveys Total		240	76	78	394		205	66	66	337
Per 100 Cows			32	33				32	32	

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey Totals

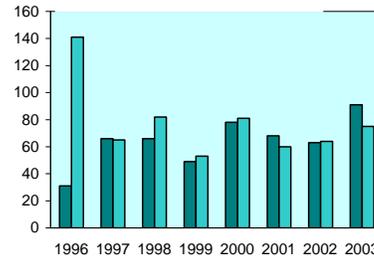


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	31	66	66	49	78	68	63	91
'A' Tag			0	26	35	23	30	26
'B' Tag			0	0	0	0	0	1
CH Tag			66	23	43	45	33	64
Antlered Harvest	141	65	82	53	81	60	64	75
'A' Tag			5	0	6	11	4	16
'B' Tag			19	17	30	23	16	11
CH Tag			58	36	45	26	44	48
Hunter Numbers	1046	887	736	749	ND	631	675	646
'A' Tag			114	396	ND	246	280	268
'B' Tag			340	86	ND	134	136	104
CH Tag			282	267	ND	251	259	274
% 6+ Points	62	16	30	18	48	34	37	45

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

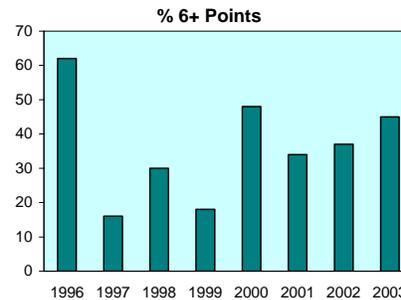
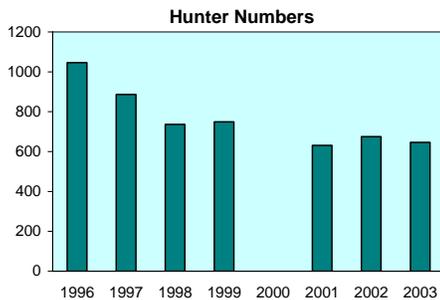


Figure 23. Teton Zone Status and Objectives.

Palisades Zone (Units 64, 67)

Management Objectives

The population management objective for the Palisades Zone is to maintain approximately 500 cows and 160 bulls, of which 100 should be mature bulls. An aerial survey during 2003-2004 indicates that the population is near or at objective. Current and future management efforts will be consistent with eliminating the artificial feeding operation existing at Rainey Creek, as directed by the Wildlife Brucellosis Task Force Report and Recommendations to the Governor (September 1998). Following the elimination of annual feeding, the population will be allowed to recover to the extent it can be supported on natural forage, particularly on winter ranges northwest of Dry Canyon. Population manipulation will be accomplished primarily through public hunting; however, trapping and transplanting will also be employed. This zone offers most of what little backcountry hunting opportunity remains in southeast Idaho.

Historical Perspective

Reports of elk in the 1800s and early 1900s are sketchy and inconclusive for this area; however, it is likely elk were present. General either-sex hunting was allowed until the mid-1970s. At that time, over-harvest became a concern and the format was changed to allow five days of general hunting for bulls only. Hunting for antlerless elk was restricted to permits. Elk damage to haystacks in Swan Valley dates back to the mid-1950s, corresponding with a loss of winter range to inundation by Palisades Reservoir on the South Fork of the Snake River. In the mid-1970s, the Department began feeding elk in Rainey Creek to bait them away from livestock feeding operations. This activity has continued to the present and involves approximately 150 animals. The elk population wintering in this zone has increased gradually over the last three decades.

Habitat Issues

Abundant spring, summer, and fall habitat exists in this zone. Winter range is limited and is more characteristic of mule deer habitat than elk habitat. Winter range has been lost to agriculture and inundation by a large artificial reservoir, and is currently threatened by proposed housing developments. Efforts are underway to inventory both occupied and potential elk winter range in the zone as part of a strategy to end winter feeding. Opportunities to preserve or enhance winter range will be pursued. Potentially important winter ranges in the northern portion of the zone (Grandview Point) are now nearly vacant, in all probability due to displacement of elk by snowmobile activity. Winter range shrub communities on slopes in the vicinity of the mouth of Rainey Creek appears to have suffered from years of overgrazing by elk and mule deer. Mature mountain mahogany stands throughout the zone may be providing only limited forage, in addition to precluding all but a sparse understory of other species.

Biological Issues

The most pressing biological issues in this zone relate to the fed elk herd at Rainey Creek. This group of about 150 animals has a documented exposure rate to Brucellosis exceeding 25% based

on testing of >100 individuals. Late hunts have limited success in reducing this population. Plans have been implemented to trap and remove all positive testing female animals and transplant negative testing animals to winter ranges northwest of Dry Canyon. This process is expected to take three or more years to complete. The elk are being transplanted in an experimental effort to determine if they will return to their birthing summer ranges and then migrate back near their transplant site the following winter. Radio-tracking will monitor this test.

Inter-specific Issues

In addition to elk, the Palisades Zone is home to an important mule deer population and a strong moose population and is grazed extensively by domestic livestock. Inter-specific relationships among these species and elk are not well monitored and are poorly understood. Competition between elk and mule deer is probably occurring in the immediate vicinity of Rainey Creek where both species have been fed most winters since the mid-1970s. There is concern over elk herds establishing winter use in traditional mule deer winter range in the Heise area.

Predation Issues

There are no known unique or unusual predator issues affecting elk populations in this zone.

Winter Feeding Issues

In the late 1970s, a rancher near Irwin began feeding cattle near the mouth of Rainey Creek and along the USFS boundary. Concurrently, large areas of browse in the area were being converted to cultivation. The combination of these factors resulted in elk damaging stored hay and taking advantage of the livestock feed-lines. The Department resolved these conflicts by baiting the elk up into Rainey Creek where they have been fed ever since. It is the Department's intent to eliminate all but emergency feeding of elk in this zone. This should also reduce any Brucellosis-related concerns.

Information Requirements

A comprehensive inventory of winter range in this zone is needed to accomplish the objective of ending annual winter feeding. The condition of some winter ranges may provide opportunities for enhancement for elk, perhaps through burning or changes in livestock management. As part of this, an assessment of the location, quality, and remaining terms of enrollment of the area's CRP lands will be determined.

Elk Palisades Zone (Units 64, 67)

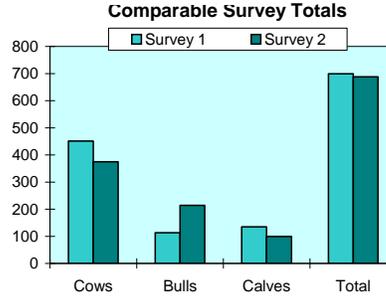
Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Current Status			Objective			
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
64/65w/67	2004	375	214	113	400 - 600	125 - 200	75 - 125
Zone Total		375	214	113	400 - 600	125 - 200	75 - 125
Bulls per 100 Cows			57	33		30 - 35	18 - 22



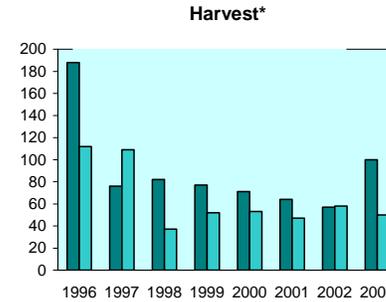
Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
64/65w/67	2001	451	113	135	699	2004	375	214	99	688
Comparable Surveys Total		451	113	135	699		375	214	99	688
Per 100 Cows			39	43				25	43	



Zone Harvest Statistics

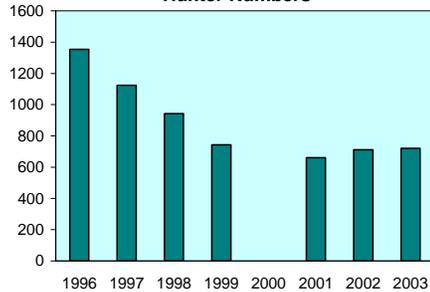
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	188	76	82	77	71	64	57	100
'A' Tag			0	19	19	22	16	21
'B' Tag			0	0	0	1	0	0
CH Tag			82	58	52	41	41	79
Antlered Harvest	112	109	37	52	53	47	58	50
'A' Tag			6	6	14	13	16	15
'B' Tag			25	38	37	34	40	35
CH Tag			6	8	2	0	2	0
Hunter Numbers	1353	1124	942	743	ND	660	711	721
'A' Tag			181	247	ND	305	300	315
'B' Tag			285	228	ND	212	259	245
CH Tag			476	268	ND	143	152	161
% 6+ Points	0	1	27	75	42	47	44	40



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

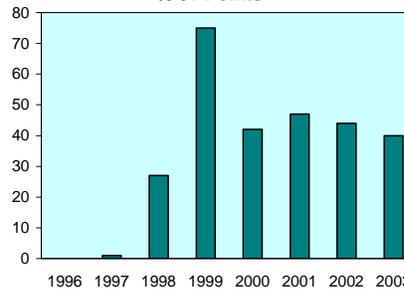


Figure 24. Palisades Zone Status and Objectives.

Tex Creek Zone (Units 66, 69)

Management Objectives

The population management objective for the Tex Creek Zone is to winter approximately 2,500 cows and 525 bulls, of which 300 should be adult bulls. The most recent aerial survey information, 1999-2000, indicates that cows are at objective and bulls over objective. However, due to the fact that a number of elk from Unit 66A winter in this zone and that objectives differ between the Tex Creek and Diamond Creek zones, it is unknown what extra harvest opportunity may be available. Population manipulation will be accomplished primarily through regulated public hunting. Management will be coordinated with management of Unit 66A of the Diamond Creek Zone, where a major portion of the wintering Tex Creek elk resides in summer and fall. Claims resulting from crop damage will be eliminated and depredation problems will be solved using hunting as a first option.

Historical Perspective

Elk were present in the Tex Creek Zone during the late 1840s, as reported by Osborne Russell in *Journal of a Trapper* (1848). During the early 20th century, elk were rarely seen according to residents of the area. The elk population increased during the 1940s and by the mid-1950s, depredation complaints on winter wheat were common. The first modern hunt was implemented in 1952 and consisted of 50 permits. Beginning in 1955, general hunting was allowed and has continued in some form to the present.

The elk population continued its growth through the following decades to the current count of 4,300. Controlling the growth of the zone's elk population has driven harvest strategies during this period. Recently, historical over-harvest of bulls and under-harvest of cows has been addressed with implementation of the dual tag zone system and increased antlerless permits on late hunts.

Habitat Issues

Habitat throughout the Tex Creek Zone is or has the potential to be highly productive. The fertile, mineral rich soils of the area produce diverse plant communities including sagebrush-grasslands, extensive aspen patches, and cool moist conifer stands primarily on north and east-facing slopes. Terrain is generally mild and much of the private land of the area is dry-farmed with cereal grains. Nearly half of the zone is private land with the balance of public lands administered by the USFS, BLM, IDL, and the Department. A significant portion of the private land is CRP enrolled and is contributing substantially to the area's carrying capacity during all seasons. The Tex Creek WMA, partially owned and totally managed by the Department, provides 30,000 acres of prime winter habitat for elk, mule deer, and moose in the zone. This land was purchased to mitigate for habitat inundated or destroyed by Ririe, Palisades, and Teton Dams.

Biological Issues

A projected over-harvest of bull elk in this zone was occurring under the prior management scheme of five days of any-bull hunting. This condition was not evident on winter surveys because the elk from Unit 66A in the Diamond Creek Zone winter in this zone. These elk should be managed as one population in the same zone from a biological perspective. Implementation of zone management has resulted in a dramatic drop in the number of any-bull hunters and could improve the bull age structure of the population. The Tex Creek elk are productive and their future management will be heavily influenced by the need to control this population. Placing all of the seasonal ranges of these elk in the same zone would be appropriate to accomplish this objective.

Inter-specific Issues

The Tex Creek Zone supports an important deer population. This population during the 1992-1993 winter sustained significant mortality and is gradually recovering. The area also supports a strong moose population and is grazed extensively by domestic livestock. In the past, mule deer and elk appeared to be spatially separated on winter range and there were no known conflicts between elk and moose; however, relationships among these species are not monitored or well understood. There is growing concern over elk herds establishing winter use in traditional mule deer winter range in the Willow Creek Canyon complex.

Predation Issues

There are no known unique or unusual predator issues affecting the elk population in this zone.

Winter Feeding Issues

Elk are not fed in this zone except on an emergency basis, which occurred during the winters of 1988-1989 and 1992-1993. Because of the zone's proximity to known Brucellosis-infected herds in Wyoming and Idaho, it is extremely critical that feeding on anything less than a genuine emergency basis should be avoided. Large round bales of grass-alfalfa hay have been left in the field on Tex Creek WMA periodically to attract elk to the area and hold them on that winter range.

During the winter of 2003-2004, approximately 2,000 elk had crossed Willow Creek and many were very close to Iona Hill. After a few elk were killed on railroad tracks close to Iona, the Department decided to drive the elk back to Tex Creek WMA and bait them there with hay to keep them away from town and potential trouble. The operation required two driving operations and feeding ~76 tons of hay to over 1,400 elk. The elk were successfully held until the end of winter.

Information Requirements

In 1978, 1979, and 1980, the Department conducted radio-telemetry studies of elk wintering on Tex Creek WMA, the results of which indicated these elk summered primarily in Units 66 and

66A with some going to Units 69 and 76. This work was duplicated in 1998-1999 with results showing the same trends in distribution and movement. Of concern, however, is the low proportion of marked animals remaining in the zone during the summer and fall. Information from this work may result in new harvest strategies designed to favor the zone's resident animals.

Literature Cited

Russell, O. 1848. Journal of a Trapper. Syms-York, Boise, Idaho.

