

FACTSHEET ELK

EST.  2015
WILD HARVEST
INITIATIVE®



SPECIES PROFILE *CERVUS CANADENSIS*

- ▶ Elk are sometimes called *Wapiti*, a word borrowed from the Shawnee and Cree Nations. Ironically, it means “white deer,” and comes from the light-coloured coat of the bull elk.
- ▶ Elk are fast endurance runners and, despite their typically large size, can run up to 40 miles per hour.
- ▶ All male elk have a high-pitched bugling call used during rut, a vocal adaptation that carries sounds across impressively long distances. Some females may also bugle, though very rarely.
- ▶ Living up to 20 years of age, elk are social animals and, except for rutting bulls, are seldom seen alone. They are primarily protected from predators by forming large groups.
- ▶ Elk body mass varies considerably within and between populations, increasing from south to north. Exceptional bulls may exceed 500 kg.

Elk are a species of the Siberian Age faunal assembly that crossed the Bering land bridge into Alaska, arriving in North America over 1 million years ago. Before European settlement, it is estimated more than 10 million elk roamed nearly all the United States and parts of Canada. The animals were highly valued by Indigenous Peoples for their hide, ceremonial importance, and their rich, healthy meat.

Although American elk were nearly rendered extinct by market hunting in the 19th century, the species has been carefully managed since then, and reintroduced to various parts of its former range. Today, elk are thriving in diverse habitats across North America. About 1 million elk now inhabit the western United States, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and North Carolina, and occur from Ontario west in Canada.

This conservation success is largely thanks to the American Conservation Movement, which began in the late 1800s, spearheaded by American hunters who realized that wanton waste of wildlife and its habitat was detrimental to nature and to the human communities who depended on its bounty.

Elk conservation work continues today, led by state and provincial wildlife agencies and non-profit organizations like the hunting and conservation-based, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF). With 235,000 members and more than 12,000 volunteers working across more than 500 chapters, RMEF has supported and helped complete more than 12,700 conservation and hunting heritage projects that have protected or enhanced more than 8 million acres of wildlife habitat, benefiting elk and many other species.

WEIGHT OF ELK HARVEST IN THE US AND CANADA

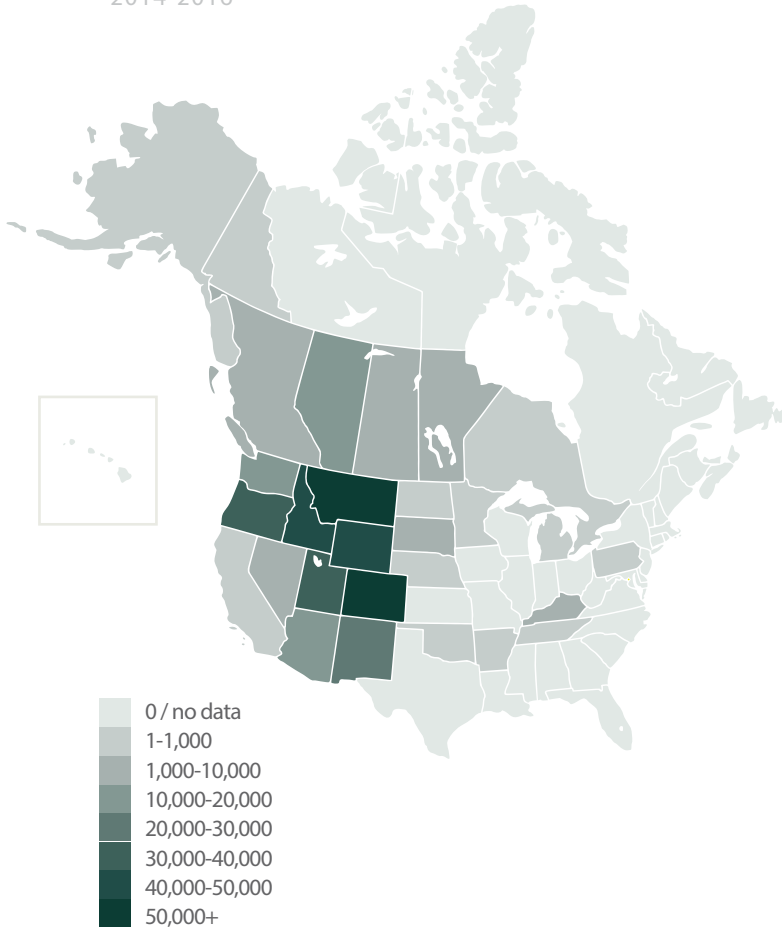
(2014/15-2015/16)

	Live Weight of Harvest	Consumable Weight of Harvest	Number of Meals (6oz serving)
CANADA	19,934,000 lbs	7,994,000 lbs	21,316,000
US	254,530,000 lbs	102,066,000 lbs	272,175,000

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NUMBER OF ELK HARVESTED BY JURISDICTION

2014-2016



Over 400,000 elk were harvested in the US and Canada between 2014-2016 (an average of just over 200,000 per year)



Average live weight of one elk:

- **Male:** 844 lbs
- **Female:** 550 lbs

Average dressed weight of one elk:

- **Male:** 584 lbs
- **Female:** 381 lbs

Average consumable weight of one elk:

- **Male:** 339 lbs (903 meals)
- **Female:** 221 lbs (588 meals)



Elk meat is an excellent source of lean protein, with a 6-ounce serving boasting a full 36 grams of protein. It is also high in vitamins and minerals, has only 1/5 the fat of beef, and is richer than beef in Omega 3, CLA, and other "good fats," known to improve muscle mass and cardiovascular health in humans.

ABOUT THE WILD HARVEST INITIATIVE®

The Wild Harvest Initiative® is the first serious effort to synthesize and evaluate the combined economic, conservation and social benefits of recreational wild animal harvests in the United States and Canada. The program's combined primary emphasis on food security and wildlife conservation is tailored to change conversations and provide new ways of communicating the relevance and benefits of recreational hunting and angling.