



## 2007 Elk Harvest

By  
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### Introduction

Arkansas held its tenth modern day elk hunt in the fall of 2007. Two five-day hunt periods were held September 24-28 and December 3-7 in 5 hunt zones. One three-day hunt (December 3-5) was held in one new private land hunt zone that opened for the first time in 2007. Arkansas' first modern day elk season was held in 1998 and was a significant historic event for the state following the successful restoration of elk in the natural state. The eastern elk (*Cervus elaphus canadensis*) was extirpated from the state by 1840. Between 1981 and 1985, 112 Rocky Mountain elk (*Cervus elaphus nelsoni*) were stocked near the Buffalo National River in Newton County. The herd has grown to an estimated 500 animals.

### Permits

A total of 26 permits (eight bull, two either-sex and 16 antlerless) were issued for use in four established elk hunt zones (public land elk zones 1-4). Four bull permits were allocated for the September hunt period and four bull permits, two either-sex permit and sixteen antlerless permits were available for the December hunt period. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) donated two bull permits (two of 26 total permits available) to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) for fundraising purposes. These two permits generated \$60,000.00 with 85% of the proceeds returned to Arkansas for in-state elk project funding. Only Arkansas residents could apply for elk permits through a standard application process. Almost 9000 (8950) people applied for draw permits and voluntarily donated \$4768.40 for elk project work in Arkansas. Twenty-four permits were randomly drawn from a squirrel cage in Jasper, Arkansas on June 30, 2007. Applicants drawn were notified by phone or mail and each received an information packet by mail. Each hunter was required to attend a hunter orientation session prior to each hunt period. Fifty-eight (58) and 11 either-sex permits were issued for elk zones A and B, respectively (private land elk zones). Zone A permits were valid for the September and December elk hunt periods and zone B permits were valid for the first three days of the December hunt period. Landowner written permission was required for applicants to qualify for a zone A or B permit and the permit cost was \$35.00 with a limit of one either-sex elk. The zone A elk quota was six either-sex elk (three for each hunt period). The zone B quota was five elk (two bulls and three antlerless).

### Results

Twenty (20) elk (Table 1) were taken in public land elk zones 1-4. Hunter success was 77% (number of elk taken/number of permits issued). Eight bulls and 12 antlerless elk were harvested with four bulls taken during the September hunt and four bulls and 12 antlerless elk taken during the December hunt. Seven elk (7 bulls) were taken from two private land hunting zones with one bull taken in zone A during the December hunt and six bulls taken in elk zone B during the December hunt. Total harvest increased from 23 (10 bulls, 13 antlerless) taken in 2006 (Figure 1) to 27 (15 bulls, 12 antlerless) with a total of 95 hunters having an opportunity to hunt elk.

Data and samples collected on harvested elk included weight, a tooth for aging, antler measurements, lactation information, reproductive tracts (December hunt only), and tissue samples for disease/parasite analysis. Weights on harvested cows taken ranged up to 553 lbs (live weight). Bull weights ranged up to 855 lbs (live weight). Field ages of elk ranged from 2.5 to 7.5 years for bulls and 2.5 to 5.5 years for cows. Six of 15 harvested bulls (1.5 years of age and older) were over 4.5 years of age. Bulls with the largest antlers included an 8x8, an 8x7 and a 7x7. Nine of 15 harvested bulls had 6x6 or better antlers. Reproductive tracts were taken from twelve cows to determine reproductive rates and conception dates. Reproductive data collected from 1998 through 2007 (N=45) indicates most cows are bred during the first two weeks of October with most calves born the first two weeks in June. Serum or tissue samples from animals were tested for chronic wasting disease, brucellosis, bluetongue, epizootic hemorrhagic disease, bovine virus diarrhea, infectious bovine rhinotracheitis and parainfluenza-3. No significant health problems were detected.

As in previous years most harvested elk were taken during the first three days of the hunt periods (89%). Elk sightings by successful hunters in elk zones 1-4 totaled 649 and included 86 bulls (28 spikes and 58 branch antlered bulls), 463 cows and 100 calves (average 32.5 sightings/hunter, range 2-130). Elk sightings by successful hunters in elk zone A totaled 20 and included two branched bulls, 12 cows and six calves (all

observed by one successful hunter). Elk sightings in elk zone B totaled 28 branch antlered bulls (average 4.7 sightings/hunter, range 1-13). Undoubtedly some of the elk sighted were counted more than once. A post-season survey of all hunters (58) in elk zone A indicated that 32 (67%) of 48 (response rate of 83%) respondents hunted in 2007. Twenty-eight respondents (58%) participated in the September season and 19 (40%) respondents participated in the December season. Twenty-four (5) and seventy-six (16) per cent of the 21 reported elk sightings by participating hunters were for the September and December seasons, respectively. Respondents who hunted averaged 3.3 days of participation in September and 2.8 days in December. Seventy-nine per cent (38) of respondents felt the elk population in elk zone A has decreased or stayed the same during the last five years; 50% (24) favored an increase in the population and 17% (8) favored a decrease.

Table 1. Elk harvest for the 2007 September and December hunts

Hunters	Bull	Antler-less	Field Age (yrs)	Wt.	Hunters	Bull	Antler-less	Field Age (yrs)	Wt.
Walton Short	6x5		5.5	715L	Joshua Burns*		F	4.5	453L
Patrick Gilligan	8x8		7.5	855L	Jerry Medley*		F	3.5	455L
Jimmy Hall	6x7		7.5		Stacey Clark*	6x5		4.5	733L
Joey Shirley	5x4		3.5	545L	Amanda Lewis*		F	5.5	378D
Gregory Smith*		F	3.5	410L	Ronnie Ramsey*	6x8		2.5	423D
Shawn Clark*	6x6		3.5	658L	Brian Weaver*		F	4.5	553L
Kevin Clark*	6x6		4.5	738L	Kylan Larsen*	6x6		4.5	650L
Nathan Ogden*	7x7		7.5	583D	Walker Davis*	5x5		3.5	590L
John Fowler*	6x6		5.5	503D	Jeremy Brown*		F	2.5	450L
Scottie Trammell*	8x7		5.5	443D	John Unwer*	5x4		2.5	488L
Sandy West*		F	4.5	515L	Robert Smith*		F	2.5	378L
Scottie Rush*		F	2.5	415L	Jim Palmer*	5x6		3.5	490L
John Hinton*		F	4.5	380D	Woodrow Armfield*		F	3.5	443L
Johnnie Tash*		F	4.5	315D					

\* December 2007 Elk Harvest (F - Female, M - Male, L - Live Weight (lbs), D - Dressed Weight (lbs))

Figure 1. Elk harvest summary, 1998-2007