Elk Tex Creek Zone (Units 66, 69)

Winter Status & Objectives

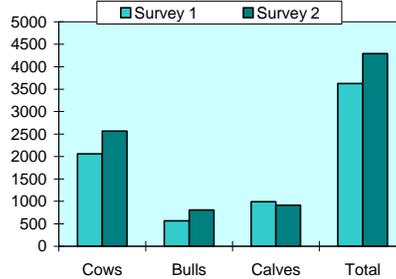
Unit	Survey Year	Current Status			Objective		
		Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
66/69	2000	2569	808	460	2000 - 3000	425 - 625	250 - 350
Zone Total		2569	808	460	2000 - 3000	425 - 625	250 - 350
Bulls per 100 Cows			31	18		18 - 24	10 - 14



Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
66/69	1997	2059	570	995	3624	2000	2569	808	916	4293
Comparable Surveys Total		2059	570	995	3624		2569	808	916	4293
Per 100 Cows			28	48				31	36	

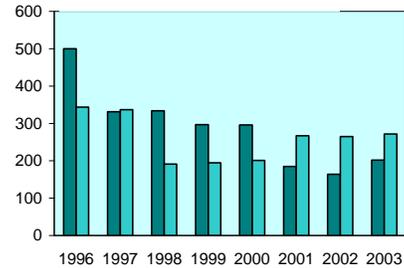
Comparable Survey Totals



Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	500	331	334	297	296	185	164	202
'A' Tag			7	138	171	159	143	188
'B' Tag			0	0	0	2	3	
CH Tag			327	159	125	24	19	11
Antlered Harvest	344	337	191	195	201	267	265	272
'A' Tag			73	73	38	44	49	48
'B' Tag			118	118	159	223	216	224
CH Tag			0	4	4	0	0	0
Hunter Numbers	4763	3743	2638	2257	ND	2114	2168	2346
'A' Tag			413	1168	ND	1205	1149	1235
'B' Tag			827	516	ND	830	977	1072
CH Tag			1398	573	ND	79	42	39
% 6+ Points	32	11	7	14	31	32	21	30

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

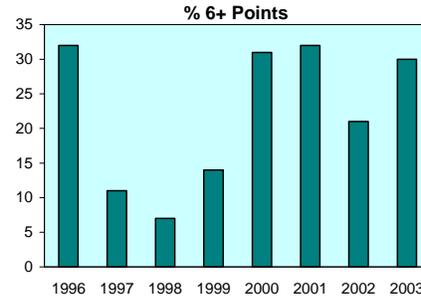
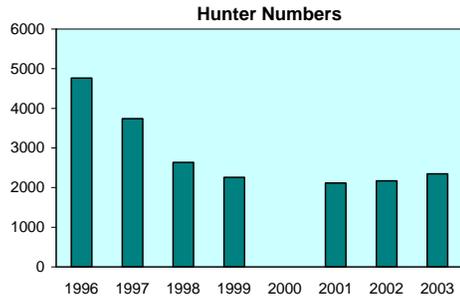


Figure 25. Tex Creek Zone Status and Objectives.

**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Elk Surveys and Inventories</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-28</u>		
SUBPROJECT:	<u>7</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>I</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>1</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004</u>		

SALMON REGION

Middle Fork Zone (Units 20A, 26, 27)

Management Objectives

Objectives for this zone are to maintain Units 20A and 26 at current herd levels of approximately 2,100 cows and increase bull numbers from the current 270 to approximately 650. If future elk surveys do not reveal a change in productivity and bull:cow ratios, a reassessment of management objectives may be necessary. The objective in Unit 27 is to reduce cow numbers to approximately 2,400 cows and increase bulls to approximately 650. Herds will be managed to maintain 25-29 bulls:100 cows postseason, which translates to 14-18 mature bulls:100 cows.

Historical Perspective

Elk were in low abundance in the Middle Fork Zone through the early part of the 20th century. As has occurred over much of the west, elk herds expanded dramatically since the mid-1970s. Today, the Middle Fork Zone winters approximately 7,500 elk. Approximately 4,000 people were hunting elk in the Middle Fork Zone through 1997. Caps on hunter numbers have reduced participation to <3,000 hunters since 1998. Seasons traditionally have been general hunts from mid-September to mid-late November for any bull. Much of the hunting pressure and harvest, particularly for mature bulls, has come during September. In recent years, emphasis on antlerless opportunity has been reduced. However, even with liberal antlerless elk hunting opportunities and seasons, harvest has consistently been <3% of the antlerless segment of the herd.

Habitat Issues

Habitat ultimately determines elk densities and productivity. Over past decades, fire suppression contributed to conifer encroachment on forage-producing areas, particularly winter ranges. Recent large wildfires have partially reversed this trend and enhanced elk habitat. Present management policies that allow fire a larger role in wilderness ecosystems will benefit elk habitat and elk over the long run. Already established in some areas, spread of noxious weeds

such as knapweed and rush skeletonweed could ultimately have significant impacts on winter range productivity.

Biological Issues

Elk populations in Units 20A and 26 have performed poorly in the past decade. Calf production has gone from poor (23:100 cows) through a low of 13:100 cows and rebounded somewhat to almost 19:100 cows. At least partly as a consequence of low calf recruitment, bull:cow ratios have also been less than desirable (17 declining to 13 bulls:100 cows). In contrast, Unit 27 grew dramatically, increasing from 3,000 elk in 1989 to 6,300 in 1995. However, the herd showed signs of decline through the January 2002 survey, dropping to 4,750. Calf production and bull ratios in Unit 27 fell through the same period (from 31-36 calves:100 cows to 18, and 25-28 bulls:100 cows to 17). Large fires in Unit 27 in 1979 and 1988 enhanced elk habitat and probably significantly contributed to the rapid expansion of that wintering elk herd. Similar large fires in Units 20A and 26 in the past decade (including large-scale fires in 2000) may help reverse the trend of declining productivity noted in the last several years.

Inter-specific Issues

Current high elk densities may be having some impact on habitat capacity for deer and on deer productivity. Elk could also have an impact in some of the less rugged grassland areas used by bighorn sheep, whose diets are similar to elk. Domestic livestock grazing is minimal in this zone.

Predation Issues

Black bear densities appear to be low to moderate. Mountain lion densities are at least moderate, perhaps high, and appear to have increased in recent years, probably partly due to increased elk densities. Coyotes are common, but not known to have much impact on elk populations. Wolves reintroduced by the USFWS have become well established in these units. The addition of wolves will likely have an impact on bear, mountain lion, and coyote populations. At some level, predation could benefit elk herds to the extent that it keeps elk herds below habitat carrying capacity, where they can be more productive. This is particularly true for this zone, where antlerless elk harvest by hunters has been insignificant. However, excessive levels of predation can also suppress prey populations to undesirably low levels. At this point, it is unclear what the net impact of predation will be with the new mix of large predators.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding has not occurred in these remote big game units.

Information Requirements

Impacts of elk on mule deer production and survival are suspected but unknown. The most productive elk herds are those maintained at a level below carrying capacity. Better information is needed to identify appropriate elk densities that will maintain optimum productivity and

harvest. The potential impact of the new mix of large predators is unknown. Migratory patterns are largely unknown.

Elk Middle Fork Zone (Units 20A, 26, 27)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Survey Year	Current Status			Objective		
		Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
20A	2002	1241	192	123	1050 - 1550	250 - 400	150 - 250
26	2002	830	79	42	900 - 1300	200 - 350	150 - 200
27	2002	3542	604	309	1900 - 2900	500 - 800	300 - 450
Zone Total		5613	875	474	3850 - 5750	950 - 1550	600 - 900
Bulls per 100 Cows			16	8		25 - 29	14 - 18

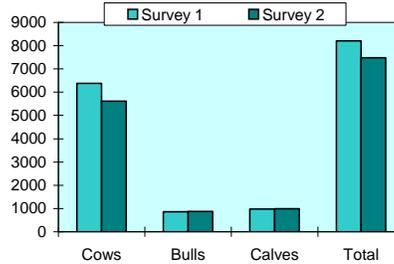


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
20A	1999	1317	182	169	1668	2002	1241	192	246	1679
26	*1999	1100	140	80	1320	2002	830	79	141	1050
27	1999	3966	533	723	5222	2002	3542	604	606	4752
Comparable Surveys Total		6383	855	972	8210		5613	875	993	7481
Per 100 Cows			13	15				16	18	

* Incomplete survey, projected sightability estimates.

Comparable Survey Totals

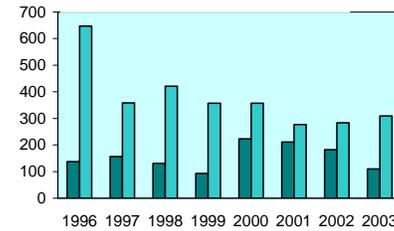


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	137	157	131	93	223	211	182	110
A' Tag			131	93	70	92	72	71
B' Tag			0	0	153	118	110	39
CH Tag	137	157	0	0	0	1	0	0
Antlered Harvest	647	358	421	357	357	277	283	309
A' Tag			104	86	82	78	64	75
B' Tag	647	358	317	149	275	199	219	234
CH Tag			0	122	0	0	0	0
Hunter Numbers	4085	3499	3044	2300	ND	2168	2038	1878
A' Tag			1479	1106	ND	631	667	752
B' Tag	3211	2404	1565	666	ND	1165	1371	1126
CH Tag	874	1095	0	528	ND	372	0	0
% 6+ Points	32	16	43	25	28	35	34	39

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

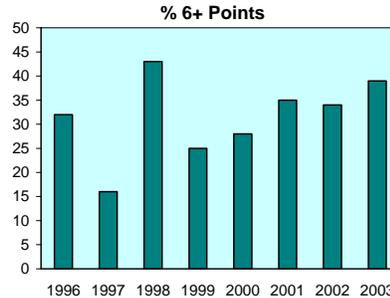
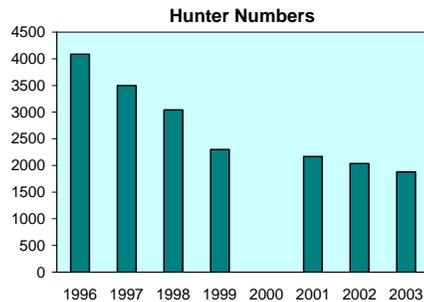


Figure 26. Middle Fork Zone Status and Objectives.

Salmon Zone (Units 21, 21A, 28, 36B)

Management Objectives

Objectives for this zone are to increase elk in Units 21 and 21A from current herd levels of 2,700 adults to approximately 3,600 and to reduce cow elk numbers in Units 28 and 36B from 4,000 to approximately 3,000 while increasing bulls from 450 to approximately 600. To stimulate and maintain herd productivity, balance depredation concerns with a reasonably large elk population, and minimize potential impacts on mule deer, a five-year period of herd reduction totaling about 33% of previous numbers was accomplished in Unit 21. Antlerless elk hunts in Units 28 and 36B continue to achieve modest herd reduction and stabilization. Antlerless harvest in Unit 28 recently has been reduced in response to low calf recruitment. The Salmon Zone will continue to be managed to produce general hunting opportunity and 10-14 mature bulls:100 cows postseason.

Historical Perspective

Although present from the time of the first white explorers and trappers, elk were in low abundance in the Salmon Zone through much of the 20th century. From 1917 until the 1940s, parts of Units 28 and 36B were designated as no hunting “game preserves.” Sixty-two elk from Yellowstone Park were released in Panther Creek drainage (Unit 28) in 1937. As has occurred over much of the west, elk herds have expanded dramatically since the mid-1970s. Today, the Salmon Zone winters approximately 8,700 elk. Aggressive antlerless harvest since 1992 stabilized and reduced rapidly growing herds in Units 21 and 21A, and may have reduced growth rates in the other two units. Declining calf recruitment and bull:cow ratios in recent years suggest that elk herds may have reached undesirable densities that contributed to declining populations.

About 4,000 people have participated in rifle hunts and 300 in archery hunts in the Salmon Zone in recent years, harvesting approximately 400-500 cows and 500-1,200 bulls annually.

Habitat Issues

Cattle ranching, livestock grazing, mining, timber harvest, and recreation are the dominant human uses of the landscape in the Salmon Zone. Elk depredations on agricultural crops are localized, but are especially pronounced in dry years.

In some areas of the Salmon Zone, elk winter in mature stands of mountain mahogany that appear relatively stagnant and unproductive. Forests are slowly encroaching into shrub and grassland communities. Spread of noxious weeds such as knapweed and leafy spurge could ultimately have significant impacts on winter range productivity.

A large-scale forest fire occurred in the western portion of Unit 28 in 2000. Fires removed forest canopy in large tracts, creating conditions for increased elk forage production.

Biological Issues

Aerial surveys in 1992 and 1994 found exceptionally high winter elk densities in Unit 21A, a migratory herd shared by Idaho and Montana. Winter range concerns in Idaho and depredation concerns in Montana prompted significant increases in antlerless hunting in both states with a goal of reducing the herd to 2,000-2,500 wintering elk. The average total antlerless harvest increased from about 100 animals to about 300 animals, and by 2000, the herd was reduced to approximately 1,800 animals. Similar reductions occurred in Unit 21; total winter elk numbers dropped to 1,550 during surveys in 2001. Antlerless elk harvest was discontinued in Units 21 and 21A in 2000. In contrast, Units 28 and 36B experienced major population increases (57% and 30%, respectively) since the early 1990s, despite modest increases in antlerless harvest. As a group, these units are only moderately productive, averaging 30-35 calves:100 cows. The decline in productivity in Unit 28 as elk numbers increased is worrisome. Partly as a result of this modest productivity, and partly because they are relatively accessible general hunt units, Units 28 and 36B have weak bull:cow ratios (13-18 bulls per 100 cows).

