



## 2001 Elk Harvest

By  
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### Introduction

Arkansas held its fourth modern day elk hunt in the fall of 2001. Two three-day hunt periods were held September 24-26 and December 10-12. Arkansas' first modern day elk season was held in 1998 and was a significant historic event for the state. The eastern elk (*Cervus elaphus canadensis*) was extirpated from the state by about 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 400-450 animals.

### Permits

A total of 20 permits (8 bull and 12 antlerless) were issued for use in four established public elk hunt zones (Zones 1-4). Four bull permits were allocated for the September hunt period and four bull permits and twelve antlerless permits were available for the December hunt period. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) donated two bull permits to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) for fundraising purposes. These two permits generated \$30,000.00 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. Five thousand eight hundred ninety-four people applied for draw permits and voluntarily donated \$6,604 for elk project work in Arkansas. Eighteen permits were randomly drawn from a squirrel cage in Jasper, Arkansas on June 30, 2001. 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.

One hundred forty nine (149) permits were issued for the one private land elk zone (Zone A). These permits were valid for the September and December elk hunt periods. Landowner written permission was required for applicants to qualify for a Zone A permit and the permit cost was \$35.00 with a limit of one either-sex elk. The Zone A elk limit was 10 for the September hunt period and 10 for the December hunt period.

### Results

Fourteen elk (Table 1) were taken in public land elk zones 1-4 with 20 hunters participating. Hunter success was 70%. Eight bulls and six antlerless elk were harvested with four bulls taken during the September hunt (four hunters participating) and four bulls and six antlerless elk taken during the December hunt (16 hunters participating). Seventeen elk (7 bulls, 10 antlerless) were taken from the private lands hunting zone, 11 in the September hunt and six in the December hunt. Total harvest increased from 24 elk taken in 2000 to 31 in 2001 (Figure 1) with a total of 169 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 585 lbs (live weight). Bull weights ranged up to 755 lbs (dressed weight). Ages of elk ranged from .5 to 7.5 years for bulls and 1.5 to 21.5 (oldest harvested cow on record for Arkansas) years for cows. Four of 15 bulls (1.5 years of age and older) were over 5.5 years of age. The bull with the largest antlers was a 6X8. Reproductive tracts were taken from 6 cows to determine reproductive rates and conception dates. Reproductive data collected since 1998 indicates an average conception date of October 13 and an average calving date of June 17. Tissue samples from animals were tested for chronic wasting disease, tuberculosis, brucellosis, Johne's disease, pneumonia, lungworm infection, and meningeal worm infection. No significant health problems were detected.

As in 1998, 1999 and 2000 most elk were taken the first two days of each hunt period. Elk sightings by successful hunters in elk zones 1-4 included 39 bulls (11 spikes and 28 branch antlered bulls), 163 cows and 32 calves (average 16.7 sightings/hunter, range 1-42). Elk sightings by successful hunters in Zone A included nine bulls (four spikes and five branched), 53 cows and seven calves (average 4.1 sightings/hunter, range 1-12). Undoubtedly some of the elk sighted were counted more than once. A post season survey of all permittees (149) in Zone A indicated that 85% of respondents actually hunted. Seventy-one respondents (81%) participated in the September season and 38 (43%) respondents participated in the December season. Most (74) of the 118 reported elk sightings by participating hunters were for the September season. Respondents who hunted averaged 2.0 days in September and 1.7 days in December.

Table 1. Elk harvest for the 2001 September and December hunts

Hunters	Bull	Antlerless	Age (yrs)	Wt.	Hunters	Bull	Antlerless	Age (yrs)	Wt.
Ron Ellington	1x2		1.5	277D	Sam Jordan*		F	3.5	500L
Marvin Brock	6x6		5.5		Jim Sutterfield*		F	6.5	330L
Walton Short	6x7		6.5	755D	Robert Mullins*		F	3.5	415D
Tom Lewis	6x8		7.5		Jackie Davis*	6x6		3.5	520D
Jimmy May	4x5		2.5	375D	David Yarnell*		F	2.5	570L
Steve Cavendar	7x7		1.5	375D	Bret Tacker*		F	7.5	585L
Terry Simmons		F	2.5	310D	Steve Kaczmar*	5x5		6.5	400D
Del Ramsey		F	2.5	315D	Michael Goins*	6x6		5.5	670D
Jerry Dean		F	5.5	375D	Elmer Montgomery*	1x1		1.5	400D
James Roberts		F	7.5		Royce Sweatman*	1x1		1.5	375D
Kevin Singleterry	3x2		2.5	300D	Larry Jones*		F	21.5	
Louis Melton	7x6		3.5	490D	Phillip Floyd*		M	0.5	275D
Kenneth Duff	7x6		6.5	580D	Arther Barrett Jr.*		F	1.5	320D
Jim Milum	6x5		2.5	370D	Gabriel Barrett*		F	3.5	400D
Tracy Floyd		F	1.5		Wesley Foushee*		F	8.5	375D
Timothy Britton*		F	3.5	450D					

\* December 2001 Elk Harvest (F - Female, M - Male, L - Live Weight (lbs), D - Dressed Weight (lbs))

Figure 1. Elk harvest summary, 1998-2001



