



North Cascades Elk Herd Human-Elk Conflict Update January 2025

Purpose

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) employs dedicated staff to assist landowners with wildlife-related damage issues. This monthly report summarizes efforts by WDFW staff to address damage to private property caused by elk from the North Cascades elk herd.

Number of Complaints

- Elk Damage Complaints in January 2025 – 7
- Elk Related Damage Complaints year to date – 7



Harvest on Private Property

Table 1. Elk harvested on private property as part of elk-related damage-mitigation efforts, North Cascades elk herd, July 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025. Landowner harvest pertains to elk harvested by landowners with WDFW-issued Damage Prevention Permits or Kill Permits. Master Hunter harvest pertains to elk harvested by WDFW-certified Master Hunters who have drawn Master Hunter Elk Hunt special permits. Tribal donations pertain to elk harvested by either landowners or WDFW staff and donated to a Point Elliott Treaty Tribe.

GMU	Landowner		Master Hunter		Tribal Donations	
	Bull	Antlerless	Bull	Antlerless	Bull	Antlerless
407		3		1		
418	2	6				2
437	2	8		2		
Total		21		3		2

Damage Mitigation Efforts

WDFW received seven elk related damage complaints in January 2025. Five complaints were from commercial producers. Three of those involved elk damage to hay fields and/or livestock fencing. Damage Prevention contracts, damage permits, and non-lethal hazing were discussed. One producer requested damage claim information due to elk eating various row crop lettuce varieties. The fifth complaint was from a commercial producer who had 1-3 elk breach their

electric exclusion fencing that surrounds the cattle pasture. A master hunter was deployed and harvested an elk inside the exclusion fencing. No other elk were seen inside the area during the hunt.

Two complaints were from non-commercial producers involving elk damage to ornamental shrubbery and garden plants. Non-lethal deterrents and fencing advice/options were discussed.

Limping Elk Removals

- Number of limping elk removed via 2024-25 Damage Permits – **6**. These elk are included in the total harvest listed in Table 1.

Treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD) was first confirmed in the North Cascades elk herd in 2014. TAHD in elk causes limping and lameness due to abnormal hoof growth, lesions, and, in severe cases, sloughing of the hoof capsule. TAHD is a form of digital dermatitis, a disease strongly associated with a group of bacteria known as treponemes. Although digital dermatitis has affected the livestock industry for decades, TAHD is the first known instance of digital dermatitis in a wild ungulate. Not all limping elk have TAHD.

This section highlights the reported number of limping elk removed by landowners who are issued Damage or Kill Permits. It does not include limping elk removed by recreational hunters. Some landowners with a Damage or Kill Permit may choose to harvest a limping elk, or in some cases, landowners are required to specifically target a limping elk as a condition of their permit. WDFW will use the assistance of landowners to target a specific limping elk when the circumstances allow for the safe and reliable harvest of that animal.

For more information please contact:

Tucker Seitz
WDFW Wildlife Conflict Specialist
(425) 410 - 9160

Robert Waddell
WDFW District 14 Wildlife Biologist
(425) 422 - 0537