Inter-specific Issues

This zone contains the majority of the most productive deer units in the Salmon Region; parts of Units 21, 21A, and 36B contain high densities of wintering deer. Current high elk densities may be having some impact on the area's capacity to produce deer. This may be particularly pronounced during severe winters when deep snow moves elk down onto deer winter ranges. Similar problems may also occur with bighorn sheep, but the amount of habitat overlap is much less.

Predation Issues

Black bear densities appear to be moderate in the Salmon Zone. Mountain lion densities are at least moderate, perhaps high in some areas, and appear to have increased in recent years, probably partly due to increased elk densities. Coyotes are common, but not known to have much impact on elk populations. Two packs of wolves reintroduced by the USFWS have become established in Unit 28. Other packs apparently are resident in Units 21 and 36B and transient in Unit 21A. The addition of wolves will likely have an impact on black bear, mountain lion, and coyote populations. At some level, predation could benefit elk herds to the extent that it keeps elk herds below habitat carrying capacity, where they can be more productive. However, excessive levels of predation can also suppress prey populations to undesirably low levels. At this point, it is unclear what the net impact of predation will be with the new mix of large predators.

Winter Feeding Issues

Aside from an occasional small private feeding activity and a few elk fed incidental to the rare deer feeding operations, elk have not been deliberately fed recently in the Salmon Zone.

Information Requirements

Budget constraints have not allowed elk census surveys to be conducted at regular intervals. Impacts of elk on mule deer production and survival are suspected but unknown. The most productive elk herds are those maintained at a level below carrying capacity. Better information is needed to identify appropriate elk densities that will maintain optimum productivity and harvest. Potential impact of the new mix of large predators is unknown.

Elk Salmon Zone (Units 21, 21A, 28, 36B)

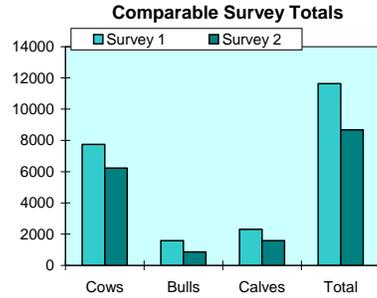
Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Survey Year	Current Status			Objective		
		Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
21	2001	1125	172	112	1200 - 1800	250 - 350	150 - 225
21A	2000	1149	240	154	1200 - 1800	250 - 350	150 - 225
28	2001	2560	286	164	1500 - 2300	325 - 475	175 - 275
36B	2000	1393	161	68	700 - 1100	150 - 250	75 - 125
Zone Total		6227	859	498	4600 - 7000	975 - 1425	550 - 850
Bulls per 100 Cows		14	8			18 - 24	10 - 14



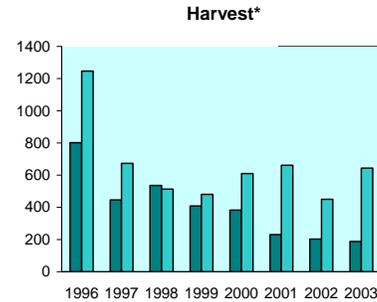
Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
21	1993	1972	475	665	3112	2001	1125	172	250	1547
21A	1998	1219	377	376	1972	2000	1149	240	403	1792
28	1996	2939	530	696	4165	2001	2560	286	490	3336
36B	1997	1617	204	562	2383	2000	1393	161	442	1996
Comparable Surveys Total		7747	1586	2299	11632		6227	859	1585	8671
Per 100 Cows		20	30				16	27		



Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	802	446	536	409	382	231	203	188
'A' Tag			7	20	8	43	41	47
'B' Tag			0	7	0	1	3	2
CH Tag	802	446	529	382	374	187	159	139
Antlered Harvest	1247	673	513	480	610	662	450	643
'A' Tag			59	25	26	29	21	20
'B' Tag	1247	673	454	455	581	627	415	613
CH Tag			0	0	3	6	14	10
Hunter Numbers	6749	5989	4766	4365	ND	3261	3580	3628
'A' Tag			327	305	ND	258	315	323
'B' Tag	5292	4265	3407	2931	ND	2498	2832	2972
CH Tag	1457	1724	1032	1129	ND	505	433	333
% 6+ Points	27	18	26	16	19	23	24	24



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Note: ND = no survey data available.

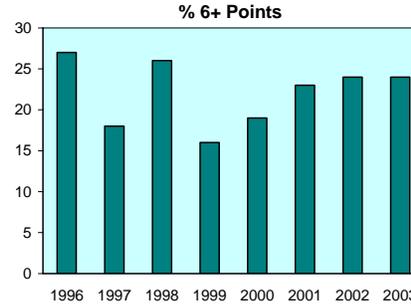
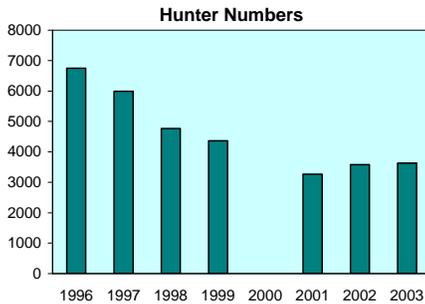


Figure 27. Salmon Zone Status and Objectives.

Lemhi Zone (Units 29, 37, 37A, 51)

Management Objectives

Objectives for this zone are to reduce the elk population to approximately 2,000 cows and 650 bulls. To stimulate and maintain herd productivity, balance depredation concerns with maintaining a reasonably large elk population, and minimize potential impacts on mule deer, a five-year period of herd reduction, totaling 40-50% of current numbers, is being conducted in the zone. Herds will be managed to maintain 10-14 mature bulls:100 cows in Unit 37, 14-18 mature bulls:100 cows in Unit 51, and 18-22 mature bulls:100 cows in Units 29 and 37A.

Historical Perspective

Elk abundance was low in the Lemhi Zone through much of the 20th century. Most of the zone has been managed for decades under very conservative controlled hunt strategies. In 1993, Unit 51 changed from general any-bull harvest to general hunting for spike bulls with controlled any-bull permits. As has occurred over much of the west, elk herds have expanded dramatically since the mid-1970s. Today, the Lemhi Zone winters approximately 5,200 elk, a reduction of 1,400 from recent highs but still 1,200 more than during the mid 1990s.

About 1,400 people each year participated in rifle hunts in the Lemhi Zone through the late 1990s. However, with increases in controlled and general antlerless elk opportunities, hunter numbers have increased to approximately 3,000 per year. Conservative bull harvest management has produced exceptional bull:cow ratios and a reputation for large mature bulls. Controlled bull hunts in this zone have become very desirable; rifle permits are much in demand and difficult to draw. The area's reputation for many mature bulls has also made this zone a very attractive archery hunt; up to approximately 1,300 people have participated in recent years, 50-70% of them in Unit 29 alone.

Habitat Issues

Cattle ranching, livestock grazing, and recreation are dominant human uses of the landscape in the Lemhi Zone. The zone is in a generally arid region where forage production can be strongly influenced by growing season precipitation. During drought years, high elevation mesic habitats are more heavily utilized by elk, while low elevation riparian areas and wet meadows are more heavily utilized by cattle. Elk depredations on agricultural crops are common and are especially pronounced in dry years. Expanded irrigated agriculture, passage of legislation authorizing depredation payments, and legislation authorizing depredation hunts combined with increasing elk populations have led to more depredation complaints in Unit 51.

In some areas of the Lemhi Zone, elk winter in mature stands of mountain mahogany which appear relatively stagnant and unproductive. In other areas, elk winter on open sagebrush-grassland ridgetops. Forests are slowly encroaching into shrub and grassland communities. Spread of noxious weeds, such as knapweed and leafy spurge, could ultimately have significant impacts on winter range productivity.

Biological Issues

In 1992, Units 29 and 37A contained strongly-performing elk populations; a base of 1,200 cows was producing 600 calves and 600 bulls. By 1998 and into 2003, the herd had increased to over 1,700 cows, but was still only producing 600 calves. This loss in productivity may be related to higher-than-desirable elk densities. Through intensive antlerless harvest, the herd in Unit 37 was significantly reduced. Although herd size is still over objective levels, harvest was reduced beginning in 2003 as the herd neared desired levels.

Inter-specific Issues

Although historically the Lemhi Zone supported high deer densities, the zone currently has relatively modest deer populations. Current high elk densities may be having some impact on deer productivity.

When elk numbers are high, as they are currently, livestock operators often perceive elk to be strong competitors for range forage. However, elk generally remove a minor portion of forage compared to livestock.

Predation Issues

Black bear densities appear to be low and stable in the Lemhi Zone. Mountain lion densities are low to moderate and appear to have increased in recent years in Units 29, 37, and 37A, probably partly due to increased elk densities. Coyotes are common, but not known to have much impact on elk populations.

Winter Feeding Issues

Because this is an arid area with relatively little snowfall, winter feeding has not occurred recently in the Lemhi Zone.

Information Requirements

Impacts of elk on mule deer production and survival are suspected but unknown. The most productive elk herds are those maintained at a level below carrying capacity. Better information is needed to identify appropriate elk densities that will maintain optimum productivity and harvest. Better information on elk migration patterns is also needed.

Elk Lemhi Zone (Units 29, 37, 37A, 51)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Survey Year	Current Status			Objective		
		Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
29/37A	2003	1703	805	321	1000 - 1600	300 - 500	200 - 300
37	2003	395	83	54	150 - 250	30 - 50	20 - 30
51	2003	737	479	109	500 - 700	125 - 200	75 - 125
Zone Total		2835	1367	484	1650 - 2550	455 - 750	295 - 455
Bulls per 100 Cows			48	17		30 - 35	14 - 18

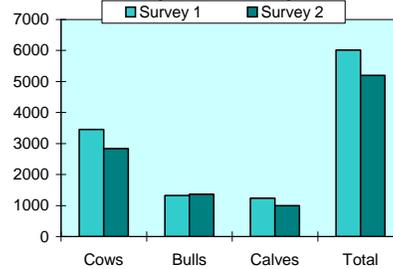


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
29/37A	1998	1467	527	449	2443	2003	1703	805	618	3126
37	2000	909	217	316	1442	2003	395	83	100	578
51	1999	1078	580	470	2128	2003	737	479	281	1497
Comparable Surveys Total		3454	1324	1235	6013		2835	1367	999	5201
Per 100 Cows			38	36				48	35	

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey Totals

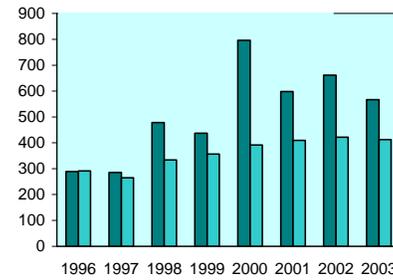


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	289	285	478	437	796	598	662	567
'A' Tag			105	245	267	200	206	234
'B' Tag					0	3	0	0
CH Tag	289	285	373	192	529	395	456	333
Antlered Harvest	291	265	334	356	391	409	422	412
'A' Tag	83	69	112	132	167	155	133	122
'B' Tag					0	10	0	6
CH Tag	208	196	222	224	224	244	289	284
Hunter Numbers	1338	1561	2600	2603	ND	3316	3099	3125
'A' Tag	399	454	1429	1651	ND	1355	1380	1492
'B' Tag					ND	38	23	28
CH Tag	939	1107	1171	952	ND	1923	1696	1605
% 6+ Points	30	42	44	47	58	42	47	42

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

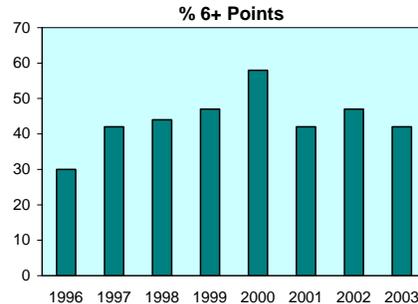
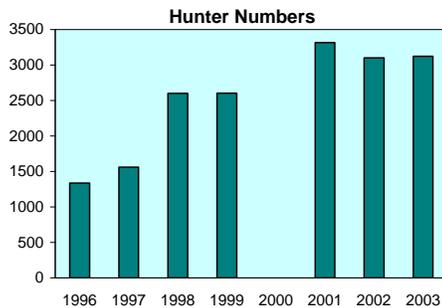


Figure 28. Lemhi Zone Status and Objectives.

Beaverhead Zone (Units 30, 30A, 58, 59, 59A)

Management Objectives

Objectives for the Beaverhead Zone are to maintain Units 58, 59, and 59A at current herd levels (about 1,300 cows and 350 bulls) and to maintain elk densities in Units 30 and 30A at approximately 1,250 cows and 325 bulls. Herds will be managed to maintain 14-18 mature bulls:100 cows in Units 58, 59, and 59A and 18-24 mature bulls:100 cows in Units 30 and 30A. To maintain herd productivity, balance depredation concerns with maintaining a reasonably large elk population, and minimize potential impacts on mule deer, a five-year period of herd reduction totaling about 40% was recommended in Units 30 and 30A during the late 1990s. Surveys in 2004 indicated populations are at or slightly below objective levels. Accordingly, cow harvest was reduced to maintain relatively high productivity and stabilize herd size.

Historical Perspective

Elk abundance was low in the Beaverhead Zone through much of the 20th century. In fact, elk numbers were apparently low enough that a few elk from Horse Prairie and Yellowstone National Park were translocated to Units 30 and 30A around 1918. Units 30 and 30A were closed to hunting through the 1940s, managed as general hunts during the 1950s, and changed to general hunts with harvest quotas in the 1960s. Since 1970, Units 30 and 30A have been managed under very conservative controlled hunt strategies. Controlled antlerless hunts were initiated in Units 59 and 59A in 1979 and in Unit 58 in 1988. In 1991, Units 58, 59, and 59A changed from general any-bull management to general hunting for spike bulls with controlled any-bull permits. As has occurred over much of the west, elk herds have expanded dramatically since the mid-1970s. Today, the Beaverhead Zone winters approximately 4,400 elk and supports about 2,000 hunters annually.

