



## **2008-2009 Elk Harvest Summary**

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### **Introduction:**

Arkansas held its eleventh modern day elk hunt in the fall of 2008. Two five-day hunt periods were held in September 22-26 and December 8-12. In addition, an elk hunt was held January 12-16 for private landowners in Elk Zone 4. 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.

### **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 permits 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 \$42,000 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 8,000 (7,649) people applied for draw permits. A total of 24 permits were randomly drawn from a squirrel cage in Jasper, Arkansas on June 28, 2008. 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. Forty-six and 22 permits were issued for elk zones and 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 December elk hunt. In January 2009, the AGFC initiated a five-day (January 12-16) private lands elk hunt in Elk Zone 4 due to increased nuisance elk complaints. A total of 29 permits were issued. Landowner permission was required for applicants to qualify for a zone A, B or 4 permit. The Zone A quota was six either-sex elk (three for each hunt period). The Zone B quota was 10 elk (three either-sex and seven antlerless). The Zone 4 quota was seven elk (two either-sex and five antlerless).

### **Results**

A total of 16 elk were harvested during the 2008-2009 elk season. Thirteen (13) elk were taken in public land elk zones. Hunter success was 60% (number of elk taken/number of permits issued). Eight bulls and five antlerless were harvested with two bulls taken during the September hunt and six bulls and five antlerless elk taken during the

December hunt. A total of three bulls were taken from the three private lands hunts (Zone A, Zone B, and Zone 4).

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 490 pounds (live weight). Bull weights ranged up to 600 pounds (dressed weight). Field ages of elk ranged from 1.5 to 6.5 for bulls and 4.5 to 6.5 for cows. Cementum age analysis resulted in the oldest harvested elk for 2008 was an 18 year-old cow. Cementum aging is the process where the animal's incisor is sliced in a laboratory and the rings of the tooth are counted to provide an age of the animal. A total of three calves (0.5) were harvested. The bull with the largest antlers was a 7X7.

Reproductive tracts were taken from two cows to determine reproductive rates and conception dates. Reproductive data collected from 1998 through 2008 (N=47) 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 by the date of this report.

Elk sightings by hunters in elk zones 1-4 totaled 122 and included 13 bulls (three spikes and 10 branched antlered bulls), 70 cows and 39 calves. Elk sightings by hunters in elk zone A totaled two elk (one spike bull and one branched antlered bull). Elk sightings by hunters in elk zone B totaled three branched antlered bulls.

Hunter	Bull	Cow	Calf	Field Age	Cementum Age	Weight
1	x			1.5	2	433 L
2	x			5.5	4	NA
3	x			3.5	4	NA
4	x			5.5	6	570 D
5	x			4.5	7	475 D
6	x			3.5	2	295 D
7	x			4.5	4	575 L
8		x		4.5	6	490 L
9			x	0.5	NA	165 D
10			x	0.5	NA	260 L
11	x			3.5	2	370 D
12	x			4.5	2	350 L
13		x		6.5	18	NA
14			x	0.5	1	NA
15	x			4.5	3	588 L
16	x			6.5	6	600 D

# Arkansas Elk Harvest 1998-2007