Many elk in this zone, particularly in Units 30 and 30A, spend winter in Idaho and migrate to summer ranges in Montana. Traditionally, elk in Units 58, 59, and 59A summered in Idaho and wintered in Montana; however, since the early half of the 1980s, more elk are wintering in Idaho. In recent years, high elk densities have become a controversial issue with landowners and livestock grazers in both states.

Habitat Issues

Cattle ranching, livestock grazing, and recreation are dominant human uses of the landscape in the Beaverhead Zone. The zone is in a generally arid region where forage production can be strongly influenced by growing season precipitation. During drought years, high elevation mesic habitats are more heavily utilized by elk while low elevation riparian areas and wet meadows are more heavily utilized by cattle. Elk depredations on agricultural crops are common and are especially pronounced in dry years in Units 30, 30A, and along Medicine Lodge Creek.

Forests are slowly encroaching into shrub and grassland communities. Spread of noxious weeds, such as knapweed and leafy spurge, could ultimately have significant impacts on winter range

productivity. Elk wintering on windswept ridgetops in Units 59 and 59A are periodically subject to *Oxytropis* poisoning.

Biological Issues

The elk population in Unit 30 experienced very high growth rates through the mid-1990s, despite attempts to increase antlerless harvest and considerable depredation hunt activity. Units 30A, 58, 59, and 59A show relatively stable populations. Calf production and bull:cow ratios are showing signs of decline in this zone.

Inter-specific Issues

Although historically the Beaverhead Zone supported high mule deer densities, the zone currently has relatively moderate deer populations. Current high elk densities may be having some impact on deer populations and/or winter range.

When elk numbers are high, as they are currently, livestock operators often perceive elk to be strong competitors for range forage. However, elk generally remove a minor portion of the forage compared to livestock. During some winters, elk move into Unit 63 and cause haystack depredations in the Montevieu, Cedar Butte, and Beaver Creek areas.

Predation Issues

Black bear densities appear to be low and stable in the Beaverhead Zone. Mountain lion densities are low to moderate and appear to have increased in recent years in Units 30 and 30A, probably partly due to increased elk densities. Coyotes are common, but not known to have much impact on elk populations.

Winter Feeding Issues

Because this is an arid area with relatively little snowfall, winter feeding has not occurred recently in the Beaverhead Zone.

Information Requirements

Impacts of elk on mule deer production and survival are suspected but unknown. The most productive elk herds are those maintained at a level below carrying capacity. Better information is needed to identify appropriate elk densities that will maintain optimum productivity and harvest.

Elk Beaverhead Zone (Units 30, 30A, 58, 59, 59A)

Winter Status & Objectives

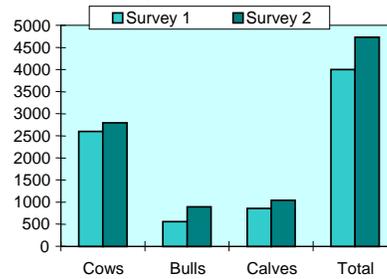
Unit	Survey Year	Current Status			Objective		
		Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
30	2004	1272	381	280	800 - 1200	250 - 350	150 - 250
30A	2004	178	122	88	200 - 300	40 - 60	25 - 35
58	2000	769	185	128	400 - 600	100 - 175	50 - 100
59/59A	2000	577	205	118	650 - 950	150 - 250	100 - 150
Zone Total		2796	893	614	2050 - 3050	540 - 835	325 - 535
Bulls per 100 Cows			32	22		25 - 29	14 - 18



Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
30	2001	1103	304	338	1745	2004	1272	381	413	2066
30A	2001	188	33	65	286	2004	178	122	61	361
58	1995	409	130	187	726	2000	769	185	316	1270
59/59A	1994	893	89	264	1246	2000	577	205	254	1036
Comparable Surveys Total		2593	556	854	4003		2796	893	1044	4733
Per 100 Cows			21	33				29	37	

Comparable Survey Totals

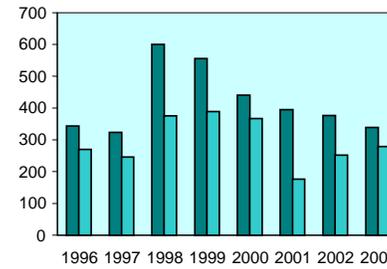


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	343	323	600	556	440	395	376	339
'A' Tag			71	396	73	95	79	66
'B' Tag			0	0	0	0	0	0
CH Tag			529	160	367	300	297	273
Antlered Harvest	269	246	375	389	367	176	252	279
'A' Tag			216	218	181	52	102	117
'B' Tag			0	0	1	5	0	2
CH Tag			159	171	185	119	150	160
Hunter Numbers	1691	1851	2378	2716	ND	1601	1906	1899
'A' Tag			1274	2055	ND	646	893	906
'B' Tag			0	0	ND	18	13	13
CH Tag			1104	661	ND	937	1000	980
% 6+ Points	32	45	29	28	28	40	35	37

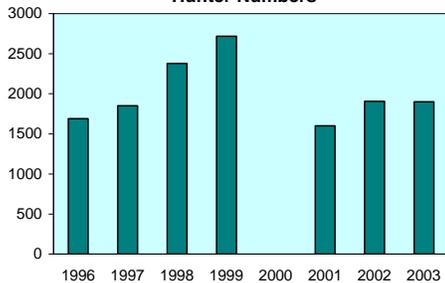
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

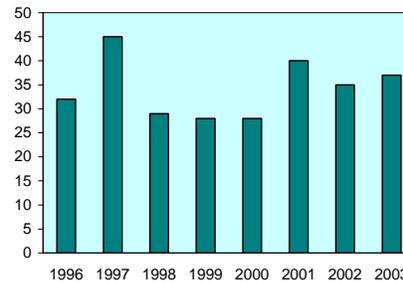


Figure 29. Beaverhead Zone Status and Objectives.

Sawtooth Zone (Units 33, 34, 35, 36)

Management Objectives

Objectives include maintaining a population of $\geq 3,800$ cows and ≥ 790 bulls, including ≥ 465 adult bulls in the wintering population in this zone. Bull:cow and adult bull:cow ratios will be managed at 18-24 bulls:100 cows and 10-14 adult bulls:100 cows, the statewide minimums. Summer elk numbers in Unit 36 were reduced to near objectives during the late 1990s. A harvest of ≥ 750 bulls each year is desired. However, at current recruitment rates, harvest of ≤ 500 bulls is sustainable. These objectives reflect a balance between the need for a relatively large, huntable elk population and concerns about feeding elk during winter. Unless calf production and survival increases dramatically, harvest rates will have to be reduced to achieve these goals.

Historical Perspective

Both mule deer and elk herds were over-harvested for hides and meat for mining camps in the mid- to late 1800s. Lack of big game in the area resulted in the Idaho Legislature establishing the South Fork Game Preserve (now Unit 35) in 1909. This was the first game preserve in Idaho and remained in place until 1977. No hunting was allowed in the preserve until 1945. Deer populations increased rapidly. The elk herd increased to $>1,000$ by 1940 and approximately 2,000 by the early 1950s. The rapid increase to the current population of approximately 5,200 elk started in the late 1970s.

The Sawtooth Zone is a popular destination for elk hunters from the Boise and Magic Valley areas. Hunter numbers declined to approximately 5,500 in recent years.

Habitat Issues

More than 90% of this zone is managed by the USFS. Access ranges from heavily roaded in the Garden Valley area to the unroaded Frank Church River-of-No-Return Wilderness and Sawtooth National Recreation Area. Hunters are able to select hunting conditions from wilderness to logged/roaded situations. In several areas, road densities are very high and access management programs could provide more area with less motorized access.

Habitat conditions on winter range have been an important consideration since the early 1930s. Reports by USFS and National Park Service biologists described degraded conditions of winter range in 1932. There have been numerous attempts to improve habitat on winter range, but none of them have shown significant success.

Elk have caused damage to several ranches (primarily cattle and small horse feeding operations) in the Garden Valley area over the last ten years. Establishing bait sites nearby reduces this damage. In spring, elk concentrate on new forage growth on private rangeland. In the Stanley area, very limited winter ranges have been impacted by the small part of the herd that does not migrate in the fall. Portions of local summer range are noticeably impacted by elk.

Biological Issues

Following the trend south of the Salmon River, this elk population has increased dramatically in the last 20 years. Calf recruitment in the past has been high; however, indications of declines are present. Harvest data indicate that more bulls are being killed than are produced annually.

Inter-specific Issues

The Garden Valley area has been a significant wintering area for mule deer. In the early 1940s, estimated winter deer populations were from 5,000 to 12,000. The elk population consisted of <2,000 animals. Since 1964, mule deer numbers have not exceeded 2,000 and there are approximately 5,500 elk wintering in the area. Livestock grazing has been significantly reduced over the last 60 years. Unit 34, Bear Valley, still has significant levels of cattle grazing.

Predation Issues

Black bear and mountain lion populations are well established and apparently stable in the Sawtooth Zone. Recent sightability surveys indicated a declining calf:cow ratio, but there is no evidence to indicate predation is, or is not, the cause of this decline. As a result of a recent USFWS wolf reintroduction, ≥ 3 packs are established in the Sawtooth Zone. Impacts of wolf reintroduction on elk population dynamics remain unclear.

Winter Feeding Issues

The Sawtooth Zone has been a focal point for winter feeding since the 1930s. Severe winter mortality occurred on a regular basis starting in 1932 when 93 dead elk were found and 1,800 dead deer were buried along South Fork Payette River. Winter feeding programs for mule deer started shortly thereafter. In a few years, elk were consuming more feed than mule deer. Now, winter feeding takes place approximately two out of every five years.

There has been no evidence of Brucellosis at any of the feed sites. The major concern is for feeding mule deer on limited deer winter range in Garden Valley. When mule deer are fed, elk quickly take over feed sites and exclude deer. This requires establishment of elk feeding sites to allow deer access to sufficient feed. Native range has the capability to support the current elk herd in nearly all situations. There is considerable public demand for feeding elk. This is both for public concern about the welfare of the herd and to develop an elk feeding sleigh ride as a tourist attraction.

In the past two decades, occasional winter feeding has allowed a wintering elk herd to become established in the Stanley area, where historically they could not survive severe winters. The herd grew to 500-1,000 animals and severely impacted the small amount of natural winter range available. More recently, antlerless hunting that targeted the wintering population reduced numbers to objective levels.

Information Requirements

Migratory patterns of elk are largely unknown. Information about impacts of several large fires in the last ten years on calving, summer, or winter ranges is needed. Potential impacts of the new mix of large predators are unknown.

Elk Sawtooth Zone (Units 33, 34, 35, 36)

Winter Status & Objectives

Unit	Current Status				Objective		
	Survey Year	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls	Cows	Bulls	Adult Bulls
33	2001	2114	282	116	3544	500 - 800	300 - 450
34	ND				0	0	0
35	2001	1011	93	57	1761	50 - 100	25 - 75
36	2003	284	52	40	250 - 350	50 - 75	30 - 50
Zone Total		3409	427	213	3050 - 4550	600 - 975	355 - 575
Bulls per 100 Cows			13	6		18 - 24	10 - 14

Note: Estimates within parentheses are based on information other than sightability surveys.

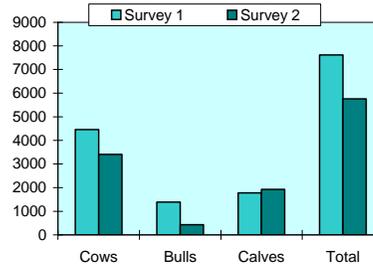


Population Surveys

Unit	Year	Survey 1				Survey 2				
		Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total	Year	Cows	Bulls	Calves	Total
33	1989	3135	1138	1153	5426	2001	2114	282	1148	3544
34	ND					ND				
35	1992	1078	213	557	1848	2001	1011	93	657	1761
36	2000	249	34	66	349	2003	284	52	118	454
Comparable Surveys Total		4462	1385	1776	7623		3409	427	1923	5759
Per 100 Cows			31	40				13	56	

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Comparable Survey Totals

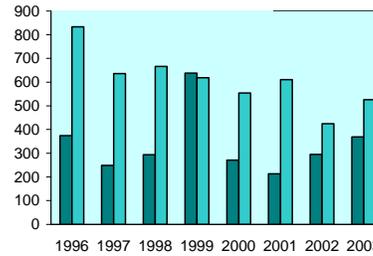


Zone Harvest Statistics

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antlerless Harvest	375	249	294	638	271	213	295	369
'A' Tag				174	160	122	203	274
'B' Tag				176	15	4	2	2
CH Tag				288	96	87	90	93
Antlered Harvest	833	636	666	619	554	611	424	526
'A' Tag				91	87	139	90	129
'B' Tag				525	452	463	330	387
CH Tag				3	15	9	4	10
Hunter Numbers	7267	5955	6670	7451	ND	5490	5680	5665
'A' Tag				1725	ND	1868	2123	2136
'B' Tag				4603	ND	3319	3253	3259
CH Tag				1123	ND	303	304	270
% 6+ Points	24	31	23	23	23	24	17	20

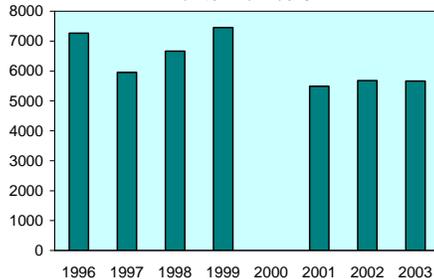
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. %6+ pts does not include spike-only harvest.

Harvest*



Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 6+ Points

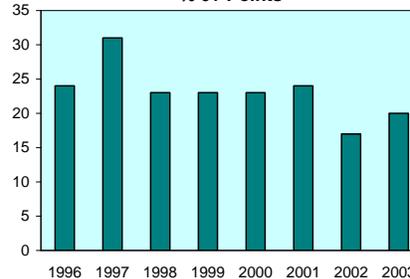


Figure 30. Sawtooth Zone Status and Objectives.

APPENDIX A



2003 ELK HUNTING SEASONS

Hunters may select one zone and may select either an A tag or B tag in most zones. A few zones are limited to controlled hunts. In general, A tags provide more opportunity for muzzleloader and archery hunters, and B tags provide more opportunity for centerfire rifle hunters.

ANTLERED ELK: Only elk with at least one antler longer than 6 inches may be taken in any season which is open for antlered elk only. In antlered or spike-only seasons, antlers must accompany the carcass while in transit.

ANTLERLESS ELK: Only elk without antlers or with antlers shorter than 6 inches may be taken in any season which is open for antlerless elk only.

SPIKE ELK: Only elk with no branching on either antler and at least one antler longer than 6 inches may be taken in any season which is open for spike elk only. A branch is an antler projection that is at least one inch long and longer than the width of the projection. In antlered or spike-only seasons, antlers must accompany the carcass while in transit.

BROW-TINED ELK: Only elk having at least one antler with a visible point on the lower half of the main beam which is four inches or greater in length may be taken in any season open for brow-tine elk only.

MANDATORY REPORT AND CHECK

REQUIREMENTS: All elk hunters are required to fill out a Harvest Report within 10 days after harvest, or within 10 days of the close of the hunting season.

In addition to this requirement, hunters killing an elk in the Panhandle Zone (Game Management Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7, and 9) must **WITHIN 10 DAYS OF A KILL,** present the antlers (if present) and the front portion of the lower jaw to an authorized check point, Department check station, to a conservation officer, or to a regional office so additional information may be collected.

A hunter may authorize another person to comply with the above requirement if that person complies with reporting requirements and possesses enough information to accurately complete the necessary form.

Any person who receives a controlled hunt permit for elk is prohibited from hunting in any other elk hunt—archery, muzzleloader, or general, EXCEPT by purchasing a leftover nonresident elk tag, if available.

Note: Residents or nonresidents may purchase unlicensed nonresident deer or elk tags at the nonresident price starting Aug 28, to be used as a second tag.

EVIDENCE OF SEX

See page 11.

LEGAL IN SPIKE ELK HUNTS



SPIKE ELK
One antler must be at least 6 inches or longer. (Not legal in brow-tined elk hunts.)

NOT LEGAL IN SPIKE ELK HUNTS OR BROW-TINED ELK HUNTS



BRANCH ANTLERED BULL (OR LARGER)
NOT legal for spike-only hunts if branched point is longer than one inch.



Antler branch is a projection one inch or more in length.

LEGAL IN BROW-TINED ELK HUNTS

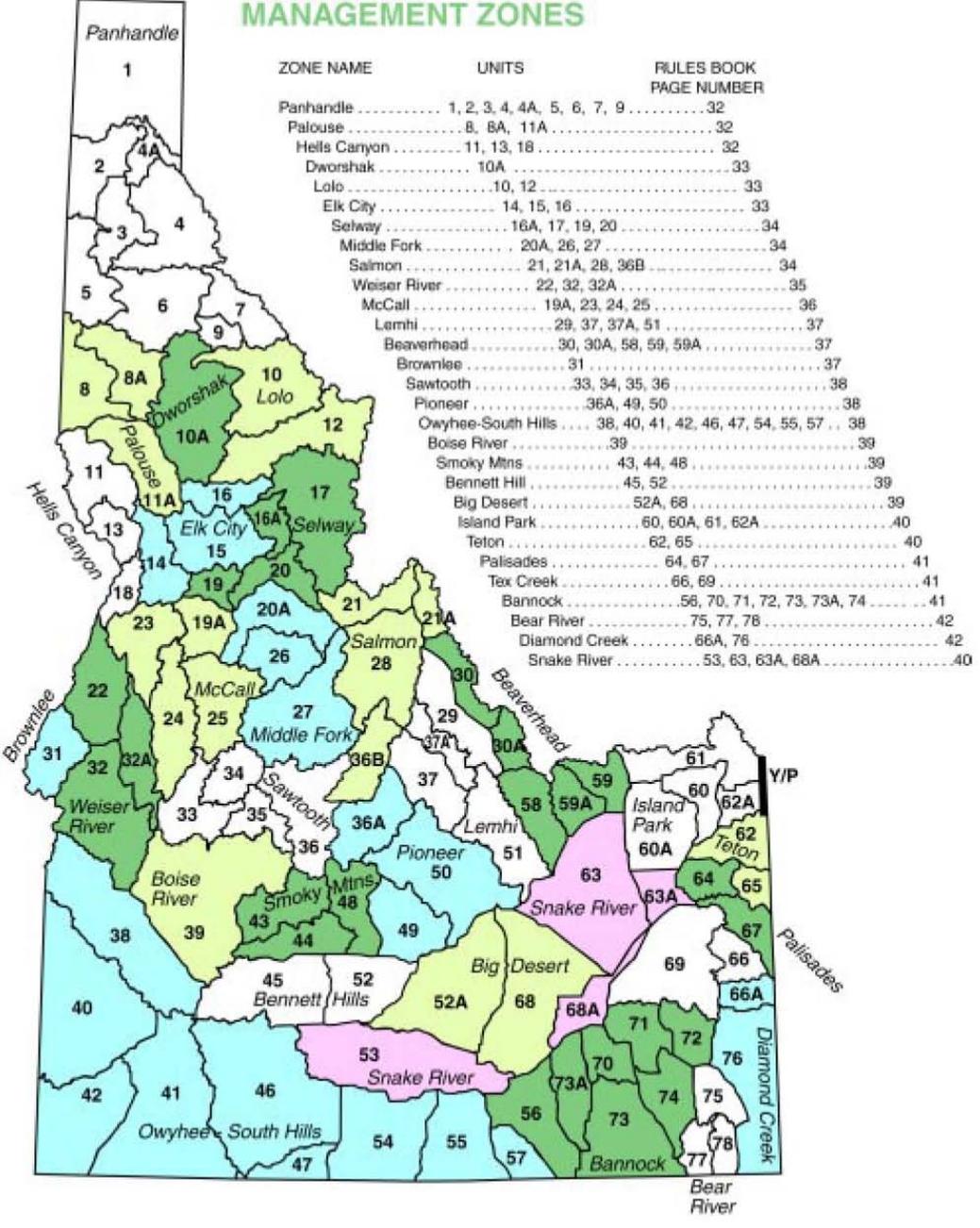
Brow Tine —



CAUTION - Archers: "Any weapon" antlerless elk hunts will be open, on or within 1 mile of private fields on which cultivated crops are currently growing, in all or parts of the following zones: Pioneer, Beaverhead, Salmon and Lemhi. A muzzleloader controlled hunt in a small portion of Unit 1 runs Dec 15 - Dec 31. Please use appropriate caution if hunting.

The colors on this map are only to distinguish zone boundaries

2003 ELK MANAGEMENT ZONES



ELK

ELK

2003 GENERAL ELK SEASONS

PANHANDLE ZONE (Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7, 9)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30	ANY WEAPON — antlered only Oct 25 - Oct 31	MUZZLELOADER — antlered only UNITS 4, 7 ONLY Nov 10 - Nov 29	ARCHERY — any elk Dec 10 - Dec 23 See archers caution pg 30.
B TAG	ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 14	ANY WEAPON — antlered only UNITS 2, 3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7, 9: Oct 10 - Nov 3 UNIT 1: Oct 10 - Oct 24		MUZZLELOADER — spike only Dec 2 - Dec 8
		ANY WEAPON — any elk Oct 15 - Oct 19 EXCEPT that portion of UNIT 1 within the Priest River drainage is CLOSED to antlerless harvest.		

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PALOUSE ZONE (Units 8, 8A, 11A)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30			MUZZLELOADER — spike OR antlerless UNIT 8A ONLY: Dec 2 - Dec 9 SEE AREA DESCRIPTION, PAGE 40
B TAG	ARCHERY — spike OR antlerless Aug 30 - Sep 14	ANY WEAPON — antlered only UNITS 8, 8A: Oct 10 - Nov 3 UNIT 11A: Oct 10 - Oct 24		



This elk season partially overlaps with a same-weapon general deer season in part of the zone. Check deer seasons beginning on page 19.

HELLS CANYON ZONE (Units 11, 13, 18) — Controlled Hunts Only.

LOLO ZONE (Units 10, 12)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30			
B TAG		ANY WEAPON — antlered only Oct 10 - Nov 3		
<p>Note: 1,600 B Tag Quota Available On First-Come, First-Served Basis</p> <p>Hunters Notice: Declines in adult antlerless elk in Unit 10 may result in more restrictive hunting seasons in 2004. Lolo Motorway Permits: A Forest Service permit is required to travel the section of the Lolo Motorway (Road 500) between Parachute Road 569 and Weitas Butte Road 557 from July 15 - October 1. Permits are not required from October 2, through July 14. No permit is needed to cross into Gravey Creek on Road 107. The permits will be required during the Lewis & Clark commemoration years (2003-2005). To apply for a permit or for more information, visit www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater, or call the Lochsa Ranger District at (208) 926-4274 or (208) 935-4274.</p>				

DWORSHAK ZONE (Unit 10A)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30			MUZZLELOADER spike or antlerless: Nov 21 - Nov 24 spike ONLY: Nov 25 - Dec 9
B TAG	ARCHERY — spike OR antlerless Aug 30 - Sep 14	ANY WEAPON — antlered only Oct 10 - Nov 3		
<p>Note: 2,380 B Tag Quota Available On First-Come, First-Served Basis</p>				

ELK CITY ZONE (Units 14, 15, 16)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk UNIT 15 ONLY Aug 30 - Sep 30		MUZZLELOADER UNITS 14, 16 ONLY: spike OR antlerless Nov 21 - Dec 9	ARCHERY — any elk UNIT 15 ONLY Dec 5 - Dec 20
B TAG	ARCHERY — spike OR antlerless UNIT 15 ONLY Aug 30 - Sep 14	ANY WEAPON — antlered only UNITS 15, 16: Oct 10 - Nov 3 UNIT 14: Oct 10 - Oct 24		
<p>Note: 1,790 B Tag Quota Available On First-Come, First-Served Basis</p>				

ELK

ELK

SELWAY ZONE (Units 16A, 17, 19, 20)

	September	October	November	December
A TAG		ANY WEAPON — antlered only Oct 1 - Oct 31		
B TAG	ANY WEAPON — antlered only Sep 15 - Sep 30		ANY WEAPON — antlered only Nov 1 - Nov 18	
Note: 1,255 B Tag Quota Available On First Come, First Served Basis.				

MIDDLE FORK ZONE (Units 20A, 26, 27)

	September	October	November	December
A TAG		ANY WEAPON — Oct 1 - Oct 31 Units 20A, 26 - any elk Unit 27 - antlerless or brow-tined or larger bulls ONLY		
B TAG	ANY WEAPON — Sep 15 - Sep 30 Units 20A, 26 - any bull Unit 27 - brow-tined or larger bulls ONLY		ANY WEAPON — Nov 1 - Nov 18 Units 20A, 26 - any bull Unit 27 - antlerless or brow-tined or larger bulls ONLY	
Note: 1,551 A Tag Quota Available On First Come, First Served Basis.				
Note: 1,636 B Tag Quota Available On First Come, First Served Basis.				

SALMON ZONE (Units 21, 21A, 28, 36B)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30 UNITS 21, 21A, 36B ONLY See archers caution page 30			ARCHERY — any elk UNIT 28 ONLY Dec 1 - Dec 31
B TAG	ANY WEAPON - antlerless only Aug 1 - Sep 30 Near cultivated fields outside National Forest boundary in Units 28, 36B ONLY See description page 42.		ANY WEAPON — antlered only Oct 15 - Nov 8	

WEISER RIVER ZONE (Units 22, 32, 32A)

	August / September	October	November	December
A	<p>ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30 See note A, below.</p> <p><i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 32, 32A, See Note 3, Page 46</i></p>	<p>ANY WEAPON — antlerless only UNIT 22 ONLY Aug 15 - Sep 30 <i>Outside National Forest System Boundary</i> See note C below.</p>		
TAG	<p>ANY WEAPON — antlerless only UNIT 32 ONLY Aug 1 - Nov 30 See note B below, extremely limited access. <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction</i> See Note 3, Page 46</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Please obtain permission to hunt private land before buying this tag!</p>		
B			<p>ANY WEAPON — antlered only Oct 25 - Nov 3</p>	
TAG			<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 32, 32A, See Note 3, Page 46</i></p>	

Note A — EXCEPT, that portion of Unit 32 west of the following boundary: Beginning at the Unit 32/38 boundary at Emmett, then north on Highway 52 to the Van Dussen Road, then north on the four Mile Road to the Unit 32/32A boundary is CLOSED.

Note B — That portion of Unit 32 west of the following boundary: Beginning at the Unit 32/38 boundary at Emmett, then north on Highway 52 to the Van Dussen Road, then north on the four Mile Road to the Unit 32/32A boundary. Most elk are on private property in this area.

Note C — You may hunt only outside the National Forest System Boundary. The National Forest System Boundary is a legislatively set boundary — it is not necessarily the boundary of Forest Service property. State, private, and other lands within the National Forest System Boundary are not open to hunting during this season. (Please refer to a U.S. Forest Service travel plan map for the location of this boundary.)



ELK

MCCALL ZONE (Units 19A, 23, 24, 25)

August / September	October	November	December
<p>ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30</p> <p>SHORT-RANGE WEAPONS ONLY — antlerless only UNITS 23 & 24 ONLY Outside National Forest Boundary, see note B below. See short-range weapons information on page 12. Aug 15 - Sep 30</p>	<p>ANY WEAPON — spike only Short-range weapons ONLY within described boundaries in Unit 24, see note A below Oct 5 - Oct 14</p>	<p>ANY WEAPON — antlered only Oct 15 - Nov 3 Short-range weapons only within described boundaries, see note A below.</p>	
A TAG			
B TAG			

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Note A — Short-Range Weapons ONLY in That Portion of Unit 24 Within the Following Boundary — Beginning in McCall at the junction of State Highway 55 and Boydston Street, then south on Boydston Street to West Valley Road, then west and south along West Valley Road and West Mountain Road to Cabarton Road, then north on Cabarton Road to State Highway 55, then north on State Highway 55 to Farm-To-Market Road then north on Farm-To-Market Road to Elo Road, then west on Elo Road to State Highway 55, then north on State Highway 55 to the point of beginning.

Note B — You may hunt only outside the National Forest System Boundary. The National Forest System Boundary is a legislatively set boundary — it is not necessarily the boundary of Forest Service property. State, private, and other lands within the National Forest System Boundary are not open to hunting during this season. (Please refer to a U.S. Forest Service travel plan map for the location of this boundary.)

LEMHI ZONE (Units 29, 37, 37A, 51)

	August / September	October	November	December
A	<p>ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30 See archers caution pg 30 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Unit 51, See Note 3, Page 46</i></p>		<p>MUZZLELOADER — antlerless only Nov 25 - Dec 9 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Unit 51, See Note 3, Page 46</i></p>	
TAG	<p>ANY WEAPON — antlerless only Near cultivated fields outside National Forest boundary. See description page 42 UNITS 37, 37A, 51: Aug 1 - Sep 30 UNIT 29: Aug 1 - Sep 15 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Unit 51, See Note 3, Page 46</i></p>		<p>ANY WEAPON — spike only Nov 1 - Nov 7 UNITS 37, 51 ONLY <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Unit 51, See Note 3, Page 46</i></p>	<p>NOTE: A pass is required from the IDFG office, 1515 Lincoln Road, Idaho Falls, to hunt on INEEL lands in Unit 51 during any general season hunt.</p>
No B Tags in this Zone — See Controlled Hunts				

BEAVERHEAD ZONE (Units 30, 30A, 58, 59, 59A)

	August / September	October	November	December
A	<p>ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30 See archers caution pg 30. <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 58, 59, 59A, See Note 3, Page 46</i></p>	<p>Units 30, 30A - TRADITIONAL MUZZLELOADER ONLY See Traditional Muzzleloader Rules on page 12. antlerless only Oct 15 - Oct 31 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 58, 59, 59A, See Note 3, Page 46</i></p>	<p>Units 58, 59, 59A — ANY WEAPON — spike only Oct 15 - Oct 31 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 58, 59, 59A, See Note 3, Page 46</i></p>	
TAG	<p>ANY WEAPON — antlerless only Near cultivated fields outside National Forest boundary. See description page 42. UNITS 30, 30A ONLY: Aug 1 - Sep 30</p>	<p>NOTE: A pass is required from the IDFG office, 1515 Lincoln Road, Idaho Falls, to hunt on any INEEL lands in that portion of Unit 58 south of and including the Kyle Canyon drainage north and west of State Highway 22 in any general season hunt.</p>		
No B Tags in this Zone — See Controlled Hunts				

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BROWNLEE ZONE (Unit 31)

	August / September	October	November	December
A	<p>ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30</p>			
TAG				
No B Tags in this Zone — See Controlled Hunts				

ELK

ELK

SAWTOOTH ZONE (Units 33, 34, 35, 36)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30	ANY WEAPON — spike only Oct 5 - Oct 14	MUZZLELOADER — antlerless only Nov 10 - Nov 30	
B TAG	ARCHERY — antlerless only Aug 30 - Sep 14	ANY WEAPON — antlered only Oct 15 - Nov 8		

PIONEER ZONE (Units 36A, 49, 50)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30 See archers caution page 30 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 49, 50, See Note 3, Page 46</i>		ANY WEAPON — spike only Nov 1 - Nov 7 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 49, 50, See Note 3, Page 46</i>	
	ANY WEAPON — antlerless only Near cultivated fields outside National Forest boundary. See description on page 42. UNITS 36A & 50 ONLY Aug 1 - Sep 30 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Unit 50, See Note 3, Page 46</i>			
No B Tags in this Zone — See Controlled Hunts				

OWYHEE - SOUTH HILLS ZONE (Units 38, 40, 41, 42, 46, 47, 54, 55, 57) — Controlled Hunts Only.

BOISE RIVER ZONE (Unit 39)

	September	October	November	December
A TAG	TRADITIONAL MUZZLELOADER Sep 8 - Sep 30 - Antlerless only		ARCHERY ONLY — any elk Nov 10 - Nov 30 See page 42 for area closure	
B TAG			ANY WEAPON — antlered only Nov 1 - Nov 9	

SMOKY MOUNTAINS ZONE (Units 43, 44, 48)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk UNITS 43, 48 ONLY Aug 30 - Sep 30 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Unit 48, See Note 3, Page 46</i>		ANY WEAPON — spike only Nov 10 - Nov 16 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Unit 48, See Note 3, Page 46</i>	
No B Tags in this Zone — See Controlled Hunts				

BENNETT HILLS ZONE (Units 45, 52)

	September	October	November	December
A TAG			ANY WEAPON — spike only Oct 15 - Nov 9	
No B Tags in this Zone — See Controlled Hunts				

BIG DESERT ZONE (Units 52A, 68) — Controlled Hunts Only.



ELK

SNAKE RIVER ZONE (Units 53, 63, 63A, 68A)

August / September	October	November	December
<p>A TAG</p> <p>ANY WEAPON—any elk UNITS 53, 63 ONLY Aug 1 - Sep 30</p> <p>ARCHERY—any elk UNIT 68A ONLY Aug 1 - Sep 30</p>	<p>ANY WEAPON — antlerless only UNITS 53, 63 ONLY Oct 1 - Dec 31</p> <p>ARCHERY — antlerless only UNIT 68A ONLY Oct 1 - Dec 31</p>	<p>UNIT 63A CLOSED</p>	<p>UNIT 63A CLOSED</p> <p><i>NOTE: A pass is required from the IDFG office, 1515 Lincoln Road, Idaho Falls, to hunt in Unit 63 within one-half mile inside the north and east boundary of the INEEL which is adjacent to agricultural land.</i></p>
No B Tags in this Zone			

ISLAND PARK ZONE (Units 60, 60A, 61, 62A)

August / September	October	November	December
<p>A TAG</p> <p>ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30</p>	<p>ANY WEAPON — spike only Oct 15 - Oct 28</p>	<p>MUZZLELOADER — spike OR antlerless UNIT 61 ONLY Nov 11 - Dec 9</p>	<p></p>
No B Tags in this Zone — See Controlled Hunts			

TETON ZONE (Units 62, 65)

August / September	October	November	December
<p>A TAG</p> <p>ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30</p>	<p>ANY WEAPON — antlerless only Oct 22 - Nov 5</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>
<p>B TAG</p> <p>ARCHERY — spike OR antlerless Aug 30 - Sep 14</p>	<p>ANY WEAPON — antlered only Oct 15 - Oct 21</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

PALISADES ZONE (Units 64, 67)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30	ANY WEAPON — antlerless only Oct 22 - Nov 5		
B TAG	ARCHERY — spike OR antlerless Aug 30 - Sep 14	ANY WEAPON — antlered only Oct 15 - Oct 21		

TEX CREEK ZONE (Units 66, 69)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30	ANY WEAPON — antlerless only Oct 22 - Nov 5		
B TAG	ARCHERY — spike OR antlerless Aug 30 - Sep 14	ANY WEAPON — antlered only Oct 15 - Oct 21		

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BANNOCK ZONE (Units 56, 70, 71, 72, 73, 73A, 74)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 70, 73, See Note 3, Page 46</i>	ANY WEAPON — antlerless only UNITS 70, 71, 72, 73, 73A, 74 ONLY: Oct 25 - Nov 15 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 70, 73, See Note 3, Page 46</i>	MUZZLELOADER — antlerless only Nov 16 - Nov 30 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 70, 73, See Note 3, Page 46</i>	
No B Tags in this Zone — See Controlled Hunts				

ELK

ELK

BEAR RIVER ZONE (Units 75, 77, 78)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30	ANY WEAPON — antlerless only Oct 25 - Nov 15	MUZZLELOADER — antlerless only Nov 16 - Dec 19 <i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See Note 3, Page 46</i> PRIVATE LANDS in that portion of Unit 75 east and north of Bear River are CLOSED .	
B TAG	ARCHERY — spike OR antlerless Aug 30 - Sep 14	ANY WEAPON — antlered only Oct 15 - Oct 24		

DIAMOND CREEK ZONE (Units 66A, 76)

	August / September	October	November	December
A TAG	ARCHERY — any elk Aug 30 - Sep 30			
No B Tags in this Zone — See Controlled Hunts				

ELK GENERAL SEASON SPECIAL AREA DESCRIPTIONS

- **Unit 8A Muzzleloader Spike or Antlerless Hunt** — That portion of Unit 8A east of State Highway 6 and State Highway 9 and north of the following line: Beginning at the boundary of Unit 8A at its junction with State Highway 8 at Deary, then east on Highway 8 to Forest Service Road 1963 at Helmer, then south and east on Forest Service Road 1963 to Long Meadow Creek, then southeast on Long Meadow Creek to Dworshak Reservoir, then east along the shoreline of Dworshak Reservoir to the Unit 8A boundary at Dent Bridge.
- **Outside the National Forest Boundary in Lemhi, Beaverhead and Pioneer Zones, and Units 28 and 36B in Salmon Zone— Aug 1 - Sep 30 Antlerless Hunts:** These hunts open only outside National Forest boundary within one mile of private fields on which cultivated crops are currently growing. The National Forest Boundary is a legislatively set boundary — it is not necessarily the boundary of Forest Service property. State, private and other lands within the National Forest Boundary are not open to hunting during this season. (Please refer to a U.S. Forest Service travel plan map for the location of this boundary.) "Private fields on which cultivated crops are currently growing" is defined as: fields on which soil has been used or broken up for the raising of crops, and artificially irrigated pasture. "Currently" means during the current or most recent growing season. Lands enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or other set-aside farm programs are specifically excluded.
- **Unit 39 Archery Hunt:** That portion of Unit 39 within Ada County and that portion within the following boundary: Beginning at the intersection of state highway 21 and the Middle Fork Boise River road (Forest Rd 268), east on Forest Rd 268 to Cottonwood Creek-Thorn Creek Road (Forest Rd 377), north and west on Forest Road 377 to State Highway 21, south and west on Highway 21 to the point of beginning is **CLOSED**.

2003 CONTROLLED ELK HUNTS (21,884 Permits)
ANTLERED ELK

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
2001	Oct 10 - Nov 3	11	50	
2002	Oct 10 - Nov 3	18	120	
2003	Oct 1 - Oct 14	19A	5	
2004	Oct 1 - Oct 14	23-1	5	
2005	Oct 1 - Oct 24	29-1	194	
2006	Oct 1 - Oct 14	30-1* (see pg 48)	30	
2007	Nov 1 - Nov 30	30-2* (see pg 48)	100	
2008	Nov 1 - Nov 30	30A	35	
2009	Oct 15 - Nov 8	31	75	
2010	Oct 1 - Oct 31	36A-1	97	
2011	Oct 1 - Oct 31	36A-2	95	
2012	Oct 1 - Oct 24	37	50	
2013	Oct 1 - Oct 24	37A	70	
2014	Aug 30 - Sep 30	40* (see pg 48)	5	
2015	Oct 15 - Nov 24	40* (see pg 48)	40	
2016	Sep 25 - Oct 10	43	20	
2017	Oct 15 - Nov 9	43	194	
2018	Nov 10 - Nov 24	43	198	
2019	Sep 25 - Oct 10	44	20	
2020	Oct 15 - Nov 9	44	175	
2021	Sep 25 - Oct 10	45* (see pg 48)	30	<i>Very limited access.</i>
2022	Oct 15 - Nov 9	45* (see pg 48)	50	<i>Very limited access.</i>
2023	Dec 1 - Dec 17	45* (see pg 48)	50	<i>Very limited access.</i>
2024	Sep 25 - Oct 10	48-1	10	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2025	Oct 15 - Nov 9	48-1	150	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2026	Sep 25 - Oct 10	49	20	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2027	Oct 15 - Oct 31	49	225	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2028	Oct 1 - Oct 31	50-1	197	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2029	Oct 1 - Oct 14	51	35	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2030	Nov 1 - Nov 30	51	125	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2031	Oct 1 - Nov 30	52A* (see pg 49)	75	
2032	Oct 15 - Nov 24	54* (see pg 49)	15	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Unit 47, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2033	Oct 15 - Nov 9	56	20	
2034	Nov 1 - Nov 30	58-1* (see pg 49)	100	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2035	Oct 1 - Oct 14	60-1* (see pg 49)	50	
2036	Nov 1 - Dec 7	60-2* (see pg 49)	300	
2037	Nov 1 - Nov 10	61	148	
2038	Oct 1 - Oct 14	66A* (see pg 49)	50	<i>Includes Unit 76</i>
2039	Oct 25 - Nov 9	66A* (see pg 49)	591	<i>Includes Unit 76</i>
2040	Oct 1 - Oct 14	70* (see pg 49)	25	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 70, 73, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2041	Oct 15 - Oct 24	70* (see pg 49)	200	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 70, 73, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2042	Oct 1 - Oct 14	75* (see pg 49)	25	

ELK

* See controlled hunt area descriptions. This hunt includes other units or parts of other units.

**2003 CONTROLLED HUNTS
ANTLERLESS ELK**

ELK

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
2043	Oct 20 - Nov 13	8-1*(see pg 47)	50	
2044	Oct 20 - Nov 13	8-2* (see pg 47)	50	
2045	Nov 21 - Dec 31	8-1* (see pg 47)	75	
2046	Nov 21 - Dec 31	8-2* (see pg 47)	100	
2047	Dec 10 - Dec 31	10A	50	
2048	Oct 20 - Nov 13	11	50	
2049	Oct 20 - Dec 31	11A	75	
2050	Oct 10 - Nov 3	13	75	Very limited access
2051	Dec 10 - Dec 31	14	75	
2052	Oct 10 - Nov 3	18	75	
2053	Oct 15 - Nov 8	19A	150	
2054	Oct 1 - Oct 12	22-1	400	
2055	Oct 13 - Oct 24	22-1	300	
2056	Oct 25 - Nov 3	22-1	100	
2057	Oct 1 - Oct 14	22-2	100	
2058	Nov 10 - Nov 30	22-3	100	
2059	Oct 1 - Oct 14	23-2	100	
2060	Oct 5 - Oct 29	23-3	100	Very limited access
2061	Oct 15 - Nov 8	23-2	125	
2062	Oct 15 - Dec 31	23-4	150	Very limited access
2063	Nov 1 - Dec 15	23-3	100	Very limited access
2064	Oct 15 - Nov 8	24-1	300	
2065	Oct 15 - Nov 8	24-2	150	
2066	Oct 15 - Nov 8	25	125	
2067	Nov 1 - Nov 20	29-2* (see pg 48)	400	
2068	Dec 1 - Dec 15	30-2* (see pg 48)	205	
2069	Dec 1 - Dec 15	30A	70	
2070	Oct 1 - Oct 14	31	50	
2071	Oct 15 - Nov 9	31	50	
2072	Oct 1 - Nov 3	32-1	100	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46 Very limited access
2073	Nov 4 - Nov 30	32-1	200	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46 Very limited access
2074	Aug 1 - Aug 29 Oct 5 - Dec 31	32-2	400	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46 Landowner permission required, See note 2, Page 46
2075	Oct 1 - Oct 12	32A	200	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46
2076	Oct 13 - Oct 24	32A	200	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46
2077	Oct 25 - Nov 3	32A	100	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46
2078	Nov 10 - Nov 30	32A	100	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46
2079	Dec 1 - Dec 9	33-1	100	
2080	Oct 5 - Oct 14	36	150	
2081	Nov 10 - Nov 30	36A-1	150	
2082	Oct 15 - Oct 28	36A-2	150	
2083	Nov 5 - Nov 18	36A-2	190	
2084	Dec 1 - Dec 15	36A-2	190	
2085	Nov 10 - Nov 30	36B	300	
2086	Oct 15 - Oct 31	37	50	
2087	Nov 1 - Nov 20	37	30	
2088	Oct 5 - Oct 31	39-1	500	
2089	Oct 5 - Oct 31	39-2	500	
2090	Oct 5 - Oct 31	39-3	500	
2091	Aug 1 - Nov 9 Dec 1 - Dec 31	39-4	600	Landowner permission required, See note 2, Page 46,
2092	Oct 15 - Nov 24	40* (see pg 48)	250	
2093	Oct 15 - Nov 9	43-1	150	
2094	Nov 10 - Nov 30	43-1	300	

* See controlled hunt area descriptions. This hunt includes other units or parts of other units.

2003 CONTROLLED HUNTS
ANTLERLESS ELK - Continued

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
2095	Nov 10 - Nov 30	44	300	
2096	Oct 15 - Nov 9	45* (see pg 48)	50	<i>Very limited access</i>
2097	Oct 15 - Nov 9	48-2	150	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2098	Oct 15 - Nov 9	48-3	75	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2199	Oct 15 - Oct 31	49	150	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2100	Nov 10 - Nov 30	49	300	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2101	Oct 15 - Oct 28	50-1	300	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2102	Nov 5 - Nov 18	50-2	300	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2103	Dec 1 - Dec 15	50-2	400	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2104	Oct 15 - Nov 3	51	350	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2105	Dec 10 - Dec 31	51	350	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2106	Oct 1 - Nov 30	52A* (see pg 49)	150	
2107	Oct 15 - Nov 24	54* (see pg 49)	40	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Unit 47, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2108	Sep 16 - Oct 14	56	10	
2109	Nov 1 - Nov 30	58-2	200	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2110	Nov 1 - Nov 30	59* (see pg 49)	300	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46</i>
2111	Nov 1 - Nov 24	60-2* (see pg 49)	350	
2112	Nov 25 - Dec 7	60-2* (see pg 49)	350	
2113	Nov 1 - Nov 10	61	250	
2114	Nov 1 - Dec 15	62A	200	
2115	Nov 6 - Nov 30	64* (see pg 49)	75	
2116	Oct 25 - Nov 15	66A* (see pg 49)	1300	<i>Includes Unit 76</i>
2117	Nov 6 - Nov 30	67	100	
2118	Dec 1 - Dec 31	69	50	
2119	Nov 16 - Dec 31	76-1 (see pg 49)	250	

ELK

2003 CONTROLLED HUNTS
EITHER SEX ELK

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
2120	Oct 10 - Nov 3	13	191	<i>Very limited access</i>
2121	Nov 10 - Nov 30	43-2	150	
2122	Nov 6 - Dec 15	62* (see pg 49)	281	<i>See note 4, Page 46</i>
2123	Nov 1 - Dec 15	62A	200	

2003 CONTROLLED HUNTS
ARCHERY ELK

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
2124	Aug 30 - Sep 30	54* (see pg 49)	15	<i>Either sex, Motorized Vehicle Restriction Unit 47, See note 3 Page 46</i>

2003 CONTROLLED HUNTS
YOUTH ELK

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
2125	Oct 15 - Nov 30	28	70	<i>Either sex, See note 1, Page 46</i>
2126	Nov 10 - Nov 30	43-1	150	<i>Either sex, See note 1, Page 46</i>
2127	Oct 15 - Oct 28	60* (see pg 49)	200	<i>Antlerless ONLY, See note 1, Page 46</i>

* See controlled hunt area descriptions. This hunt includes other units or parts of other units.

**2003 CONTROLLED HUNTS
MUZZLELOADER ELK**

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
2128	Dec 15 - Dec 31	1	30	Antlerless ONLY
2129	Nov 10 - Nov 29	4* (see pg 47)	20	Either sex
2130	Dec 1 - Dec 31	22-3	100	Antlerless ONLY
2131	Nov 9 - Nov 30	23-2	25	Antlerless ONLY
2132	Nov 15 - Dec 10	24-3	300	Antlerless ONLY
2133	Nov 15 - Dec 10	25	25	Antlerless ONLY
2134	Dec 1 - Dec 31	32A	100	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46 Antlerless ONLY
2135	Nov 10 - Nov 24	33-2* (see pg 48)	50	Antlerless ONLY
2136	Nov 11 - Dec 9	61	300	Either sex

**2003 CONTROLLED HUNTS
OUTFITTER ALLOCATION ELK**

ELK

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
2137	Oct 10 - Nov 3	13	9	Either sex
2138	Oct 10 - Nov 3	18	5	Antlered ONLY
2139	Oct 1 - Oct 24	29-1	6	Antlered ONLY
2140	Oct 1 - Oct 31	36A-1	3	Antlered ONLY
2141	Oct 1 - Oct 31	36A-2	10	Antlered ONLY
2142	Oct 1 - Oct 24	37A	5	Antlered ONLY
2143	Oct 15 - Nov 9	43	6	Antlered ONLY
2144	Nov 10 - Nov 24	43	2	Antlered ONLY
2145	Nov 10 - Nov 30	43-2	5	Either sex
2146	Nov 10 - Nov 30	43-1	5	See note 1, Page 46, Either sex
2147	Oct 15 - Oct 31	49	9	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46 Antlered ONLY
2148	Oct 1 - Oct 31	50-1	3	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 3, Page 46 Antlered ONLY
2149	Nov 1 - Nov 10	61	2	Antlered ONLY
2150	Nov 6 - Dec 15	62* (see pg 49)	19	See note 4, Page 46, Either sex
2151	Oct 25- Nov 9	66A* (see pg 49)	9	Antlered ONLY

All successful outfitter allocation applicants must hunt with a licensed outfitter and purchase their permit and tag by Aug 20, 2003. Unsold permits and tags after Aug 20, will be considered leftover and sold on a first-come first-served basis. Applicants who apply for an outfitter controlled hunt, by their application, authorize the Department to provide names and addresses of successful applicants to the outfitter licensed for that controlled hunt. Contact the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board by calling (208) 327-7380 (or e-mail at licensing@oglb.state.id.us) to obtain a list of eligible licensed outfitters in the applicable controlled hunt area or unit.

Notes:

- 1 — YOUTH HUNT: ONLY hunters 12- 17 years of age with a valid license may apply for this hunt.
- 2 — Controlled Hunt 2074 and 2091 Landowner Permission Hunt. Written permission from landowner who owns more than 159 acres in the hunt area is required to apply for this hunt. Landowner Permission Hunt Permits will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis at the Nampa, McCall and headquarters IDFG offices starting Jul 15. Do not apply for this hunt during the controlled hunt application period.
- 3 — Motorized vehicle use as an aid to hunting for wildlife is restricted to established roadways open to motorized vehicle traffic capable of travel by full-sized automobiles. A full-sized automobile shall be defined as any motorized vehicle with a gross vehicle weight in excess of 1500 pounds.
- 4 — Unit 62 closes Nov 30, antlerless only in Unit 65 from Dec 1 - Dec 15.

* See controlled hunt area descriptions. This hunt includes other units or parts of other units.

ELK CONTROLLED HUNT AREA DESCRIPTIONS

Hunt Area 1 — That portion of Unit 1 within the following boundary: beginning where the Kootenai River crosses the Canada border, then upstream along the Kootenai River to Mission Creek, then upstream along Mission Creek to the East Fork of Mission Creek to the Canada border, then west along the Canada border to the Kootenai River, the point of beginning.

Hunt Area 4 — All of Units 4 and 7.

Hunt Area 8-1 — That portion of Units 8 and 8A north of the following line: Beginning at the western boundary of Unit 8 at its junction with State Highway 8, then east on Highway 8 to State Highway 9, then northwest on Highway 9 to State Highway 6, then north on Highway 6 to the Unit 8A boundary.

Hunt Area 8-2 — That portion of Units 8 and 8A south of the following line: Beginning at the western boundary of Unit 8 at its junction with State Highway 8, then east on Highway 8 to Forest Service Road 1963 at Helmer, then south and east on Forest Service Road 1963 to Long Meadow Creek, then southeast along Long Meadow Creek to Dworshak Reservoir, then east along the shoreline of Dworshak Reservoir to the Unit 8A boundary at Dent Bridge.

Hunt Area 10A — That portion of Unit 10A west of the Clearwater National Forest boundary, south of Forest Service Road 250, south of State Highway 11 from Pierce to Weippe, and Jim Ford Creek from Weippe to its junction with the Clearwater River.

Hunt Area 11 — All of Unit 11.

Hunt Area 11A — All of Unit 11A.

Hunt Area 13 — All of Unit 13.

Hunt Area 14 — That portion of Unit 14 north of the following boundary: Beginning on the Unit 14 western boundary on the Slate Creek Road (Forest Service Road 354), then east on the Slate Creek Road to Forest Service Road 221, then north on Forest Service Road 221 to the Unit 14 east boundary.

Hunt Area 18 — All of Unit 18.

Hunt Area 19A — All of Unit 19A.

Hunt Area 22-1 — That portion of Unit 22 described as follows: Beginning at the junction of U.S. 95 and the West Fork Weiser River Road (Forest Service Road 127), then north on Forest Service Road 127 to Grouse Creek Road (Forest Service Road 123), then northwest on Forest Service Road 123 to the watershed divide between Lick Creek and Lost Creek drainages, then north on the divide between Lick Creek and Lost Creek drainages to Lick Creek Lookout, then west on Unit 22 boundary to the Snake River, then south on the Snake River to State Highway 71, then southeast on State Highway 71 to Cambridge, then north on U.S. 95 to the point of beginning.

Hunt Area 22-2 — That portion of Unit 22 as follows: Beginning at the junction of U.S. 95 and the West Fork Weiser River Road (Forest Service Road 127), then north on Forest Service Road 127 to Grouse Creek Road (Forest Service Road 123), then northwest on Forest Service Road 123 to the watershed divide between Lick Creek and Lost Creek drainages, then north on the divide between Lick Creek and Lost Creek drainages to Lick Creek Lookout, then east along Unit 22 boundary to U.S. 95 to the point of beginning.

Hunt Area 22-3 — All of Unit 22.

Hunt Area 23-1 — All of Unit 23.

Hunt Area 23-2 — That portion of Unit 23 within the Little Salmon River drainage, upstream from and including the Boulder Creek drainage on the west side of the Little Salmon River; and upstream from but excluding the Hazard Creek drainage on the east side of the Little Salmon River.

Hunt Area 23-3 — That portion of Unit 23 west of U.S. 95 and north of, and excluding, the Boulder Creek drainage.

Hunt Area 23-4 — That portion of Unit 23 which drains into the main Salmon River upstream from its confluence with the Little Salmon River to the French Creek-Burgdorf Road.

Hunt Area 24-1 — That portion of Unit 24 within the following boundary: Beginning at the junction of State Highway 55 and the Warm Lake Road, then east along Warm Lake Road to the Unit 24/25 boundary, then north along the Unit 24/25/19A boundary to the intersection of the Unit 24/19A/23 boundaries, then south along the Unit 24/23/32A boundary to Forest Service Road 186 at No Business Saddle, then southeast on Forest Service Road 186 to West Mountain Road, then south on West Mountain Road to Tamarack Falls Road, then east on Tamarack Falls Road to Norwood Road, then north on Norwood Road to West Roseberry Road, then east on West Roseberry Road to State Highway 55, then south on State Highway 55 to the point of beginning. EXCEPT Short Range Weapons ONLY in that portion within the following boundary: Beginning in McCall at the junction of State Highway 55 and Boydston Street, then south on Boydston Street to West Valley Road, then west and south along West Valley Road and west Mountain Road to Tamarack Falls Road, then east on Tamarack Falls Road to Norwood Road, then north on Norwood Road to West Roseberry Road, then east on West Roseberry Road to State Highway 55, then south on State Highway 55 to Farm-to-Market Road then north on Farm-to-Market Road, to Elo Road, then west on Elo Road to State Highway 55, then north on State Highway 55 to the point of beginning.

Hunt Area 24-2 — That portion of Unit 24 within the following boundary: Beginning north of Cascade at the junction of State Highway 55 and Warm Lake Road, then north on Highway 55 to West Roseberry Road, then west on West Roseberry Road to Norwood Road, then south on Norwood

(continued)

ELK

Road to Tamarack Falls Road, then west on Tamarack Falls Road to West Mountain Road, then north on West Mountain Road to Forest Service Road 186, then northwest on Forest Service Road 186 to No Business Saddle, then south along the Unit 24/32A unit boundary to the intersection of the Unit 24/32A/33 boundaries at Smith's Ferry, then north along the Unit 24/33/25 boundary to Warm Lake Road, then west on Warm Lake Road to the point of beginning. EXCEPT Short Range Weapons ONLY within the following boundary: Beginning in Donnelly at the junction of State Highway 55 and West Roseberry Road, then west on West Roseberry Road to Norwood Road, then south on Norwood Road to Tamarack Falls Road, then west on Tamarack Falls Road to West Mountain Road, then south on West Mountain Road to Cabarton Road, then north on Cabarton Road to State Highway 55, then north on State Highway 55 to the point of beginning.

Hunt Area 24-3 — All of Unit 24.

Hunt Area 25 — All of Unit 25.

Hunt Area 28 — All of Unit 28.

Hunt Area 29-1 — All of Unit 29.

Hunt Area 29-2 — All of Units 29 and 37A.

Hunt Area 30-1 — All of Units 30, 30A, 58, 59, and 59A.

Hunt Area 30-2 — All of Unit 30 and that portion of Unit 21A within Carmen Creek drainage.

Hunt Area 30A — All of Unit 30A.

Hunt Area 31 — All of Unit 31.

Hunt Area 32-1 — That portion of Unit 32 east of the following boundary: Beginning at the unit 32/38 boundary at Emmett, then north on Highway 52 to the Van Dussen Road, then north on Four Mile Road to the unit 32/32A boundary.

Hunt Area 32-2 — All of Unit 32 south and east of the following boundary: Beginning at the unit 32 boundary at Gardena, then west on the Brownlee Road to the Sweet highway, then south to highway 52, then south and west on highway 52 to the Unit 32/38 boundary.

Hunt Area 32A — All of Unit 32A.

Hunt Area 33-1 — Beginning at the Unit 33 boundary on the Alder Creek Road (Forest Road 615) then west and north along the unit 39/33 boundary to Banks, then north on the unit 32/33 boundary to Smiths Ferry, then south on Forest road 689 to Murray Saddle, then north along the watershed divide between the North Fork and the Middle Fork of the Payette River to Forest Road 696 (West Fork of Scriver Creek), then east on Forest Road 696 to Forest Road 693 (Scriver Creek), then south and east on said road to Forest Road 698 (Middle fork), then south on Forest Road 698 to Forest Road 642 (Smith Creek), and then south and east on said road to Forest Road 668a (Cow Creek), then west on Forest Road 668a to Forest Road 668 (Anderson Creek) to Highway 17 at Garden Valley, then east on Highway 17 to Forest Road 615 (Alder Creek Road), then south on said road to the unit boundary, the point of beginning.

Hunt Area 33-2 — All of Units 33 and 35 and that portion of Unit 34 south and west of the Landmark-Stanley Road.

Hunt Area 36 — All of Unit 36.

Hunt Area 36A-1 — That portion of Unit 36A west of the East Fork of the Salmon River and that portion east of the East Fork of the Salmon River upstream from and including the West Pass Creek drainage.

Hunt Area 36A-2 — That portion of Unit 36A east of the East Fork of the Salmon River downstream from but EXCLUDING the West Pass Creek drainage.

Hunt Area 36B — All of Unit 36B.

Hunt Area 37 — All of Unit 37.

Hunt Area 37A — All of Unit 37A.

Hunt Area 39-1 — That portion of Unit 39 south and east of the Blacks Creek Road and south of the South Fork of the Boise River.

Hunt Area 39-2 — That portion of Unit 39 south and east of State Highway 21.

Hunt Area 39-3 — That portion of Unit 39 north and west of State Highway 21.

Hunt Area 39-4 — That portion of Unit 39 north and west of the following boundary: Beginning in Boise, north on the Bogus Basin Road to Bogus Basin, then north on Forest Service Road 374 (Boise Ridge Road) to the Unit 39 boundary at Hawley Mountain.

Hunt Area 40 — All of Units 40 and 42.

Hunt Area 43-1 — All of Unit 43.

Hunt Area 43-2 — That portion of Unit 43 east of Forest Service Road 227 (Five Points to Big Smoky), and east of Forest Service Road 012 and Forest Service Road 079 (Big Smoky to Fleck Summit to the North Fork Ross Fork Creek), and Forest Service Trail 226 (North Fork Ross Fork trail to unit boundary).

Hunt Area 44 — All of Unit 44.

Hunt Area 45 — All of Units 45 and 52.

Hunt Area 48-1 — All of Unit 48.

Hunt Area 48-2 — That portion of Unit 48 north of Trail Creek and the Ketchum-Warm Springs Creek-Dollarhide Summit Road.

Hunt Area 48-3 — That portion of Unit 48 south of the Ketchum-Warm Springs Creek-Dollarhide Summit Road.

Hunt Area 49 — All of Unit 49.

Hunt Area 50-1 — All of Unit 50.

Hunt Area 50-2 — That portion of Unit 50 EXCLUDING the North Fork and East Fork of the Big Lost River drainages.

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Hunt Area 51 — All of Unit 51 and including that portion of this hunt within one-half mile inside the north and west boundary of the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) adjacent to agricultural lands.

Hunt Area 52A — All of Units 52A and 68. (Caution: See Craters of the Moon closure, page 9.)

Hunt Area 54 — All of Units 46, 47, 54, and 55 and that portion of Unit 41 east of the West Fork Bruneau River.

Hunt Area 56 — All of Unit 56.

Hunt Area 58-1 — All of Units 58, 59, and 59A.

Hunt Area 58-2 — All of Unit 58.

Hunt Area 59 — All of Units 59 and 59A.

Hunt Area 60 — All of Units 60, 60A, 61, and 62A.

Hunt Area 60-1 — All of Units 60, 61, and 62A.

Hunt Area 60-2 — All of Units 60 and 60A.

Hunt Area 61 — All of Unit 61.

Hunt Area 62 — That portion of Unit 62 east of the following described boundary: Beginning at the junction of State Highway 33 and State Highway 32, then north on State Highway 32 to Lamont, then north on 4700 East approximately five miles to 1100 North, then west on 1100 North approximately two miles to 4500 East, then north on 4500 East to Robinson Creek, and that portion of Unit 65 east of State Highway 33.

Hunt Area 62A — All of Unit 62A.

Hunt Area 64 — All of Unit 64 and that portion of Unit 65 west of State Highway 33.

Hunt Area 66A — All of Units 66A and 76.

Hunt Area 67 — All of Unit 67 south and east of State Highway 31, and that portion of Unit 67 north of State Highway 31, south and east of Dry Canyon and south and west of Fleming Canyon.

Hunt Area 69 — That portion of Unit 69 south and west of the Gray's Lake-Long Valley-Bone-Iona Road.

Hunt Area 70 — All of Units 70, 71, 72, 73, 73A, and 74.

Hunt Area 75 — All of Units 75, 77, and 78.

Hunt Area 76-1 — That portion of Unit 66A within the Miller and Newswander Creek drainages, the Jackknife Creek drainage east of the mouth of Squaw Creek, and east of the Cabin Creek-Haderlie Ridge Trail (Forest Service Trail 610), and the following portions of Unit 76: the drainage of Tincup Creek downstream from the South Fork, Stump Creek, Crow Creek, and Thomas Fork of the Bear River north of State Highway 89 to the Idaho-Wyoming border.

ELK

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for Christmas!

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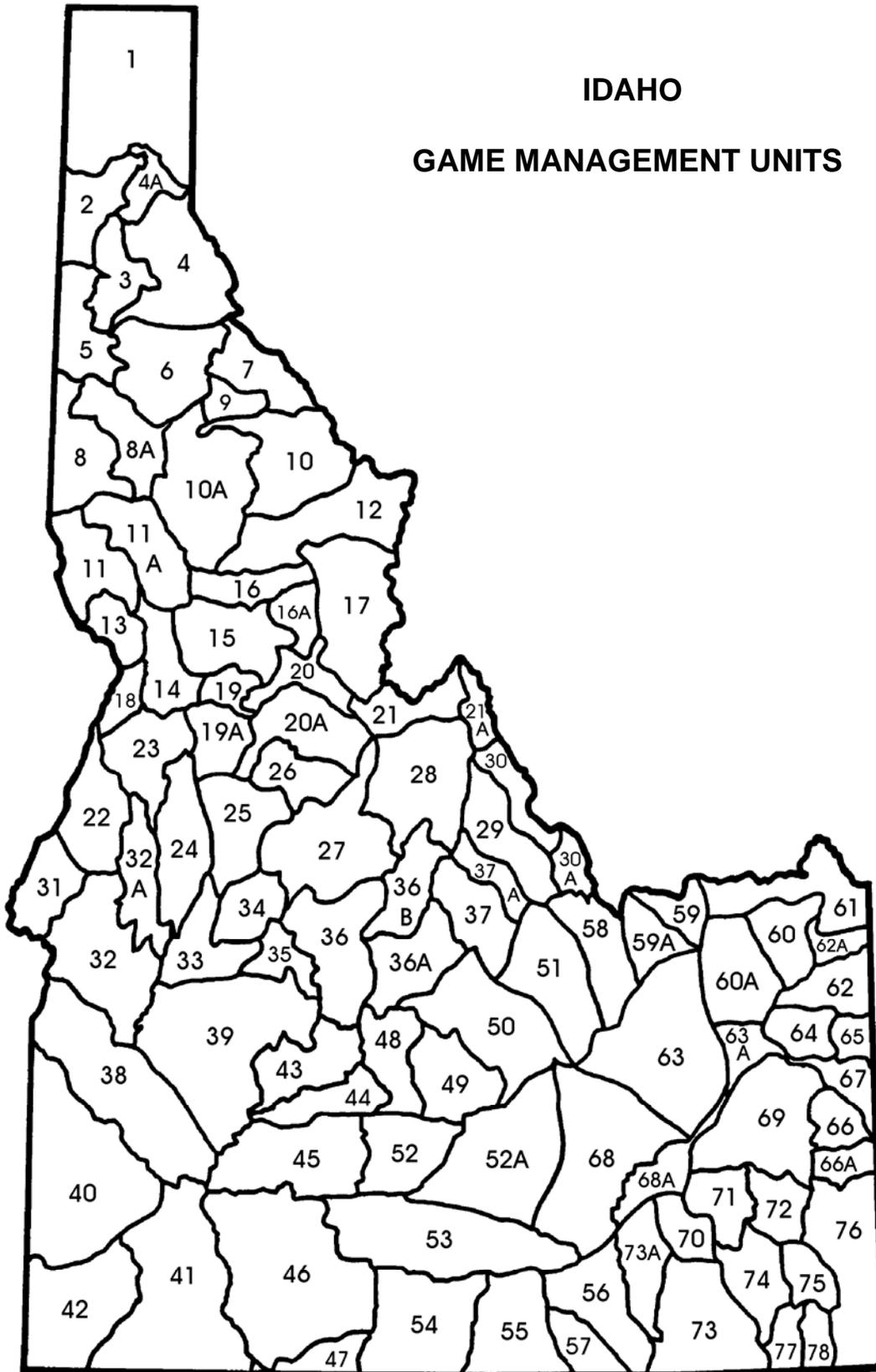


Wildlife plates are available at the vehicle licensing offices of every county assessor. Just bring the vehicle registration with you and re-register it for either a bluebird plate, an elk plate or fish plate. The extra \$35 will help support Department of Fish and Game nongame wildlife conservation, education, and recreation programs. For a statewide list of assessor's offices, check this website:

<http://www2.state.id.us/itd/dmv/assessor.pdf>

IDAHO

GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS



FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program consists of funds from a 10% to 11% manufacturer's excise tax collected from the sale of handguns, sporting rifles, shotguns, ammunition, and archery equipment. The Federal Aid program then allots the funds back to states through a formula based on each state's geographic area and the number of paid hunting license holders in the state. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game uses the funds to help restore, conserve, manage, and enhance wild birds and mammals for the public benefit. These funds are also used to educate hunters to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be responsible, ethical hunters. Seventy-five percent of the funds for this project are from Federal Aid. The other 25% comes from license-generated funds.

